



**Migration Yorkshire**  
*Strategic leadership, local support*

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# COMMUNITIES UP CLOSE

NEIGHBOURHOOD  
CHANGE AND MIGRATION  
IN YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER



**Lucy Mort and Marley Morris**

July 2020

## **ABOUT MIGRATION YORKSHIRE**

Migration Yorkshire provides strategic leadership and local support across the Yorkshire and Humber region, and is hosted by Leeds City Council. Migration Yorkshire works with national, regional and local partners to ensure that the region can deal with, and benefit from, migration.

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## Summary

In recent years, neighbourhoods across Yorkshire and Humber have experienced considerable economic and social change. One of these changes has been increased migration to the region. This report – the culmination of a major two-year research project – aims to understand how people living in cities and towns across the region experience change and migration in their local areas.

While this research was conducted in 2019, the report is being published in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, which has reshaped communities in significant ways. A study on the experiences of neighbourhood change could not be more timely.

For this study, IPPR and Migration Yorkshire visited ten different neighbourhoods that have experienced significant population change as a result of recent migration. The findings of this report are based on the accounts and experiences of almost 250 residents from host and migrant communities, as well as 80 professionals working with communities in the region.

### Our neighbourhood typology

This report presents a typology of neighbourhoods in Yorkshire and Humber based on their experiences of recent migration. The typology seeks to categorise neighbourhoods according to their responses to changing levels of migration.

By its nature, a typology cannot capture all the nuances of how neighbourhoods experience migration or the different experiences and perspectives of residents within a neighbourhood. But a typology can be helpful for local areas to consider how to develop and share good practice in relation to migration and community change by comparing neighbourhoods with similar characteristics and experiences.

Our typology is based on three contextual factors that are of particular importance for understanding how neighbourhoods experience migration:

- The **history of migration** in a neighbourhood
- The **geography** of a neighbourhood
- The **economic situation** of a neighbourhood

Our typology identifies five different neighbourhoods on the basis of these factors. The typology is not entirely comprehensive and does not seek to capture every neighbourhood's experience of migration, but we have designed it to classify all the ten neighbourhoods included in our study. The five neighbourhoods in our typology include:

## Cosmopolitan Centres



Cosmopolitan Centres tend to be hubs of professional activity in the centre of large, highly diverse cities. For these areas, migration is long-established, and they often attract large numbers of migrants coming to work and study. People tend to 'keep themselves to themselves' and are often unaware of their neighbours. Residents tend to be largely comfortable with increases in migration and there are few tensions between communities compared with other areas. There are sometimes, however, concerns about a lack of community, especially given there are often high levels of neighbourhood churn.

## Super-Diverse Districts



Super-Diverse Districts tend to be in inner-city areas with high levels of ethnic diversity. They have long histories of migration and are characterised by a range of different ethnicities, languages, and faiths. The local economies are often vibrant, yet there are also high levels of poverty. As a result of their migration histories, local residents are familiar and broadly comfortable with migration. Local concerns in these areas tend to centre on crime, safety and anti-social behaviour, as well as issues related to poverty and housing. Where there are community tensions, these may be directed towards newer migrant groups.

## Diverse Suburbs



Diverse Suburbs tend to be in the suburbs of highly diverse cities. While highly diverse, Diverse Suburbs tend to be characterised by a smaller number of different ethnic groups than Super-Diverse Districts. This can mean there tend to be clearer social boundaries between distinct communities. As a result of their high levels of diversity, local residents are generally comfortable with recent increases in migration. Yet in contrast with Super-Diverse Districts, there are more likely to be pockets of local tensions between communities, including xenophobia and racism.

## Dynamic Districts



Dynamic Districts tend to be in cities or large towns, often in or nearby the centre. They are areas of transition, characterised by their experience of recent economic and demographic change against a backdrop of relatively high levels of poverty and insecure labour markets. Migration into these areas has increased in recent years, but there is less familiarity with migration compared with the above areas. As a result, residents tend to be more sceptical of recent change, although there are often a mix of perspectives. Concerns about the local area often relate to experiences of crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues such as littering and fly-tipping.

## Tight-Knit Towns



Tight-Knit Towns are neighbourhoods in smaller towns with a strong sense of community and a rich industrial heritage. They tend to have low levels of ethnic diversity and limited histories of migration. In recent years, Central and Eastern European migrants have begun to settle in these towns, often due to work opportunities at nearby factories and warehouses. While some residents are comfortable with this change, others have expressed concerns – associating recent migration, for instance, with anti-social behaviour and displacement in the local labour market. While tensions do not often bubble to the surface, there tends to be little mixing between settled and newer communities.

### Findings

Our conversations with residents and stakeholders across Yorkshire and Humber identified a number of significant themes relating to how communities had experienced recent migration. We found that:

**The identity of a neighbourhood was critical to understanding how it had adapted to recent change.** Participants spoke about the industrial heritage of their neighbourhoods, with the decline of industry tending to shape people's sense of community and identity. As one business owner explained in a Tight-Knit Town, the area *"was once a mining community 'til they closed the local mine. It's a market town. Well, it used to be a market town till the demise of the market and that finished it"*.

In areas with a longer history of migration, such as Super-Diverse Districts, migration was more likely to be a fundamental part of the identity of residents – with many from the host community having their own personal histories of migration. One resident from a Super-Diverse District summarised this perspective: *"I think the majority of us are migrants, whether you're going back ten years, twenty years or a hundred years. My grandad came over from Italy 70 years ago."*

**The economic wellbeing of an area shapes responses to migration locally.** Changes in the local employment offer meant that some areas

had seen a stark rise in low-paid and precarious work. Many people – from both the host and migrant community – were working long hours for little pay or security. This meant that people had little time, money or energy often to get involved in community events and activities. In the words of one resident from a Tight-Knit Town, *“You’ve got to work 60 hours a week, you’ve never got no time to go out in the community, you’re tired...”*

Moreover, cuts to government funding had seen people’s safety net stretched and torn and opportunities for community action reduced. As one volunteer from a Dynamic District noted, *“I think if money were no object, we could do all sorts of things ... but the thing is we just feel like we’ve got our hands tied behind our backs because you can’t do anything without money or funding, can you?”*

**Perceptions of migration can be shaped by other issues in a neighbourhood, even where these issues are not necessarily connected.** Participants spoke about their perceptions of challenges related to housing, declining high streets and town centres, the neighbourhood environment and crime and safety. Neighbourhood changes more broadly could combine with migration to the local area to fuel hostilities.

In particular, the response of participants to an increased presence of diverse shops and businesses was something of a litmus test for broader perspectives on migration to the area. In one Dynamic District, for instance, some appreciated the opening of new shops and saw migrant communities as *“entrepreneurial”*, while others voiced suspicion and questioned *“where are all these people that’s opening all these kebab shops and barber shops getting their money from then?”*

**Views about migration and diversity locally are mixed but with lots to be proud of and hopeful about.** Participants recognised that their local areas were becoming more diverse and home to people from around the world. Some were optimistic about this and saw benefits to migration locally, while others saw migration as a potential threat and felt that migrants had a better deal than they did. More often than not, people had mixed views themselves – seeing both the benefits and the challenges of migration. Overwhelmingly people wanted to get to know their neighbours better and have opportunities to get to know migrant communities.

We found positive examples of integration and community initiatives in a number of our neighbourhoods. In a Cosmopolitan Centre, for instance, a resident talked of organising a community event: *“I’ve got two Poles; I’ve got an Indian lady who’s a really good friend. I’ve got a Nigerian lady. We started trying to plan [a party] for summer... A little bit like a street*

party.” There were, however, also significant barriers to integration in communities too. As one resident in a Dynamic District recounted, *“I don't think we mix, to be honest. I think Eastern Europeans tend to keep themselves to themselves. It's difficult when you're working... I never speak to any of my neighbours.”*

**The experiences and concerns of migrants are not dissimilar to the host community – however, they are compounded by additional factors.** Some of the EU migrants that we spoke to feared, or had experienced, increasing hostility post-Brexit. Some migrants, international students, refugees and asylum seekers had faced hostility locally – especially on the basis of ethnicity and culture. Restrictions inherent to the asylum system meant that a number of asylum seekers faced challenges in their day to day life, affecting their perceptions of their neighbourhood and of integration. One asylum seeker from a Dynamic District explained that *“We don't have the opportunity to communicate with other people – [with] the local people here... We are not allowed to study, we're not allowed to work, we're not allowed to do anything here until we're getting this decision from the Home Office...”*

## **Recommendations**

The report highlights a number of recommendations for policy and practice at the neighbourhood, regional and national level. These include:

**Investing in English language support:** We recommend that local policymakers work to coordinate English language provision locally, in order to facilitate partnership working, share best practice between providers, and detect and resolve any gaps in provision.

**Actively engaging employers on integration:** We recommend that, where local employers are recruiting migrant workers, local authorities should proactively engage them, and trade unions, in recognition of the important role they can play in supporting community integration.

**Facilitating social contact:** We recommend that local authorities, voluntary and community sector partners, and local employers develop plans for supporting social contact – through community events, regular meet-ups, and online forums – in consultation with local residents.

**Inclusive decision making:** We recommend that local policymakers make more active use of consultation procedures to engage and share power with local residents in decision-making on integration issues.

**Addressing tensions and tackling discrimination:** We recommend that local areas monitor evidence of emerging tensions carefully and take a partnership approach to calming tensions, tackling xenophobia and hate crime, and challenging ‘fake news’.

For national government, we recommend:

- **Strengthening local economies and investing in social infrastructure** through the 'levelling up' agenda
- **Introducing reforms to the labour market** to ensure decent work
- **Extending investment in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**
- **Designing an immigration system that aids integration** through:
  - Easier routes to settlement
  - Encouraging employers and educational institutions to support social cohesion in their local areas through the work and study visa systems
  - Removing the bar on working for asylum seekers.

## Introduction

This report details the findings of the Communities up Close research project – an ambitious project that took researchers across the Yorkshire and Humber region to understand how ten neighbourhoods have changed and been shaped by migration. Our aim has been to explore how different types of communities in cities and towns across the region understand, experience and respond to migration locally.

Looking at ten neighbourhoods - with different migration histories, local economies and levels of deprivation, and varying urban and rural geographies – we have listened to communities to understand what they think about their neighbourhood. We wanted to know how the area had changed, how they understood and felt about migration locally, and what could help people to get along better in the neighbourhood. Importantly, researchers spoke to both host communities and migrant communities alike, as well as stakeholders working and volunteering in the area, to understand a wide range of perspectives and put these in dialogue with one another.

The report has five chapters. Chapter One sets out what we mean by neighbourhood change, and how migration and integration are intertwined with this. This chapter situates the views of people living in Yorkshire and Humber within the national context by looking at other studies that have sought to understand public opinion on migration. Neighbourhood change is about more than migration alone however, and so we also reflect on the economic and social context that shape people's lives in the region.

Chapter Two sets out a typology that classifies the ten neighbourhoods into five categories. The typology groups areas with shared characteristics and experiences of migration and change together in order to provide a tool that is applicable beyond the ten neighbourhoods selected for this research. Places that recognise where they fit in the typology will be able to reflect on the sorts of issues that are shared with other places in the region and draw on recommendations that most suit their area.

Inevitably the typology cannot comprehensively capture the entire range of neighbourhoods in Yorkshire and Humber, however any given neighbourhood may recognise elements of the place types presented in this report. To protect as far as possible the anonymity of the ten neighbourhoods that we visited we do not name them in this report. The findings and quotes are therefore contextualised using the neighbourhoods types identified in the typology.

The third chapter presents the findings from research that has listened to almost 250 residents, through focus groups with nearly 200 from the host

community and with nearly 50 residents with a more recent migrant background. In addition, we draw on almost 80 interviews with people working and volunteering in neighbourhoods across Yorkshire and Humber. The chapter outlines the economic and social challenges that participants saw as affecting their area, as well as analysing how these related to perceptions of migration locally.

The findings look at the multiple ways in which participants narrated their sense of community, their views on migration and their experiences of integration and connection with people from different backgrounds to themselves. There is no one definitive story of a neighbourhood, but many experiences and narratives that coexist and evolve. It is intended that this report captures the richness of people and places in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

We were interested to understand what participants thought could make their areas better places to live. This chapter also addresses the solutions that participants suggested as potential ways to address the challenges that their communities faced. It is these deliberations, from residents and professionals alike, that shape the recommendations of this report.

The fourth chapter summarises our recommendations. Primarily targeted at local authorities and local actors, we make suggestions as to which neighbourhood types would benefit most from the recommendation. Integration at a local level is intricately woven into the fabric of challenges and opportunities shaped by the national context, and so we also make recommendations for national government.

The final chapter concludes the report and - in a world that indeed looks unbelievably different from when we started this research - looks to the future of communities and migration in Yorkshire and Humber.

## Chapter One: Neighbourhood change and migration

### What is neighbourhood change?

Neighbourhoods and communities are not static objects - they change and evolve over time. As people move in and out, as businesses and industry wax and wane, and as investment in an area increases or lessens, so the area changes. Neighbourhoods sit within a regional, national and global context that is ever shifting, and these have consequences at the local level. At the other end of the scale – *who* moves into and out of an area matters too for how an area has changed.

Studying neighbourhood change is complex. There is no one definitive story of how a neighbourhood has changed. Neighbourhoods are places in which people live and are bound by geography – but more than that, neighbourhoods tend to foster an emotional attachment and sense of belonging for people living there. Changes often happen over a long period of time, and changes in a neighbourhood can feel like a loss, or changes locally could contribute to the feeling that the area is thriving. This combination of function and feeling makes the concept of the neighbourhood quite amorphous. As Lupton and Power (2004:16) explain:

*"...when people reflect on the characteristics of their area, they may simultaneously make reference to the friendliness of their next door neighbours, the quality of local schools or parks, and the atmosphere and facilities of the city centre and the job opportunities within an even broader travel-to-work area."*

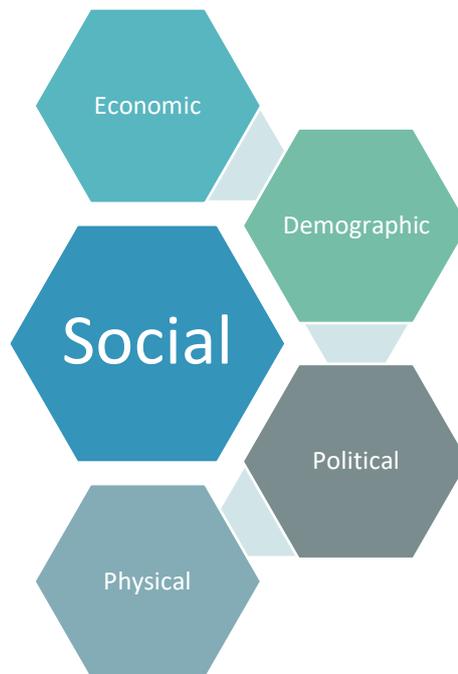
One of the key questions that this research sought to understand was how people living in neighbourhoods understood communities to have changed as a result of recent migration. But untangling change as *a result of* migration from other changes experienced is difficult. Asking people about changes in their neighbourhood, it is likely that migration is one of many factors that have changed. Furthermore, and depending on the outlook of people, migration might be seen to have brought positive or negative change – or a combination of the two. Changes in the physical environment or in economic opportunities, may, by some, be attributed to migration to the area. Migration and population change therefore has to be understood holistically alongside broader economic, social and political changes and attitudes towards migration.

In studying neighbourhood change there are a number of attributes that might be considered as contributing to change (Lupton and Power, 2004; Cox et al., 2013; Hincks, 2015; Lymperopoulou, 2019):

- **Economic** – the structural effects of economic change can transform neighbourhoods. Austerity, deprivation and poverty, deindustrialisation and employment opportunities, the housing market, public services, government investment, business and universities, and regeneration all contribute to the living standards of a neighbourhood.
- **Social** – the sense of trust, safety, reciprocity and bonds that residents of a neighbourhood feel. These may be linked to 'sentimental characteristics' (Lupton and Power, 2004:13) that shape people's sense of identity in relation to the area. Levels of civic activity, volunteering and residents groups/associations, community discord, anti-social behaviours, and public attitudes towards immigration all factor in to people's sense of trust and community bonds.
- **Physical** – the geographical space and physical attributes of a neighbourhood. This includes housing, a neighbourhood's parks, infrastructure, transport, community spaces, as well as how the neighbourhood looks and how it is cared for.
- **Demographic** – the movement of people in and out of the area, their economic, social and cultural statuses and consequent changes in the overall composition of the local area. Migration (both international and internal), turnover of residents, and the pace and scale of migratory flows shape demographic change.
- **Political** – neighbourhoods are situated within local, regional, national and global politics. These shape the views and outlook of residents, their material conditions, and the likelihood of policy interventions in a neighbourhood.

**Figure 1**

**Neighbourhood change attributes**



**Source: Derived by the author from Lupton and Power (2004), Cox et al. (2013), Hincks (2015) and Lympelopoulou (2019)**

The relationships between these attributes are complex and interdependent. What happens at the global and national level can alter who moves to neighbourhoods, and changes in neighbourhoods can determine who stays and who leaves the area.

It is also evident that changes are not experienced in the same way by everyone living in a neighbourhood. Different people will respond to changes in different ways. For example, as Somerville et al. (2009:29) note in a review of neighbourhood change research:

*"...different neighbourhood residents respond differently to similar neighbourhood attributes... the impact of disorder, for example, depends, in part, on the level of tolerance community members feel towards that disorder, with different members having more or less tolerance or more or less capacity to move away."*

This reinforces the point that there is no one story of a neighbourhood; there are always multiple issues and challenges but also strengths and connections that bind people. It is crucial that these positive attributes are supported so that challenges can be withstood, and neighbourhoods can thrive.

## **Neighbourhood change in 2020**

In setting out the context for this research, there are a number of factors at the global and national level that have had transformative effects on many neighbourhoods in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Three of these – though not exhaustive – are global patterns of migration, austerity, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Migration**

Migration is not new and has always been a feature of UK society. However, patterns of migration have changed and the movement of people to the UK – as a result of forced displacement and global crises, economic necessity and opportunity, and freedom of movement within the EU – has increased the ethnic and cultural diversity of the UK.

For a number of reasons explored in this report, the effects of migration are felt differently in different places. For instance, the UK government's immigration rules and policies create differential rights and entitlements with often major socioeconomic consequences for individuals living in neighbourhoods. The dispersal of asylum seekers to areas outside of London and the South East, often to deprived and ethnically homogenous areas, has consequences for community cohesion (Lymperopoulou, 2019). Similarly, the increase in industries reliant on migrant workers in rural, semi-rural and coastal areas has seen increasing settlements of EU citizens in areas without a history of welcoming migrant communities (ibid).

More recently, net EU migration to the UK fell significantly after the public vote to leave the EU in 2016. Migration is likely to fall further as a result of the ending of free movement and the introduction of the points-based system in 2021 (as well as the slowdown in international travel resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic). While the implications of these changes in migration patterns for communities are not yet clear, they are likely to play an important role in shaping community experiences of migration in the coming years.

### **Austerity**

Neighbourhood change is shaped by the broader economic context, and for the last decade this has been dominated by a programme of cuts to public spending that has eroded the resilience of the North of England (Johns, 2020). Recent years have seen one in three children and one in five pensioners pushed into poverty, rising homelessness and over a million people using foodbanks in the UK (Quilter-Pinner and Hochlaf, 2019). The relationship between economic hardship and attitudes to

immigration is complex. Lympelopoulou (2019: online) suggests one way in which they are related:

*"The social impacts of immigration are often interlinked with economic conditions—established residents blame new immigrants for economic hardship or compete with them for scarce resources."*

The indices of deprivation were a key measure in the selection of sites for this research. Many of the areas that we visited had experienced significant economic and social challenges in recent years. It was evident throughout the research that discussions about neighbourhood change related just as importantly to experiences of austerity as well as of migration. This is important, for the two are intricately woven together when it comes to understanding people's views and experiences of neighbourhood change.

### **The coronavirus pandemic**

While this research was conducted prior to the pandemic, it is noted here because of the new challenges that neighbourhoods will face as a result – and in the hope that this research can point to ways in which communities can be supported to reconnect as we recover from the crisis.

The unprecedented crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on individuals and communities. This is seen at a number of levels: in terms of the virus itself and the uneven infection and death rate, particularly on ethnic minority communities and poorer neighbourhoods (ONS, 2020a; ONS, 2020b); the economic and labour market impacts of the pandemic, particularly for migrants found to be more likely to work in industries affected by the crisis (Morris, 2020); the additional risks faced by those subject to immigration controls (Migration Exchange, 2020); and the effect of the pandemic on shifting attitudes toward migration (Fernández-Reino et al., 2020). In addition, the challenges of the lockdown and social distancing measures have major implications for community relations and social isolation (APPG on Social Integration, 2020), as well as the potential for opportunities for greater community cohesion (Hope Not Hate, 2020; New Local Government Network, 2020).

This research was undertaken pre-pandemic but writing a report about neighbourhood change would be impossible to do without reference to how the coronavirus pandemic has fundamentally altered already, and will continue to shape, migration and neighbourhoods across the world. The pandemic has shown just how unknowable the future can be, and so it is vital that we think about how people can be supported, and neighbourhoods strengthened, so that they can better weather change.

## Public attitudes towards migration

There is an extensive and multifaceted literature on public attitudes to migration. According to much of the recent literature, attitudes to immigration are often complex and nuanced. While there are significant minorities with strong opinions on the subject on both ends of the spectrum, the majority of the public do not believe that migration has had either a strongly negative or strongly positive impact on the UK (Hewlett et al, 2020). In one recent major publication on attitudes in the UK – the *'National Conversation on Immigration'* conducted by Hope not Hate and the thinktank British Future – the authors argue that the majority of people are 'balancers' who believe that there are both gains and pressures as a result of migration (Rutter and Carter, 2018).

The salience of immigration has changed significantly over time. While the share of people identifying immigration as an important issue peaked in 2015 and 2016, it has reduced significantly since the EU referendum (Hewlett et al, 2020). There are also important differences between people's perceptions at the national and local level: the public are far less likely to consider that immigration is a problem in their local area than in the UK as a whole (Duffy and Frere-Smith, 2014).

Attitudes to immigration vary significantly by demographic group. Public support for immigration is significantly higher among younger people, graduates, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds (Duffy and Frere-Smith, 2014). There is also some evidence to suggest that attitudes to migration are more positive in areas that have experienced higher levels of migration (ibid). This supports the theory that greater social contact helps to build cohesion and strengthen support for migration (Blinder, 2011).

The public priorities for migration are manifold and vary depending on age, education level, ethnicity, and geography. However, there are some themes that emerge prominently and capture widespread public support. The public broadly recognises and values the contribution of migration to communities and to the economy, and there is strong support for an immigration system that welcomes people's skills, talents, and contributions. Concerns about migration tend to centre on pressures on public services, access to the welfare system, and the potential for job displacement and wage undercutting. Most people tend to place value on integration and there is strong support for encouraging people to learn English (Rutter and Carter, 2018).

Attitudes to immigration are critically tied to issues of race, ethnicity, and religion. While the majority of people do not explicitly endorse racist statements, conversations about migration can raise racist or xenophobic

viewpoints. In particular, there is evidence of widespread Islamophobic views, based on fears and negative stereotypes about Muslim communities (ibid).

In recent years, attitudes to immigration have become more positive (Blinder and Richards, 2020). The share of people agreeing that the UK is made a better place to live by people coming from other countries has increased from around 30 per cent in 2010 to around 50 per cent in 2018 (Hewlett et al, 2020). While there have not been major changes in attitudes since the start of the coronavirus crisis, there is evidence of a steady and incremental shift towards more positive views over time (ibid).

### **Area classifications and typologies**

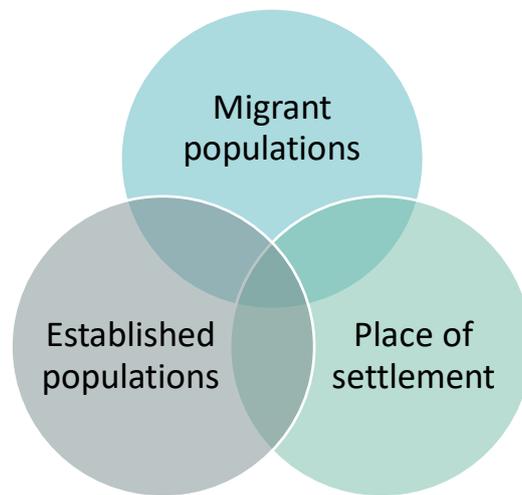
A number of typologies have sought to categorise different types of places in order to condense complex information in a format that “brings some simplicity and patterning”, and enables a “shared understanding and language” for those interested in the differences between places (Lupton et al., 2011:7).

Typologies of neighbourhoods are the basis or starting point for more in-depth analysis of communities. They allow policy makers and those assessing and developing services to understand the differences between areas and to direct the right resources to the right areas. There have been a number of typologies or classifications developed in an effort to understand the consequences of neighbourhood change and migration. However, these have tended to focus on internal migration (Dennett and Stillwell, 2001; Robson, 2008).

A recent framework developed by Kitty Lymperopoulou (2019) has developed 12 classifications of local authorities to better understand the nature of immigration in different socioeconomic contexts. The framework assesses a number of factors that contribute to understanding the different ways that immigration can impact on social cohesion at a local level. These factors include characteristics at a number of levels (Fig. 1), with the author emphasising the interrelationship between the characteristics associated with migrant populations, the established (or host) population and the places where they settle.

## Figure 2

### Overarching factors to be considered in assessing social cohesion at a local level



**Source: Edited from Lymeropoulou (2019)**

This approach recognises that integration is a two-way process, and that places matter in the shaping of our daily lives. Lymeropoulou highlights a number of characteristics that help to determine the social impacts of migration, including the following:

- The socioeconomic characteristics of migrants, including their country of birth and nationality and the rights and entitlements afforded to them in the UK under immigration rules.
- The demographic characteristics of established populations, particularly their age, education and ethnic background.<sup>1</sup>
- The cultural distance between migrant and established populations, particularly in relation to language, education and religion.
- The features of the social environment, such as levels of deprivation, social networks and support, and community norms related to shared identity and attitudes towards diversity and migration.

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<sup>1</sup> An additional factor that may be relevant, though not mentioned in Lymeropoulou (2019), is whether established populations have histories of migration within their own family and/or friend networks.

- The history of migration and ethnic diversity in an area, which influences the social support, infrastructure, resources and services available to migrants to support their settlement.
- Locally available public services and employment. The author notes that tensions often arise in relation to services and employment, with some perceiving that migrants put pressures on services and displace local workers.
- The differences between urban and rural contexts, with the visibility of migrants in rural areas potentially increasing the risk of racial harassment, alongside fewer community resources for contact between migrant and established communities.<sup>2</sup>
- The rate of population change, with high turnover levels associated with challenges for schools and healthcare services and different expectations of the neighbourhood for transient and settled communities.

Based on these characteristics, Lymperopoulou develops a typology of local authorities. In Table 1, we categorise local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber according to Lymperopoulou's classification. Local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber cover eight of the 12 categories, with the remaining four referring either to areas specifically in London or to commuter towns.

The typology is one of the most advanced and nuanced efforts to distinguish local experiences of migration. Nevertheless, no typology can capture the full nuance of different local characteristics – for instance, the 'Asylum Dispersal Areas' do not include all parts of the region which support asylum seekers. It is therefore important to treat Table 1 as a guide rather than as a definitive account of the experiences of migration for all local authorities in the region.

Lymperopoulou identifies which of the 12 categories may face particular challenges in relation to social cohesion. Areas that are less ethnically diverse and which face significant levels of deprivation are more likely to have hostile attitudes towards immigration. The framework finds that areas titled 'Asylum Dispersal Area', 'Diverse Conurbation Centres' and 'Migrant Worker Towns & Countryside' have the lowest perceptions of social cohesion among the 12 classifications. However, 'Diverse Conurbation Centres' may have greater capacity to manage tensions due

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<sup>2</sup> A further consideration not referred to in Lymperopoulou (2019) is that in more rural communities there may be fewer professionals and services with the in-depth knowledge needed to meet the needs of populations with diverse rights and entitlements.

to their longer histories of immigration. The article concludes therefore that 'Asylum Dispersal Areas' and 'Migrant Worker Towns & Countryside' would most benefit from interventions aimed at improving community cohesion.

**Table 1**

**Local authority categories according to Lympelopoulou classification**

Area Classification	Local Authority area
Diverse Conurbation Centres	Bradford Leeds Sheffield
High Turnover Provincial and Student Towns	York
Asylum Dispersal Areas	Barnsley Calderdale Doncaster Hull Kirklees Wakefield Rotherham
Migrant Worker Towns and Countryside	North Lincolnshire
Rural and Coastal Retirement Areas	Craven Ryedale Scarborough
Prosperous Small Towns	Harrogate Richmond
Industrial and Manufacturing Towns	North East Lincolnshire
Low Migration Small Towns and Rural Areas	East Riding of Yorkshire Hambleton Selby

**Source: Edited from Lympelopoulou (2019)**

Building on extensive qualitative research, the Communities up Close project builds on the classification developed by Lymperopoulou through developing a more granular and in-depth analysis that looks at the neighbourhood (MSOA) level.<sup>3</sup> There is a lot of diversity between neighbourhoods within local authority areas, and a local authority classification system has some limitations for those working on the ground with communities. This project aims to help local authorities and partners better understand the experiences and needs of their residents across different neighbourhoods.

### **Neighbourhood change in Yorkshire and Humber**

Yorkshire and Humber has a long and diverse history of migration. After the Second World War, many people from Commonwealth countries came to Yorkshire and Humber after the UK government encouraged Commonwealth immigration to help rebuild the economy and fill labour shortages. In the 1950s and 1960s, many migrants – including people from India and Pakistan – found work in Yorkshire’s industries, including in textile mills in cities such as Bradford and in steelworks in South Yorkshire. People seeking asylum also settled in Yorkshire and Humber – including refugees during and after the Second World War, Ugandan Asians in the 1970s, and Kosovans during the 1990s.

In recent years, migration to Yorkshire and Humber has increased considerably. The accession of the ‘A8’ member states in 2004 led to a significant rise in economic migration from Central and Eastern Europe. Unlike former periods of migration to Yorkshire and Humber, where people tended to settle mainly in urban areas, EU citizens have settled across the region, often in small towns as well as larger cities. Between 2001 and 2011, Yorkshire and Humber’s non-UK born population increased by 78 per cent – from around 260,000 to around 460,000 (Krausova and Vargas-Silva, 2013).

The latest figures suggest that in 2019 the number of non-UK born people in Yorkshire and Humber stood at around 520,000, approximately 10 per cent of the total population in the region (ONS, 2020c). The local authorities with the highest share of non-UK born residents are Bradford (17 per cent), Sheffield (13 per cent), and Leeds (13 per cent). In North Yorkshire, the number of non-UK born people is smaller, reflecting historically lower migration to the region. Migrants tend to come from

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<sup>3</sup> MSOAs (middle layer super output areas) are a type of geographical unit used in the census. There are around 7,200 MSOAs in England and Wales and each MSOA contains between 2000 and 6000 households. For this project, we have used MSOAs to help delineate neighbourhoods across Yorkshire and Humber.

South Asia (approximately 134,000 people in the region) and from the 'A8' countries (approximately 103,000). The most common countries of origin include Pakistan (approximately 84,000), Poland (approximately 66,000) and India (approximately 38,000).

As a result of their histories of migration, parts of Yorkshire and Humber are highly diverse, encompassing a range of ethnicities, nationalities, and religions. In Bradford, nearly a third of residents are from ethnic minority backgrounds, while in Kirklees, Sheffield and Leeds around one in five are from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, in other areas there is far less diversity. In North Yorkshire, for instance, the share of white British residents is more than 95 per cent (ONS, 2019).

The increase in migration to Yorkshire and Humber over recent decades has coincided with broader economic change, as the region has transitioned away from heavy industry and manufacturing and towards a diverse range of sectors. While manufacturing still plays a critical role in the regional economy – comprising more than 10 per cent of overall employment – the largest sectors according to the latest available data are wholesale and retail (14 per cent) and health and social work (12 per cent). At the same time, parts of Yorkshire and Humber have faced growing economic challenges – including the decline of local high streets, the rise of insecure work, and reductions in government funding. Average earnings in Yorkshire and Humber are lower than for the UK as a whole and there are pockets of serious poverty and deprivation (ONS, 2020d).

Migration has played an important role in the political debate in Yorkshire and Humber in recent years. At the referendum on EU membership in 2016, 58 per cent of voters in the region opted for leaving the EU (Electoral Commission, 2019). While attitudes to immigration were by no means the sole reason for supporting Brexit, they were widely perceived as an important factor in the vote to leave. Since the referendum, there has been considerable political flux in Yorkshire and Humber. Most notably, at the 2019 General Election, a number of former Labour safe seats – including Don Valley, Scunthorpe, and Wakefield – became Conservative-held constituencies. This was perceived to be partly motivated by the Conservative Party's campaign message to "get Brexit done".

Recent developments pose new challenges for the region and are likely to transform future migration patterns. The Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have major long-term impacts on the regional economy and labour market. According to an ONS study, residents in Yorkshire and Humber were second only to the North East in having the greatest concerns about the impact of coronavirus on their work (ONS, 2020e). The pandemic – combined with global restrictions on travel and the future plans to end the

free movement of people – is likely to both reduce net migration and reconfigure migration patterns in the region in the coming years. Future policy debates on integration and inclusion in Yorkshire and Humber are therefore set to take place in a radically different economic and social context.

## Chapter Two: Neighbourhood Typology

**Figure 3**

### Our neighbourhood typology



**Source: IPPR**

This chapter introduces our neighbourhood typology, developed following extensive qualitative research across Yorkshire and Humber. In Fig. 3 (above) the neighbourhood types are introduced. The remainder of this chapter explains how these have been developed and their characteristics.

This report explores the experiences of migration in ten different neighbourhoods across Yorkshire and Humber. In drawing comparisons between the neighbourhoods in our study, we have identified a number of clear differences in how communities have adapted to changes in migration. While in every neighbourhood there is a diverse range of responses to migration – relating to individual attitudes, perspectives and circumstances – there are some common themes that help us to distinguish how different neighbourhoods have as a whole experienced community change.

By identifying parallels and drawing contrasts between different communities in our study, we have developed a typology of neighbourhoods based on their experiences of recent migration. This typology seeks to categorise neighbourhoods according to their responses to changing levels of migration. Ultimately, the typology is designed to help local areas consider how to develop and share good practice in relation to migration and community change by comparing neighbourhoods with similar characteristics and experiences.

Of course, in reality every neighbourhood is distinct, and any policy intervention must be tailored to the needs and circumstances of the local community. But some neighbourhoods do share important similarities,

which can help them to learn from each other in developing effective policy solutions. The typology we present is inherently an over-simplification of the complex and nuanced experiences of different neighbourhoods. But we hope that by categorising neighbourhoods on the basis of their experiences of recent migration, the typology can serve as a useful tool for local areas to think about community change in their neighbourhood, to share collective wisdom about experiences of migration and responding to that change, and to develop more targeted and place-based policy responses.

### **Developing the typology**

In order to develop our typology, we have identified from our research a number of important considerations that help to shape a community's experience of migration. These can be broadly grouped into three categories: the history of migration in the neighbourhood, its location and geography, and the situation of the local economy.

### **History of migration**

As we discuss in the literature review, there is longstanding evidence to suggest that a neighbourhood's experience of recent migration is shaped by its history of migration (Griffith and Halej, 2015). For diverse areas with longer histories of migration, recent increases in migration are more likely to be perceived as part of the regular patterns of community life. This is perhaps most true for areas sometimes described as 'super-diverse'. These are areas characterised by multiple and complex layers of migration and a multitude of ethnicities, faiths and languages (Vertovec, 2007).

Our research confirmed that an area's history of migration is a critical dimension in understanding experiences of migration in Yorkshire and Humber. Neighbourhoods with long histories of migration tended to be more comfortable adapting to new migrant communities, simply because they were used to welcoming newcomers. For new migrants, diverse neighbourhoods tended to be attractive because it could be more comfortable to move to areas with a range of other migrant communities.

By contrast, our research found that neighbourhoods with limited or no history of migration often found it far harder to adapt to newcomers. These neighbourhoods tended not to be used to some of the changes associated with increases in migration – such as hearing new languages or seeing the opening of new shops and local businesses. For new migrants moving to areas with little diversity and little history of migration, there was a greater risk of standing out. As a result, relatively small changes in migration in these neighbourhoods tended to have more significant implications when compared to other neighbourhoods.

## **Geography**

The geography of a neighbourhood also has an important role in shaping how it responds to increases in migration (Lymeropoulou 2019). Importantly, our research found that this relates to how a neighbourhood conceives successful integration. For inner city areas used to significant churn and with high levels of commuting, there tended to be a less distinct community life. The standard for integration was therefore relatively low; people generally said that they 'keep themselves to themselves'. For newcomers, there was less expectation to build relationships with neighbours, because individuals were largely operating independently and had fewer strong social bonds.

On the other hand, in more suburban and residential neighbourhoods – and especially in small towns and rural areas – there tended to be a more thriving community life. In these close-knit communities, neighbours were more likely to know each other, develop close relationships over many years, and actively engage in community projects and activities. The standard for integration was therefore relatively high. This could mean that newcomers – including those from other parts of the UK as well as migrants – were expected to play an active role in this community life in order to be truly embedded into the neighbourhood. Yet the longstanding relationships between local residents could sometimes make it harder to break into a community circle. In these neighbourhoods, there was therefore potentially a greater risk of divides forming between community insiders and outsiders.

## **Local economy**

The local economy is another vital consideration in understanding how communities experience and respond to increases in migration (Lymeropoulou 2019). Our research found that in areas experiencing economic expansion, investment or redevelopment, increases in migration tended to be associated with positive economic news. Local residents often recognised the positive contribution of migrants in helping to benefit the area through bringing skills and filling local labour shortages. For some, recent migration into an area reflected their neighbourhood's economic regeneration and vibrancy.

However, in areas experiencing decline – or a long period of stagnation following the loss of industry – increases in migration could be associated with negative economic developments. Even where migrants were helping to boost the local economy through taking up factory work or opening new local businesses, if the overarching economic trajectory was downward then residents nevertheless sometimes associated these changes with negative economic consequences, such as the rise in low-

paid and insecure work and the decline of the high street. Where poverty and unemployment were high, residents also at times viewed newcomers as competition in the local labour market, which served to heighten community tensions.

Each of these considerations – histories of migration, local geographies, and economic change – are critical in appreciating how and why different communities respond to migration. We have therefore used them as the basis for our typology of different neighbourhoods. However, they are not the only considerations and they often interact with each other in complex ways. As a result, we have included further nuance in the typology where appropriate to try to capture some of the additional complexities in capturing local experiences of migration.

### **Our neighbourhood typology**

Our typology identifies five different neighbourhoods on the basis of these factors, which we categorise as follows:

- **Cosmopolitan Centres**
- **Super-Diverse Districts**
- **Diverse Suburbs**
- **Dynamic Districts**
- **Tight-Knit Towns**

These archetypes do not cover all possible circumstances and some neighbourhoods in Yorkshire and Humber may not neatly fall into any relevant category. We have, however, designed the typology so that it is able to categorise the full selection of neighbourhoods included in the research study. This means that the typology should encompass a broad range of different neighbourhoods in Yorkshire and Humber (and elsewhere), even if it is not fully comprehensive.

In the following sections, we describe our five archetype neighbourhoods and explain how each of the ten research sites are categorised by the typology.

## Cosmopolitan Centres



Cosmopolitan Centres tend to be in the centre of large, highly diverse cities. They can be characterised as economically dynamic areas with large young populations. They tend to be hubs for professional activity and often have large private rental sectors. For these areas, migration is long-established, and they often attract large numbers of migrants coming to work and study at local universities. People tend to 'keep themselves to themselves' and are often unaware of their neighbours.

In Cosmopolitan Centres, residents tend to be largely comfortable with increases in migration and there are few tensions between communities compared with other areas. There are sometimes, however, concerns about a lack of community, especially given there are often high levels of neighbourhood churn. There may also be concerns over crime and safety in certain parts of the neighbourhood.

We have categorised one of our ten research sites as a Cosmopolitan Centre:

- The Cosmopolitan Centre in our study is in the centre of a large Yorkshire city. The neighbourhood is highly diverse – with half the population born outside the UK at the 2011 census – and attracts in particular large numbers of international students (ONS, 2011a). Unlike the other areas in our study, this area has relatively high average incomes and parts have benefited from significant economic regeneration over recent years (ONS, 2020f). However, there is considerable inequality in the area and once housing costs are accounted for there are high levels of relative household poverty (ONS, 2017a).

## Super-Diverse Districts



Super-Diverse Districts tend to be in inner-city areas with high levels of ethnic diversity and considerable migration and churn. They have long histories of migration and are characterised by a range of different ethnicities, languages, and faiths. Patterns of migration are complex – with people moving to the neighbourhood for a variety of reasons, including work, study, asylum and to join family. The local economies are often vibrant and dynamic, yet there are also high levels of poverty and deprivation, poor quality housing and overcrowding.

As a result of their migration histories, local residents are familiar and broadly comfortable with migration. Local concerns in these areas tend to centre on crime, safety and anti-social behaviour, as well as issues related to poverty and substandard housing. Where there are community tensions, these may be directed towards newer migrant groups, such as recent arrivals from Central and Eastern Europe.

We have categorised one of our ten research sites as a Super-Diverse District:

- The Super-Diverse District in our study is a densely populated residential neighbourhood in the inner city of a large city in Yorkshire and Humber. This neighbourhood has very high levels of diversity – with 39 per cent of residents born outside the UK and more than two thirds from ethnic minority backgrounds at the 2011 census (ONS, 2011a; ONS, 2011b). It is also an area with very high levels of poverty – all of the LSOAs within the neighbourhood are in the 5 per cent most deprived in England (MHCLG, 2019).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> LSOAs (lower layer super output areas) are a type of geographical unit used in the census. They are on a smaller scale when compared with MSOAs. There are around 35,000 LSOAs in England and Wales and each LSOA contains between 400 and 1200 households.

## Diverse Suburbs



Diverse Suburbs tend to be in the suburbs of highly diverse cities. They tend to be areas with long histories of migration, attracting newcomers for both work and family reasons. While very diverse, Diverse Suburbs tend to be characterised by a smaller number of different ethnic groups than Super-Diverse Districts. This creates a different dynamic to Super-Diverse Districts; while for Super-Diverse Districts there are complex and overlaying patterns of migration that can make ethnic and national identities less relevant for community life, in Diverse Suburbs there tend to be clearer social boundaries between distinct communities.

As a result of their high levels of diversity, local residents are generally comfortable with recent increases in migration in Diverse Suburbs. Yet in contrast with Super-Diverse Districts and Cosmopolitan Centres, there are more likely to be pockets of local tensions between communities, including xenophobia and racism.

We have categorised one of the ten research sites in our study as a Diverse Suburb:

- The Diverse Suburb in our study is located in the suburb of a large city in Yorkshire and Humber with a long history of migration. In the 2011 census 29 per cent of residents were born outside the UK (ONS, 2011a). Just over half of residents were of Pakistani heritage and just under a third were white British (ONS, 2011b). The area also has high levels of deprivation; around 30 per cent of households are in relative poverty after housing costs (ONS, 2017a).

## Dynamic Districts



Dynamic Districts tend to be neighbourhoods in cities or large towns, often in or nearby the centre. They are areas characterised by their experience of recent economic and demographic change, against a backdrop of relatively high levels of poverty and insecure labour markets. While their high streets are often struggling, they tend to also operate as hubs of economic activity. Migration into these areas has increased in recent years largely due to the availability of cheap housing and nearby job opportunities and travel connections. They are relatively diverse, and over time as migration increases may, in some cases, become super-diverse.

In Dynamic Districts, there is less familiarity with migration and ethnic diversity compared with Super-Diverse Districts and Cosmopolitan Centres. As a result, residents tend to be more sceptical of recent increases in migration, although there are often a mix of perspectives. In some cases, residents in these neighbourhoods reference nearby diverse areas where they view the impacts of high levels of migration as problematic. Concerns about the local area often relate to experiences of crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues such as littering and fly-tipping. In certain cases, these broader concerns about the changing neighbourhood and economic decline have merged with attitudes towards recent migration, resulting in some tensions between settled and newer communities.

We have categorised four of our ten research sites as Dynamic Districts. These are perhaps more unexpected sites to group together as they appear to be quite different: one is near a city centre, one is a suburb of a large town, and two incorporate industrial town centres. However, they all share the characteristics identified above:

- The first Dynamic District is situated within a city in the Yorkshire and Humber region, close to the city centre. The neighbourhood has high levels of poverty, with each of its four component LSOAs in the 10 per cent most deprived nationally (MHCLG, 2019). Average

incomes are low and employment is concentrated in insecure, poorly paid sectors such as wholesale and retail. The area has moderate levels of diversity and has experienced a rise in immigration in recent years. In 2011, 22 per cent of the local population were non-UK born residents (ONS, 2011a).

- Another site classified as a Dynamic District is located in the suburb of a large Yorkshire town. This neighbourhood is harder to categorise because it is fragmented and has substantial income diversity: the southernmost LSOA is relatively well-off – in the 20 per cent least deprived nationally – while the northern LSOAs are much poorer – in the 10 per cent most deprived nationally (MHCLG, 2019). In the north of the neighbourhood, there is a large industrial estate employing people in manufacturing and distribution work. The area has experienced a significant increase in migration over the past two decades. In 2011, just over 10 per cent of residents were born outside the UK, though this varies across the neighbourhood – with one in five residents born abroad in one northern LSOA (ONS, 2011a).
- The third area in this category encompasses the high street and neighbouring residential area of a large industrial town in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Average incomes are low and the area has high levels of deprivation – all of the four LSOAs in the neighbourhood are in the 20 per cent most deprived nationally (ONS, 2020f; MHCLG, 2019). In the town as a whole, manufacturing is the dominant industry and there has been a significant increase in food manufacturing in recent years. The neighbourhood has fairly high levels of diversity and around a quarter of residents were born outside the UK (ONS, 2011a).
- The final area classified as a Dynamic District is the centre of a large former industrial town, much of which is densely populated. Incomes are somewhat below average and some of the areas in the neighbourhood have high levels of deprivation (ONS, 2020f; MHCLG, 2019). Yet it is also the centre of significant economic activity and operates as a service hub for the surrounding area. This area has moderate levels of diversity and some experience of migration – at the 2011 census, 10 per cent of residents were born outside the UK – with levels of migration increasing in recent years (ONS, 2011a).

## Tight-Knit Towns



Tight-Knit Towns are neighbourhoods in smaller towns and rural communities. They tend to have low levels of ethnic diversity and only very limited histories of migration. Often Tight-Knit Towns have long industrial histories but have experienced decline in recent decades. Residents living in these neighbourhoods tend to form strong communities, grounded in family and neighbourhood ties which can stretch back generations. In recent years, Central and Eastern European migrants have begun to settle in these towns due to work opportunities at nearby factories.

While some residents are comfortable with this change and see it as an opportunity to boost their town's economic prospects, others have struggled to adapt to higher levels of migration. Some residents associate migration with rising crime or anti-social behaviour. In some instances, residents express hostility towards those newcomers who have found employment, in the belief that they are displacing others in the local labour market. While tensions do not often bubble to the surface, there tends to be little mixing between settled and newer communities.

We have categorised three of our ten research sites as Tight-Knit Towns, all of which were located in small to medium size towns with an industrial heritage:

- The first area in this category comprises the northern half of a post-industrial town, once home to a number of collieries. Major employers in the area include those in the food manufacturing and retail sectors. Levels of deprivation are high (MHCLG, 2019). The neighbourhood is ethnically homogeneous – 95 per cent of the population were white British at the last census – though migrants from Central and Eastern Europe have settled in the town in recent years (ONS, 2011b).
- Another of the areas in this category is principally made up of a small market town with a mining history. After the collapse of the mining industry, the town and surrounding area has seen the development of food processing, manufacturing, and retail

distribution centres. The town has relatively low house prices and rents, as well as modest incomes (ONS, 2020f; ONS, 2017b). The economic situation across the town is somewhat uneven: some areas have relatively high levels of poverty, while deprivation in other areas is similar to the national average (MHCLG, 2019). As with the first area above, the town is ethnically homogenous with 96 per cent of the population recorded as white British at the 2011 census (ONS, 2011b). More recently, there has been a rise in Central and Eastern European migration to the town.

- The final area in this category covers part of another town in the Yorkshire and Humber region. (Unlike the other research sites in our study, this area is not a single MSOA; instead, it is a collection of five LSOAs that make up a central area of the town, which is equivalent in size to an MSOA and feels more like a coherent neighbourhood.) Historically, the town was a major hub for the coal trade. The town's residents are now most commonly employed in sectors such as wholesale and retail and manufacturing. Although there is some variation by area, all of the LSOAs in the neighbourhood are in the 50 per cent most deprived in England (MHCLG, 2019). There is relatively little ethnic diversity – around 97 per cent of residents are white. However, only 81 per cent of residents were white British at the last census and the area had a larger share of EU-born residents compared with the other two neighbourhoods in this category (ONS, 2011a; ONS, 2011b).

## Chapter Three: Findings

In this chapter we present the findings of conversations held with almost 250 residents from host and migrant communities living in ten neighbourhoods in Yorkshire and Humber, and with almost 80 stakeholders working in the region. We explore how people understand neighbourhoods to have changed, the challenges that communities face, and the perceptions of migration and integration locally. We also highlight the solutions that participants thought would make their neighbourhood a better place to live.

We outline 12 key themes arising from the views and experiences of the host and migrant participants and the stakeholders. Each theme highlights the nuances between the different places that we visited and indicates which types of neighbourhood, as defined by the neighbourhood typology, are most affected by the issues raised. Where relevant we explore the similarities and differences between the views and experiences of the host and migrant residents and the stakeholders.

Quotes illustrate the views of participants, and brackets following the quote contextualise in which neighbourhood type the participant lives or work, their gender and age if a resident, as well as their immigration status if a migrant. Stakeholders are identified by their profession only. These quotes should not be taken to be representative of neighbourhoods as a whole, but as indicative of some of the views heard during the course of the research.

### **Identity and community in neighbourhoods**

We began our discussions with residents and stakeholders by asking them how they felt about their neighbourhood. Asked to describe what their neighbourhoods were like, participants in many of our research sites spoke often about their area's industrial heritage. This was powerful in shaping people's identity and creating a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of loss. As one business owner in a Tight-Knit Town described:

*"[It's] a very working-class area. It was once a mining community 'til they closed the local mine. It's a market town. Well, it used to be a market town till the demise of the market and that finished it. That's just about it, just an average working-class area really."* (Small business owner, Tight-Knit Town)

Similarly, in a Dynamic District, the legacy of the community's fishing industry was said to have created "*people who weather the elements*" (VCS worker, Dynamic District). Such identities were thought by some to be particularly strong for older populations who were said to sometimes struggle to adapt to population changes in the neighbourhood.

Generalisations about older populations being averse to new migrant communities were made elsewhere too, with one participant in a Tight-Knit Town believing that the area was becoming more accepting of newcomers as *"a lot of the old miners that were very against foreigners have now gone"* (F, 65+, Tight-Knit Town).

However, industrial heritage and histories of migration for work could also be linked to greater acceptance of migrants for a number of participants:

*"There were a lot of Polish and Romanian and Hungarian came here in't '60s... We've always had migrants around us in the area... because of the collieries. Whereas other parts of the country that didn't have the collieries they'll have a different view on [migration] than us because we've seen it."* (M, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town)

In the Cosmopolitan Centre in our study, there was also a strong sense of identity related to the industrial heritage of the area – though here this was experienced differently, with the remnants of industry memorialised in museums. Participants spoke of the regeneration of this once industrial area as transforming the local economy, as sites of industry had given way to residential living:

*"There's more and more places springing up all the time. If a factory shuts down, it's going to turn into 120-200 apartments."* (M, 30-49, Cosmopolitan Centre)

In this neighbourhood, changes to the community as a result of international migration were less notable, due to a feeling that everyone living there was new to the area because *"people weren't there before"* (M, 30-49, Cosmopolitan Centre).

Similarly, in the Super-Diverse District, there was greater identification with migration as part and parcel of the history of the area and of people living within it:

*"I think the majority of us are migrants, whether you're going back ten years, twenty years or a hundred years. My grandad came over from Italy 70 years ago."* (M, 30-49, Super-Diverse District)

Participants discussed neighbourliness and friendliness as an important aspect of their sense of trust and community. For some, they felt that this had been lost, and people spoke nostalgically about when *"you knew everybody there and it was a nice community"* (M, 18-29, Diverse Suburb).

For many of the migrant groups that we spoke to, their relationship to the area could be more functional. The asylum seekers and resettled refugees that we spoke to in the Cosmopolitan Centre, the Diverse Suburb and the

Dynamic Districts often had no choice in deciding where they lived and had few expectations about the neighbourhoods before arrival, except that they would provide safety. Some had found this and come to identify quite strongly with the area in which they lived:

*"...the experience which we come through, we don't have a place to live, we don't have a bed to sleep, and you don't know where you are going, right? This is a haven for me, simple as that. I think from there, what we have experienced, this is better than any palace."* (M, 30-49, Asylum Seeker, Dynamic District)

Others – mostly young people seeking asylum without families in Dynamic Districts – hoped to move into more diverse areas closer to the region's city centres.

Migrant workers in Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns spoke of moving to the area due to work opportunities and family or friendship ties. Speaking to Chinese students in a Cosmopolitan Centre, there was more of a sense of choice and evaluation of the area before moving, as the participants spoke of choosing to move to the area because it is marketed by agents as a safe and friendly city in which to study in the UK, and as a place with a rich literary heritage.

### **Economic conditions**

A prominent theme of discussions with participants was industrial decline and the experience of, or proximity to, poverty. People in Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns spoke of how traditional industries had declined, and while other industries had emerged – such as food manufacturing and warehouse work – these were often undesirable due to being precarious and low-paid jobs with poor working conditions. One participant described the effects of this on the wellbeing of individuals and communities:

*"I think we need higher paid jobs in the area, with less working hours to improve everybody's quality of life... stop having so many lower wage jobs. You've got to work 60 hours a week, you've never got no time to go out in the community, you're tired... it's a never-ending cycle of doom and gloom."* (F, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town)

This was related to migrant communities, particularly EU migrants from accession countries, who were seen to move in to the area to work in lower paid industries. For some this was something to be commended, as it was perceived that migrants work hard and do jobs that British people would prefer not to do:

*"They [actually] want the jobs. Whereas when I worked [at a factory], English people didn't want the jobs. They didn't want to do it."* (F, 50-64, Dynamic District)

Others, however, saw these changes as adversely impacting on the work opportunities available to the settled population. Some expressed the view that migrants were "*cheap labour*" who made it "*harder to find jobs*" (M, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town). Some perceived that migrants received preferential treatment by local employers. As one local woman said of her son:

*"He went for a job... and [the] receptionist says: 'You can sit and wait', she says, 'but you're the wrong nationality.'"* (F, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town)

A number of focus group participants were concerned about the employment offer for young people, many of whom were said to move out of Tight-Knit Towns in particular to find work:

*"We build factories and things like that; you would expect more work here but there's still not enough work for the young ones... My son, he's living and working in Spain at the moment because he couldn't get work here."* (F, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town)

In Tight-Knit Towns, the arrival of large numbers of migrant workers through employment agencies was particularly visible, with one stakeholder summarising the local view that there were a "*boatload of immigrants being transported in*" (voluntary sector worker, Tight-Knit Town). This perception at times resulted in animosity towards migrant groups.

Conversations with migrant communities echoed some of the perceptions of the host community. A group of Polish women in a Dynamic District spoke about their experiences of coming to the country in the late 00s and finding it very easy to gain employment in a local factory, though they observed that finding work was somewhat harder now:

*"I came in 6th of December and 13th of December I was at work first time. At the time - it's 13 years ago - if you want to work, it was like that. Even if you didn't speak English at all. Well, now it's a little bit more difficult because there's more people from the other countries so it's a bit more difficult."* (F, 30-49, EU migrant, Dynamic District)

EU migrants from A8 countries also spoke about their work in intense manual labour and their experiences of low pay and exploitative practices (Morris and Hochlaf, 2019) – such as docked cash-in-hand payments and homes provided by recruitment agencies that were overcrowded and mouldy. Their experiences improved as they came to know their rights

and became established in the workplace, but precariousness was seen as still a major issue for agency workers new to the country.

In-work poverty and changes to welfare were also seen to have had hugely negative effects on communities. People in Tight-Knit Towns spoke of feeling like *"guinea pigs"* (M, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town) in the rollout of the Universal Credit scheme; the implementation of this in northern towns was seen to be indicative of a class and geographical divide in which: *"North of Watford, we're known as a lesser class of person."* (M, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town)

Our discussions highlighted that inequity, whether real or perceived, could be a significant barrier to integration between communities. Some from the host community expressed frustration towards migrant groups whom they perceived as being able to afford things that they could not. This was remarked upon by Polish migrants in a Tight-Knit Town who perceived that:

*"English people [are] very jealous because, for example, we buy house, we buy very good cars, something like that and they jealous, why? We [are] working... but then they don't know how to do that or something like that. That's why sometimes they're angry."* (M, 30-49, EU migrant, Tight-Knit Town)

For asylum seekers living in the region, restrictions on working caused great material and emotional hardship. The high visibility of asylum seekers in areas of deprivation is thought to risk greater neighbourhood tensions (Lymeropoulou, 2019). One woman seeking asylum in a Dynamic District shared the misconceptions that her neighbours had when she moved to the area:

*"She said to me, 'Why don't you ask for a job? Why don't you search for a job?' I said, 'I'm not allowed to.' She said, 'What? I thought you don't want to.' They don't have the information and they think we are here just to get from them."* (F, 30-49, Asylum Seeker, Dynamic District)

Some participants and employers in the region spoke of the role for businesses in supporting integration and community wellbeing. A number of factories and warehouses in Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns provided ad-hoc English language classes for employees that fitted around their work schedules – or had done so in the past.

In the context of hostilities and xenophobic abuse directed towards staff from the local community, one food manufacturing factory in a Tight-Knit Town saw it as part of their remit to support relations between their migrant workforce and the host community:

*"We're trying to get involved heavily in the charities and the community, even by offering our staff services. If there is any way so we can get the correct impressions out there and show that everybody is different, and they're not all as they are deemed to be... We're in the process of producing a newsletter, and we've contacted the local radio station and paper to see if there's anything that we can do to help or be part of going forward. We're hoping that what we are doing is going to have a better impact."* (Human Resources manager, Tight-Knit Town)

Formalising these efforts and working in partnership with such employers would be beneficial for community integration.

### **The changing face of housing**

In a majority of the areas that we visited, there were significant issues raised related to housing, especially so in the Super-Diverse District, the Diverse Suburb, Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns. Poor quality housing, the dominance of the private rented sector, and insecure tenancies were key concerns for many (Baxter and Murphy, 2018). Cheap properties and the increase of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) were considered key reasons that newly arrived migrants settled in the majority of the neighbourhoods. One participant in the Super-Diverse District commented on the density of such accommodation:

*"It's easy to get a property here because look at all the back-to-back houses, look how many houses, just rows and rows and rows of houses. There's no grass. There's so many people because it's just blocks of houses. You can see, if you look out your window, it's just houses."* (F, 18-29, Super-Diverse District)

In a Dynamic District, residents shared extensive observations about HMOs and the impact on the local area, in which there could be *"sixteen people sharing one house"* (M, 50-64, Dynamic District) and that were subject to awful conditions such as *"damp and rats and all sorts"* (M, 30-49, Dynamic District). Overcrowding was seen to be a significant factor that contributed to waste issues in the community, and as such a primary source of tension. Many were concerned about out-of-area landlords who did not care for their properties or their tenants. Some felt that landlords exploited tenants who were just *"starting out, just leaving home, wanting somewhere cheap"* (F, 30-49, Dynamic District), and who may not be able to complain for fear of eviction or because they did not know their rights.

There was a different story in the Cosmopolitan Centre. There, participants spoke about the rapid development of apartments, particularly student accommodation, in and near the city centre. Some saw the deleterious effects of a lack of social housing:

*"All this means that there's no affordable housing for young people, anybody who wants to either rent something cheaply or buy something cheaply... there's no council houses... I mean, when we were young, we could get a council house."* (F, 65+, Cosmopolitan Centre)

Echoing the concerns of charities supporting asylum seekers (Asylum Matters, 2020) the asylum seekers that we spoke to in the Cosmopolitan Centre and Dynamic Districts described poor standards from their accommodation providers, with participants highlighting poor hygiene and cleanliness, properties in disrepair, and overcrowded conditions.

### **Experiences of services and support**

The public services locally available is a key issue for people's experiences of their neighbourhood. Cuts in local authority funding and public services were issues that came up time and again in interviews with stakeholders in statutory and voluntary sector services, as well as with residents that had seen the demise of services locally. Diminishing services influence people's views of migration, as some perceived that resources were too far stretched to handle population growth and the specific needs of migrant communities.

In one Dynamic District, researchers held a focus group with women who volunteered and maintained a community centre in the neighbourhood. They spoke of their desires to attract newer migrant communities to the centre, which was mainly frequented by the host community. However, they felt that their attempts were hampered by a lack of funding:

*'The thing is I think if money were no object, we could do all sorts of things. We could do marvellous things, but the thing is we just feel like we've got our hands tied behind our backs because you can't do anything without money or funding, can you?'* (F, 30-49, Dynamic District)

One stakeholder in a Tight-Knit Town saw that there had been a decline in services available for those who needed them most:

*"All I see is people struggling because they can't get the support where they used to be able to get it."* (Voluntary sector worker, Tight-Knit Town)

This was seen to have a direct effect on integration efforts, which – in the current economic climate – could be seen as an additional, rather than core, function:

*"There has been a decline in services. This is due to austerity measures which are really kicking in... as a council, we are looking to deliver our core duties, but there is no provision for anything extra [such] as newly arrived migrants... [where] support is needed."* (Elected member, Diverse District)

Some participants were concerned about the effects of migration on public services, particularly in schools and the NHS. Some, for instance, felt that the demands of pupils with English as an Additional Language put a strain on school resources that meant their children were *"being held behind"* (F, 18-29, Dynamic District). Another participant felt similarly that healthcare services were over-capacity:

*"I used to take my sister - she got cancer, and I used to take her to [the hospital] for treatment. Before... they agreed it was cancer they thought it might be TB so I used to take her quite often and the amount of foreigners who actually was in that section and... they had an interpreter and it was like, 'I don't believe this.' ... In the waiting room it was definitely a high percentage. I think it was about 80 per cent that were - the UK was a second place for them."* (M, 50-64, Dynamic District)

Conversations with stakeholders highlighted the role of public and voluntary sector services in shaping migrant experiences. Some spoke of the precariousness of voluntary sector and statutory organisations supporting migrants:

*"We live from month to month. We don't know, at the beginning of the month... whether we're still going to be open at the end of the month."* (Voluntary sector manager, Dynamic District)

Some organisations in the region that used to support the settlement of new arrivals no longer exist, or their remit has been reduced:

*"My service I work for, when I first started working there used to accept economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, then the funding changed and we were not allowed to accept economic migrants anymore, it was just refugees and asylum seekers. Now there's been another change and it's just refugees and it's like the net's got tighter and tighter and tighter."* (Immigration advice worker, Dynamic District)

Some Dynamic Districts that have a more recent history of accommodating migrant communities, such as young people seeking asylum, can struggle to provide local services to meet people's needs. Instead, refugees and people seeking asylum have to travel across the region for therapeutic support, family tracing services and Home Office appointments.

All areas have faced funding challenges, but for areas with shorter migration histories there are particular challenges, because there may be limited institutional knowledge to draw on. Some stakeholders working in Tight-Knit Towns had experience of working in areas with longer histories of migration, and were able to bring that knowledge into their current role

– however it could be a challenge to get inclusive services (Broadhead and Kierans, 2019) on the agenda of the local authority:

*"The migrant population just aren't accessing... services at all... I think some of that... is our communications approach around 'going digital'. If there are any particular language barriers, I feel that that's making it even more difficult for us to promote our services... [We have] a lack of funding – although we could get round that I think, but it's a lack of understanding [too]."* (Community development, Dynamic District)

Conversely, there was a feeling that in the Diverse Suburb and Super-Diverse District, support and services were provided to migrant communities in large part as a result of institutional knowledge, human resources and civic will, rather than as a result of adequate funding and resources.

Migrants spoke about their experiences of accessing services. Some of these were very positive, such as a specialist GP service supporting asylum seekers and refugees in a Diverse District. However, some also spoke about facing discrimination from service providers. For instance, one Eastern European woman in a Tight-Knit Town described how she felt her daughter had received dismissive and less gentle treatment from a doctor at the hospital after they had seen their name wasn't English.

Stakeholders working with migrants and refugee communities emphasised the importance of providing services that are accessible and meet the needs of linguistically diverse communities. Some advocated for services to take steps to ensure that service information is translated into key languages and that interpreters are used where necessary for migrants accessing public services and healthcare. The effects of not doing this were observed by one stakeholder:

*"For people [who are] trying to better themselves, who are trying to get on with their life without being disrupted through violence or war, through whatever circumstances they're running away from... come here and then find actually you're not welcome here either... Actually, you speak in another language and that's a problem for us. You are the problem for us."* (Voluntary sector worker, Dynamic District)

### **Community spaces and civic action**

Participants spoke about a lack of community spaces or affordable activities that could serve local residents and bring people from diverse backgrounds together. In the Super-Diverse District, Cosmopolitan Centre and Diverse Suburb, there was thought to be a lack of green spaces for the local community. Where there were parks, these could be hotspots for anti-social behaviour and actively avoided by many local residents.

In a number of areas such as Tight-Knit Towns and Dynamic Districts, the closure of pubs was synonymous, for some, with a decline in a 'traditional' way of life. As one stakeholder said:

*"Pubs have disappeared on quite a large scale... we've lost a lot of places where people used to go."* (Voluntary sector worker, Tight-Knit Town)

Moreover, some felt strongly that migration and ethnically diverse communities were damaging to a sense of community. For instance, in the Diverse Suburb, some participants that were particularly hostile towards Asian and Muslim communities described pubs turning into mosques.

Participants describing a lack of things to do locally often spoke about the loss of youth clubs and free activities for young people. For a number of participants, this was one of the reasons they felt that young people engaged in anti-social behaviour.

A stakeholder in a Dynamic District spoke about the need for physical spaces that could bring the community together:

*"I think the role of local government and I think national government is really looking at how they develop platforms... [There is] a community centre that's in this area. It's basically being used as a bingo club. It's a massive space and it gets used maybe one night of the week just for bingo, and that's a council-owned building... In my opinion, what local council needs to do is to really think about the spaces that they're creating for some of these communities to get together. Because at the moment, there is no space and there is no real effort to do that."* (Voluntary sector worker, Dynamic District)

Similarly, a young participant in a Tight-Knit Town spoke of wanting to meet new migrants in the area, but she thought that there was little to bring diverse individuals, in respect of age as well as nationality, together:

*"I feel like in [this town] – there's stuff like Weight Watchers and stuff but there's no – I don't know, groups or something that would join people together with different interests. It opens up a conversation and things like that and it gets people to know each other. I think that could really help the community."* (F, 18-29, Tight-Knit Town)

Some participants spoke about volunteering and the vast amounts of time and energy put into the community to try and bring local residents together and make neighbourhoods pleasant places to live. However, there were also discussions about the challenges of this. Echoing general volunteering trends (NCVO, 2019), one focus group in a Tight-Knit Town, for instance, saw that few young people were involved in volunteering

locally. Participants held different opinions as to the reason for this: while some saw it as evidence of a lack of motivation, others argued that there was a lack of time to engage in civic action:

M, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town: *"We're running out of volunteers because they're all getting too old to do it."*

F, 65+, Tight-Knit Town: *"The young one's are just not interested, are they? ... I mean, I'd love to do summat' in our area to improve it... I'd do owt' to try and get a community going. But there's nobody bothered..."*

F, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town: *"They are, they've just not got time, have they? They've not got time to do it."*

In the same Tight-Knit Town, participants also found it challenging to engage new migrant communities in local volunteering efforts. One person volunteering for a project that maintained a local community space said:

*"We had a couple of Polish [people] come there and they lasted two weeks and they didn't come back and I don't know why."* (M, 30,49, Tight-Knit Town)

The importance of civic action and volunteering for communities was apparent across the neighbourhoods that we visited, but, as described above, the challenges seemed especially pertinent in Tight-Knit Towns, where community infrastructure relies so heavily on "small groups of dedicated volunteers" (Chapman and Hunter, 2018: 12). As one stakeholder surmised:

*"Lots of people do volunteer and they do great things... But lots of people who work full time don't... they don't have time... and what with the retirement age changing, we won't have women in their sixties who are still able bodied enough to do things. So we're going to struggle in the future... I just can't see where our volunteers are [going to be] coming from."* (Elected member, Tight-Knit Town)

### **Changing high streets and town centres**

Asked about how their local neighbourhoods had changed, a striking theme across the focus groups related to the changes faced by high streets and town centres. This echoes other research about the challenges facing high streets and towns in the UK (Grimsey et al., 2018).

Experiences of changing high streets differed across the area types, with the most adverse experiences in Tight-Knit Towns and Dynamic Districts, where boarded up shops and the closure of banks were pressing concerns. This was particularly the case for those areas that had ageing populations. One person in a Tight-Knit Town, for instance, spoke of

seeing a post on social media in which someone reported that they had counted thirty-one closed shops in the town. Elsewhere, one person said:

*"I want the town centre to improve because it's dying... you just have to walk down there and it's just, oh my God, it's terrible."* (F, 50-64, Dynamic District)

The closure of markets in Tight-Knit Towns and Dynamic Districts was also a big concern, with such closures seen as analogous to broader neighbourhood decline:

*"I'd say the last five years it's... deteriorated. You only have to look at the market to see what's happened... I remember once upon a time it used to be thriving. I think the council tax has gone up... but you see less and less and less investment in the area."* (M, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town)

Some attributed the closure of shops in neighbourhoods to an increase in online shopping and out of town retail centres. Some people, for instance, preferred to visit out of town shopping centres over the town or city centre as they perceived it was safer and there were better parking facilities.

Another notable change discussed was the increase of foreign-owned businesses and shops stocking foreign goods. In the Super-Diverse District this was a distinctive feature of the area, which was home to a diverse and thriving high street. This was seen favourably by some who saw it as having *"everything that you need"* (M, 30-49, Super-Diverse District), while others commented instead that *"the butcher, the baker, the fishmongers are non-existent any more"* (M, 30-49, Super-Diverse District).

The response of participants to an increased presence of diverse shops and businesses was something of a litmus test for broader perspectives on migration to the area. While some were comfortable with the changes, seeing migrant communities as *'entrepreneurial'* (M, 30-49, Dynamic District) and bringing vibrancy to the area, others in the same Dynamic District were more sceptical:

F, 51, Dynamic District: *"Well where are all these people that's opening all these kebab shops and barber shops getting their money from then?"*

M, 51, Dynamic District: *"That is a good question because I think a lot of it is money laundering."*

## **Neighbourhood appearance**

The appearance of the neighbourhood environment was a key issue discussed by host and migrant communities across most research sites, but particularly in the Super-Diverse District, Diverse Suburb and

Dynamic Districts. The most often cited challenges were littering and fly-tipping, with overgrown grass and vegetation, graffiti and dog-fouling also commonly raised by residents as concerns. One area in which this did not appear to be a concern was in the Cosmopolitan Centre. Instead, participants named a neighbourhood in the city's suburbs as an area where littering was a problem - it was perceived by some participants that this was linked with the Eastern European population living there.

Similarly, participants in other areas often attributed environmental blight to new migrant populations:

*"Just from the back alleys alone on my street, you can actually see who lives where. I'm not being racist in any way, shape or form, but if you walk down my back alley - and I'm not being racist - you can go: 'foreigner, foreigner, foreigner, might be English, foreigner, foreigner, English, English, English.' You can tell by how the rubbish is just thrown out the gate. When you get to people that live down there... a long time, like my next-door neighbour who owns her house and who's lived there for nearly 50 years, it's spotless."* (M, 30-49, Dynamic District)

Such generalisations were reiterated by stakeholders as often a cause of tensions in communities:

*"Some of the older settled population has struggled with the migrant workers, just because of some of the anti-social behaviour that's come as a consequence of multiple living or the overcrowding situation. The littering, the excess waste, the noise nuisance, the drinking, I think the settled community have struggled with coming to terms with that and clearly accepting it."* (Housing worker, Dynamic District)

Some stakeholders suggested that there was a fixation of residents on environmental issues, with one stakeholder highlighting how funding cuts meant that "bins and potholes" were "last on [the] list" (elected member, Tight-Knit Town) of what was important locally. The impact of the physical surroundings on communities, however, was summarised by one participant in a Dynamic District:

*"If you're living in a slum place, you don't have any pride in where you're living, do you? It [has] like a knock-on effect to your mood and your mental health."* (F, 30-49, Dynamic District)

There was evidence of a number of actions taken at the community level to improve the environmental condition of neighbourhoods, through litter-picking, "guerrilla" gardening (gardening on public land without permissions) and river clean-ups. There were mixed views about the effectiveness of these efforts. Some participants spoke of being simply "back to square one" (M, 30-49, Dynamic District) a couple of weeks after

a community clean up, while others saw the value of modelling civic pride for their new neighbours. One participant shared a story of influencing new migrants locally:

*"I started brushing my backyard and... not just my little bit [but] half the street... I did that on a regular basis, a few weeks later, I've actually seen a lady who lives a bit further down, she started doing it... she used to watch me from her garden... she used to watch me brush and a few weeks later... I'm like: 'Oh, she started doing it!'"* (F, 30-49, Super-Diverse District)

### **Crime and feeling unsafe**

Participants spoke about their perceptions of crime and of feeling unsafe in their neighbourhoods. This was linked with a more general sense that community trust had declined, and that the area was not "safe like it used to be" (F, 50-64 Tight-Knit Town). Residents spoke of "knife crime", sexual assaults, theft, "mugging", dangerous driving, drug use (particularly of 'spice' in the Cosmopolitan Centre and some of the Dynamic Districts) and drug dealing.

Participants felt that crime was a significant concern in most of the areas we visited. In the Diverse District the issues referred to were less related to violent crime and more related to theft and dangerous driving. In two of the Tight-Knit Towns, crime was raised less often as a concern, and participants spoke about the area being preferable to neighbouring towns and cities because they felt safer.

Feeling unsafe often related to the use of public space, and women in particular raised concerns about safety. There were concerns raised in a number of places (the Super-Diverse District, Dynamic District and in one Tight-Knit Town) about groups of men – often reported to be Eastern European – standing on residential streets and outside off-licences. Some women that participated in the research spoke of taking alternative routes to avoid areas where groups congregate. One woman said:

*"When I walk home from [work]... at ten o'clock at night... I [now] go a long way round because I don't want to walk through the middle of [the town] because they're all there. It's just so unnerving because you can't communicate... It's usually the blokes, the young fellas the ones that's like 18 to 25 - that kind of age... and they hang around right in the middle of the market place. They're always there."* (F, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town)

These conversations often sparked debate about the reality of any threat that some participants perceived when encountering groups of migrant men. Participants in a Dynamic District discussed that the tensions about groups congregating may be a result of cultural differences as opposed to

any marked threat, and that those congregating may simply want to *“get away from it all”* after a long day at work (M, 30-49, Dynamic District). One woman agreed that it could be intimidating to see groups of men, but that she thought *“everybody is just trying to get together”* (F, 18-29, Dynamic District).

Within neighbourhoods, there tended to be areas that were perceived as particularly dangerous residential streets. These were described by some through comparison to places that have experienced war and conflict. For instance, referring to streets as *“like being in Northern Ireland in The Troubles”* (F, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town) or as akin to being in *“Beirut”* (M, 30-49, Dynamic District).

Criminal activity and anti-social behaviour were often linked in participants’ narratives with young people, and perpetrators were often defined by their minority ethnic and/or migrant backgrounds. A combination of gender, age, ethnicity and nationality were factors in determining who may be viewed as a potential threat. Eastern European communities were most often referred to, by residents and stakeholders, as being involved in crime locally. Some participants, discussing their perceptions of an increase in crime, believed that there were cultural reasons for involvement in crime and claimed that some migrants brought conflict and violence with them. One participant suggested that feuding nationalities were *“slicing each other up... bringing over old gang wars from their home countries”* (M, 30-49, Dynamic District).

This echoes wider trends, in which migration is popularly linked with a rise in crime (Baker et al., 2012). Conversations about migration led, for a minority of participants, to explicit conversations that also positioned long-standing minority ethnic communities as threatening (Redclift, 2014; Erel et al., 2016). In the Diverse District, one focus group of white British residents perceived Muslim men as dangerous, with participants referring to *“grooming gang people”* and the threat that they posed to *“our daughters”* (F, 27).

Some stakeholders, particularly in Diverse Suburbs and Dynamic Districts, indicated that residents’ perceptions of crime were often unconnected to crime statistics locally, and therefore can reflect anxieties surrounding migration and migrants rather than any crime ‘reality’. Stakeholders across the region spoke about the misconceptions and rumours that circulated about new migrant communities and their involvement in crime:

*“The migrants suddenly became the target of everything that ever happened that shouldn’t be happening - [it] would always be the migrant’s fault.”* (Local authority worker, Tight-Knit Town)

Social media and press media were thought by many, stakeholders and residents alike, to play a part in perpetuating fears of crime. One stakeholder, for instance, said that the local newspaper perpetuated negative views of migrants locally with "*deliberately provocative headlines*" (Voluntary sector worker, Dynamic District). This is in keeping with studies that find that the media tend to portray migrants as a threat and that crimes committed by migrants are subject to increased speculation (Baker et al., 2012; Stansfield and Stone, 2018).

Discussions about crime went hand in hand with discussions about policing. Many people spoke of policing services being cut in their area and of having little confidence in the police. Some participants expressed a desire for greater police presence in their communities to keep them safe, though this was not uniformly expressed across areas or among participants. In the Diverse District, Super-Diverse District and one of the Dynamic District areas we held focus groups with long-standing residents from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In these areas, some participants from an ethnic minority background raised concerns about policing and spoke of community mistrust towards the police as a result of "*heavy handed*" (F, 30-49, Super-Diverse District) policing toward ethnic minority groups. One stakeholder said:

*"I think over the years, in terms of the change and all that... what I've heard people talk about is that there's just been a real 'take it into your own hands' type of mentality because it's not worth dealing with [the] local authority or police necessarily."* (Voluntary sector worker, Dynamic District)

There were shared concerns related to feeling safe among the migrants that we spoke to. Concerns about safety in public space were raised by some living in the Cosmopolitan Centre and Dynamic Districts. This was often related to drug use, to drinking in public space, and to noticing a rise in homelessness and begging that was reportedly intimidating.

### **Hostility, racism and discrimination**

Perceptions of safety among migrant participants were further shaped by experiences of prejudice and racism, as participants spoke of facing racist abuse and a generalised sense of hostility in their local area. One woman in a Dynamic District spoke of being physically assaulted:

*"Once I went out to buy something and a man came out of the pub and [said something to me], I told him, 'I don't understand English.' He punched me... [after] saying that."* (F, 30-49, Refugee, Dynamic District)

A group of people seeking asylum in a Dynamic District spoke of their reluctance to visit the town centre after facing racist abuse from an

intoxicated group of people. One member had been verbally attacked for speaking in his mother tongue to his children, and another said: *"I was even told to go back to my country"* (F, 18-30, Asylum Seeker, Dynamic District).

Some of the EU migrants that we spoke to perceived that abuse had heightened following the EU referendum and vote for 'Brexit'. In a Tight-Knit Town, a group of Lithuanian migrants spoke about their own and their children's experiences of facing bullying and discrimination, in school and in the neighbourhood. One woman shared a recent incident that they had reported to the police, after they had been subject to racist abuse when buying an item on a social networking site. Believing that her name and written English made it apparent she was *"from different country"* she received *"bullying"* messages that said to *"go back to your country"*. Despite the police advising her to block the user and ignore the message, she said that she still felt *"nervous because he was not a nice person"* and was living locally (F, 30-49, EU migrant, Tight-Knit Town).

A stakeholder in another Tight-Knit Town observed that racism and hostilities had increased since the EU referendum vote, both for migrants and ethnic minorities:

*"There's some very strong feelings [about Brexit]. One of my volunteers... she is British, but she's Muslim, and she's had some racist abuse recently. I think it's got worse over the past year, I would say."* (Community worker, Tight-Knit Town).

Some of the EU migrants that we spoke to also expressed concerns that Brexit would fuel discrimination within institutions and in the workplace:

*"I'm worried that we might be treated separately because of the Brexit, so even if we will be under the same law, but they still will keep us a little bit on the side - to progress at work or something like that - we won't be considered the same as the British population."* (F, 30-49, EU migrant, Dynamic District)

Prejudiced views were also evident in conversation with some participants from the host community. As described in the above section, some were very hostile towards migrants and, by extension, ethnic minority groups.

### **Perceptions of migration and ethnic diversity**

Asked about how their neighbourhoods had changed, participants in most areas observed that they had become more diverse. This was often referred to as greater ethnic diversity, but in Tight-Knit Towns – where migration has predominantly been from majority white Eastern European countries - participants spoke of recognising population change through linguistic diversity. As one stakeholder put it, to notice the increased

diversity of the area you just have to *"use your ears and listen"* (Local authority worker, Tight-Knit Town).

For already diverse areas, such as the Super-Diverse District, participants spoke about the area, becoming notably busier and noted that people often move *"in and out"* (F, 30-49, Super-Diverse District) of the area, referencing the increased trend towards transience of migrants (Griffith and Halej, 2015). In all areas, except the Cosmopolitan Centre, participants most often referred to Eastern European communities as making up the newest population in the area. Polish populations, on the whole, were often more accepted by the host community, while the Romanian and Roma community (terms that were often used interchangeably) were spoken about in predominantly negative terms, echoing polling research on negative views towards Roma communities in Britain (Dahlgreen, 2015). There was relatively little discussion among the host community about asylum seekers and refugees specifically, except in a small number of Dynamic Districts that are asylum dispersal areas.

Views about migration to the neighbourhood were extremely varied across the region and within neighbourhoods themselves. This can be attributed to a number of interrelated factors, such as an individual's own migration history and peer group, the history of migration to the area and *"community narratives"* – drawn from the media and peer group debates (Rutter and Carter, 2018). One participant articulated how their negative views of migrants had been shaped by the media:

*"You've got 10 people in the house, what are they actually doing in the house?... Are they up to no good? They could all just be genuinely - I don't know - just trying to save on some rent or something... but you just think the worst because of everything in the media."* (F, 50-64, Dynamic District)

Accordingly, because of these interrelated factors, the wide range of views recorded cannot be neatly aligned with a neighbourhood typology. However, we can make broad suggestions as to trends in different types of areas. In the Diverse Suburb, Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns there was greater concern expressed about migration, with migrants viewed by some as exploiting the welfare system and public services at the expense of the host population:

*"You know what they do? They come to England. They don't have jobs. To get benefits they go round scrapping so they're classed as self-employed. They get receipts from the scrapyards and say, 'Look, I'm self-employed. This is what I've earned in that time.' That gets them a National Insurance number, that gets them the doctor, NHS and all that lot."*

*Jobcentre, that's how it works. That's how it all starts."* (M, 50-64, Diverse Suburb)

*"The problem is, is that they're open arms and they've got red carpet out and they get whatever and all the money goes out the country and it goes somewhere else, so the benefits they get goes into another country [because they] send it back home to the family."* (M, 18-29, Dynamic District)

*"I think everyone's obsessed in this country about being fair and that. I think we're not being fair on ourselves. Do you know what I mean? I don't think we're being fair on ourselves. We're leaving ourselves short... It's the people at the bottom like us [that are affected]. We're at the bottom and we've got to live day to day with these people."* (M, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town)

Depending upon the outlook of participants, discussions about migration locally could lead participants to suggest that immigration rules should be stricter. Some advocated for a points-based system that promoted skilled migration, an end to freedom of movement and measures to slow the pace and reduce the scale of migration:

*"I personally think they're letting too many in. I mean, yes, we do need certain amount of them, like your doctors and your nurses... them sort of people. I think [they're] starting to just let everybody in."* (F, 50-64, Dynamic District)

There was evidently a disconnect between the perceptions of many of the host community in relation to the rights and experiences of migrants, and the more challenging experiences shared with researchers by migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and stakeholders working with migrant communities.

Others in the same neighbourhoods, however, highlighted that migration brought opportunities to the area – through enabling local residents to get to know different cultures and ways of life, as well as through economic benefits. Focus group discussions discussed the merits and challenges of migration, often sharing different perspectives despite living in the same neighbourhood.

While there were those who expressed strong concerns about migration, as well as those who spoke uniformly in favour of migration, the majority of participants simultaneously highlighted both benefits and challenges. One participant in a Tight-Knit Town spoke of their increasing acceptance of the newest residents in the neighbourhood:

*"I didn't really like it at first because I don't like change much, but I got used to it now and I see that it's a benefit for the area."* (F, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town)

Participants who were more familiar with immigration tended to highlight the benefits brought to their neighbourhood:

*"I think it tends to be you hear it from people who don't actually have to have any dealings with migrants. I think most people who've had any experience of migrants - in fact, even like older generations, I'm thinking my grandad, he'd be the first to say like, 'Wow, look at this - immigration, rah rah rah,' banging his fist on the table. Then he's met like four immigrants in his life and he's loved every single one of them. He's got a story about how great they were!"* (M, 30-49, Dynamic District)

In places such as the Super-Diverse District, where migration is woven into the fabric of family life and community life, participants were more likely to express empathy for migrants and refugees coming to the area. Reflecting on the hardships that some people seeking asylum experience travelling to the UK, one group had this exchange:

M, 38, Super-Diverse District: *"I don't like to judge because I know they've got a hard life wherever they're from... when you see people getting [on boats]..."*

M, 38, Super-Diverse District: *"Or running into a lorry..."*

M, 35, Super-Diverse District: *"Or the guy who fell out of the plane... obviously there must be something here and something lacking [there] for them to be chasing this..."*

One participant from an ethnic minority background himself explained that:

*"Growing up here I think we - as an Asian person - I think we understand it more because we've had to do the same thing where our parents haven't spoken English very well... We've been translators and interpreters for our parents. I think we could relate to that."* (M, 30-49, Super-Diverse District)

In the Cosmopolitan Centre, the views of the host community were largely positive towards migrant communities. Distinctive from the other sites, this city centre location has a university with a large international student population. Chinese students make up a large number of this population, and they were often viewed favourably in relation to their economic contribution to the area. However, for a small number of participants, the positive views they held towards Chinese students was juxtaposed with negative and stigmatising views towards the local Somali

community, who were framed as more prone to "congregate" (F, 30-49, Cosmopolitan Centre) and be in "gangs" (F, 30-49, Cosmopolitan Centre), and were viewed as potentially "dangerous" (M, 30-49, Cosmopolitan Centre).

### **Perceptions of integration and cohesion**

Participants across the region had different views and expectations regarding integration locally. These conversations were intertwined with the conversations about community, with participants from the host community valuing neighbourliness from new migrant communities. Additionally, participants shared views about what they expected needed to change to improve integration and community relations.

Across the region, and indeed within the neighbourhoods, participants had very different perspectives on how well different communities got along with each other. Discussion about migrants keeping "*themselves to themselves*" or reflections that the host community keep "*ourselves to ourselves*" were some of the most common refrains across the focus groups. Some spoke of concerns about segregation and saw that migrant communities specifically "*keep themselves to themselves*" (F, 50-64, Dynamic District), while others saw this as unproblematic and as something that migrant and non-migrant communities do equally:

*"I think if there's a lack of integration, you know, between two groups, I think that's just because everybody's happy with that. People wanna talk to people that they've got [things] in common with."* (F, 35, Cosmopolitan Centre)

The transience of some migrant communities was raised as a challenge for integration:

*"There's a lot of people that come in and out of the area... a lot of people come here as first accommodation and within the first ten years they move out. They don't really talk with people, they don't make friendships. They're just here to survive and move on to something better."* (M, 18-29, Super-Diverse District).

The ability to speak English was one of the biggest concerns for participants discussing barriers to integration. This was discussed in most of our focus groups. Participants proposed different solutions, ranging from changing immigration rules so that only people that speak English can move to the UK to making English language lessons free and accessible for people wanting to learn. Participants that emphasised integration as a two-way process, rather than as an assimilationist project, spoke also of language exchanges and conversation café style ideas that could facilitate English speakers learning the language of new

migrants too. For participants in Tight-Knit Towns and Dynamic Districts, having a shared language or a willingness to learn and speak English was seen to be especially important for good community relations:

*"It's nice if [someone] acknowledges you, so you don't feel any animosity to that person. When you see somebody and you go, 'good morning', and they [say nothing] - that puts your hackles up."* (M, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town)

*"I had a lot of neighbours over the last ten years. [Because of] this private rented house next door I met so many neighbours who don't speak English so [I say] 'Morning, hello', and it's just head down."* (M, 30-49, Dynamic District)

Conversations with migrant groups across the region showed clearly that learning English is a shared priority, with many wanting greater access to English language provision in order to find work and meet people. This was true for resettled refugees who were enrolled on an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) course for a limited number of hours per week, for EU migrants who had varied experiences of employer-based provision and limited ESOL provision locally (especially the case in Tight-Knit Towns), and for those seeking asylum in Dynamic Districts who could not access formal ESOL provision (see Refugee Action, 2017).

In the Cosmopolitan Centre, participants from asylum seeking and refugee backgrounds and Chinese international students spoke of their positive experiences of learning English, the former through community organisations and the latter through university and associated activities. One participant also valued the patience of the host community while learning the language:

*"I feel here... people are more friendly, like helpful. When you go somewhere, even if you can't speak English, they try to understand you, they [try] really hard to explain if you don't understand."* (F, 50-64, Refugee, Cosmopolitan Centre)

A significant barrier to attending community events or getting involved in civic action in the community is the lack of time, energy and money that some participants face as a result of long hours and low paid work:

*"I don't think we mix, to be honest. I think Eastern Europeans tend to keep themselves to themselves. It's difficult when you're working... when you have got time off, you're busy playing catch up for all the other things that you can't do when you're at work so you're not spending time making friends with your neighbours. I never speak to any of my neighbours. I might say hello or smile. I'd never be rude to anyone, but I don't know them."* (F, 50-64, Dynamic District)

Stakeholders emphasised austerity and funding cuts too as a significant challenge for communities:

*"[If] we're really talking about community development work - with the intent of getting people to get to know one another and to socialise and to take part in joint activities - I think that takes investment, and it takes investment over many years. The sad thing is that actually when that investment stops, things can regress very quickly... I think it's very unsurprising that with a lack of investment cohesion suffers, integration suffers. Definitely, I'd say that's the case here too."* (Voluntary sector worker, Cosmopolitan Centre)

The workplace and school were seen as spaces that promote integration, more so than any other – emphasising that integration is about sustained contact, rather than only one-off events. Faith communities, universities and voluntary and community sector spaces were also important spaces in which new and settled communities could meet one another. However, in some areas, particularly in Tight-Knit Towns, concerns were raised that it was difficult to reach single migrant workers through traditional family-based activities.

Many participants from the host community spoke of desiring greater opportunities to meet migrant neighbours, despite sometimes ambivalent views towards migration. Some people that shared anti-immigration views in abstract terms spoke of positive personal experiences in practice:

*"I've got Sri Lankans living next door to me at one side, I've Muslims on t'other side, Eastern Europeans over t'other side – [then] it's more Muslims. And I get looked after. [They] take me shopping, feed me, bring me summat to eat – one came round yesterday with a big plate of biryani, [another neighbour] will take me to [a fish and chip shop]."* (M, 72, Diverse Suburb)

Some participants spoke about their desire for cultural events and activities that could bring communities together in celebration of their diversity. One participant spoke about civic action in her neighbourhood to bring people together:

*"I've got two Poles; I've got an Indian lady who's a really good friend. I've got a Nigerian lady. We started trying to plan [a party] for summer... I spoke to my next-door neighbour to see whether we can have some kind of thing where everybody brings a bit of food... A little bit like a street party."* (F, 50-64, Cosmopolitan Centre)

For many there was also a sense that "you can't force integration" and that "people have got to want to get together" (M, 30-49, Cosmopolitan Centre). Participants spoke of challenges and reluctance from both host

and migrant communities – in one neighbourhood, for instance, reluctance was partially framed as a generational issue:

*"I do think a lot of people, I mean, especially at my age, in the 60s, they've made their friends and they're not very welcoming to new people in the area... especially where English isn't the first language, I think they're reluctant to become friends."* (F, 50-64, Tight-Knit Town).

For a small number of participants, the issue of change and migration in their neighbourhood had 'gone beyond' integration. One participant expressed the belief that recent migration to their area meant that they were *"definitely getting took over"* (M, 30-49, Tight-Knit Town). For this minority, their concerns about immigration were significant and framed around a threat posed to British culture by migration. Views such as these were not typical across a neighbourhood but were most prevalent in the Diverse Suburb, Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns.

On the whole, however, participants – both host and migrant alike – desired greater opportunities to meet and know their neighbours.

### **The effects of immigration policies on neighbourhood experiences**

For some of the migrant groups that we spoke to their experiences of the neighbourhood were shaped by the restricted rights and entitlements of their immigration status. Asylum seekers unable to work and without a choice about where they lived faced particular challenges, as they explained difficulties related to meeting new people and of facing economic insecurity. One participant said of this:

*"We don't have the opportunity to communicate with other people – [with] the local people here... We are not allowed to study, we're not allowed to work, we're not allowed to do anything here until we're getting this decision from the Home Office..."* (M, 18-29, Asylum Seeker, Dynamic District)

The long wait to receive a decision on an asylum claim left participants *"in limbo"* and people seeking asylum spoke of being unable to plan for the future because they don't know *"what is going to happen tomorrow"* (M, 18-29, Asylum Seeker, Dynamic District).

Some participants, both those seeking asylum and resettled refugees, spoke of the challenges of living in small and relatively ethnically homogeneous towns (in particular, Dynamic Districts). One volunteer working with asylum seekers and refugees highlighted the scrutiny that Muslim women faced in the town centre:

*"Sometimes I'm with women in the street... and there have been lots of experiences through these last years in different places where [the]*

*people [I've been with] have mentioned to me: 'Did you see that?' There is a tension, I think, and certainly I've experienced that, I would say numerous times. I think nothing overt, it's very, as you say, discreet and it will be in a glance or a gesture, or something.'* (Voluntary sector worker, Dynamic District)

In another Dynamic District, a social worker spoke of some of the difficulties for young people seeking asylum in the area. Young people compared their experiences to their peers living in cities such as Leeds and Manchester and questioned the differences in service provision for those living in urban and those in more rural contexts, leading to a general discontent with the neighbourhood that they lived in.

## Chapter Four: Recommendations for policy and practice

Here we set out a number of suggested policies and practices based on the findings from our qualitative research. Ultimately, of course, it is local policymakers and practitioners who will have the knowledge and insights to tailor the most appropriate response to issues in their neighbourhoods. But there are some common themes that emerged in our research that point to specific policy considerations. For each of our proposed responses we have indicated the neighbourhoods in our typology that would be likely to benefit the most, recognising that different responses will work best for different communities.

The recommendations presented here look to improve outcomes for migrants as well as the host population. This reflects the view that integration is a two-way process, but also that when all individuals are supported to thrive, their neighbourhoods will thrive too.

As well as local authorities and national government, the findings of this report and the recommendations will also be of interest to the West Yorkshire and Sheffield City Region Combined Authorities, as well as to Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Communities up Close research is vital for understanding how residents in Yorkshire and Humber experience change and it should be useful in informing strategic priorities related to communities, employment and the local economy. Convening partners from across the local authorities that have been involved in this research, and addressing the issues it raises as a collective, is a vital role for these devolved bodies.

### **Investing in English language support**

The vast majority of recent migrants, settled residents and stakeholders we spoke to for the project recognised the critical importance of language in facilitating integration. A shared language was considered vital for building common bonds between residents and creating a shared sense of community, as well as helping to progress migrants in the labour market. Yet we found that limited funding opportunities have in a number of cases made it hard for newcomers to develop their English language skills and created barriers to integration in communities.

We therefore recommend that local authorities assess the English language provision available locally and prioritise increasing provision and widening access for English language support for recent migrants. There is no 'one-size fits-all' approach to English language provision and local areas should decide the appropriate mix of providers, including FE colleges, charities, and community groups. Local policymakers should play a central role in coordinating provision, in order to facilitate partnership working, share best practice between providers, and detect and resolve

any gaps in provision. Local areas should also encourage employers to step in and support English language provision for their workforce, as we discuss further below.

This recommendation was relevant for all the neighbourhoods in our typology but was particularly prominent for Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns.

### **Actively engaging employers on integration**

In many of the neighbourhoods in our study, recent migrants were often attracted to the area due to local employment opportunities in nearby factories or distribution centres. In many cases, these local employers play an important role as a key interface between new migrant workers and the local community. Yet we found that these local employers could often be particularly 'hard-to-reach' and not actively involved in supporting integration. A number of our research participants believed that employers could go further in working with other local partners and supporting social cohesion.

We recommend that, where local employers are recruiting migrant workers, local authorities should proactively engage them, and trade unions, in recognition of the important role they can play in supporting community integration. In particular, large employers should be involved in local partnership working and should be encouraged to invest in English language provision, support community events, and alert local partners to any potential emerging tensions.

There are examples of local level employer engagement already happening in pockets of the region. For instance, in one Tight-Knit Town a local food manufacturing company spoke of their commitment to working alongside the community and the council to foster better relations for their mostly migrant workforce within the local community. We also heard from a number of migrants working in factories and warehouses across Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns that had been supported by their employer to learn English – though this was certainly patchy. Some stakeholders in Tight-Knit Towns also highlighted the role of trade unions in contributing to the development of English language provision for workers, with learning and understanding English seen as enabling workers to better understand their employment rights.

This recommendation was particularly relevant for neighbourhoods containing or nearby large factories or distribution centres with migrant workers – in particular, Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns.

## **Facilitating social contact**

The vast majority of our research participants recognised the value of social contact between different communities in facilitating integration at the local level. Participants highlighted how greater mixing between settled residents and newcomers can help to bring down barriers, address misconceptions, and build relationships.

Supporting social contact can take place in a number of ways – through local community centres, regular meet-ups, street festivals, or (particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing pandemic) online forums. Of particular importance is the need to promote sustained social contact – one-off events are not sufficient for the type of contact that can help to bring down barriers. We recommend that local policymakers actively support initiatives to promote meaningful contact between communities – through, for instance, providing financial support to local voluntary and community sector organisations and co-delivering services with community groups. They should take care, however, to not be seen to ‘force’ the issue or to be intervening too heavily, as this can give the impression of artificiality. Instead, local authorities, voluntary and community sector partners and local business partners should develop plans for supporting social contact in consultation with local residents.

There were positive examples of this in a number of neighbourhoods that we visited. For instance, in the Cosmopolitan Centre – an area typified by its diversity – two community organisations serving quite different sections of the community had come together to facilitate greater social contact between their respective groups. One was a voluntary organisation working with a diverse community on the edge of the Cosmopolitan Centre, and the other was a residents’ association for an area of the city that is relatively wealthy and which has – as one stakeholder put it – “huge amounts of social capital” (residents’ association, Cosmopolitan Centre). Through a cohesion grant the two groups were working in partnership to bring young people from diverse backgrounds together on a regular basis through sporting activities.

This recommendation was relevant to all the neighbourhoods in our typology, but it was of particular importance for Diverse Suburbs, Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns.

## **Inclusive decision-making**

Many of the participants we spoke to throughout the research emphasised the importance of community-led approaches to integration. Rather than perceiving policy as being applied to them irrespective of their views, residents wanted to have the opportunity to be actively involved in decision-making. Participants supported the ideas of coproduction and

consultation in order to improve the quality of services and achieve community buy-in. Crucially, we found that it was important this consultative approach was inclusive, engaging with all members of the community – settled residents and newcomers alike.

We therefore recommend that local policymakers make more active use of consultation procedures to engage and share power with local residents in decision-making on integration issues. This approach could be taken through the organisation of advisory groups, through more active partnership working, or through hosting citizens' juries or other deliberative events to engage on contentious issues. Active consultation should aim to hear from a wide range of residents – including those who might normally be less involved in community issues or face barriers to engagement – to avoid simply meeting with "the same old faces". For instance, local authorities could aim to work with a wide range of grassroots voluntary and community sector organisations to maximise efforts to hear from a range of voices, including people from migrant communities

Researchers have been introduced to some innovative approaches to inclusive decision making already going on in the region. For instance, one council implements a devolved budget scheme in which money is allocated at ward level and local residents and councillors come together to decide how the money is spent. This model has engaged people at a local level in decisions that affect them and their immediate community. In consultation with local people, a number of priorities have been identified in wards that direct how the funding is allocated. For instance, improving the local environment, providing advice services locally, supporting business and the local economy, and supporting young people into work. In one Tight-Knit Town ward funding has, in the past, been used to fund ESOL classes in the local library for new arrivals.

This recommendation applies to many of the neighbourhoods in our typology, but it could be particularly helpful for those neighbourhoods classed as Super-Diverse Districts and Dynamic Districts.

### **Addressing tensions and tackling discrimination**

As discussed in the previous chapter, in some of our research sites we found evidence of low-level tensions between communities, 'fake news' spread about recent arrivals, and xenophobic and racist abuse targeted at specific groups. Our stakeholders emphasised that managing these issues requires a sophisticated approach that tackles misperceptions, mediates between communities, and avoids inflaming tensions.

The findings from our research indicate a number of important lessons for local policymakers and practitioners. First, it is important that a robust

approach is taken against any instances of xenophobia and hate crime. In some areas, we were concerned that incidents were taking place below the radar and were under-reported. This highlights the importance of strong relationships between the council, the police, and recent arrivals, in order to build trust with communities and allow for issues to be raised early.

Second, where there is the risk of any emerging tensions between communities, local policymakers should take a partnership approach – coordinating between police, schools, councillors, voluntary organisations, and local services – in order to detect issues quickly and develop comprehensive approaches to settling differences. We saw a number of effective examples of partnership working throughout the course of the research which were able to understand emerging issues and key challenges quickly. For instance, in the Super-Diverse District, the local council coordinates a partnership approach through their Community Team. The partnership looks at a number of key issues locally, including physical and emotional wellbeing, employment, crime and anti-social behaviour, the local environment, and community cohesion. Regular meetings are a space for stakeholders working and volunteering locally to come together, local residents views to be gathered, and plans for neighbourhood improvement to be agreed among the partnership. Incorporating a consultative and co-production ethos, the partnership is an effective way for community teams to understand what is happening ‘on the ground’ and to advocate for local needs at a strategic level.

Third, in responding to instances of ‘fake news’ spread about new arrivals, local authorities should adopt proactive ‘anti-rumour’ campaigns to tackle misinformation. ‘Anti-rumour’ campaigns are based on a strategy originally successfully developed in Barcelona and applied in a number of European cities. This strategy recognises that simply negating the claims of residents or providing data and information to counter their claims is generally ineffective, and it can often be counterproductive. Rather than dismissing or blaming residents – which risks alienating them further – the approach seeks to win over those with ambivalent views through the promotion of alternative, positive narratives about community relations (de Torres Barderi, 2018). We recommend that where there is evidence of emerging ‘fake news’, neighbourhoods should adapt such an approach in response, adapting it carefully to account for the local context.

Within our typology, this recommendation applies most directly to Diverse Districts, Dynamic Districts, and Tight-Knit Towns.

## National policy recommendations

Beyond these recommendations for local policymakers, we also make a number of suggestions for how national policy can support stronger communities within the Yorkshire and Humber region. While it is beyond the scope of this report to suggest details for a national strategy for integration policy, we highlight a number of priority areas for government that have emerged within our research and that would help to facilitate an effective response to challenges at the local level. Importantly, these policy proposals are not simply confined to areas traditionally considered within the remit of integration policy. This is because our research has demonstrated that a range of areas of policy – including immigration, skills, and labour market policy – play a critical role in shaping experiences of migration and integration at the local level.

First, we highlight the importance of strengthening local economies for helping to bring communities together. Our research found that in many neighbourhoods – most strikingly in Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns – the combined effects of industrial decline, struggling high streets, and reductions in government funding had had sustained impacts on community life. As discussed in our typology, areas facing greater economic challenges tended to also experience greater difficulties in adapting to changes in migration. Moreover, residents across our neighbourhoods emphasised how the lack of community and social spaces made it harder to meet other people locally. The government's 'levelling up' agenda is therefore not only important for rebalancing economic inequalities across the UK; it is also vital for supporting community relations. As part of this agenda, we recommend that emphasis is placed on investing in public spaces, high streets and transport in towns and more rural areas, where we found the need for social infrastructure was particularly great.

Second, we recommend reforms to the labour market to help support community relations. As the labour market has changed over the past decade, this has had significant implications for integration. In many of the areas we visited, recent migrants and settled residents alike struggled to spend sufficient time building relationships in their community due to long working hours, low pay, and irregular work. Without a robust safety net and good-quality jobs, integration will seem like a luxury for many. We therefore recommend that the government, alongside local authorities (Johns et al., 2019), place renewed focus on decent work – by, for instance, raising the minimum wage to the real living wage, expanding the rights of those on zero-hours or other atypical contracts, and extending work-related benefits and support to those who are self-employed.

Third, we recommend that the government significantly expands investment in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision. ESOL spending has fallen significantly over the past decade due to new restrictions on learners' access to English language provision. We recommend that these restrictions are lifted – in particular, through reintroducing ESOL funding for workplace learning – and that adult education budgets to combined authorities are expanded. This would help local policymakers provide the English language support that is so critical for successful experiences of local integration.

Fourth, we also highlight the importance of the immigration system in supporting positive experiences of migration and integration at the local level. At the national level, the immigration system should be designed to facilitate, rather than inhibit, the integration of newcomers. While it is beyond our scope to cover all aspects of the immigration system, we highlight a few areas where changes to immigration policy would facilitate integration. This includes:

- Encouraging new and easier routes to settlement, in order to encourage migrants to get involved in their local neighbourhood in the reassurance that their status is not a temporary one
- Encouraging employers and educational institutions to support social cohesion in their local areas through the work and study visa systems
- Removing the bar on asylum seekers from working, which would help them to integrate into the labour market and build relationships with local residents

These immigration reforms could help to support a model of immigration that encourages new residents to contribute and settle in their local communities, supporting positive experiences of integration for both recent migrants and settled residents.

## Chapter Five: Looking to the future

The Communities up Close research has given researchers the opportunity to look in-depth at the experiences of migration and change in neighbourhoods and communities across the Yorkshire and Humber region. A number of the issues and challenges that people spoke about do not necessarily directly relate to migration; however, *any* issue can become about migration and about how migrants are perceived locally. Supporting the integration and wellbeing of communities therefore necessitates an approach that sees issues of neighbourhood change and integration as relevant to everybody.

This report has highlighted the diversity of views and experiences across the region and has emphasised that there is not one definitive story of the region, or indeed of neighbourhoods themselves. However, by also looking at the commonalities and shared experiences between places we have sought to make critical links that help us to distinguish between different types of places and their experiences of new migration, and to shape responses that are tailored to the neighbourhood level.

Our neighbourhood typology is intended to assist those working in cities and towns across the region to better understand how communities experience and respond to migration locally. We have identified five kinds of neighbourhoods that have experienced significant migration over recent years: Cosmopolitan Centres, Super-Diverse Districts, Diverse Suburbs, Dynamic Districts and Tight-Knit Towns.

Looking at the neighbourhood level we have identified areas that are experiencing challenges regarding change and migration that may not otherwise be recognised when looking at the local authority level. This indicates the value of working at a neighbourhood level, and of understanding the diversity of communities within local authority areas. While our neighbourhood typology does not capture every single type of neighbourhood in Yorkshire and Humber, we have developed a model that can be tested and expanded to other places in the future.

A vital aspect of the research with communities was to understand how they thought their local areas could be improved, and where the responsibility for integration lies. As participants discussed, there is a role for everyone in creating communities that get along and that can prosper - for individuals, for local authorities and voluntary and community sector partners, for employers, and for national government. One of the resounding messages of this research is that the wellbeing of a community comes from greater economic and social security, for all and regardless of background. This is the foundation for ensuring that communities can weather change and thrive.

## Appendix 1: Methodology

The fieldwork for the Communities up Close project was conducted between March 2019 and January 2020. With advisory input from IPPR, Migration Yorkshire reviewed census data, National Insurance (NINo) data, asylum dispersal and refugee resettlement data and contextual data such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. We then selected ten areas across the Yorkshire and Humber region that had experienced increased migration to the area relative to the local population and which had unique characteristics that would enable a comparative and place-based analysis of how different types of places respond to migration.

To understand how communities perceived the area in which they live to have changed as a result of recent migration, including what pressures and benefits migration brought, we planned five focus groups (with approximately five participants in each group) and up to ten interviews with key stakeholders in each site. Four of these focus groups were to be held with the host community – that is, those who were either British or who had lived in the UK for 20 years or more. The final focus group was to be held with those who had migrated to the area, with efforts made to speak to a range of migrant groups across the region.

Using ‘on street’ recruitment, we recruited approximately 20 participants from the host community for each research site. A diverse set of participants were selected on the basis of gender, age, qualifications, ethnicity and length of time living in the area. While precise representation of local demographics was not possible, we ensured that focus groups included people with a range of characteristics.

Participants were also asked the following screening question:

*‘on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is completely disagree and 10 is completely agree, how far do you agree that migrants make a positive contribution to the UK?’*

This was used to broadly determine how participants perceived migration. This information was used to screen out those self-identifying as having extremely negative or positive views. Researchers sought to balance the compatibility of participants - linked to their having shared characteristics - with contrasting opinions in order to elicit useful discussion (Krueger and Casey, 2009; Greenwood et al., 2014).

An overview of the data from our focus groups with host community suggests that around 80 per cent of participants were white British. Participants were split between those with A-levels or higher (around 45 per cent) and those with GCSE qualifications or lower (around 50 per cent). The focus groups involved a range of age groups, including around

20 per cent aged 18 to 30, around 45 per cent aged 30 to 49, around 30 per cent aged 50-64, and around 5 per cent aged 65 and over. There were slightly more women than men in our sample – just under 60 per cent of participants were female. In response to the screening question, participants expressed a wide range of views (Table 2). The pattern of attitudes broadly reflects the views expressed by the public in national survey data (see e.g. Curtice and Montagu, 2018).

**Table 2**

**Participant responses to the screening question**

<b>Participant response to the screening question</b>	<b>Percentage of participants that responded</b>
2	4%
3	7%
4	6%
5	23%
6	14%
7	14%
8	16%
9	8%
Not recorded	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: IPPR**

In the first two focus groups for each research site, researchers prompted participants to discuss their perceptions and experiences of living in the local area, how it had changed, how migration had affected the area, and how people in the area get along with others. Finally, participants were asked what and who might be able to help people get along better. This solutions-focused section asked participants to consider the role of, and relationships between, individuals, local communities, local councils and national government in facilitating integration.

The third and fourth focus groups for each research site were informed by a 'deliberative inquiry' model that sought to facilitate a solutions-focused discussion with residents. IPPR drew out five initial themes from the first

round of focus groups conducted in the neighbourhood and, in the first half of the session, participants discussed how far they agreed with these.

In the second half, groups focused on potential solutions, using five suggestions from the previous round as a springboard for discussion.

For the fifth focus group, researchers liaised with community groups and migrant organisations to organise discussions with migrant communities in each area. These focus groups are a non-representative snapshot of life for newer communities in the research sites. Participants were asked questions related to their experiences of living in the area, if and how it had changed, reasons for migration to the area, plans for the future, and thoughts on what could make the area a better place to live.

In total, we conducted 39 focus groups with the host community and 9 focus groups with migrants. In a small number of research sites, we were not able to conduct all focus groups due to logistical reasons (notably in relation to the coronavirus pandemic). However, for the most part we were able to hear from a wide range of residents in each of our research sites.

Additionally, we conducted around ten interviews in each research site with key stakeholders working or volunteering in the area. These interviews discussed participants' professional observations of the area, how it has been affected by migration, the challenges and successes of integration, and suggestions for future integration responses. In each research site, we aimed to approach a diverse range of stakeholders from local authority neighbourhood and community teams, environmental health, frontline workers (including schools, police, youth services), councillors and elected members, migrant, refugee and asylum support organisations, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Focus groups and stakeholder interviews were facilitated by researchers at IPPR and audio recorded. For the focus groups, detailed notes were taken by researchers at Migration Yorkshire. An iterative and reflective approach to analysis has been a key part of the research process, with the second-round focus groups informed by initial analysis of the first two focus groups in each area. Transcripts for all the focus groups and stakeholder interviews were subsequently analysed using NVivo software.

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