If people with social care support needs are to live independent lives then the neighbourhood in which those people live needs the right skills at the right time and in the right form to support those individuals naturally. Community capacity building needs to include an understanding of the skills that already exist in that neighbourhood and a clear idea about how to support the neighbourhood to get new skills to support itself.

Skills for Care is working with fourteen projects in neighbourhoods and communities across England that differ in make up, size and geographical and social economical status. We have commissioned these groups of people to test out a practical approach to enabling skilled communities. This two stage process is defined as Neighbourhood Workforce Planning (understanding and planning workforce development at a neighbourhood level) and Community Skills Development (finding innovative and unique ways to improve specific skills related to specific support issues in a particular community). In many local neighbourhoods there is often excellent practice that has been going on for many years between people, for and with people, doing things they need, making best use of people’s skills and talents - where they live. However, by taking a skills led approach to community capacity building at a local level we believe peoples confidence and competence to support each other in subtle ways can improved and that this approach can have a big impact on peoples lives - delivering added value too.

The Neighbourhood Workforce Planning and Community Skills Development project has unearthed activities that are taking place on a day to day basis across England. We are working with colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to share what we each learn, learning alongside community projects when it comes to providing preventative, community-based approaches and personalised care and support in a natural way.
The practical neighbourhood workforce planning and community skills development tools that the fourteen neighbourhoods and communities are testing out will encourage people to focus on recognising the skills they already have; helping them to share and gain new skills and encourage them to build skills and knowledge development into their planning for the future.

Working with these projects will enable Skills for Care to further develop the practical tools, so that they will capture, report on, and provide support and guidance for others who need to respond to community needs - preparing for the future and provide more effective, personalised and preventative care.

Importantly the tools will highlight how a skills led approach to community capacity building works and can make a noticeable difference to the lives of vulnerable people living in the local community. Aiming to demonstrate that it doesn’t need financial resources to implement a skills-led approach to building the capacity of a community that supports itself.

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