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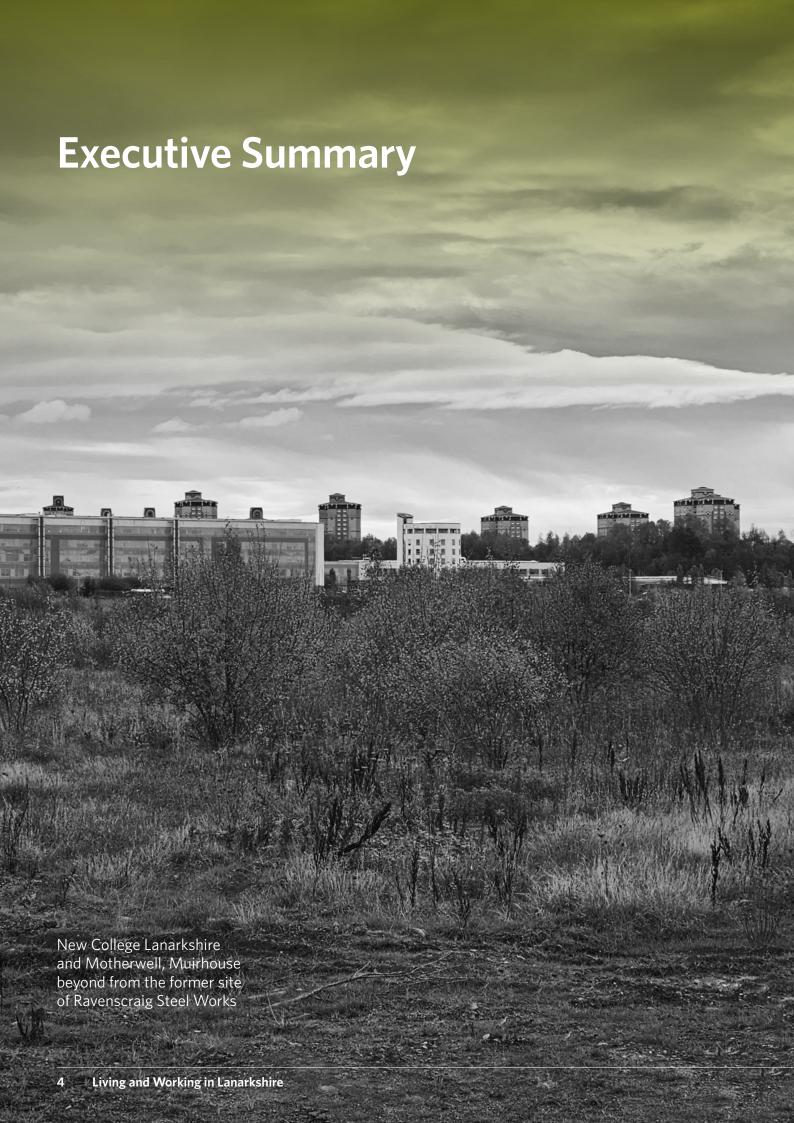
Living and Working in Lanarkshire: A History Study Report





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Project Overview

- Deindustrialisation, the declining importance of industrial activities to employment and production has had a longterm economic and social impact in Lanarkshire.
- The CommonHealth Catalyst project History Team interviewed seven middle aged and elderly participants who had grown up in industrial and deindustrialising Lanarkshire during the mid to late twentieth century.
- Our interviews approached health and wellbeing in broad terms, emphasising family and life-course experiences.

Public and Community Resources

- A formal and informal welfare state operated in tandem in post-Second World War industrial Lanarkshire. Council housing and community support networks were integrated.
- Selling off council housing and workplace closures overlapped in time, bringing increased inequality but opportunities for those able to buy their homes.
- The rundown of public transport provision and the encroachment on greenspace through private housing developments has been experienced as a considerable loss.

Household Budgeting

- Strategies for wellbeing or at least survival were primarily formulated at a household rather than individual level.
- The earnings of women and older children were important sources of financial support in the industrial era and afterwards.
- Help from workmates and credit from small businesses supported families.

Caring

- Women commonly acted as carers across their lifecourse, from older daughters to grandmothers.
- Ill health was frequently associated with industrial employment, and this continued even after workplaces such as collieries had closed down.
- Women usually found paid employment in roles caring for children, elderly or sick people.

Ageing and Retiring

- Leaving the labour market was often a slow gradual process, with some participants working for years after formal retirement.
- Grandparents are important sources of financial and caring support for families.
- Pensioners who cannot drive often feel adrift and isolated.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

- Dependency culture framings of relationships between families and the welfare state are counterproductive.
- Industrial and deindustrialising Lanarkshire was and is characterised by an interdependency between individuals, families, local communities, evolving economic structures and the state.
- Policymakers should seek to strengthen these interdependencies and their connection to health and wellbeing as exemplified by concerns over the future of public housing, public transport provision and greenspace amenities.



Living and Working in Lanarkshire was a research project which explored health and wellbeing in Lanarkshire's former industrial communities. It was a part of the larger CommonHealth Catalyst initiative funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and based at Glasgow Caledonian's Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health. The project was completed by academic researchers and colleagues at NHS Lanarkshire, the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) and the Scottish Committee for Health and Wellbeing. A team of three historical researchers collected and analysed testimonies from seven respondents detailing their reflections on growing up, living and working and then ageing and retiring in Lanarkshire. Their memories extended from the 1950s into the present.

Our interviews included two focus groups, each involving three participants, and one individual interview. Each was conducted during the first half of 2023, the focus groups in person and the interview remotely. The interviewees ages ranged from the late forties to mid-seventies. Both focus groups were completed with two existing groups.

Three participants who regularly meet as part of a Speedway reminiscence group at the Summerlee Museum of Industrial Life in Coatbridge took part in the first focus group. It comprised two women and one man, including a married couple. Each participant was born in the late 1940s and is now retired, having respectively lived and worked in the Motherwell-Wishaw area of North Lanarkshire and the Uddingston-Bothwell area of South Lanarkshire.

A second focus group was recorded in the former mining village of Cardowan in North Lanarkshire with a group of three women who participate in the Cardowan Community Meadow Group which meets weekly in the area. All participants were from Cardowan and were the daughters of miners who had worked at Cardowan colliery before it closed in 1983. The final interview was recorded with Ellis who was born in the late 1960s and grew up in Mount Ellen. She has stayed living within the surrounding area of North Lanarkshire since and now has a house in Moodiesburn. All participants are referred to by pseudonyms in this report in accordance with the confidentiality measures applied to protect their identity.

Health was both framed and understood in broad terms in these interviews. Discussions focused on the social and economic changes which the interviewees had lived through. Whilst there were generational distinctions between the interviewees, they all had connections to industry either through personal experiences or family links via parents and spouses. Each of the interviewees came from what could broadly be defined as working-class backgrounds, with parents in manual or routine service jobs and having grown up in rented rather than owner-occupied housing.

The interview discussions concentrated on important changes associated with the experience of deindustrialisation — the diminishing importance

of industrial activities to employment and economic production. Lanarkshire was at the heart of Scotland's industrial economy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The closure of mines, mills and factories was an important feature of its economic life since the 1950s, across the lifetime of all interviewees.

Table 1: Industrial Employment in Lanarkshire

Source: Census records for relevant years and NOMIS.

Year	Workforce size	Industrial workforce *	% employed in industry
1951	187,632	99,591	53.1
1971	257,558	114,098	44.3
1991	216,830	47,280	21.8
2011	308,870	29,384	9.5
2022	323,300	23,275	7.2

^{*}Industry here is defined as manufacturing and mining employment

Table 1 demonstrates the impact of deindustrialisation as a long and still unfolding economic process which is still shaping Lanarkshire's labour market. The impact of intensifying rates of job loss in the 1980s, including the experience of redundancy and mass unemployment, were important themes in the interview. These material hardships magnified deprivations that were already associated with the precarious nature of supporting families on relatively low incomes and through bouts of ill health often caused by industrial injuries or diseases. In the Cardowan focus group, Joan described her family as characterised by household strategies formed around finding 'a way o survivin' material deprivations which she felt was a common struggle faced by households in the village. Deindustrialisation brought mass unemployment and further difficulties in securing stable jobs for men as well as women. Joan herself worked in the Black and White Whisky Bond which closed in 1989, six years after the colliery.

Lanarkshire's industrial past has made it more vulnerable to the impact of government austerity measures. Researchers from the GCPH estimate 335,000 excess deaths in the UK from 2012 to 2019 can be attributed to austerity and these were concentrated in deprived areas (Walsh et al, 2022). Our participants' reflections came from areas of Lanarkshire that have concentrations of economic and social disadvantages as tracked in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (North Lanarkshire Council, nd).

In the following sections we discuss key findings from the interviews, including: the value of public and community resources such as greenspace, public housing and leisure facilities; assessing budgeting and managing household incomes; caring, ageing and support networks. A conclusion synthesises these findings, emphasising the importance of women in taking on caring responsibilities, the role of household strategising to survive economic shocks and take advantage of newfound opportunities, as well as the overlap between the formal welfare state and informal community support.



The value placed on public services and resources was a powerful theme across all the interviews, especially in relation to experiences of material improvements. These strongly related to dimensions of community support which were reinforced in tandem with the public sector. Both a formal and informal welfare state was an important part of life in Lanarkshire's industrial communities after the Second World War. It delivered recognisable advantages to upcoming generations who enjoyed better opportunities and more comfortable lives than their parents had.

These improvements that were still obtained in a larger context often marked by deprivation and precarity. Ellis recalled that as a child growing up in Mount Ellen during the early 1970s, she felt 'cut off' from Glasgow and even larger nearby settlements in Lanarkshire like Coatbridge. She remembered that 'a journey was properly a journey, to be able to go and do anything', leaving her dependent on an hourly bus to enjoy amenities beyond a church and community hall. In her testimony though, Ellis also underlined the value of a community where 'everyone knew one another' and where her basic material needs were provided for:

"I would always be adamant saying that I would never have thought that I was growing up in an area of poverty. I had a clean house, I had a warm house, I had clothes, I had food, I had friends, you know, I had things to go and do, you know, we played, we exercised, we, we did all the things that people would do."

Ellis underlined that Mount Ellen houses were almost exclusively local authority owned at the time. Similarly, the Cardowan participants all grew up in council housing and also emphasised the benefits of greenspace. Alice remembered that in the 1970s and 1980s, she and her friends:

"Would run for miles wi your friends and play out in the open spaces, that's all dramatically changed, the development o houses has taken most o those open spaces away and the last remainin bits, we're now left to fight for and try and save'. The colliery itself was part of the children's social world."

Joan recalled that when her family was most financially struggling she or her sisters might be sent to the colliery by her father and that 'the men that worked in the pit. They looked after us when the girls collected glass bottles that could be exchanged for money'.

Bus services were also crucial for the women of Cardowan. Formerly, three bus services had made it easier to reach other parts of Lanarkshire and Glasgow, including a direct link to Parkhead in Glasgow's East End which took Katy to her job at the P and J Shirt factory. Greenspace was lost in Cardowan with the expansion of private housing, concurrent with the privatisation of much of the existing housing stock under Right to Buy policies during the 1980s and 1990s. The loss of over one thousand jobs at the publicly owned colliery after it shut in 1983 came alongside the decline of related social infrastructure. The Miners' Club had been supported by the industry and had been at the centre of social life in the village, providing a venue for weekend socialising and occasions like concerts and Christmas parties.

There were more ambiguous feelings towards Right to Buy and rising homeownership in the other testimonies. Participants in the Summerlee focus group reminisced about growing up with coal fires before improved heating systems were installed later in the twentieth century. These changes initially took place under council housing. Marie and Jimmy had been heating their homes with an electric fire and a gas-fired wall heater. Before they bought their council home, they benefited from the installation of gas central heating. Catherine installed central heating after buying her council house. Like Marie and Jimmy, Catherine had only been able to do this due to the huge discounts (of up to fifty per cent) offered by the Right to Buy scheme:

"And you could afford that. You couldnae afford a mortgage for the bigger, well, I could never afford a mortgage for a bigger house, so you got a chance to buy it."

Ellis recalled buying her council home with ambiguities. She and her husband 'bought it and you made an upside on it, and you bought your next home [laughter] as a consequence, and, and I think that's, there's some pluses and minuses in that for other people'. By contrast, her grandparents refused the incentive due to their belief in the principles of public housing. Among the 'pluses and minuses' that Ellis identified are the growing divisions between the residents of 'the scheme' who live in the (former) council housing area and residents of newer private housing estates. Homeowners in newer developments tend more strongly to distance themselves from life in Moodiesburn in Ellis' view. They prefer to use their cars to access leisure facilities elsewhere and choose not to use facilities that have been developed by a vibrant community group who meet in a local community centre. The changes brought about by the privatisation of public resources and the replacement of public transport by privately-owned cars have made the redevelopment of amenities and greenspace more pressing but also more challenging.

Household Budgeting 50003 ED CA FRIES TOM PI TOM PIZ

Ways of surviving, alongside household strategies for navigating economic threats and opportunities, were the dominant framings in all interviews. Markers of increased inequality emerged as important experiences, along with changes to labour market associated with deindustrialisation. These included rising home ownership for those able to afford it, while at the same time public housing stock was rundown, and increasing car ownership with the attendant diminishment of public transport.

The perspective of women who grew up around the impact of these major economic changes provides a distinctive vantage on the link between them and individual and collective wellbeing. Participants spoke about health in conventional terms but also commonly discussed security and insecurity and patterns of social care within and outside of families.

To address these broad economic changes, many interviewees spoke about their parents' strategies for managing the household budget, as well as the sense of community that they associated with these survival strategies — it was commonly said that households within a settlement were all in the same situation. These strategies had been part of the lived experience of industrial Scotland and were extended and adapted in the era of deindustrialisation. In the Cardowan group, Alice remembered how during the miner's strikes of the 1970s and 1980s her family used soup kitchens, but that needing to do so made her mother feel ashamed. She remembered her mother asking the butcher for:

"a bone for the dog, but it wasn't for the dog, it was for the soup, it was to make a big pot o soup, you know, and it's like, I remember she'd say, 'I'd hide at the side o' the butcher's, ah didn't want them knowin that ah was there for a bone for soup."

Yet at the same time, there was comfort in knowing that most families were in similar financial peril. Alice knew her family was not alone in needing the soup kitchen. In all interviews, the memories of childhood poverty were balanced with memories of parents' strategies to feed, clothe and house the family, alongside recollections of how this influenced them as adults to work to ensure a different financial reality for themselves and their children. Engrained throughout was the importance of intergenerational help. So too, did managing the household income form a central part of participants' lives, with strategies adapting to meet the family's current situation.

These economic strategies were clearly imprinted in participants' memories. Joan recalled how her mother:

"would break intae the gas meter, you know, and she would take out all the, the silver shillings."

Hers was not the only family in this position because the gas man would inform the community which day he would come to collect the gas money so that the families could replace the shillings. Alice recalled how her mother had 'tick' at the local store because she knew the shopkeeper. '[Y]ou'd be waitin' on the wages comin' in, there wasn't enough tae buy what was needed, so they local businesses were your, were your lifeline, so they would run you a line o' credit, you know'. On pay day her mother would pay the bill. Other participants, including Marie and Jimmy, remembered how they 'didnae buy things you couldnae afford, you just had to save up until you got something, you know'. While the strategies households adopted to 'get buy' were individual, participants remembered how multiple family members needed to make financial contributions.

Few households had a solitary breadwinner, which was a feature that crossed generations. Most participants left school between the ages of fourteen to sixteen to start earning, which was common practice for their generation. Both Catherine and Jimmy remembered giving their weekly pay-packets to their mothers. They remembered how, as Marie put it, 'my parents had a, a hard life, I would say... They had a harder life than us'. Ellis' mother supplemented her father's full-time income by periodically taking on paid administrative work, alongside taking care of the children. Catherine remembered how both her 'mum and dad always worked'. After school, she and her sister used 'to make the dinner and everythin' for my mum and da comin' in and a' that, at fourteen. Never thought anythin' aboot, aboot that, that was just what you done.' Not only were the memories clear about family helping family across the generations, but so too did participants want their children and grandchildren to have an easier life than they did. This meant that after men and women retired from their main career, like Jimmy and Marie, many continued to work other jobs, usually on a part-time basis, to be able to help their children and grandchildren 'get on'.

The importance of household strategising to achieve or maintain wellbeing, or at least survival, was central to participants' stories, providing continuity across the industrial and deindustrial eras. Notably, strategies were primarily adopted at a family or household rather than individual level. While individual households varied in their approach, the clear focus was on working towards family wellbeing, with women's and children's economic contributions both necessary and highly valued. During deindustrialisation the form of this contribution adapted to meet current circumstances, including spells of men and women's unemployment, but remained important.



Both industrialisation and deindustrialisation imposed heavy community and individual costs. These crossed generations and, in many cases, participants remembered how 'caring' became a central feature of their lives, extending from childhood into retirement, but that the form of care changed. The Cardowan participants all came from mining families and had witnessed the debilitating respiratory illnesses associated with dust inhalation from years working underground, as well as disastrous mining accidents and other diseases, including alcoholism. Joan was a miner's daughter and considered one of the biggest costs of industry to have been 'the lungs. Ma father always had bronchitis, ah remember bein just a wee small kid and he would come in, and alcohol played a big part in his life too'. Heavy drinking was remembered in several households. Joan recalled how her 'dad came fae a family o' twelve kids, and there was eight brothers, and they were all the same...' Katy agreed that drinking '...carried on right through a' the families'. Growing up, accommodating their father's alcohol consumption habits became routine. The groups shared very personal histories of their families. Intergenerational distinctions helped to make sense of changing opportunities and challenges over time. Talking about her parents, Jean, retold stories she'd heard from her parents and how histories of alcohol abuse in both her parent's households had shaped their lives and how they ran their own households:

"Ma mum and da cam out o very sick households. They cam' out of alcoholism, you know, and when you listed tae them reminiscin; about their past...ma mum and day came leaps and bounds fae what their past was."

During deindustrialisation, caring took on broader meaning as women had to care for men experiencing industrial illnesses. Joan had been caring for her husband for years because of his debilitating lung disease caused from years working in the pits and was disappointed that there were no 'proper benefits either'. Such caring was ingrained within families, although most found it to be an economic necessity. Both Joan and Katy remembered how before the state sponsored care system was introduced, their families cared for elderly grandparents at home. 'You just had tae take the, the grandparents in, and they just lived wi you until the, they passed on'. As a child, Joan helped her family to care for her grandfather. Such intergenerational caring was accepted as normal:

"Like that we were carin' for him, you know, carryin basins o' water in and oot the room and helpin ma mum and, you know, it's just, ah think maybe that's how we a end up carers because there was no money tae employ somebody tae come in and do it for you [assenting noises from all], so yeah, it was a case o, it was the family."

Indeed, Joan, Alice and Katy considered themselves 'lifelong unpaid carers'. Alice remembered how her parents had:

"Reared their own siblings as well, you know, so they had done their stint before they even got tae maturity themselves, they're raisin their own siblings because o loss o parents and a the rest o it, eh, and then the impact o what happened wi ma dad and the strain that it put on ma mum, ah ended up havin tae be her carer too, you know."

Katy's role as a carer also started in childhood:

"Ma mother and father died when ah was younger, so aye, ah did do the carin from, you know, for them up til ah was aboot thirty, cause that, by the time ah was thirty the two o' them had died and then ah had a brother who had AIDS, so that was another carin job for about seven years after that."

These women did not question the ongoing caring roles. Nevertheless, the type of care gradually changed during deindustrialisation with the growth of the state sponsored care system.

Domestic care-giving, including parenting, provided a background for future jobs in the growing public sector care industry. For example, Katy worked as a nursery nurse, managed a childcare service and worked with refugees. Ongoing deindustrialisation contribute to the growing public sector care industry also attracting increasing numbers of men, frequently after having worked in labouring. The women recognised that caring was '...quite a new area people are movin intae'. As Joan qualified, 'Ah think maybe tae be fair, we didnae have that years ago'. The development of public services through Care in the Community and care homes changed the dynamics of family life, but also provided 'a lot o new jobs'. Participants considered the state funded care system beneficial because it removed some of the physical aspect of home care, the 'liftin about', as well as some of the financial burden. It contributed to the increased entwining of the evolving formal and informal welfare system

While the changing nature of domestic care provision in the latter decades of the twentieth century was not unique to Lanarkshire, the detrimental health effects of industrialisation had a long tail. Alongside caring for those who had been injured or debilitated by industrial work, the lack of an external care system until later in the century placed the burden of care on women in households with little money to spare. Participants clearly remembered the centrality of caring within their lives and that of their families, as well as the formal and informal systems of care which helped define the care they provided.



When narrating their childhoods and working lives, participants demonstrated an ease of composure in retelling their memories, but discussing certain generational changes, including aging and retirement, presented a level of difficulty. This was especially evident in Marie's and Jimmy's testimony. Having worked at a local engineering company for over thirty years, Jimmy left this firm aged 55 and worked as a self-employed taxi driver. His engineering job had provided a stable income and opportunities for socialising paid for by the company. However, working as a taxi driver meant long, unsociable hours with none of the perks of working for a large firm. Marie, likewise, experienced a protracted exit from the labour market. Having worked as an administrator for the NHS since 1974, Marie explained that she resumed paid work following a career break to care for her two young daughters before retiring in 2012. However, following her 'retirement', Marie continued to work bank shifts —around 15 hours a week — as she balanced this with caring for her grandchildren, along with Jimmy. In contrast to Marie's career break, her daughters continued to work through the pre-school years of their children. The discomposure apparent in the narrating of these experiences, suggest a level of difficulty and precarity as they attempted to negotiate their exit from the labour market while mitigating future uncertainties.

These experiences begin to reveal the impact of deindustrialisation on aging and retirement in Lanarkshire. This was ultimately expressed in feelings of abandonment and isolation by Katy in the Cardowan focus group:

"Don't talk tae me about bein' retired here. You cannae get out, there's no, no way out unless somebody gives me a run, ah don't drive, so unless somebody gets me a run, there's no, ah cannae get a doctor's, ah cannae get a bank, cannae get a post office."

Retired life was hard work for Katy and her friends, because without good public transport to local services and amenities, supporting neighbours and family members needs and even shopping for food was labour intensive. Paradoxically, for those who did have access to a car it became a community resource and a weight of responsibility for the driver to service needs of neighbours and family, adding to the caring responsibilities described above. Joan articulated the 'duty' of a retired driver, explaining that:

"You know, they've ripped everythin away fae us, gave us nothin back, all these houses round about us, and ah'm left like lots o' people wi cars, it's your duty now tae be runnin here, runnin there, not just for yourself but for neighbours and families. It's unfair."

Participants felt their parents' lives had been harder than their own, but they had worked hard for their children to in Marie's terms 'have everything'. In line with their difficulty in navigating aging and retirement, the participants were anxious about the future. Catherine explained this sense of loss in the Summerlee focus group:

"Nothin's like it used to be, you know.
I think, I know they were maybe harder times we had but I think we had, enjoyed wurselves a lot better than young people are noo, if you know what I mean. I think we had better times. We didnae have a lot, but we had better times, do you know what I mean? I think anyway."

Anger about the negative impacts of social and economic changes associated with recent changes had led to the Cardowan group to act to protect greenspace in their area, which had been encroached upon by private housing developments. Analogous to their childhood memories where access to outdoor play had provided opportunities to exercise, socialise and at times relief from difficult home lives, in older age green space was again expressed as crucial to health and wellbeing.

The many impacts of deindustrialisation in Lanarkshire have been experienced across generations and have had an impact on the health and wellbeing of families as older and younger generations worked together to care for each other in a landscape of increasingly scarce public resources. Notably, when asked to describe their experience of change over time, as a group, participants listed a series of workplace closures. Deindustrialisation was associated with the shock of industrial closure, but 40 years later the effects of these shocks were still being felt, and indeed exacerbated by the impact of austerity.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations Living and Working in Lanarkshire

Living and Working in Lanarkshire has highlighted how the long reach of deindustrialisation was intensified by austerity. In so doing, it has identified some of the key issues that policy makers need to address. The notion of a 'dependency culture' has pervaded political rhetoric and policy solutions since the 1980s. Our findings though demonstrate the continued interdependency of individuals, households, local communities, the welfare state and economic structures. We recommend that policymakers embrace and enhance these connections, viewing them as strengths not weaknesses.

In their testimonies, participants reinforce the notion that households strategised to survive the economic and health shocks of industrial society, caring for ill family members, some of whom suffered the direct and indirect health consequences from working in coal mines. Throughout their life-course, women were valued contributors to the household budget and even after taking formal retirement from their primary occupation, both men and women continued to contribute financially to the economic needs of their extended families as well as providing essential childcare. Women were key to most families in adopting any necessary caring responsibilities, but there was also overlap between families' individual care structures and the formal welfare state.

During the industrial era, the formal welfare state, publicly-owned industry, housing and transport had allied the efforts of neighbours and family to provide mutual support. Despite the dramatic scaling back of some of these commitments, and changes to others, they remain important today. The dismantling of some of those structures, primarily through the much incentivised sale of council housing, both created opportunities for social and geographical mobility for some but also instilled inequalities and poverty for others. Increased access to extended social care provision since the late twentieth century has not only aided the household budget but also decreased the strain of caring as well as creating jobs in the context of deindustrialising economies. Nevertheless, informal community support still played a vital role in filling the gaps within the formal welfare system.

These connections should be seen as vital to reinforcing wellbeing in Lanarkshire. Rather than chastising dependency, interdependency ought to be celebrated as central to the historical experience of industrial communities as well as to contemporary community life in the period after mass industrial employment. Policymakers across health, local government and allied areas should seek to strengthen these interdependencies and their connection to health and wellbeing as exemplified by concerns over the future of public housing, public transport provision and greenspace amenities.



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