A bridge to tomorrow

Time banking for ‘baby boomers’
Acknowledgements

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In 2005, Time Banks UK joined forces with Help the Aged to promote time banking across the United Kingdom.

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‘...for example, one hour of baby sitting equals one hour of help in the garden’
Part 1

Introduction - the Ultimate Loyalty Scheme

We need some new ideas if we are going to tackle the challenges facing our aging population successfully. The best ideas are frequently the most simple. Time banking is both incredibly innovative and disarmingly straightforward.

Time banks are a proven way to build and sustain a local, practical support network.

Time banking recognises that every member of a community has something to offer others and that all of us will, from time to time, need some extra help.

Unlike a traditional job - paid or voluntary - at a time bank everyone’s time is equally valued and rewarded. One hour equals one time credit - for example, one hour of baby sitting equals one hour of help in the garden.

These hours earned are deposited at the time bank and can then be spent on services we would like another member of the time bank to do for us.

Time banking is not intended as an alternative to the mainstream economy or to our public services. It is complementary to them and plays a unique part in plugging the gaps in them.

Time banking rewards those everyday acts of support that happen between friends, neighbours and others in our communities.

Time banking brings us in contact with people who we would not normally come across and we soon discover together that our best hope of solving social problems is to pool our efforts and work together on issues of common concern.

Time banking provides a new kind of mutual insurance scheme - we all pay in with our time and then take out the help that we need.

We set aside a couple of hours a month to be useful through our local time bank knowing what goes around comes around - new friends, skills and opportunities - the sort of things that money alone just cannot buy.

It makes sense, it works, it is fulfilling and it can be great fun.

Time banking is the ultimate Loyalty Scheme.
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**A different World**

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**Part one of this handbook** will offer a completely fresh outlook on getting older and its impact on family life, work life and public life. It gets us to question what we mean by aging well and asks us to decide what is important for a good quality of life in our old age.

**Work**

Patterns of work that were traditional to our parents have largely disappeared. The idea of a “job for life” is a thing of the past. While employment law protects workers’ rights better than ever before, loyalty is sometimes an anachronism to both employer and employee.

In Britain our industry was once based on the raw materials and markets of the British Empire, our modern economy is no less global. However, the balance of power has shifted and more than ever we are (inter)dependent on consumers and workforces across the globe. It is therefore easy for us individuals to lose a sense of control and responsibility - what difference does our contribution really make?

New technology allows people to work from home, but digital connectivity can undermine human connections. We are more isolated and feel less like we belong to an office, a department, or an organisation.

Unemployment is not new and there is more support than ever before available to people who are out of work or unable to work due to poor health or disability. Under the banner of “back to work”, however, this support increasingly aims to get people to return to the job market - as if this is the only way they can contribute to society, regardless of their capacity or desire to take up employment.

While there is a great deal of support available for people entering or re-entering employment, less help or thought is given to those facing their retirement. Again, it seems our contribution won’t count anymore. We only remain “useful” if we continue to work beyond our retirement age - to pay for our pensions.

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While we understand the changes in traditional working patterns, traditional views of retirement persist. The “20-40-10” split of our lives - 20 years of education, 40 years of work and 10 years of retirement - is no longer appropriate:

1. We cannot afford to keep ourselves well for ten years if we are dependent on state pensions and are without social support from friends and neighbours.
2. We need more flexibility throughout our lives. Greater life expectancy, changing family structures, the costs of higher education and house prices together mean that we are supporting our children and our parents for longer.
3. We don’t want an “all or nothing” life. More people want to take career breaks, semi-retirement or self-employment. Many of us re-train and have a second career.

**Reality check**

Education, employment, leisure and looking after your family can be achieved throughout your life...and given the right circumstances, it’s more enjoyable to do more than one at a time!

Although we hear a lot about work-life balance, we still do not properly count the contribution made by the invisible economy - i.e. raising children, helping friends and neighbours, looking after elderly parents, fighting social injustice... This invisible economy only becomes visible when it stops working.

Time banking records and rewards everyone’s contribution to the economy. It promotes loyalty, responsibility and belonging, allowing us to contribute on a flexible basis. You put in an hour to the time bank when you are free to do so. You don’t have to make any long term commitments as you do with traditional volunteering.
Home

For many of us our ideas and experiences of family life are also very different from our parents’. Birth control, divorce, single parenthood and two-working-parent households have each changed the way we start and raise a family. Families have shrunk with a declining birth rate.

Family generations are more widespread geographically. We more readily move with employment opportunities and more children now continue into higher education and study away from home.

So family members can find their roles and responsibilities changing, and the way we feel about these changes may vary:

Without an extended family network around us we may miss the emotional and practical support provided by parents, siblings and children.

At the other end of the spectrum we may find ourselves caught up with family obligations, for example raising our grandchildren at a time when we planned to be independent.

Our home life is inextricably linked to the communities we live in - influenced as much by our detachment as by our participation in our neighbourhoods. In our parents’ day, there was a deep sense of community born out of hardship and a common foe. They knew who their neighbours were, and young people had too much respect (or were too scared of the consequences) to create trouble.

True or not, we believe that we are missing that sense of community today.

With 24-hour television and internet services, it is possible to have a truly global outlook. We are aware of and responsive to the needs of people living in the developing world, to crises on the opposite side of the planet and to the environmental threats to the planet itself. At the same time, many people feel they know less - and care less! - about our immediate neighbours.

Time banking lends a sense of identity and belonging to the individual as well as to the community. It can plug the gap where we feel something is missing in our lives and in our neighbourhoods: mutual respect, a practical and local support network and most importantly new friendships.

Public life

Looking beyond the boundaries of our neighbourhoods, our private lives have become so important to us that they begin to exclude our wider involvement in the world. Measured by the number of people who vote in political elections, or by the number of us who volunteer for charities, we participate less in public life compared with our parents.

Traditional party politics are on the decline, party loyalties replaced by affiliation to pressure groups or single-issue politics.

Attitudes to public services are also transforming. We are no longer passengers or patients but “customers”; we have choice and competition in education, health, transport and utilities. The public sector is borrowing from the private sector in its drive to provide “value”.

And in turn, the voluntary sector is becoming more like the public sector. Charities secure government contracts to provide services; these services are increasingly being delivered by paid professional staff. In our progress towards better skilled and more accountable voluntary organisations, we risk losing the very essence of our local communities.

It may sound churlish to complain that our health services have become too clinical, or our social care provision is too professional. But how else can we explain why people are often so unhappy with their personal experience of public sector services? We expect something different, something more.

Time banking rewards the involvement of individuals, treating them as valued participants, not as passive consumers.
2 Numbers speak for themselves

There are 20 million people aged 50 and over in Britain.
There are 11 million people over the retirement age - that's 18.5% of the population.

People aged over 60 now outnumber those aged under 16.
By 2025, 60+ year olds will also outnumber under 25 year olds.

There are 13 million grandparents in Britain - that's 22% of the population.
On average, we will spend 15 years as a grandparent - longer than any other stage of our lives.

The average life expectancy for a man is 82 years.
The average life expectancy for a woman is 85 years.

As we live longer, the highest proportional growth in the population will be amongst older people; the number of people aged 65 and over is predicted to increase by 60% in the next 25 years.

By the time we are 75 years old, up to 50% of us will live alone.

Almost 50% of the workforce are not contributing to any form of pension scheme.

An estimated 40% of all economic activity is not measured in GDP - representing the invisible economy of caring.

3 Exploding the ‘time bomb’ myth

We cannot argue against the statistical evidence: as a nation, we are getting older. We cannot deny that home life, working life and public life today have changed dramatically from our parents’. These changes will affect our future; they will determine whether we “age well” in terms of our quality of life.

Constantly, we are told that our aging population is a problem. We are sitting on a “time bomb” and bleak predictions focus particularly on a "pensions crisis".

Time banking challenges this language and negativity with straightforward fresh thinking.

The statistical trend towards an aging nation is not new and has been foreseen for some time. Aging in itself does not need to be a problem; the real problem is the lack of any new thinking to keep pace with these changes.

Public services and public policy are out of step with new economic needs and lifestyles.

Aging is of course linear and predictable. Contrary to many reports, the economic and social effects of an aging population are not at all predictable: there are simply too many variables involved. Not least of these variables are our own ideals and capacities to enjoy a happy and healthy old age.

Reality check
A crisis is not inevitable. Our own values and actions will shape the future depending on how we react to social and economic changes.

We still have choices as we grow older: “Old people” are not all the same and cannot be defined and labelled simply by needs. We can choose to retreat - retire, if you will - into our own private life, doing our best to minimise the impact of the outside world. Or we can be active citizens. We can use the benefits of more free time and life experience presented by old age to make a better future, instead of being dependent upon what someone else values in society.
Time banking is a tried and trusted method to harness people’s ideas, skills and energies. By investing in a time bank through active citizenship, we can grow the support networks which provide our own mutual insurance policy for aging well.

Age and illness may stop us from working in the formal economy, but employment is not the only way we can contribute to society.

And what if we are not prevented from working but simply don’t want to work any longer? We have worked hard and now we want to do something different.

We are increasingly told that we should all work longer to pay for our retirement. If we are unemployed, either we aim to go back to work, or we live a life of benefit dependency. You are valued if you work; you are a “scrounger” if you don’t.

One answer to the pensions crisis and dependency culture is to blur the distinction between work and retirement, to broaden the definition of our “jobs” and embrace a new ideal of lifelong “usefulness”.

This is not just about changing the words we use but about changing the way we think about the contribution we make throughout our working life - whether we are formally employed or whether we work in the invisible economy that makes up 40% of our nation’s wealth.

After all, we don’t just work for the money: we get a sense of fulfilment, of identity and belonging from our jobs. Why else do some people choose to carry on working when financially they don’t need to? Why else do other people choose to earn less in order to work in a more rewarding way?

Time banking re-values our usefulness and recognises our contributions on a human scale - on a scale where we can all make a difference to each other’s quality of life. Everyone wants to make a difference.

Because the time bomb threatened by an aging population is not inevitable (chapter 3), we have to question what we can do to change the course of the future. If this sounds unrealistic, think again about the huge changes we have already seen in our lifetime.

Born between 1945 and 1965, we are part of the “Baby Boomer” generation, responsible for feminism and the Pill; the computer and the Internet; social liberalism, the expansion of higher education and the dominance of popular culture.

From politics and economics to art and culture - and even sex - baby boomers have set the agenda for almost half a century. There is evidence that our influence on public life will not diminish when we are retired - witness our mobilisation over pensions, the environment and the Gulf War.

On the other hand, we are an individualistic generation: we connect less with our neighbours, and identify less with our communities. We are more questioning of convention and authority than our parents’ generation. We are more “demanding” - more likely to complain but also asking for accountability from our policy makers and business leaders.

How will we use these characteristics to get what we want for our old age? The answer to whether we will age well is not to be found in pensions schemes and NHS plans. It lies in our own capacity to cope, our willingness to lead change, and what we value in life.

ACTION:
Answer the following questions to find out what’s important to you. There are no right or wrong answers, but you need to be honest.

■ When was the last time I was really enthusiastic about something new?
■ Am I open to new ideas?
■ Do I vote at elections?
■ Do I like it when people ask for my help or advice?
■ When was the last time I felt my sense of justice was offended?
■ Is it easier for me to ask for help if I know I can “pay back” a bridge to tomorrow time banking for ‘baby boomers’ Part 1
4 - Getting to know ourselves

continued over…
Finally, for this section, we ask you to take a moment to have a look at the values behind time banking and check whether or not you share them:

- Do I consciously use my spending power—buying Free Trade products, for example?
- Is meeting new people worth the effort?
- Am I wary of getting involved in other people’s lives?
- Do I enjoy my privacy? Do I like to get away from it all?
- Do I still feel that I want to change the world? Do I feel stupid admitting it?
- Do I still feel that I can change the world?
- Do I have confidence in my skills and opinions? Do others?
- Would I take on work without getting paid for it?
- Do I have enough to cope with already?
- Am I happy being self-reliant?
- Do I feel like I want to leave some sort of legacy behind?
- Am I happy having people rely on me?

The real wealth of any society is its people. Every individual has valuable experience, skills and connections to contribute to the well-being of others in their local community.

Activities such as bringing up children, caring for people, keeping communities safe and fighting social injustice need to be counted and rewarded as real work.

We need each other. Giving and receiving are the basic building blocks of positive relationships and healthy communities.

Belonging to a mutually supportive social network brings more meaning to our lives and new opportunities to rebuild our trust in one another.

By re-defining our terms of reference (chapter 3) and taking stock of our values (chapter 4), we can decide what changes we will accept and what changes we will make for our old age.

Our values control our progress through life more than we may think. In a 50-year study of aging and personal development, the Harvard Medical School discovered that:

- A happy marriage at the age of 50 is a reliable indicator of good quality of life at 80. A low cholesterol count is not!
- Getting new, younger friends as we lose older ones adds more to our enjoyment of life than retirement income.
- Objective good health was less important to positive aging than subjective good health: whether we feel ill is what counts.

Reality check

Successful aging and quality of life cannot be predicted or measured by pension income or health service expenditure.

ACTION:

Make a list of everyone who is responsible for your health.

When we are sick, of course we get professional treatment from our GP, a hospital consultant or a complementary therapist. But who is responsible for keeping us healthy?

As the proverb says, prevention is better than cure. An over-reliance on expert help undermines our own responsibility for a positive attitude and healthy lifestyle, which boosts the immune system. A sense of feeling useful prevents depression and in turn has an impact on standards of self-care, on how well we eat, how often we exercise, etc.

Time banking can have many practical applications within our health service:

- health education in the community
- peer support by patients
- transport for hospital appointments
- visiting schemes in hospital and at home
The emphasis is placed squarely on prevention and on active co-operation with the public sector by involving people in their own health care.

**ACTION:**
- Make a list of everything you need for a happy and healthy old age.

We live in the real world and we need a decent pension in later life. But very often money cannot buy the things we need the most: a positive outlook, the respect and support of other people, the chance to play an active part in our family and community.

Providing for a successful old age means building up our social network as well as our financial security. Our network of family, friends and neighbours is just like a nest egg in the building society. It’s there when we need to draw upon it and we can top it up anytime by returning that help - the ‘give and take’ and mutual support which is at the core of time banking.

For many of us, our greatest wealth is tied up in our house. We are dependent on the housing market and spend our lives moving up the ladder - trading up. Now we come to a stage when we have to think about releasing that financial capital - cashing in.

But in the parallel world of social capital, it’s time to re-invest. Our families and neighbourhoods - so important to aging well - are not built on trading up or cashing in. Time banking provides a toolkit for that investment scheme.

**Reality check**
- Taking responsibility for aging well gives us a sense of control. Thinking only in terms of our “right” to a reasonable retirement income and standard of health care leads to a passive acceptance of what policy makers and professionals can provide.

**ACTION:**
- Think about other areas of life in which we could choose to be active citizens.

For example, there is another important aspect to time banking and older people: it breaks down the barriers between generations and challenges the stereotypical labels attached to “the elderly” and “youths”.

Older people are often presented as isolated and vulnerable, but this can also be true of many young people. When anyone actually bothers to ask why teenagers hang around in gangs, the consistent response is that it gives them a feeling of safety and of belonging. We may nowadays rely too much on teachers to educate our children and on the police to maintain law and order but we all know that, as the saying goes, ‘it takes a village to raise a child’.

The social cohesion fostered by time banking adds immeasurably to our quality of life and helps us build the kind of society we can be proud to pass on to our grand children.
### Co-sufficiency

Giving, receiving and reciprocating are the basic building blocks of all relationships and healthy communities. The more we give and receive from each other, the stronger and wealthier we all become.

Self-sufficiency implies that we can singly provide for our needs, that we need no-one, (just some money in the bank).

Sharing and co-operating as part of a mutually supportive local social network is far more likely to maintain our health, happiness and well-being for the long term.

Instead of always looking outside of our communities for the "expert" services and support we need, time banking shows the huge resource of skills and experience that we already have to offer.

#### How time banking works

1. People list the skills and experience which they can offer and those that they need.
2. Everyone is interviewed and provides references.
3. Everyone’s contribution is welcomed and everyone’s skills are valued equally - one hour equals one Time Credit regardless of the type of transaction.
4. Every hour of help given to someone else earns the giver one Time Credit.
5. Time Credits are “deposited” in the time bank.
6. Participants can withdraw the Time Credits which they have earned to “spend” on the range of skills and support.
7. Everyone is encouraged to spend their time credits as this gives others the chance to feel needed. (Unlike an ordinary bank account a time bank does not charge interest so it does not matter if your account goes into the red).
8. A record of Time Credits earned and spent and the list of participants’ skills and availability, is stored in a software package on computer.
9. The software is managed by the Time Broker - the person who builds relationships, matches people up and co-ordinates all the transactions.
10. Participants list the skills and experience which they can offer and those that they need.
11. Participants can donate Time Credits to each other or into a community “fund”.
12. Participants receive a regular Time Credit 'bank' statement.
13. Time Credits are not covetable and they do not affect entitlement to state benefits.

#### An average time bank in any community will offer such practical skills as:

- Adult literacy
- Advice and advocacy
- After school care
- Art and craftwork
- Baby sitting
- Baking
- Bicycle repairs
- Bookkeeping
- Car washing
- Coaching and mentoring
- Computing skills
- Cooking
- Companionship
- Dance tuition
- Dog walking
- Driving
- Emergencies
- Holistic therapies
- House sitting
- Interior design
- IRONING
- Job applications
- Knitting
- Language tuition
- Local knowledge
- Music lessons
- Nature conservation
- Odd jobs
- Parenting support
- Pet sitting
- Proof reading
- Repairs
- Sewing
- Shopping
- Sports coaching
- Telephone support
- Typing
- Washing
- And many more.

As older people embrace time banking local communities are benefiting from skills developed during a lifetime in the business world, such as:

- Adapting, Analysing, Assessing a situation, Communicating, Consensus building, Critiquing, Decision making, Focusing, Independent thinking, Interpersonal skills, Leading, Listening, Mediating, Mentoring, Motivating, Networking, Paying attention to detail, Planning, Organising, Prioritising, Researching, Selling, Socialising, Strategising, Team building, Thinking out of the box, Visioning.

We ask you to compare these two lists of skills above with the citizenship training schemes promoted by the government which seem to centre around computer skills and knowing how to chair meetings.

Time Banking provides a broad based framework for everyone to chip in what they can, when they can and be recognised and valued for the contributions they make - that is how citizenship will be reborn.
7 Why time banking works

Because it gets things done where other schemes often fail:
- It brings many different types of people together and values them all equally.
- It uses a ‘local currency’ based on time that takes on a meaning of its own, every bit as real as the coins and notes in our pockets.
- It is a model for cooperation, making people more likely to work together for a common good.
- It provides opportunities for people to build their confidence and prove their skills when others may see them as a burden or ‘past the sell by date’.
- It is a tool for organisations, groups and individuals to use to share resources and to work together.

Because it is inclusive:
Anyone and everyone can join in. A time bank is open to people of all ages, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In fact, a time bank needs great diversity in its participants so that there is a wide variety of skills exchanged.

Because it makes a lasting difference:
Time banking challenges a dependency culture. Participants are not either “service users” or “volunteers”, they are both. Time banking is a two-way and equal exchange. Time banking builds skills and confidence and networks that last because they are for local people, made up of local people and owned by local people.

Because it makes an everyday reality out of public service agenda buzzwords like:
- Civil renewal
- Prevention
- Participation
- Inclusion
- Life-long learning
- Community enterprise

Time banking brings about real change... one hour at a time.
8 The time banking toolkit

Time banking is not so much an organisation or a project as it is a toolkit to achieve your community goals. Its core values will always remain the same but the ‘tool’ can be used in many different settings.

You can set up a new time bank or you can incorporate time banking within an existing organisation: from a community centre, GP’s surgery or library to a housing association or a social club. Time banking can work within charities, health and social services departments or in your street!

The toolkit is used to create all kinds of time banks.

The most popular type is usually based in a specific neighbourhood and its aim is to encourage local people to get to know and trust each other by sharing their skills. Typically it involves people of all ages and uses the many skills they have to help create a better sense of community.

Although the majority of members are individuals, local groups and organisations are welcome to join.

There are also more specialist time banks which work for particular interest groups. Examples are time banks helping people settle back into their local community after experiencing mental health difficulties, time banks centred around childcare, time banks working with refugees, time banks promoting healthy living, time banks to bring older people and young people closer together…

However, to succeed these more specialist time banks will benefit from involving a broad base of local people, not just members of the target group.

The way Time Credits can be earned and spent will vary:

- Community based time banks can help with the simple things that make all the difference such as attending a hospital appointment with someone, coaching someone in healthy living or taking up a new hobby.

- Other time banks may offer benefits to its members which are more immediately measurable: learning new skills or preparing to (re)enter the job market.

- A time bank can also operate its own Time Credit Fund in order to support community events or benefit people who have fewer credits themselves.

People can exchange skills and earn time credits in different ways:

- **One person to one person** - a simple job done for another person.

- **One person to many people** - a trainer passing on a new skill to a group.

- **Many people to one person** - a group coming together to help out an individual.

- **Many people to many people** - a group organising an event for the community.
Time banking started in the USA during the 1980s, pioneered by civil rights lawyer Edgar Cahn. The success of these early “Time Dollar” programmes has now spread time banking to countries all across the world: from Western Europe to the East, from North to South America, from Japan to New Zealand.

The first time bank in the UK was set up in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire in 1998 and set about bringing isolated older people and local single mums together.

Today, there are nearly 100 time banks nationwide, from Cornwall to Scotland: time banks are thriving in both rural and urban communities.

Thousands of members are time banking and last year they celebrated clocking up over 350,000 hours of mutual support.

Time banking is also proven to appeal to older people:

■ 42% of time bank members are retired, compared with 19% of charity volunteers.

■ 20% of time bank members are living with long-term illness or disability, compared with 3% of charity volunteers.

■ 72% of time bank members are not in formal employment, compared with 40% of charity volunteers.

Time banking is making a practical difference to the lives of thousands of people all over the UK everyday:

■ Community wellbeing
■ Social Care
■ Training and Enterprise
■ Active citizenship
■ Health promotion
■ Environmental clean-ups
■ Campaigning and lobbying

Thousands of people have already discovered that time banking is the key to a more stimulating, healthier and active older life.

Here are a few examples what some of them have been up to.

Val has become friends with Novak from Macedonia by earning time credits helping him learn English. She can also teach people to knit and pays with time credits for lifts and poetry classes, which has led to her performing her poems in public.

Norman walks dogs, feeds cats and waters plants for time credits. Before his stroke he was writing a book and it has been finished with the help of the time bank and by Franklyn, an ex photographer, who earned 50 time credits transferring photos.

John is a portrait painter and gives art classes at two sheltered housing units and in return has been taught how to use computer software to digitise his art.

Oh, and Barbara, who is in her eighties, has earned time credits giving lifts and teaching crochet and has just used her time credits to have her bicycle repaired...
Top tips for starting your time bank

Starting your own time bank is easy.

1. **Look around you** - get to understand the local community.
2. **Be creative** - ask local people what they want and create a vision together of where you all want to be in five years.
3. **Make the right connections** - link up with local organisations and businesses and get them to work with you.
4. **Find a base** - which is welcoming, comfortable and accessible.
5. **Start small** - a dozen people are enough to get going.
6. **Ask people what skills and talents they have** - and also what they need some help with.
7. **Get active** - and use the energy and talents they are offering immediately.
8. **Record the hours** - people exchange and find ways to measure the difference your time bank is making to the local community.
9. **Get in touch** - with other time banks for information and advice, and join our national umbrella organisation Time Banks UK (see chapter 13).
10. **Your checklist for all you need**
    - A small meeting/office space
    - A computer
    - A telephone
    - …and a dozen like-minded people

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From bitter searching of the heart,
Quickened with passion and with pain
We rise to play a greater part.
This is the faith from which we start:
Men shall know commonwealth again

From bitter searching of the heart.
We loved the easy and the smart,
But now, with keener hand and brain,
We rise to play a greater part.
The lesser loyalties depart,
And neither race nor creed remain

From bitter searching of the heart.
Not steering by the venal chart
That tricked the mass for private gain,
We rise to play a greater part.
Reshaping narrow law and art
Whose symbols are the millions slain,
From bitter searching of the heart
We rise to play a greater part.

L. Cohen
How will I know I am safe?

Time Banks UK recommends that anyone setting up a time bank ensures high standards of safety. As a minimum, these should include:

- references taken on all participants
- individual interviews as part of the recruitment process
- CRB checks undertaken on everyone working with children
- public liability insurance

An added safety measure is the Timekeeper computer software: by arranging all transactions through the Time Keeper system, the Time Broker knows where anyone carrying out a service is at a given time.

What if I get into debt?

Unlike a conventional bank account, there is no penalty for being in debt. All that is asked is that you give your time to another member of the time bank when the opportunity arises. We recognise that there will always be participants who have a greater earning capacity than others. The option is given for them to donate some of their credits to fellow members or to a central fund to “top up” other accounts.

Is this a tax dodge?

The help you get through a time bank is often the kind of support money can’t buy - someone to talk to, a prescription collected, a letter read or written, a homemade cake for a children’s party. These are the things that a neighbour or a family member might do for us - but not everyone knows their neighbours or has friends and family close by. The time bank links people up to share their skills and help so that it is mutually beneficial. But its main emphasis is in the social sphere - linking people together and building community - not in the economic sphere.

Do you need real money to run Time banks?

Money is needed to cover certain costs such as a computer to run the Timekeeper software, a telephone, a base to work from and ideally someone to work as the Time Broker. Time Banks UK can help with budgeting for new time banks (see chapter 13). Members can earn time credits for the hours they put into running the organisation.

Can groups join or is it just for individuals?

Time banks are for everyone and can include groups or individuals. They do not have to be stand-alone projects and can link existing groups with other members of the community. What they offer is a tool for rewarding participation and rebuilding community. This way, you can mix and match. Time banks can be run to suit your own community and those individuals and groups who are part of it. Time banks are flexible: they can be skill based, gender based, age based or more general to encompass a wide range of ages and skills.
By now, this handbook may have changed the way you look forward to getting older; it will have equipped you with the ideas and raw materials to sustain a better quality of life by employing the principles and practices of time banking.

**ACTION:**
Right now make a list of the people you know - in your family, neighbourhood and circle of friends - who make up your social network.

List all the talents and experience which they can share with each other.

Now list just three things that you would like to change or improve in your life.

If you decide to put all this together and turn these lists into an action plan and set up your own time bank, then do it now!

Time Banks UK can help you on this journey.

Time Banks UK is a registered charity established in 2000 to act as the umbrella organisation for time banks nationwide.

Time Banks UK helps individuals, organisations and communities to set up and run their own time banks and has a regional network of mentors based in England, Scotland and Wales.

See [www.timebanks.co.uk](http://www.timebanks.co.uk) for details of your nearest time bank.
As well as raising awareness and campaigning at policy level on issues affecting time banking, Time Banks UK provides a wide range of practical support on a daily basis:

- **Resources:** including a handbook, regular newsletters, a website and email groups

- **Materials:** many free to use and downloadable from the website, including standard forms and letters and promotional literature

- **Budgeting:** including breakdowns and illustrations

- **Funding:** including lists of funding bodies and sample applications

- **Marketing and publicity:** including guides to working with the media

- **Quality standards:** including policies and procedures for Health & Safety, insurance, data protection and disclosure/Criminal Records Bureau checks

- **Evaluation:** including suggested methodology and sample reports

- **Legal issues:** including advice on running your time bank as a registered charity or limited company

- **Training:** including regular courses on using the Time Keeper software

- **Outreach support to individuals and groups:** especially those thinking of starting their own time banks

You can join Time Banks UK right now, even if you are not a member of an existing time bank.

**Contact:** info@timebanks.co.uk

**Telephone:** 01452 541439

www.timebanks.co.uk

“Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it”

Gandhi
Resources

Your reading list

“The New Old: why baby boomers won’t be pensioned off”
Julia Huber & Paul Skidmore
Demos
ISBN 1 84180 107 0

“Aging Well”
George E Vaillant
ISBN 0 316 98936 3

“No More Throw Away People”
Edgar Cahn
New Economics Foundation
ISBN 1 893520 02 1

“Time Banks – A Radical Manifesto for the UK”
David Boyle
New Economics Foundation - www.neweconomics.org

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Registered Charity 1101204
Company Limited by Guarantee 4502783

Help the Aged
207-221 Pentonville Road
London
N1 9UZ

Telephone: 020 727 81114
Email: info@helptheaged.org.uk
Web: www.helptheaged.org.uk

Resources available from TBUK

“Yes We Can” – a handbook on time banking

“On Becoming A Time Broker” – handbook on the skills needed by a time broker

“A Fair Share of Health Care” – NHS report on time banks and your health
Martin Simon

“Time to Give and Take – Angel Town Time Bank”
DVD

“It takes a village to raise a child” – Video

Help the Aged – We Will

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In 2005, Time Banks UK joined forces with Help the Aged to promote time banking across the United Kingdom.

The Department of Health funded this new partnership through the ‘Change Up’ Programme to support the development of time banking, the production of this handbook and a promotional DVD.

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