Local Government Association

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

LGDC
local government delivery council

Improvement

Customer led transformation programme

Case study – East Riding

Eradicating Child Poverty

22/58

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About East Riding of Yorkshire

The East Riding of Yorkshire is home to just over 335,000 people; its population is growing faster than average. People moving into the area are the over 50s choosing to retire there, families moving to enjoy a rural or coastal lifestyle, migrant workers, and benefit claimants who are attracted to living on the coast. This increases demand for many public services, like health and social care, and for housing.

Whilst generally the area appears affluent, parts of Bridlington, Goole and South East Holderness have high levels of deprivation. The difference between the most deprived areas and the most affluent areas is striking. Job Seeker's Allowance claimant rates range from 7.8 per cent in Bridlington South to 1.4 per cent in Pocklington Provincial, South Hunsley, Willerby and Kirk Ella (compared to the national average of 3.5 per cent). There is a gap of up to nine years for men and seven years for women in life expectancy.

The Council, NHS, other public services such as police, fire and probation, voluntary organisations and businesses, are working together to improve the quality of life for people in the area. These partners have a vision for the area which is outlined in "Our East Riding", the shared ten-year plan which provides the blueprint for the area.

The Customer Led Transformation Programme

East Riding's work has been funded under the Customer Led Transformation programme. The fund aims to embed the use of Customer Insight and Social Media tools and techniques as strategic management capabilities across the public sector family in order to support Place-Based working.

The Customer Led Transformation programme is overseen by the Local Government Delivery Council (supported by the Local Government Association).

The fund was established specifically to support collaborative working between local authorities and their partners focused on using customer insight and social media tools and techniques to improve service outcomes. These approaches offer public services bodies the opportunity to engage customers and gather insight into their preferences and needs, and thereby provide the evidence and intelligence needed to redesign services to be more targeted, effective and efficient.

Background

The national indicator set defines child poverty as those 'children growing up in families where the family income is below 60 per cent of the national median (approximately £16,000 per year).' Twelve per cent of children growing up in East Riding of Yorkshire fall into this category, totalling 7,9351 . However, in more deprived wards such as Bridlington the figure is closer to 33 per cent.

Using this definition, across the United Kingdom as a whole roughly 21 per cent of children are growing up in poverty - amounting to 2.8 million children2. However, many of these children would be lifted out of poverty if their families claimed all of the benefits to which they were entitled.

East Riding of Yorkshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is committed to delivering improvements against the following indicators:

- NI 116 – reducing the numbers of children growing up in families having a relative income level below 60 per cent of the median; and
- NI 106 – narrowing the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

The Bridlington's Children's Trust (BCT) was established to oversee and deliver a project aimed at generating insight to identify and drive better outcomes for children in poverty (see "Objectives"). Key partners in BCT include:

- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Job Centre Plus
- Bridlington Schools
- East Riding PCT
- Bridlington community members

Furthermore, the LSP saw an opportunity to build on the work of East Riding's Customer Insight project which developed a customer segmentation analysis of the local population. This customer segmentation sorts East Riding's population into 12 semi-bespoke groups defined by a range of characteristics, traits and preferences.

The East Riding of Yorkshire Council Data Observatory has added unique local data sets (over 8 million data attributes) to the Mosaic UK database to create the 12 semi-bespoke East Riding Customer Insight Profiles. This is designed to support the Council and partners to understand their customers more completely, to communicate with them as individuals and to measure the impact of service delivery.

Objectives

The immediate objective of the project was to increase the registration for, and take up of, Free School Meals (FSM) across East Riding. The project aimed to do this by identifying families on low incomes (defined as income below 60 per cent of the national median) in Bridlington in order to:

- target those families in the low income population identifiable as eligible for FSM to ensure their children take up the free school meal entitlement (the FSM population)

1 2008 NI 116 figures, released in October 2010

2 Source: Data download 2010, Department CLG

- target low income families that may be eligible but were not claiming free school meals (the invisible population)
- build a picture profile of each population based on the data analysis.

The longer-term objective was to (using this data analysis as the basis) develop a more detailed understanding of families and children affected by poverty in Bridlington, and by extrapolation East Riding as a whole, and to review and redesign service delivery in the light of this greater understanding. Data on Free School Meals offered a proxy indicator of Child Poverty and a starting point for this analysis.

Hence, the project sought to:

- develop a detailed understanding of the families and children in the two populations (FSM claiming and eligible but not claiming) by using “Circle of Need” analysis and customer journey mapping techniques (see “Approach”)
- evaluate the effectiveness, timeliness and extent of services offered, available and accessed by the two populations
- work with partners to reshape service delivery in the light of the findings
- target reshaped services and resources in support of children and families in the target populations.

Ultimately, the partners sought to use the insight to establish improved working practices that engage this ‘hard to reach’ population in order to raise aspirations and improve outcomes.

Approach

The project progressed through the following phases:

- establishing a Project Progress group to run the ‘programme’
- establishing a Data Group to collect and analyse the data available
- promoting FSM and monitoring uptake
- streamlining the FSM Claims Process through use of Customer Journey Mapping
- conducting ‘Circle of Need’ exercises with Service Users and Providers
- developing the ‘Eradicating the Child Poverty Strategy’.

The first task for the project was to profile data relating to Free School Meals (FSM) and Child Poverty against East Riding of Yorkshire’s existing Customer Insight Information. This task was undertaken by the Data Group, which was established together with a Project Progress Group to manage the project’s work streams. The Data Group included a Data Analysis Officer, recruited at the start of the project and hosted by the Council’s Data Observatory, who collaborated with colleagues from across the Council and the partnership to identify and assemble a range of data sets (for an outline of the Data Analysis Officer role, please see the Text Box below). For a list of organisations who contributed to the work of the ‘Data Group’, see ‘Governance & Resourcing’.

Figure 1. Data analysis officer job role

Overall Purpose of the Job:
To primarily support the GIS, data and analytical needs of the Children, Family and Adult Services directorate, focussed on the Bridlington Child Poverty project. To assist the Senior Research Officer (Information) to gather relevant data from a range of sources, and to deal with requests for information from colleagues and the wider public.

Principal Accountabilities:

- Assists the Senior Research Officer (Information) in undertaking research by collecting and analysing data.
- Present information and data as prescribed by the Senior Research Officer (Information) in the most appropriate format, using a range of techniques, including GIS.
- Supports ERYC Children, Family & Adult Services activity by undertaking research and statistical / spatial analysis using a range of sources and presentation methods.
- To provide the data, analytical and GIS requirements associated with the Bridlington Child Poverty project.
- Support and organises collection processes for data sets for inclusion in the Data Observatory.
- Maintain and updates data mounted in the Data Observatory.
- Deal with requests for information from a variety of sources, including public data, Census, and data held by Council services.
- Provide information to members of the public, Council officers, Members and partners as required or requested.
- In the absence of more senior post holders, this officer will be expected to be able to provide a high level of service - if necessary, with guidance or approval from the Head of the Team or another section manager within the Team.

The analysis revealed that the recipients of Free School Meals are most likely to come from socio demographic segments B and C, with the following characteristics:

- B : Low income families with single parents, high-rates of unemployment, high take-up of benefits, living on large council estates, get information from local newspapers, prefer face-to-face transactions and pay council tax in cash
- C : Young working-class, singles and families with children, renting terrace housing, poorly educated, poor diet and likely to smoke, get information from local newspapers, and pay council tax in cash.

This analysis also illustrates that children from these segments were more likely to have special educational needs, to be classified as being ‘Children in Need’, be the subjects of Child Protection Plans, and are often absent and/or excluded from school. Adults from these segments were also more likely to be recipients of Job Seekers Allowance, ESA or Incapacity Benefits and be users of Mental Health Services.

Assembling this broad range of data has helped to identify the potential needs and issues facing residents eligible for FSM (both claiming and not claiming), as well as identify key locations and issues relating to child poverty. The Data Analysts produced data sheets summarising the data according to segments, worked with small groups of service practitioners to interpret them (see figure below). These analyses informed and shaped the projects subsequent “Circle of Need” and Customer Journey Mapping work (see below).

Figure 2. Segmentation data and interpretation

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

KAYLEIGH

SEGMENT B

- Low income families and single parents
- Large council estates, little owner occupation
- High unemployment
- High take up of benefits
- Poorly educated
- Poor diet, heavy smokers
- High fear of crime/actual crime
- Pay council tax bills in cash
- Information from local papers and SMS, face to face transactions

Age 10 – year 5 at school
Mum is bed ridden and on Disability Living Allowance with mobility supplement. She (mum) smokes 20 a day and relies on alcohol as a painkiller. Mum also has mild agoraphobia.
Father has never been in Kayleigh’s life.
Kayleigh has two older brothers, aged 19 and 21 by a different father. Both brothers are known to police for petty crime/anti-social behaviour although neither has served any time in prison. Both brothers have very low academic attainment levels. One has been on Job Seekers Allowance for 9 months; the other is employed as a trolley collector at a local supermarket and is on a basic minimum wage.
Kayleigh has an indifferent attendance record averaging 76% over the 5½ years of her school life. The LEA Welfare Team are aware of her absenteeism but there has been only patchy improvement since their involvement in her case.
Her mother is known to Adult Social Services and receives daily care. Children’s welfare team consider the two elder brothers to be responsible enough for Kayleigh’s needs, notwithstanding they both have alcohol “issues”. Teachers regularly report to the Head that Kayleigh is in scruffy, unwashed clothing and that she has poor personal hygiene. The estate where Kayleigh lives has a higher than average use of recreational drugs.
Despite their low income, the internet seems to play a big part in the family life with a netbook, X-box and big box PC in the home plus broadband connection. Mother and the two boys each have a mobile phone.

Customer Journey Mapping

In developing the work of the project, the Project Progress Group identified various criteria through which families could become eligible for FSM and that each criteria had its own route for claiming FSM. These routes comprised a range of paper-based applications and assessments.

Furthermore, this initial analysis indicated that the mechanisms by which a family's eligibility for FSM was confirmed, as well as how that information was transferred and to whom and by when was unclear to both service users and providers. Several agencies are involved including Job Centre Plus, the Local Authority and schools.

This discovery resulted in the project pursuing an additional work-stream to map and streamline this process, led by the Council's 'Free School Meals Champion'. This was a seconded post of one year duration filled by the Healthy Schools Coordinator, funded in partnership by the Bridlington Children's Trust project funds and the Council.

The FSM Champion set up a task group from ERYC Revenues & Benefits and their benefits processing partner arvato. The task group interviewed 20 individual parents to understand their experience of the FSM claiming process. They discovered that:

- there were 27 different ways to claim for free school meals
- it could take up-to 32 days for a claim to be processed and for a child to start getting free school meals.

These findings have been used to streamline the claims process. Applicants can now claim using a single electronic form or over the telephone. Moreover, applicants can find out whether they are eligible in real-time and a child can potentially receive their first school meal within 24-hours of first contacting the Council. These improvements have complemented the councils push to increase the number of eligible children benefiting from free school meals whilst improving the efficiency, effectiveness and speed of the claiming, eligibility checking and allocation process.

Promoting Free School Meals

Having identified segments and locations comprising families which may be eligible for free school meals but may not be claiming them, East Riding's benefits team conducted a campaign contacting all those eligible and encouraged them to apply. The Benefits service has a direct link to DWP to confirm entitlements to benefits in order to process Housing and Council Tax Benefit, and the payment of Free School Meals. The Department of Children, School and Families Hub was developed by the Connect Digitally programme to allow Local Authorities to check entitlement when administering Free School Meals (for further information, please see Text Box 1 below).

Connect Digitally

The Connect Digitally Programme is leading 152 English local authorities in driving down the cost of service delivery, cutting bureaucracy, improving service quality and outcomes and making digital the default for three frontline transactional services. Hertfordshire County Council is the lead local authority for the national Connect Digitally Programme which is funded by the Department for Education through to March 2012.

Since April 2009, the programme has focused on three core services: online school admissions, online free school meals and online payments. In Hertfordshire, development of each of these services has introduced efficiencies for the county council and simplified the processes for parents and carers. Some Hertfordshire schools have also been involved in a pilot of the WisePay electronic payments system, enabling parents and carers to pay online for a range of school-related services.

For further information see: http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/hcc/childserv/aboutcs/condig/

The work was undertaken in the context of East Riding's publicity campaign regarding the introduction of the "pupil premium". As part of the campaign, the team telephoned every family (or wrote to them if no telephone number was available). If there was no response to an initial call, they called a second time. Where there was no response to the second call, they sent a letter. The success of this initial outbound activity is summarised under 'Benefits'.

Promotional work is on-going. The project has also provided every school with a colour-coded map of their catchment area based on the customer insight segmentation. This includes an indication of the likelihood of children living in a

particular Local Super Output Area (LSOA) being eligible for a free school meal (for a definition of Output Areas and LSOAs, see Text Box 2 below).

About "Output Areas" and LSOAs

Super Output Areas are a unit of statistical geography developed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to improve reporting on small area data. SOAs replaced electoral wards as the primary means of the dissemination of small area statistics. Super Output Areas (SOAs) were designed to have similar population sizes and be as socially alike as possible.

There are three layers of SOAs to support a range of requirements. Each layer is an aggregation of elements in the layer below:

- Output Area - OAs (around 400 people);
- Lower Super Output Area - LSOA (around 1,500 people);
- Middle Super Output Area - MSOA (around 7,500 people); and
- Upper Super Output Area - USOA (around 25,000 people).

East Riding analysed the population of FSM claimants at LSOA level. LSOAs typically contain four to six OAs. They had a minimum size of 1,000 residents and 400 households, but average 1,500 residents. There are 34,378 Lower Layer SOAs (LSOAs) in England and Wales.

Schools can now focus their efforts on working with families in the identified LSOA's. This work requires sensitive handling because whilst the likelihood of eligibility in the targeted LSOA's is high, it is not a 'given'. This is a hugely important feature of the

Customer Insight data analysis process and does require schools to understand the limits of the data shared with them.

As well as supporting the targeting on those children and families who are likely to be eligible for free school meals, the increasing numbers of pupils signing up for free school meals draws down additional funding through the pupil premium (see "Benefits"). This funding is targeted to support those children to raise their attainment. These activities enabled the project to increase the number of pupils receiving free school meals by over 1,000 between July 2010 and January 2011.

Circle of Need

Circle of Need
The Circle of Need model aims to give senior managers an understanding of how 'customer need' can be modelled to help them improve service provision and generate efficiencies. First developed by Chorley Borough Council in 2007, the Circle of Need model stemmed from A.H.Maslow's ' Hierarchy of Needs' but was simplified into a non-hierarchical model, which grouped together issues related to the same aspect of life.

The model identifies a list of needs, including:

- economic security
- physical security
- significant relationships with others
- education
- access to justice and democracy
- healthcare
- housing
- nutrition

The circle concept focuses on a particular need and shows how other needs, which are likely to be also held, and the services, which contribute to meeting the need, fit with that particular need. The circle also incorporates relationships with the council's other customers (citizens, businesses, neighbourhood and public interest groups). Plus, it is also possible to map service providers to services and customer profiles to needs to create a circle of need focussed on a particular customer profile or a particular service provider. In this case, the profile used was "families with low incomes and young children".

Customer Engagement

The project then worked with local Bridlington families using the Circle of Need methodology to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of families living in poverty. The Circle of Need exercises helped the project develop an understanding of the dimensions of poverty, the evidence base for improvements in service delivery, and would help scope East Riding's "Eradicating Child Poverty Strategy". For further information on the Circle of Need methodology, see the text box above.

As part of the Circle of Need exercise, the project invited parents from the target segments (i.e. low-income vulnerable families) identified by the initial data analysis to a focus group at Bridlington Children's Centre. The parents were asked to depict their life by sketching a picture. The picture below is of one family's depiction of their life.

The families were then asked about their hopes and aspirations, and the barriers that prevent them making progress. For example, one set of parents talked about getting themselves out of poverty and into better housing and having their children doing well at school. The Circle of Need exercise was repeated with another set of families at a community facility located in one of Bridlington's poorest estates.

The picture below was drawn by a family at this event, and depicts closed doors, barriers to services and the perception that 'customers' are little people being 'served' by bigger, more important people.

To hear the perspective of children directly, the project visited a skate park in Bridlington with local youth workers and spoke to over 60 teenagers. By approaching the teenagers in "their" territory and on their terms, the project sought to hear about the teenagers' hopes and aspirations, and the challenges they perceive, first hand. For further information, see the text box "Pizza in the Skate Park":

Figure 3. Experience of a family on low income in Bridlington

Pizza in the Skate Park
"We were accompanied by youth workers to the Skate Park, and brought pizzas to encourage the teenagers to come over and talk to us. Once you've got one or two talking to you, we found the others wanted to know what was going on. We asked them "what are your hopes and aspirations? Do you know what will happen in your life? What do you want to do?" What the young people told us was surprising. They said that by the age of 11 they knew who would be doing what in their life,"

"Another interesting observation was that the moment the Community Police Officer appeared, a number of the older children - those in their mid-teens - disappeared. This indicated just how early the segment can become distrustful of, and alienated from, local authorities and public services."

Karron Young,
Free School Meals Champion, ERYC

Circle of Need

Partner Engagement
The project convened two workshops with partners from across the public sector in July and September 2010 to explore what the public sector looks and feels like to low income families live in Bridlington.

Delegates attended from the following organisations.

- East Riding of Yorkshire Council – various sections including
  - Sure Start and Extended Services
  - Children's' Centres
  - Families Information Service Hub
  - Healthy Schools
  - Culture and Information
  - Performance and Strategic Partnership
  - Health and Diversity
  - Data Observatory
  - Adult Education Service
  - Finance
  - Benefit and Money advice
  - Youth Service
  - Improvement and Learning
  - Inclusion Services
  - Integrated Processes
  - Bridlington Renaissance Programme
  - Regeneration and Service Development
  - Connexions
  - 14-19 Commissioning Team
  - Head teachers of local schools

- Jobcentre Plus
  - East Riding College
  - East Riding Voluntary Action Services
  - Christ Church Community Services
  - The Hinge Centre
  - NHS East Riding
  - Practice Manager – GP Surgery
  - Citizens Advice Bureau

The first workshop began by reviewing the results of the segmentation and data analysis.

The attendees were asked to describe their perceptions of the public sector in pictures and words.

Figure 4. Partner depiction of public services

Service providers' view of customer's perception of public services

Confusing	Huge mountain to climb
A broken system	Feel small – "My world is small, the state is huge"
Broken lines	Confusing
No light at the end of the tunnel	"Loadsamoney"
Three wise monkeys	Frustration
No way out	Crowded out
No way in	No idea who the faceless people are
No easy route through	Impenetrable town hall
Too many barriers	Accusatory
Not easy to access	Tell, tell, tell / rules, rules, rules
Sometimes the system works	Judgemental
Sometimes the system fails	Sense of isolation
Feeling of being watched	Closed doors
Being judged	

The project convened a second workshop in September 2010.

Over 40 organisations were represented at the workshop, and attendees were divided into groups and each given a profile of a child in poverty or a situation where there was a risk of a child being in poverty. The workshop used and enhanced the segmentation, an example of which is included as Figure 2. The delegates were asked to identify:-

- The needs of their profile child
- The hopes/wants/aspirations of their profile child
- The barriers to them achieving their wants/ aspirations
- The services available to overcome the barriers and hence achieve their aspirations.

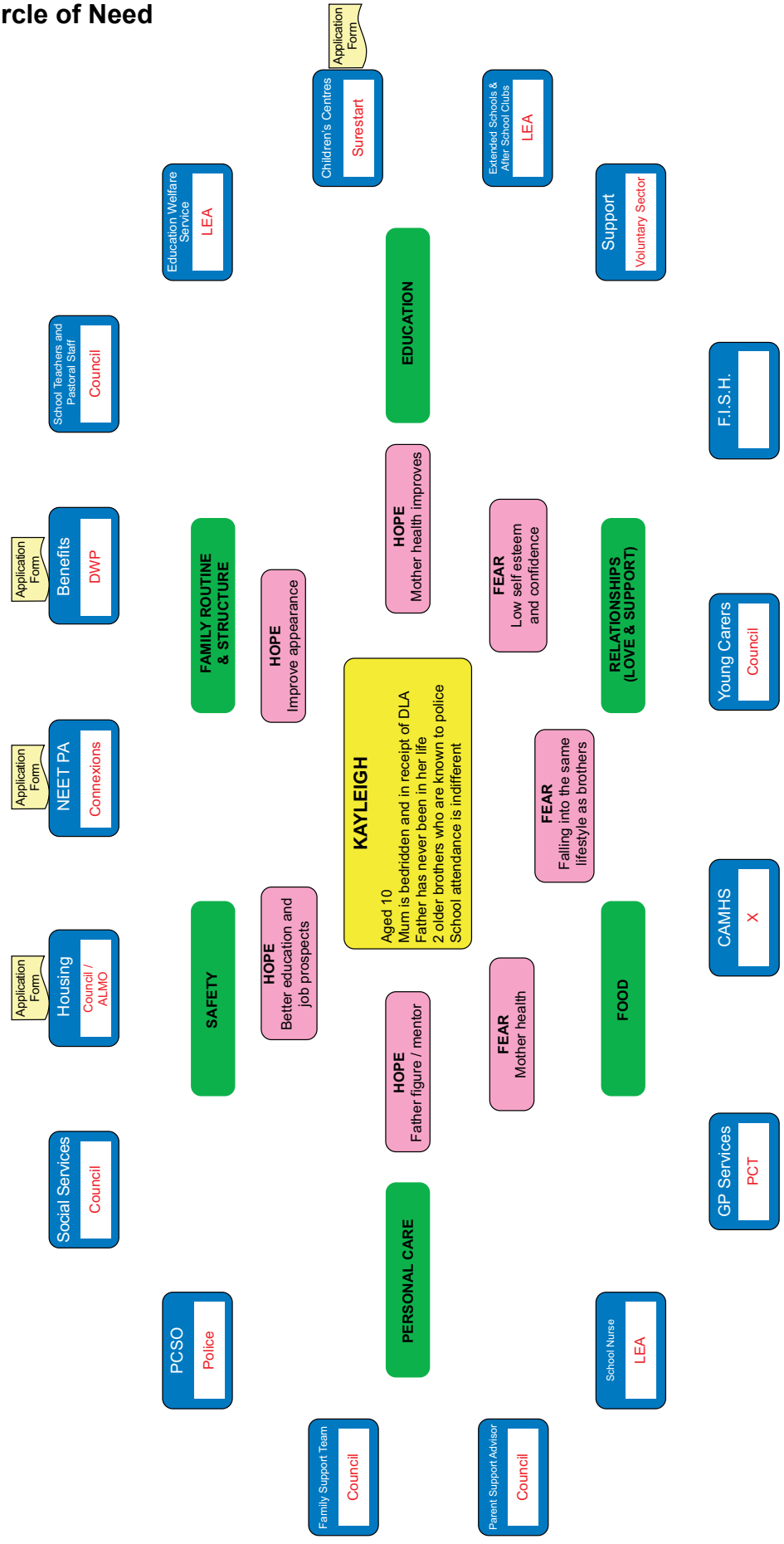
The needs, wants, barriers and services were mapped into Circles of Need using post it notes to place their identified services / needs on a brown paper wall to build up a picture of how the public sector currently supports their profiled child. An example of the brown paper wall is shown below.

Figure 5. Services Supporting Children in Poverty

These brown paper pictures were translated into diagrams, and an example for ‘Kayleigh’ is included below. The groups then identified where a service required an application form to identify duplication of data collection. Each group was also asked what they would improve to realise the objectives of:

- increasing take up of services
- reducing cost
- meeting customer needs better.

Figure 6. Circle of Need



The following slide takes the findings from these exercises and presents a coherent view of the life that the everyone is striving to enable for a typical 16 year old. Most of these statements relate to the individuals themselves and some relate to the environment in which they live.

Figure 7. Desired Outcomes

The following slide summarises the key barriers delegates perceive face young people when pursuing their ambitions. The size of each of the spheres below is indicative of the number of delegates raising the issue at the workshop.

Figure 8. Key Barriers

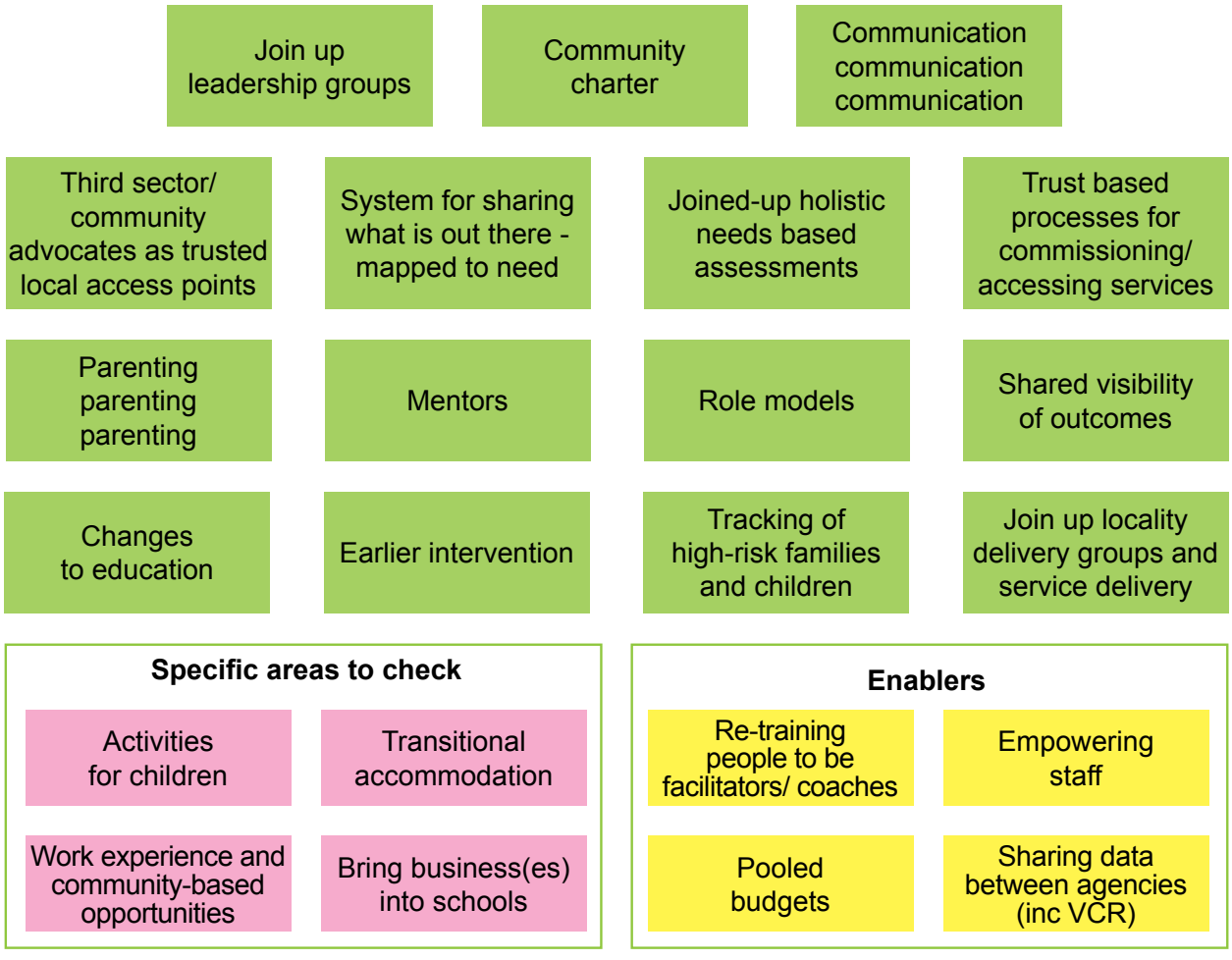
The final exercise the partners conducted looked to identify improvements and map these against the barriers that they might overcome. These improvement ideas came from looking at a vision of the future for children in Bridlington the partners had outlined earlier in the workshops, and what was offered by services currently. Participants generated an enormous range of ideas, and these help to direct and shape the further development of the strategy and specifically the nature of the service provider interviews conducted from November onwards (see below).

Developing Bridlington's Child Poverty Strategy

This consultation culminated in the presentation and agreement of the strategy by the Bridlington Children's Trust in January 2011. The project team drew together these various work streams into a coherent strategy and action plan, outlined under "Outputs".

To further refine the ideas highlighted above and to develop the recommendations of Bridlington's Eradicating Child Poverty Strategy, the project tasked three Circle of Need trained interviewers with undertaking over 40 in-depth interviews with service providers - ranging from schools, local authority staff to the PCT to the voluntary community sector.

Figure 9. Improvement Themes



Findings

The project generated a range of findings, many already highlighted under “Approach” above. The key findings included:

- Location mattered less than socio demographic segmentation in indicating the likelihood of a family claiming free school meals. Socio demographic groups B and C were the most likely to require free school meals.
- Bridlington was an appropriate place to focus this insight activity, as groups B and C comprised 33 per cent of the total population compared to 10 per cent East Riding of Yorkshire as a whole.
- The initial investigation established that the numbers of children eligible for a Free School Meal did not correlate with the number of children receiving them. The data indicated that as many as 1,421 pupils eligible for Free School Meals across the Council had not registered. Results of the campaign to encourage registration are summarised under “Benefits” below
- During the Customer Journey Mapping exercise it was found that whilst the ‘customer’ does have to make an application for a FSM for their child, how they make their application was not clear to them and several applications were missed as a result of this.
- Furthermore, once the FSM application had been made, the checking/ allocation process was cumbersome and a delay of several weeks between ‘application and eating’ was not unusual. The checking / allocation process has been streamlined and an application before lunch-time on one day, usually means lunch the next.
- These findings offered the basis for subsequent collaboration between partners across the public and voluntary sectors which generated a rich picture of the current state of services and many ideas for improvement.

Outcomes

As well as supporting the delivery of direct benefits through the increase of children benefits from FSMs (see below), the project has also generated a significant amount of insight into the lives of children living in poverty, and how the Council and their partners can betters serve these constituents. Having an ‘objective’ evidence base – incorporating the external perspective of service users - has provided the basis for productive dialogue and the formulation and agreement of the strategy and recommendations. The Council also modelled the role of the ‘Early Help Team’ on the needs and gaps identified by the insight (see ‘Intervening Early’ below).

The wider impact of these successes has been to help demonstrate the value of the data observatory and to help embed customer insight into the Council’s approach to service transformation (see Text Box ‘Future Use of Insight’)

Increase in Up-Take of FSM

Before the exercise started in September 2010 there were 3974 pupils receiving a Free School Meal in East Riding Schools. By the beginning of January 2011 this figure had increased by over 27 per cent to 5047. This improvement is due in part to the exercise carried out in contacting those eligible but not claiming the Free School Meal mentioned in “Approach” (including the outbound calling

campaign), and in part as a result of the on-going promotional activities throughout the authority to highlight Free School Meals.

Free school meals are worth approximately £370.50 per child per year. Clothing allowance varies according to the age of the child, but is usually in the region of £30 per year. Given the number of children who were not formerly claiming free school meals, this represents a significant transfer of resources to some of the poorest families in the region.

Future Use of Insight
"The project is part of a drive within the Council to use customer insight to improve the design and delivery of services. A range of tools, techniques and skills have been developed that can be applied to a range of services. There is a strong focus on developing a core of people who can 'do' customer insight on behalf of services across the organisation. Having people with skills in data analysis, change management or facilitation to support the use of customer insight has been invaluable. Techniques developed for the organisation include segmentation, customer journey mapping and Circles of Need®."

Tony Good,
East Riding Data Observatory

Furthermore, the project has resulted in extra funding for schools through the pupil premium because each child on free school meals gets £430 a year paid to the school to support them with their education. Hence, by January 2011 the project had generated £461,390 in extra funding for the area – more than three times the cost of the project.

Streamlining of the Claims Process
The customer journey mapping undertaken to establish barriers within the FSM claiming process has also improved the customer experience and generated efficiency savings. At the start of the programme there were multiple different application forms and the delay before receiving a free school meal could be up to three months. Today it is possible to claim using a single online form, be judged eligible and eating within 24hrs. Although these efficiencies have not been measured, they are substantial.

Furthermore, as part of the streamlining that resulted from the insight, the Council worked with their service provider arvato to implement a new system that now enables their benefits teams to input information directly into the systems used by schools to record pupil-related information. The system then notifies the school regarding these updates. Since the schools no longer need to input the data, and the benefits teams no longer have to fax data across to the schools for checking, the new system removes duplication of effort. Improvements like these also mean that families can benefit from FSM within a fraction of the time.

An example of the savings that have resulted can be seen in the new way clothing allowances for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are processed. In past years, it required one staff member a minimum of ten working days plus a significant amount of overtime to conduct manual checks on hundreds of pupils transferring to secondary school. As a result of the new stream-lined process, this specific task is now done electronically and therefore the member of staff no longer needs to carry out these checks thus saving time estimated to be at least £1,000 in administration time.

Intervening Early

The consultation phase with partners also revealed that although there were over 8,000 contacts made to children social care per year, only 2,000 were appropriate enquiries i.e. relating to children who need to be involved with social services. To better manage those enquiries that do not reach the threshold for children's social care involvement, East Riding has developed and piloted an Early Help & Advice Team with the purpose of helping professionals to:

- Discuss enquiries and advise practitioners / managers about shared and joined-up approaches to assessment.
- Signpost practitioners to access services and activities in a cost effective manner.
- Provide support to the Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings, including independent chairing as appropriate
- Identify who is best placed to become the Lead Professional and play a brokering and troubleshooting role where required.
- Assist in the formulation of clear multi-agency action plans to ensure that the identified needs are met.
- Provide ongoing advice to practitioners carrying out the Lead Professional role, to ensure effective delivery.
- Champion multi-agency approaches and encourage working together and information sharing for the benefit of families.

By drawing on information and resources from multiple agencies across East Riding, it is hoped that the Early Help & Advice Team will help to meet the family's needs before they reach crisis point (so avoiding more costly action). An example of the role and impact of the Early Help & Advice Team is depicted in the case story summarised in Text Box 5 below.

Role of the Early Help & Advice Team

Background:

L's father called into School requesting support, finding it difficult to manage L's behaviour at home. L is caring for his mother who has a disability. He has received support from Young Carers.

According to the Integrated Children's System (ICS) – East Riding's Children's Social Care case management system – Beverley Family Support (a Council Service providing targeted support for families at a stage before social worker involvement) has also previously provided support.

The Head Teacher at school does not have any major concerns about L at school, but has made a referral to the Educational Psychological Behaviour Support Team and is seeing someone from the service on Friday. The Head Teacher is also planning on talking to a Parent Support Adviser at another school.

Decision:

As no one in the school is trained in the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the father is requesting support, the Assistant Director of Children's and Young People's Services agreed that a member of staff from the Early Help & Advice Team – Simon - would make arrangements to complete the CAF and then liaise with the school. Following the CAF, a "Team Around the Family Meeting" might then be convened.

The Head Teacher agreed to contact L's father to point out that Simon would be in touch before the end of the week to arrange to complete the CAF. Simon would also arrange CAF training with the school.

Governance & Resourcing

Bridlington Children's Trust – a sub group reporting to the East Riding's Children's Trust – provided the "Project Steering Group". The Project Steering Group met monthly and was responsible for monitoring the progress of the project and for facilitating contact between the Project Progress Group and relevant sources of data and participants in the workshops.

The Project Steering Group comprised:

- Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
- The Local Ward Members for Bridlington
- Director of Children's Services
- Job Centre Plus
- Two Bridlington Head teachers
- Non-Executive Director of the PCT
- Performance and Finance Managers from East Riding Council

The Project Steering Group reported to the Children's Trust quarterly, with the report forwarded to the LSP as a standing item. Progress was also reported to the Children & Young People's Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

The Project Progress Group and Data Group were responsible for the delivering of the project phases, and comprised:

- Learning & Skills Manager
- Policy & Partnership Manager
- A Bridlington Headteacher
- NHS Community Officer
- Youth Offender Manager
- Council's Data Observatory, including a dedicated Data Analyst

A Data Analyst was recruited specifically to work on Child Poverty, and sited in East Riding Data Observatory. An outline of the Data Analyst Job Description in included under "Approach".

For project was given a total of £140,000 in funding by the Customer Led Transformation Programme, which was spent on the phases as outlined in the table below. The project was managed by East Ridings' Assistant Director, Children and Young People Services and the FSM Champion, a post jointly funded by the Council and the Bridlington Children's Trust.

Figure 10. Project budget

Task	Timing	Cost
Data Analysis	Jan 2010 to June 2010	£25,000
Customer Engagement, CoN & CJM	July 2010 to Sept 2010	£45,000
Partner Engagement & Interviews	July 2010 to December 2010	£30,000
Project Management	Jan 2010 to Jan 2011	£40,000

Challenges & Lessons Learnt

Taking a Holistic View of Child Poverty
The Data Group spent significant time reading around the subject of child poverty at the commencement of the project. This included reviewing various government reports and led to the data analysis taking into account wider issues such as mental health and alcohol abuse. The analysts identified some close correlations and this helped them to:

- identify the drivers of contexts in which child poverty may occur, and hence their ability to identify the invisible population
- enrich their dialogue with the frontline practitioners

Including DWP Data
The Data Group judged that accessing anonymised DWP data regarding benefits claimants would add significant value to the project by augmenting East Riding's Customer Insight Profile and helping the project target resources efficiently and to communicate effectively with the target population.

It was also felt that by including DWP data in the Profile, the Profile would be of significant benefit to DWP, providing them with a bespoke description of their client base.

However, although good working relationships were established with the DWP and they were supportive of the projects attempts to work through of the DWP data sharing protocol, the requirements of the protocol proved challenging and time-consuming. As a result, it was not possible to include DWP data in the profile.

Sharing Data with Partners
Furthermore, concerns over data sharing mean that only the East Riding benefits team were able to identify these 'invisible' families, and they

- cannot share data to allow other partners to engage invisible families - using any technique, social media or otherwise, and
- do not have sufficient resources to pursue all eligible families themselves

The project also encountered a lack of understanding as well as a general risk aversion to data protection laws. On viewing the assembled data the participants often asked "Why can't you just give us the names?"

Presenting Data
The data assembled by the Data Group was presented to various groups of stakeholders with many different backgrounds and priorities – from volunteer youth workers to customer centre staff to senior managers.

The project team learnt that different audiences have different needs and expectations from data, and in many contexts – particularly when sharing with a large audience - it is more productive to summarise headline findings and keep the messages simple than present the entire data set. Sometimes, "less is more".

Next Steps

Free School Meals

There is still a great amount of work to do to encourage parents to take up their entitlement to free school meals, but the council is taking a proactive approach and actively contacting those families who they know have an entitlement. These are households that are in receipt of passported benefits such as Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance.

As part of 'business as usual', the Council's Benefit and Money Advice Team will also ensure that whilst they are carrying out benefit take up activities, they will also actively encourage take up of Free School Meals, and will work closely with the Free School Meals Champion, and with schools, to ensure that take up is maximised.

The Data Group is also seeking to further develop their understanding of the 'invisible population' - families who are 'eligible but not claiming' free school meals by using East Riding Customer Insight profiles. This will help the Council identify the appropriate communication routes favoured by the 'eligible' families in order to secure the best possible outcome.

Eradicating Child Poverty Strategy
The project generated a range of recommendations which has been drawn into the following seven themes.

- provide a repository to establish a clear picture of every public service relating to child poverty, detailing the availability, extent and description of services/support/ provision available to families in the area – for practitioners and families alike to interrogate on some level
- develop a 'single view' of citizens, needs and issues, shared by all partners – and used this to drive/manage budgets, track outcomes
- progress the multiple assessment of needs through joint working
- develop the 'lead professional' role to cover the assessment/risk analysis/ determination of intervention process
- explore the role of voluntary and community sectors can play in providing a bridge to families and parents
- understand costs and clarifying roles (to reduce duplication) and link the work undertaken by practitioners, services and partners with a family to outcomes in order to better manage performance
- target people at greatest risk, earlier.

However, given the evolving policy landscape East Riding have taken a pragmatic and iterative approach to pursuing these recommendations. The aforementioned Early Help and Advice Team is taking the lead on embedding joint working on single assessment of multiple needs across the Council, and also modelling the lead professional role to support future implementation.

The Council is also developing the means to generate a confidential single view of children based on linking information to unique identifiers. The resulting 'involvement report' would provide a history of a child's interaction with practitioners from health, social care and education.

Since child poverty is often the symptom of wider, complex issues the Council is also developing the role of Children's Centres to address the broader needs of the family. For example, they are seeking to facilitate other services such as Adult Education and Job Centre Plus having a presence in Children's Centres. The rationale is to build bridges to, and align Children's Services with, the wider public services family collectively to address the underlying causes of child poverty.

"Looking at our figures from the January 2010 census to Jan 2011, across the whole council, not just in Bridlington, the numbers of free school eligible meal pupils have gone up by just over 15% and in some areas by as much as 30%. "

Karron Young,
Free School Meals Champion, ERYC

"Very often we found that families were very happy to have council tax and housing benefit, but didn't want their children to be on free school meals because of some of the stigma attached. So working with the schools and our benefits team, we undertook a huge piece of work to streamline that claimants process, and to reduce the stigma of children on free school meals. "

Karron Young,
Free School Meals Champion, ERYC

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