



Improvement

Customer led transformation programme

Case study – Oldham Metropolitan Borough

Early intervention in 0-4 year olds

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The Customer Led Transformation Programme

Oldham MBC 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.

About Oldham Metropolitan Borough

The borough of Oldham is one of ten metropolitan districts in Greater Manchester. The population of Oldham is continuing to grow and the next ten years should see a 4.5 per cent increase from 219,800 in 2010 to 229,700 by 2022.

Oldham is a borough of contrasts. Over 90 per cent of the population lives in urban areas. The west of the borough is densely developed, a result of the urbanisation that occurred when Oldham became one of the centres of the cotton industry. In the East however over a quarter of the Borough falls within the Boundaries of the Peak District National Park. Although the Borough remains dependent on manufacturing, the size of this sector has been reducing.

The ethnic composition of the population is also changing. In the next ten years the proportion of people in Oldham from white backgrounds is expected to have decreased from 80.6 per cent in 2012 to 75.4 per cent; meanwhile the proportion of people of Pakistani heritage is projected to be 10.2 per cent and of Bangladeshi heritage 9.2 per cent by 2022. The current composition of the 0-15 year population consists of a higher proportion of people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage than the population as a whole.

Currently about 70 per cent of school age children speak English as a first language. The older age population in Oldham is projected to remain predominantly white although there will be increases in the numbers of Pakistani heritage and Bangladeshi heritage residents in this age group.

Regarding children and young people:

- Oldham had an infant mortality rate of 7.1 per 1000 births. Although this is lower than in some previous years it is still higher than that of England and the North West Region.
- Dental health among children under five in the borough is relatively poor with 40 per cent of children seen to have evidence of dental cavities a higher figure than that for the North West and for England as a whole. The breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks after birth is also lower than that achieved nationally.
- Over 8,000 children and young people in the borough experience mental health problems which are significant enough to require treatment via child and adolescent mental health services.
- Nearly one in five children aged 10-11 years is obese and, although this is lower than in some of Oldham's statistically comparable neighbours, this represents a risk of ill health for a significant part of the population that is likely to persist into adulthood.

Background

Oldham's Customer Insight Project focuses on early intervention for 0-4 year olds. There are good reasons for Oldham to focus on this area. While in 2010 56 per cent of children nationally achieved at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the figure in Oldham was only 46 per cent.

This figure was significantly lower in the two areas that are the focus of this report:

- the ward of St Mary's located in East Oldham (where only 24 per cent of children achieved this level of achievement) and

- the ward of Coldhurst located in West Oldham (where only 33 per cent of children achieved this level).

St Mary's is the second most deprived ward in Oldham and among the five per cent most deprived wards in the country. People born in this area have an average life expectancy that is 6.7 years less than the England average if they are male (71.6 years compared to 78.3 years) and 4.5 years less if they are female (76.9 years compared to 82.3).

Coldhurst is the most deprived ward in Oldham and among the one per cent most deprived wards in the country. People born in Coldhurst have an average life expectancy that is 8.2 years less than the England average if they are male (70.1 years compared to 78.3 years) and 4.5 years less if they are female (77.8 years compared to 82.3).

Experience over the years from professionals working across many services in Oldham has suggested that, when a family becomes categorised as a 'complex family'; it is very difficult to lift them out of that category. There is a much higher chance of intervention being a success if families are supported early enough that they do not become 'complex' in the first place. Therefore, Oldham chose to focus not on families that are already complex but on those who are at risk of becoming complex.

With these aims in mind, the project sought to undertake and collate research on the needs of local areas, mapping the way in which citizens currently interact with services, and developing a stronger understanding of what motivates different types of citizens to behave in various ways.

This involves identifying issues that are of concern to communities, exploring how citizens within these areas currently approach and access services, identifying where and how service provision is currently not meeting the needs of citizens, and highlighting the most effective methods for engaging with these citizens.

The project built on previous insight work led by Bolton documented in the case study: 'Customer-Led Transformation – families with young children', and was pursued in parallel with other insight projects at Wigan, Rochdale and Trafford overseen by AGMA (see details below).

For a link to the case study, see: <http://tinyurl.com/ab9zl3b>

Objective

As the Customer Insight Steering Group developed, the project specific aims came into focus and informed the activity which would make up the Customer Insight project. As a result the aim of the overall Customer Insight project within St Mary's and Coldhurst was to:

- gain information that will enable Oldham Council to fully understand the needs/priorities from both a customer and a service delivery perspective
- understand what barriers to accessing services customers and service deliverers perceive
- understand what the drivers and motivations for customers engaging with public services are
- ascertain what kinds of interventions and services can make a real difference and improve outcomes

- inform the community budget approach and provide learning which is transferable across AGMA regarding challenges to existing spend/commissioning and service delivery
- inform the development of 'community/customer profiles' that can be rolled out across the borough.

Approach

Several strands of research were undertaken as part of the project to achieve the aims set out above. These comprised:

- profiling communities and neighbourhoods
- reviewing socio demographic segmentation
- ethnographic research
- service mapping
- values modes analysis
- social networks analysis.

Profiling communities and neighbourhoods

There were three aspects to the work led by the council research team to profile communities and neighbourhoods.

Existing data sets

The project conducted a trawl of existing data sets from official sources such as Census data, the NHS, National Indicator sets and more. The data was collected on the following themes:

- population and families eg density, ethnicity
- incomes eg levels of deprivation, numbers receiving benefits
- economic activity and qualifications eg unemployment rates, attainment
- housing and amenities eg fuel poverty, internet access

- community safety and crime eg resident perceptions of drugs and ASB
- health and care eg birth rate, life expectancy.

The council began by looking at their own systems, including e-start, libraries and benefits data. The ambition was to build a cross service picture regarding people that were using services. This proved to be challenging work and the project encountered issues such as the Data Protection Act, and data quality, (see ‘Challenges and lessons learnt’).

However, the review did illustrate the degree to which children centres were reaching families who needed help most, and that there was room for improvement in reaching the neediest.

Review of geographical landscape

The council research team also reviewed the geographical landscape of each of the areas in terms of main roads, rivers, bus routes, parks and hills in order to consider the geographic barriers that customers may encounter when interacting with public services. As a result the wards of St Mary’s and Coldhurst were further divided up into nine areas – or ‘neighbourhoods’ – based on centres of population with similar housing make-up and local amenities. This geographical and behavioural analysis (above) informed the project’s approach to the field work undertaken in the ethnographic and value modes work streams.

Customer profiles (CACI data)

Customer profiles were developed using a wide range of data sources, (including Acorn data), that enabled the project to identify the common characteristics of customers within certain areas and also showed how communities interact and view themselves. This helped to indicate the most appropriate ways with which to communicate with customers. The council research team summarised this information into written reports on each neighbourhood. Examples of these are available from the LGA Knowledge Hub.

One of the successful outputs from this work has been the development of models and agreements that enable the sharing of data in accordance with data protection legislation and in a manner which partner organisations are willing and able to support. The assembly and linking of this data does require a substantial amount of time (see ‘Challenges and lessons learnt’).

Reviewing customer segmentation

Oldham reviewed social demographic data from Acorn together with information on digital inclusion at household level to identify the common characteristics and behaviours of local residents.

ACORN data maps each household onto one of five categories and the map shown in ‘Findings’ illustrates how these categories are distributed across Oldham. This indicates Oldham’s social makeup. The map indicates how (as is typical with many towns) households are clumped together in small areas, not uniformly spread across Oldham.

As can be seen from the Map in ‘Findings’, the groups ‘moderate means’ and ‘hard pressed’ are relatively overrepresented in Oldham, and feature strongly in the St Mary’s and Coldhurst wards.

| Acorn category name | Oldham | The UK |
|---------------------|--------|--------|
| Wealthy achievers | 9 | 23.8 |
| Urban prosperity | 1.2 | 13.5 |
| Comfortably off | 27.5 | 27.4 |
| Moderate means | 36.4 | 13.2 |
| Hard-pressed | 25.7 | 21.8 |

Ethnographic research

Wigan and Oldham Councils commissioned the service design company 'thinkpublic' to help them understand how best to improve the life chances of families with young children living in deprived communities within Wigan and Oldham. The programme of research consisted of:

Training

The council arranged for 'think public' researchers to train members of staff from Wigan and Oldham Councils to interview families with young children. Members of staff were trained in the principles of ethnographic training and how to accurately capture comments and observe the behaviour of families.

Research

Wigan and Oldham Councils worked collaboratively to produce a research framework to define the focus of the research. In response to directions given by the project sponsors – Wigan and Oldham Councils – the ethnographers focused on the experiences and needs of parents with children under four.

To do this, they arranged interviews with parents in a range of settings including:

- community-based services' locations for example:
 - Sure Start centres
 - 'Tumble Tots' sessions at leisure centres
 - baby clinics at community centres
- 'out and about' – these took place at shopping centres, local cafes and on streets; targeting families that may not be engaging with services
- 'at-home' – four interviews took place in the homes of families that have been identified by service providers as being particularly relevant to the project.

Over a period of seven days each for Wigan and Oldham, ethnographers applied the skills they had learned to research the experiences and needs of families with young children living in deprived communities. The 'thinkpublic' ethnographers supervised council researchers to ensure the quality of the research programme.

The researchers conducted a total of 89 interviews with Oldham and Wigan parents, carers and grandparents. These interviews explored participants' experiences, attitudes and aspirations in relation to a broad range of issues, including:

- childhood
- pregnancy and parenthood
- employment
- health and wellbeing
- housing
- kinship
- education and learning
- aspirations.

Interviews were conducted using an ‘open questioning’ technique, allowing interviewees to direct the conversation. As a result, not all topics were covered in every interview, but topics discussed can be assumed to be of importance to the interviewee and to their family. As such, the findings consist of a range of opinions and experiences, rather than a definite set of conclusions.

The length and depth of interviews varied depending on the setting and willingness of participants, from 20 minutes to three hours. Interviews were conducted in pairs: one interviewer and one note-taker. Each pair was encouraged to record the information given to them as directly and immediately as possible.

At the end of each interview the pairs would type up their notes together and capture quotes. Alongside this they recorded their reflections of how they felt during the interview, the factors that might have influenced the information they were given, and other observations about learning or experiences from the session. At the end of each day teams would meet and share their findings.

Analysis and interpretation

After both research periods were completed, ‘thinkpublic’ researchers facilitated a compilation day. This brought both teams together to share findings, identify common and contrasting issues and themes and captured quotes from the interviews that illustrated these themes.

For further details of this work, see the Ethnographic Research Report by ‘thinkpublic’ available from the LGA Knowledge Hub.

Service mapping

Understanding the service delivery perspective is crucial when looking at how to improve outcomes and engagement for and with customers. The rationale for the service mapping was to make it possible to compare and contrast the customer perspective to what was happening from a service delivery perspective ie to understand any gaps, inconsistencies etc. This work was therefore specifically completed from a service perspective, using agency records that could then be compared with the ethnographic information.

Service mapping was undertaken for six of the families who took part in the ethnographic research. The six families were chosen according to the level of detail that emerged from the ethnographic interviews. Their service interactions were then mapped using data drawn from the services the families mentioned. An example service map is included under ‘Findings’.

Values modes analysis

Value modes analysis is a form of segmentation which focuses on the motivations and aspirations of customers within a specified area. The text box below outlines the three ‘high-level’ segmentation groups. In total 1,438 individuals within St Mary’s and Coldhurst were surveyed to gain an understanding of their values.

This provided an understanding of what motivates and engages both individuals and their communities. The research was used to encourage people to think differently about citizens and communities, and the way services are delivered.

The field work for this survey was conducted in June 2011 by field researchers working within St Mary’s and Coldhurst wards in Oldham using a questionnaire (available from the LGA Knowledge Hub).

Value modes is a psychographic mapping system which looks at the values that underlie behaviour. Behaviour is generally a strong determinant of opinion. There are three high-level value modes segmentations.

The settler (sustenance driven) needs are:

- core physiological needs
- safety and security
- belonging.

Some typical settler characteristics are:

- family and home, and caring for them, tend to be at the centre
- for those living alone, friends take the place of family
- tradition and family structure are important
- prefer things to be 'normal'
- naturally conservative (with a small 'c')
- security conscious – wary of crime, violence and terrorism
- supportive of tough punishment for criminals
- wary of change, especially for its own sake
- more comfortable with regular and routine situations
- concerned about what the future holds.

The prospector (outer directed) needs are:

- esteem of others
- self esteem.

Some typical prospector characteristics are:

- success oriented
- always want to 'be the best' at what they are doing
- welcome opportunities to show their abilities
- take great pleasure in recognition and reward
- look to maximise opportunities
- will take opportunities for advancement and professional networking
- trend and fashion conscious
- like new ideas and new ways
- generally optimistic about the future

The pioneer (inner directed) needs are:

- aesthetic cognitive
- self actualisation.

Some typical pioneer characteristics are:

- trying to put things together and understand the big picture
- concerned about the environment, society, world poverty, etc
- always looking for new questions and answers
- strong internal sense of what is right and what is wrong
- strong desire for fairness, justice and equality
- self-assured and sense of self-agency
- generally positive about change, if it seems worthwhile
- cautiously optimistic about the future.

The project chose not to use telephone surveys as these do not tend to be effective in reaching younger residents – a significant issue generally in Oldham, which has a high proportion of young adults. Some of the field team were bi-lingual and translated surveys as necessary; where this was the case, the staff member translated the responses to English for the data form.

The majority of surveys were conducted in the street or in shopping centres, parks etc. There were two important exceptions – in the West Street Estate in Coldhurst there are few locations suitable for street surveys and little activity during the day so the project used some door-knocking. In Roundthorn Salem in Coldhurst the project used a combination of door-knocking and attendance at social and community events.

For further information, see the document Values Modes analysis for St Mary's and Coldhurst wards: A report from The Campaign Company, available from the LGA Knowledge Hub. For information on the insight generated by these work streams, please see 'Findings'.

Social networks analysis

The project also conducted surveys of individuals to understand their personal networks and the impact these have on their life chances. This research provides insight and understanding of communities and how they operate. SNA can help depict networks within a community and help officers find practicable ways to make connections with them.

The aim of the research was to gain information on individual's personal connections. There is a large amount of evidence that stresses the impact personal connections have on an individual's lifestyle, life chances, health and much more. For further information on this part of the project, see Social Networks in Roundthorn Salem: A Report from The Campaign Company, available from the LGA Knowledge Hub.

The survey aimed to understand connectedness based on:

- People and places – where do people go, and which service providers do they see?
- Social contacts – who do people choose to spend time with, and who do they trust?
- Functional contacts – where can people go to find out what's happening locally, or for help with employment etc?
- Skills and resources – do people know people who have been to university, understand finance, can use the internet, or work for the council?

These contacts, skills, people and places were cross tabulated with key demographics, such as age, gender and ethnicity, as well as employment status and values. The diagram overleaf shows the logic flow for the research, with examples (source: Social Networks in Roundthorn Salem: A Report from The Campaign Company, page 5).

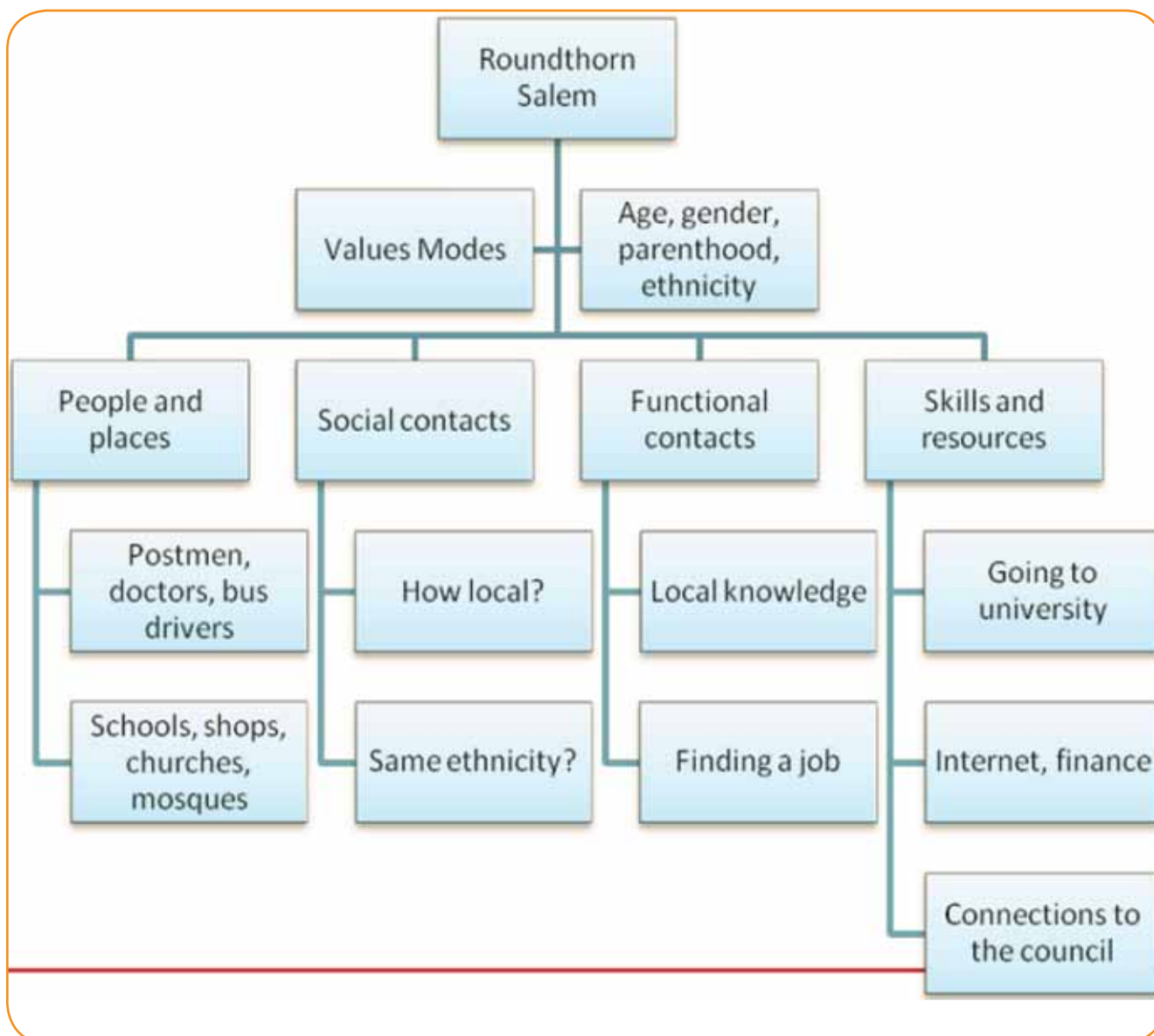
The research was carried out within Roundthorn Salem because it has more of a mix of ethnicities than other areas in the wards (although it still has a significant majority of white residents). The area has its own shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants, and it is relatively distant from the centre of Oldham.

These factors mean that residents are more likely to spend time on practical and social activities in the area itself than they would if they lived in one of the more central areas (and hence would be easier to interview).

This research is based on 289 surveys completed in Roundthorn Salem in June and July 2011. All the surveys were completed face to face, most by door-knocking but some by attending social events such as fetes, baby rhyme times and bingo. Some were also completed at local shops or at the local health centre.

The research team worked in three time slots to make the sure the sample was as representative as possible: weekday daytime, weekday evening, and Saturday daytime.

In those streets where the project planned to use door-knocking, the research team dropped flyers in advance – this helped to build trust when the researcher arrived.



The survey was completed on an individual, not a household, basis – partly because the questions related to individuals and partly to ensure that women were fully represented. As such, there are some households where the researchers completed several surveys.

Data was collected on paper questionnaires which were then entered into a full datasheet; this included the names of people’s contacts. To comply with the data protection act, researchers anonymised data by converting names into simple numbers of contacts in the information that was sent to the council.

For the details on the insight generated by the Social Network Analysis, see ‘Findings’.

Practitioner workshop

The project held a workshop for practitioners from all the partner agencies in order to gain knowledge and information from those working within St Mary’s and Coldhurst. 25 practitioners from across St Mary’s and Coldhurst attended this session. The workshop supplemented other research and also helped to cross check the insight gathered from the other insight streams.

Practitioners who attended the workshop expressed how much they enjoyed the opportunity to make links with practitioners from partner organisations and discuss issues present within the community in an impartial environment.

Building on connected communities

The research undertaken by Oldham is based on the RSA's Important Connected Communities, an in depth study of the community in New Cross Gate, a relatively deprived New Deal for Communities area in south London.

Connected Communities looked at the extent to which individuals were connected to others in their local area, where they would go for support or advice, and which people and places in the community were important in their daily lives. These were then linked to local public service provision.

The questionnaire used by Oldham for this research is based on the RSA's questionnaire, with some questions removed and one – about how people would find a job – added. The project changed the lists of people and places to reflect the people and places in Roundthorn Salem, and used the same demographic questionnaire as the one used in the Values Modes survey.

Analysing the insight

Given the range of different forms and sources of customer insight that the project generated, drawing together all the research and analysing it in such a way that it would support discussions across the partnership was a major undertaking. This analysis was undertaken by the organisation in conjunction with an external research consultancy and is comprised of an analysis of the research as well as its implications for future service delivery. A summary of this analysis is included under 'Findings'.

Brainstorming ideas

The project held two further workshops attended by the project team and key practitioners in order to brainstorm the impact of the research findings on service design. These workshops were held during the evidence gathering phase, in March and June 2011.

A final workshop was held on the 4th August, to define 'what the council will start, stop, and change' in terms of service delivery and also outline the future shape of the council's approach to early intervention.

Findings

Socio-demographic analysis

The population of Oldham has a higher proportion of people grouped as 'hard-pressed' and 'moderate means' than the UK average (see table below).

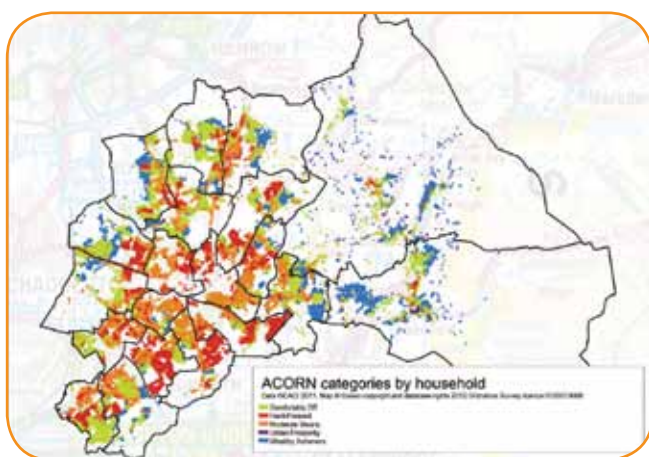
Table 1. Oldham demographics relative to United Kingdom as a whole

| Acorn category name | Oldham | UK |
|---------------------|--------|------|
| Wealthy achievers | 9 | 23.8 |
| Urban prosperity | 1.2 | 13.5 |
| Comfortably off | 27.5 | 27.4 |
| Moderate means | 36.4 | 13.2 |
| Hard-pressed | 25.7 | 21.8 |

The largest sub-categories are (in order):

- 'families and single parents, some financial uncertainty'
- 'elderly people in traditional terraces'
- 'poorer Asian families'
- singles and couples in small terraces'
- 'stable empty-nester couples'
- 'satisfied retired couples'.

Figure 1. ACORN categories across Oldham



Source: Data is CACI 2011, map is Crown copyright

This map shows the predominant Acorn category output area and highlights the different social groupings within Coldhurst ward. It is important to note that a large minority living in each area will be of a different category to the predominant one.

The five main categories are shown below with the percentage of households in the ward followed by the average for Oldham:

- wealthy achievers (0.4 per cent, 9 per cent) are established at the top end of the social ladder, typically with large incomes and large properties
- urban prosperity (0 per cent, 1.2 per cent) households are well educated and mostly prosperous people living primarily in Saddleworth
- comfortably off (8.7 per cent, 27.5 per cent) people may not be wealthy but have very few financial worries
- moderate means (44.8 per cent, 36.4 per cent) typify the traditional working class community many of whom have low skilled jobs
- hard pressed (45.8 per cent, 25.7 per cent) are the most deprived areas, with high levels of unemployment and long term illness, low skills and typically low household income.

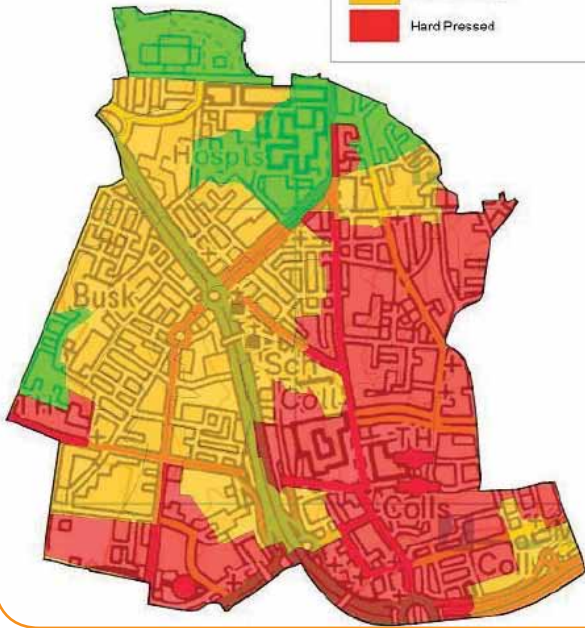
The predominant tenure of housing is socially rented. The categories are broadly in order of least to most deprived but there are exceptions, most notably Asian households are some of the most deprived but are located in areas dominated by moderate means.

The council combined the socio-demographic profiles with their existing data sources to identify some of the key issues Oldham faces which have a bearing on Early Years Intervention. These include:

- Levels of qualifications are low, with only a quarter having a degree, and 30 per cent having no qualification.
- A higher than average number of households experience financial issues. While household debt is at relatively low levels, the ability of Oldham residents to repay debt is also low – making households vulnerable to falling employment levels.
- Residents of Oldham try to save, but savings are more likely to be short term. Also, second jobs are relatively rare, and this may increase vulnerability to economic downturn.
- In terms of health, anxiety/depression and chest/breathing problems are often self-reported, but cancer and heart issues are reported less than average: this may represent under-diagnosis or low health aspirations.
- A quarter of Oldhamers smoke, and there are above average numbers with poor or very poor health.

Coldhurst

Acorn Categories 2011
Predominant category in each output area



In terms of their communication preferences:

- 40 per cent of households say no forms of marketing are acceptable to them, and they are far less likely to respond to marketing materials than people are nationally. Newspaper and magazine ads are the most acceptable medium, but not necessarily well-responded to in practice. Leaflets through doors may get a better response.
- Even though people in Oldham are less likely to be involved in community groups, where such groups exist and are vibrant they can still be useful agents of change and of communication (see also 'Social network analysis' below).
- Households in Oldham are significantly more likely than average not to be online. Of those that are, lower than expected numbers are likely to take up transactional services (eg paying bills online). However, there are groups of people and areas who are heavy users of social networking, and this could be a useful marketing tool. This

is not uniform however, and care should be taken only to use social networks as a tool if it suits the specific audience.

Ethnographic research

At broad level, the interviews suggested most respondents rely heavily on local services. Respondents regularly identified local schools or community outreach teams as the primary sources of information concerning services. Furthermore, at a broad level data suggests that most respondents were generally satisfied with these services.

However, the interviews reveal the way in which perceptions of services and quality of life are being negatively impacted on by wider social issues within the areas. The most prominent issues were anti-social and criminal behaviour, community cohesion, and poor housing ie damp. The way in which these broader issues were impacting on quality of life was perhaps best reflected in the response of one young mother in St Mary's who stated simply that: 'Social services can only help to a certain extent'.

The impact of anti-social behaviour on perceptions of services and the area was especially noticeable within St Mary's. In the words of one respondent:

"The area's not too good. There's lots of fights and stuff. We're planning to move. I don't want to bring my daughter up here".

Another family that were accessing a range of local services similarly explained:

"There are lots of bad people in this street – bad boys smoking, drinking, and banging on the doors. My children cannot grow up in this area."

Several respondents attributed this anti-social behaviour to the absence of facilities for young people within the area. There is no local park for example. Others compared their experiences with anti-social behaviour to their experience of residing within nearby authorities, such as Salford.

“All the kids around here are fighting and causing you bother. It gets me down. Maybe if they built a park or something, stuff for them to do, taking them places. I lived in Salford before, there was lots more help; they would sort out transport to get us places. The health visitor would help take the kids out for me and give me respite – foster parent would take them out and give me respite.”

Also emerging were some issues that impact upon the family unit as a whole and which are likely to impact particularly on 0-4 year olds. The two strongest determinates here were the poor state of the housing which was frequently cited by interviewees and the lack of decent employment for one or both parents. Job insecurity was cited as a factor impacting on family life.

Service mapping

The six service maps developed using the interview responses as well as findings from (46) ethnographic interviews and practitioner workshops from St Mary’s and Coldhurst demonstrated that, in general, good early intervention approaches are being followed by Oldham.

The figure overleaf provides a graphic illustration of how services interacted with six families in Oldham. It highlights how, for the service and journey maps of these specific families, children’s centre and health services were most prominent.

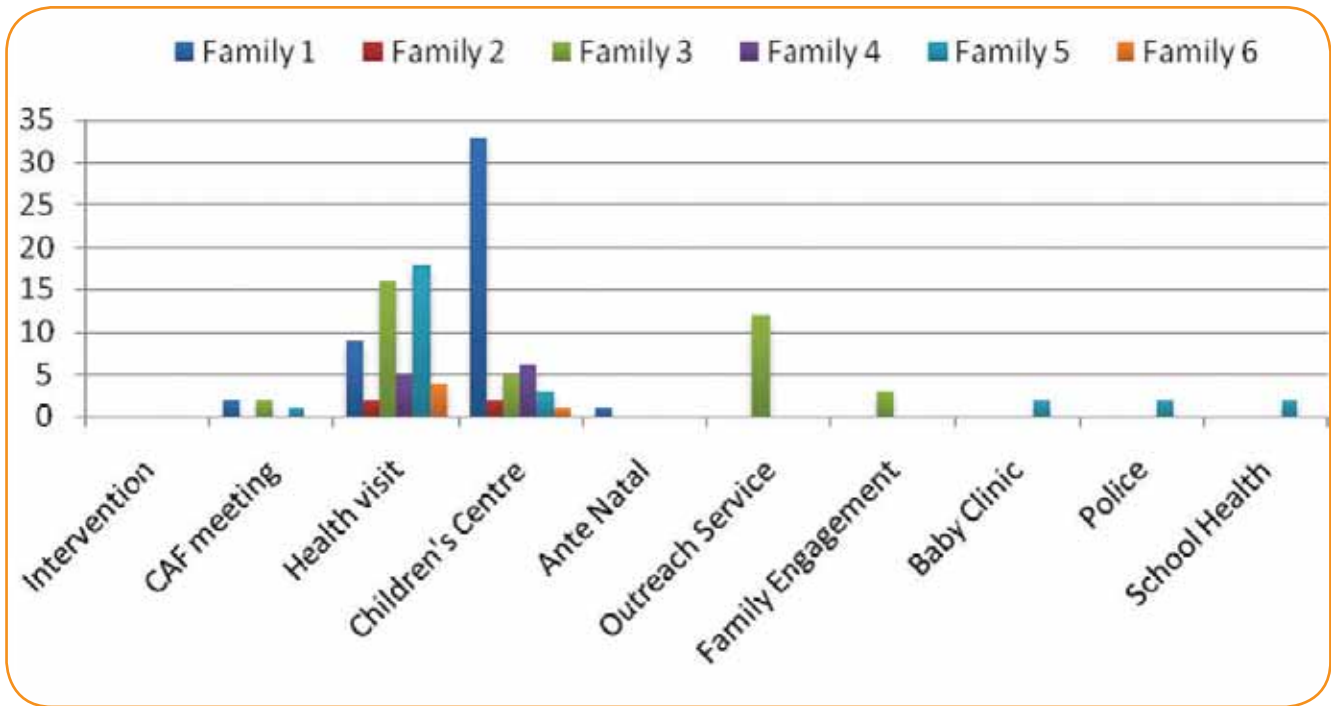
The service mapping work shows that, in general and in line with good practice, interventions tend to be early – they are proactive and aimed at influencing behaviour at an early stage, rather than dealing with crises further along. The ethnographic interview data similarly did not raise any obvious problems in this regard. The ways early years’ services are now operating appears to be reducing the level of disjointed services received by people.

However, despite this, there are some concerns highlighted by the interviews. Data shows that in St Mary’s and Coldhurst, the children’s centres are not reaching all of the most disadvantaged children, and the number of engagements with both children and carers is below the average Oldham rates, which are themselves below the rates seen for the UK as a whole according to national indicators.

Hence, the research appears to present an issue about who is accessing these services and it may be that current initiatives are not engaging the ‘hardest to reach’, residents who are likely to be the most in need. This was reflected in the finding that ‘high need’ citizens were not accessing these services in high numbers.

Therefore, this leads to the recommendation that there should be closer monitoring of the families that Early Years interventions and services are engaging with, and those which they are not. The local authority and its partners would be well placed to undertake specific attempts at outreach for those families who are not currently being helped. The difficulty for local authorities is in acquiring the knowledge of where and who these families are if they are not currently accessing services. Better information sharing between local authorities and health could go some way to addressing this issue.

Figure 2. Visual Representation of journey maps for six families



Source: Improving Outcomes For Early Years And Community Budgeting In Oldham, page 21

Value models analysis

The research within the two key wards sheds some useful light on the type of citizens that reside there, according to the values that they subscribe to. This work suggests that, when they are compared to the national picture, the values of citizens within St Mary's and Coldhurst can be clustered into three relatively distinct sub-groups of the main groups prospectors, settlers and pioneers, the most important of these are the 'golden dreamers', who are a socially conservative sub-group of prospectors.

Younger golden dreamers can be socially chaotic. Further details of this group are outlined below.

Golden dreamers:

- believe that aspirations and desires can come true. however, they are not too sure how the dream can come true for them personally.
- are attracted to recommendations – golden dreamers are a 'have a go' values mode but their uncertainty means they like recommendations; to reassure them that we are making the right decisions.
- are generally positive about their chances and are willing to try just about anything to achieve their dream.
- love events because each one offers a new opportunity. if you want to engage golden dreamers then offer new opportunities but nothing too strange, something sociable and mostly within our existing social circle.

Golden dreamers, a sub-set of ‘prospectors’ are considered to be essentially socially conservative – but they are letting go of their need to belong and instead replacing it with a desire to gain the esteem of others. This makes them the most competitive and power hungry of the values groups. It means they typically:

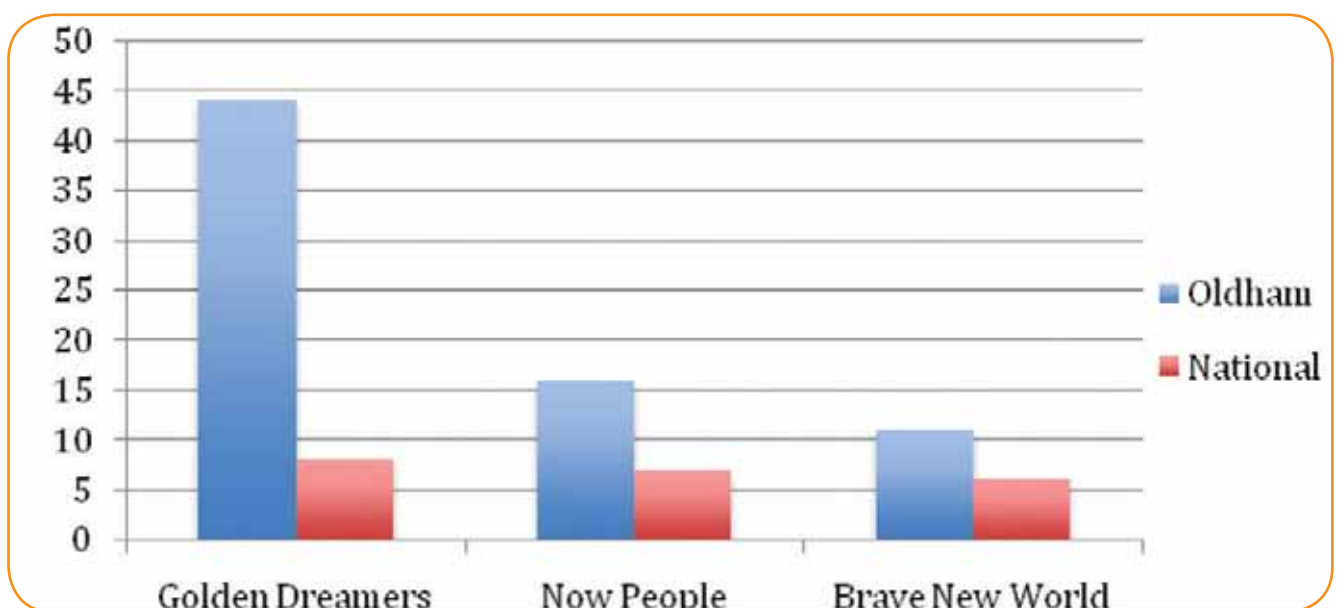
- have a strong work ethic and this often translates into a belief that people that don’t work have weak characters and are sponging off the state
- are more motivated by money and status than any other segment
- don’t ‘do’ causes, at least not global ones, but when they get angry they also get vocal. They are more likely to wind the window down and give someone ‘a piece of their mind’
- If the community is angry about something like higher parking charges, they will often be the ones that want to be seen admonishing the authorities.

One aspect that is perhaps surprising regarding the Oldham analysis is that values seem to be shared across ethnic groups. Each of the three main ethnic groups (White, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi) has broadly similar values.

They can therefore be characterised as having different social norms but similar underlying beliefs and motivations. Indeed, the overall profile of these two wards is incredibly homogenous. Normally, groups are clustered within neighbourhoods but their values seem to be shared across the wider geographic area.

In other parts of the UK, such a dominance of the ‘Golden Dreamers’ group is normally associated with more ethnic homogeneity and traditional white working-class communities. The fact that similar values are being expressed by the diverse ethnic groups in these particular areas should make it easier to change services and communications than it would in other parts of the country.

Figure 3. A Value-based typology of citizens



Source: Improving Outcomes For Early Years And Community Budgeting In Oldham, page 32

In that context, the Values work indicates the way in which these people both think and make decisions and also provides information on how service providers can go about communicating and engaging with the communities they serve.

Social network analysis

The above-mentioned findings are supported by the social network analysis undertaken in Roundthorn Salem. The project was particularly interested in the extent to which people's social networks are confined to their own ethnic groups (bonding social capital) or mixing between ethnic groups (bridging social capital).

The analysis found that there was a great deal of the former but little of the latter ie strong social networks within ethnic groups, but weak links between different ethnic groups. People are closely linked to others in their area but have far fewer connections with people outside their own geographic, ethnic or occupational community.

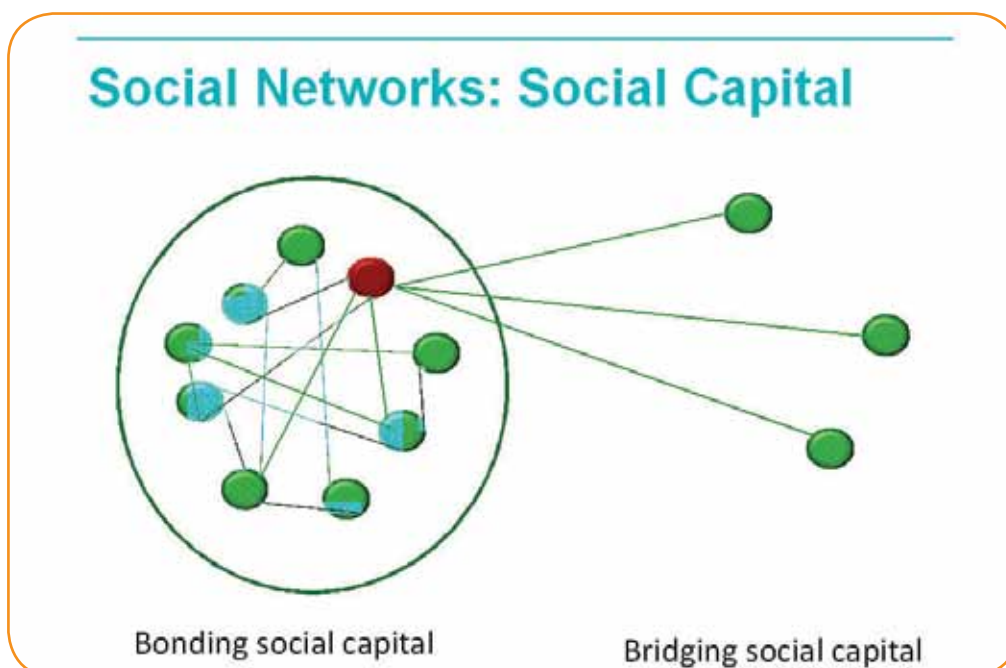
This is consistent with most studies of more deprived areas of the UK, particularly where there is a relatively low level of population churn – such communities tend to be 'tight knit' with few links outside their own area.

The levels of interethnic friendship were much lower than in comparable urban areas, although the high level of worklessness and low qualifications in the two wards – highlighted by the socio-demographic profiles – might well be the driving factor of this, as it is in other areas.

Such a strong representation of golden dreamers and the way in which social networks appear to operate has implications for how services are delivered and, especially, communicated. Such people will tend to be distrusting of out-groups (such as the local authority or other service providers) and more trusting of their own community and social networks.

The strength of social networks within groups is significant, and means that pressure from peers and the wider group:

- has a major role in delivering behaviour change and social outcomes alongside service provision
- are major determinants of attitudes towards, and levels of engagement with, those services.



Source: Social Networks in Roundthorn Salem: A Report from The Campaign Company, page 5

Understanding these networks is helping Oldham think about how they can help achieve a change in both behaviours and outcomes

For further details on the findings from the work streams, and their relevance to early years and community budgeting in Oldham, see *Improving outcomes for early years and community budgeting In Oldham*, available from the LGA Knowledge Hub.

Outcomes

Development of an ‘early years entitlement model’

The ethnographic and values model research illustrated to Oldham that the perspectives of the families were often not what practitioners and professionals expected and were not aligned with their own point of view. It also became apparent that many of the issues that families needed addressing were not necessarily related to early year’s services.

For example, families may need better transport facilities to enable them to take young children out to exercise etc. in parks, they may need better employment support. It may be they may be that they are living in poor housing conditions etc.

Consequently, Oldham have developed a new approach to engaging with families that while centred on their experiences and aspirations, also forms links to a range of relevant support services beyond the children centres and the council.

What affects early years development isn’t necessarily early year’s services.

“When we reviewed the interview transcripts with families, we realised that the issues we had identified as being significant from an internal point of view had hardly been mentioned by the families. Instead, they talked about how the issues relating to their living environment impacted their ability to parent. Our early year’s services are good and next and yet many children are still not ready for school – this is due to fuel poverty, mental illness, domestic violence in the home. Unless you address these fundamental environmental issues, it’s going to be difficult to make progress on educational attainment.”

Liz Hume, Divisional Lead – Regional Policy, Oldham MBC

This model is based on the premise that providing children with a good start in life and making sure they start school ‘ready to learn’ considerably improves their chances of achieving positive outcomes and avoiding negative outcomes later in life. For example, a child who starts school ‘ready to learn’ is much more likely to achieve qualifications that enable them to access employment; and is much less likely to be involved in crime and anti-social behaviour, abuse drugs and alcohol or have mental health problems.

Children who do not achieve 78 points on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile are much more likely to have experienced a range of issues including poor dental health or unnecessary visits to A&E. While it is challenging to place a figure on the costs to the public sector of these factors, for illustration purposes one estimate of the costs to the local NHS of unnecessary visits to A&E by pre-school children in Oldham indicates a figure in the region of around £1 million per year.

The insight work highlighted how a lack of educational attainment was a marker for wider environmental problems – including factors predating the child’s birth – and that only by addressing these issues would children’s educational attainment improve. Addressing the root causes of these issues proactively and preventatively would also have the effect of avoiding the costs to the public sector of repeatedly reacting to their symptoms.

The model is therefore a joint project across professions (particularly health visitors, midwives, children’s centres) to provide parents with universal support from pre-birth to starting school, in order to raise parents’ aspirations for themselves and their children and, to ensure that they are supporting them to develop well both emotionally and physically, therefore enabling them to reach their full potential.

The approach is based on engaging expectant parents in structured conversations to establish their aspirations for their child, and to raise awareness about what they will need to do in order for these aspirations to come true. The conversation also covers what parents want for themselves.

At key engagement points professionals (health visitors, children’s centre staff) initiated personal contact and engaged with parents through the completion of a checklist and a so-called ‘green book’ outlining all the services relevant to families offered by the council and partners. The checklist is owned by each parent and outlines the adult’s stated needs, assessment and aspirations for their children, themselves and their family.

A copy of the completed checklist and ‘green book’ remains with the parent and links directly to a range of locally existing universal and specialist services which working together to support parents and help them meet their own stated objectives.

The completed key engagement point checklist enables evidence to be gathered on the number of key engagement points delivered, the age of the child and the identified themes arising from delivery.

The conversation with parents is recorded on a paper form, and if necessary the information can be used to initiate a CAF. The project has been piloted on a small scale in St Mary’s and Coldhurst in Oldham and as of September 2012 is due to be rolled out across the whole of the borough. For the number of ‘visits’ or conversations conducted as part of the pilot at each engagement point, see the table below.

Figure 4. List of Seven pre-school engagement points, and number of visits in pilot sample

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Engagement point 1 (pregnant) | 51 visits |
| Engagement point 2 (10 – 14 days) | 43 visits |
| Engagement point 3 (3 months) | 115 visits |
| Engagement point 4 (12 months) | 79 visits |
| Engagement point 5 (18 months) | 13 visits |
| Engagement point 6 (30 months) | 37 visits |
| Engagement point 7 (42 months) | 9 visits |

“The value modes research was particularly useful changing mind-sets of the workforce, because it taught us that, although we were delivering good early years’ services, the issues that occupied the minds of customers were ones of housing, heating, transport and mental health et cetera. And that got us thinking that if we sitting in a dark room designing services for people that don’t think the same way we do maybe it’s no wonder that services aren’t fitting their needs and engaging them in the way they want to engage”

Liz Hume, Divisional Lead – Regional Policy, Oldham MBC

The ‘Early Years Entitlement Model’ has just completed a pilot and the initial signs are promising, it indicates that Oldham is both improving outcomes and saving money (see ‘Benefits’):

Developing the family common assessment framework

Oldham has long had a strong hypothesis that:

- outcomes would be improved if they adopted a ‘whole family’ approach rather than focusing purely on children
- by engaging early and co-ordinating multi-agency action before a family’s issues escalate to crisis point, the council will both improve outcomes for the family and save public sector money.

This was confirmed by the service mapping (see ‘Approach’ and ‘Findings’), where four out of the six families had been through the existing CAF process.

The ethnographic interviews confirmed that families did not see their problems as relating to their children. They understood that the way to give their children a better quality of life was to address whole family issues eg better housing conditions, more access to outside space, the ability to access training and employment. This informed the redesign of the CAF (see ‘Benefits’ for impact).

The service mapping demonstrated how families were not ‘buying into’ CAF – indeed some families did not remember that they had gone through the CAF process at all. This indicated that the outcomes the CAF process was delivering were not strongly correlated with what the family thought they needed. Essentially, the CAF process had failed to engage the families a way that meant something to them.

This discovery helped inform the redesign of the CAF. The new process shares the same ethos as the Early Years Entitlement Model – it focuses on the parent’s aspirations and on identifying what successes look like from a parent’s perspective.

The issues most commonly associated with children who do not achieve 78 points or more on the EYFS include:

- parental post-natal depression
- poor child dental health
- poor child mental health
- need for children’s social care
- being a looked after child
- having special educational needs
- having a history of unnecessary A&E events.

This is allied to overcoming one of the main shortcomings of the former approach, and focuses on supporting the family to overcome their issues themselves rather than a range of services ‘doing things to’ – or ‘at’ – the family.

Understanding what families aspire to, and the barriers they face in achieving those aspirations, is critical and so the process has been redesigned to achieve this. The new family CAF now comprises:

An introductory page – sized A3 – in which the officer captures all the basic demographic and services related information about who is living in the house and what services they are receiving. Subsequently there is:

- A parental self-assessment whereby the parent can determine how they rate relative to a set of parenting criteria using a five point scale. This is repeated at the end of the process to gauge the degree of progress.
- A specific needs sheet for each child which focuses on the original CAF considerations including development, behaviour etc.
- A specific needs sheet for each adult which addresses key indicators such as alcohol or drug misuse, mental health, worklessness etc

The training relating to the new family CAF focuses on making sure that professionals are asking the right questions in the right way, and that staff are engaging families’ parents and young people in a way that emphasises that they are themselves responsible for any outcomes. The ethos can be summed up thus:

Benefits

Benefits to customers

As part of the Early Years Entitlement Model, 405 visitors to children’s centres were taken through the pilot, with positive feedback from participants (see text boxes for comments from parents, and overleaf two brief case histories of families that have been through the process).

The numbers of children achieving 78 points early years foundation stage profile results in St Mary and Coldhurst has increased by an average of 7.3 per cent over the course of the pilot. Although this increase cannot solely be attributable to the insight project, (Oldham had other work underway to improve attainment), this increase represents an increase of 36 five-year olds between the two wards achieving a score of 78 or above.

An additional 335 families have benefited from the revised family CAF, and as a result have been able to access timely support from a range of agencies that would not have otherwise occurred. For feedback from a family that has gone through the revised family CAF, see text box.

“One of the major effects of the insight work was to broaden our thinking. We began by thinking about how we could improve things in the early years, but the insight told us that all is affecting our children being ready for school was not really the Early Years’ Service itself – the environment that they lived in was having a much higher impact on people’s educational attainment and quality of life.”

Liz Hume, Divisional Lead – Regional Policy, Oldham MBC

Benefits to council and staff

Early years entitlement model

Oldham Council estimated that a child who does not achieve the expected levels at early years foundation stage costs the public sector an average of at least £1,500 per year. This is based on short-term savings such as the costs of providing support with issues such as poor child dental health, post natal depression, increased need for children's social care, unnecessary A&E attendances, school attendance issues and increased involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

This figure would be considerably higher if potential future level 3 and 4 qualifications and future jobs are taken into account.

Estimating a figure for the value of this increase in attainment is challenging. Moreover, other council initiatives have also made a contribution to progress alongside the insight project and the entitlement model pilot. However, according to one estimate the 7.3 per cent rise in early years foundation stage scores might equate to approximately £53,000 in cost avoidance for the public sector this year.

The early years entitlement model pilot is now being rolled out more widely, and Oldham estimate that if the success of the pilot is replicated across the borough, Oldham's public sector could save at least £75,000 every year in costs avoided.

"We want to do this with you but we're not going to do it to you. We're not going to do it for you. We want you to be the custodian of your own destiny."

**Gerard Gudgion, CAF Manager,
Oldham MBC**

Revised family CAF

Oldham MBC and partners have completed an additional 335 CAFs during the last year based on the revised family-based approach. The savings to the public sector arising from a CAF can vary greatly, but research by local authorities has calculated that in most cases the predicted savings range between £41,000 and £60,000 over the course of the lifetime of the child – or over £700 per year.¹ By these conservative estimates, the new CAF has saved Oldham MBC and her partners nearly £240,000 over the past year already.

Gaining a clear view of the customer's perspective through the ethnographic and value modes work has also driven staff development and indicated productive approaches to engaging families who need support but have hitherto not been forthcoming.

Nadia, mum from St Mary's:

"If something is wrong and there is a problem, this can be identified, for a parent with their first child the book and visits would be very useful. Questions asked at the visit are a prompt for parents to talk about things which are worrying or concerning them. The visits will also be useful for new mums who don't know how to register with a GP and dentist. New parents might not think about things like safety equipment, questions at the visits might help them to think about safety in the home".

¹ Early Intervention, Using the CAF Process, and its Cost-effectiveness: Findings from LARC 3. Published by the National Foundation for Education Research, 2011, <http://bit.ly/ikeNkC>

Customer case study

The mum of a child in St Mary's moved here from Pakistan to be with her husband approximately 10 years ago and was unable to speak English prior to arrival. Mum has four children aged between 15 months and 10 years; she lives with and has support from her partner and extended family members in St Mary's ward. Her extended family have helped her by telling her where to go and what to do eg baby clinics, registering with a GP and dentist. Her husband works locally and she has help from the children's paternal grandmother.

Mum received an engagement point visit at home from the children centre worker when her youngest son was 12 months old. She does not attend the children's centre as she is unable to get there due to transport issues; however she has been learning to drive for the last four months and is hoping to have access to a car in the future which will make a difference.

Mum felt the content of the engagement point visits was useful eg toilet training, child development. As mum has four children she feels that she is now familiar with ages and stages of development but thought the engagement points were very beneficial for first time parents (see quote box above)

Parent has found the green book useful, with lots of useful information for parents. It would be helpful for other parents and friends to have received visits. Mum regularly visits the Pakistani Community Centre and attends playgroup with her son. Her daughter is now four years old and attends Glodwick School. Mum is also learning to read and speak English at the Park Road Centre where she attends maths classes and is a member of a women's group. The group is an intergenerational support group with a focus on improving health and wellbeing. Parents have been on trips to museums and the Trafford Centre. Mum is able to put her son in a crèche to enable her to take part in activities at the centre.

The key lesson from the insight is for staff to switch their frame of reference and in future centre conversations with parents on families' circumstances and their challenges and aspirations, rather than on the range of services that the children's centres provide. This approach has been enshrined in the entitlement model, but also informally in the way that staff interact with parents on a daily basis.

Sangeeta, mum, St Mary's

"For new mums early information is important and it is better to engage them at the start...I struggled to find information on registering the birth and with no support available from family members I would have welcomed input from visits. I had to rely on support from friends.

Following the visit I made enquiries at the children's centre regarding childcare and I have received information on the Nursery Education Grant. My daughter is eager to start nursery and school. The pilot should continue and developed to provide support and information to other parents."

Benefits to partnership working

The project developed a data sharing protocol which addresses all aspects of data protection law. Although the timescales of the project mean that the protocol was leveraged in a relatively limited way (four data sources were assembled – see ‘Approach’), the protocol is contributing to the continuing development of a database of service data. Moreover, the protocol is available from the LGA Knowledge Hub for other local authorities to leverage.

The entitlement model has also further developed the formal process for collaboration between health care professionals and children’s centre’s staff. The model has improved relationships and helped to develop integrated working across agencies and amongst professionals and they are beginning to work across professional boundaries (see quotes in text boxes). The customer insight work has also led to other partnership projects such as fuel poverty and troubled families. Both these projects are aimed at improving outcomes for residents by using customer insight to understand the true nature of residents needs and how best services and their delivery models should be designed in order to best meet such needs (for further information, see ‘Next steps’).

“Take for example parenting programmes. Rather than being prescriptive or formulaic, the approach we try to take now is all about ensuring that there are services available to help parents engage with services and access the resources, the advice and support that they need.... One size does not fit all.”

Margaret Rostrom, Lead for Customer Insight, Oldham MBC

Governance

The overarching governance of the project was the AGMA Programme Steering Group, which Wigan managed as the lead council. The Programme Steering Group reported to the City Region Evaluation Group – which includes representative from the AGMA Local Authorities plus colleagues from health. The City Region Evaluation Group reports into the AGMA Wider Leadership Group, which is comprised of all the public sector chief executives in Greater Manchester.

Additionally, reports were shared with the relevant AGMA commissions including the Improvement and Efficiency Commission which is made up of elected members from all ten AGMA authorities.

In Oldham, the Project Steering Group reported to the Place Board, which reported to the local Strategic Partnership. The Project Steering Group met quarterly and comprised the following members:

- corporate research and intelligence manager
- divisional lead regional policy
- neighbourhood managers (East and West Oldham)
- geographic information manager
- entitlement model project manager
- employment and skills officer
- assistant executive director – neighbourhoods
- head of customer services.

Resourcing

Oldham MBC received almost £66,000 in funding from the Customer–Led Transformation Programme, which was invested as follows:

| Area of spend | Cost |
|---|------------|
| Ethnographic research (joint with Wigan) | £6,200.00 |
| Values modes and social networks research | £18,026.00 |
| Area profiling (ACORN data) | £7,292.00 |
| Overall analysis | £4,750.00 |
| Workshop design and facilitation | £4,500.00 |
| Project management costs | £8,621.00 |
| Customer journey mapping/ service mapping | £16,375.00 |
| Total | £65,764.00 |

Challenges and lessons learnt

Creating customer profiles

Compiling the customer profiles proved to be time consuming. The amount of time it took to collect information and compile a profile of this nature should not be underestimated – even when based on existing sources of information. Oldham would advise other authorities following this route to be realistic about the amount of time it takes to set up and complete profiling. Collecting local intelligence can be a lengthy task even with ‘buy in’ from agencies, and it is therefore vital to get this buy-in up-front.

Linking data sets

One of the major successes of the project was the development of models and agreements that enabled the sharing and linking of data in accordance with data protection legislation. The data sharing protocol that was agreed is now in place and will support data sharing and linking going forward (a copy is available from the LGA Knowledge Hub).

However, Oldham had initially intended to develop cross-sector insight based on service data from a range of sources, whereas in the end it was developed based on information from only four services including the children’s centres and the council’s benefits database. The timescales needed to link data sets is significant, and the task requires significant staffing capacity.

Feedback from practitioners

- “Yes because if any issues are picked up by the process and engagement points, we can discuss it with other agencies, and find out whether the family are known locally or whether they are known to families in children’s centre”.

Community Nursery Nurse

- “It is invaluable for us to understand what has happened in a child’s life, before they come to nursery, once the key engagement points are up and running we will be able to do this”.

Nursery Class Teacher

- “The model gives parents ‘food for thought’ looking ahead with regards to the whole family including themselves. And this gives us an opportunity to explore other areas with parents which we cannot always address on regular visits”.

Community Nursery Nurse

Ethnographic research

Ethnographic research comprised in-depth interviews employing open questions. While this generates a wealth of evidence, Oldham would advise other projects to consider ways of structuring such research to ensure that it delivers against specific aims or objectives. For projects similar to Oldham's, more structured interviews may be needed to ensure the relevant information can be extracted.

Furthermore, given the personal nature of the research content arising from ethnographic interviewing, Oldham would advise other projects to ensure that the interviewers follow data protection legislation and seek consent from participants at the outset in order that research findings can be shared with public service partners.

Next steps

Community budgeting

The aims of the customer insight project were to gain more customer and community insight within St. Mary's and Coldhurst in order to better understand how to engage citizens and target support and intervention more effectively, in partnership, to improve life chances. The understanding generated by the customer insight work has also been used to inform Oldham's approach to community budgeting.

The research findings were presented at a community budget workshop to help partners (52 individuals from across Oldham Council and partner organisations) identify priorities and potential community budget interventions. As a result, four areas of priority were identified (parental support, co-ordinated family intervention, housing and community development) and specific interventions are being developed (see 'Fuel poverty' below).

Troubled families

Oldham Council are also now using the Customer Insight information gathered as part of this project to inform a whole public sector re-design of services with the aim of reducing the number of troubled families in Oldham. This service re-design is on a significant scale and is currently underway.

Fuel poverty

Although not directly related to young children, the understanding gained from the Customer Insight project that families viewed the conditions in which they were living as being one of the main determinants of their quality of life was a direct driver behind instigating with partners fuel poverty project, funded jointly between the Clinical Commissioning Group, the council and local registered housing providers.

This project aims to support 1000 people out of fuel poverty in its first year, 2013-14. Oldham have modelled likely savings as totalling £300 per person supported out of fuel poverty (£300,000 in total), accruing to the CCG and the council. These two organisations have agreed to cash and share these savings.



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