



Improvement

Customer led transformation programme Case study – Suffolk County Council

Transforming services for high demand families through insight and collaboration

34/58

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The Customer Led Transformation Programme

Suffolk County Council'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.

About Suffolk

The County of Suffolk has a population of approximately 716,000, which is projected to grow by 100,000 by 2021. Suffolk is one of the more rural counties in southern England, with the largest single land use being arable farming.

Average weekly earnings in Suffolk of £478 remain below the regional and national averages (£523 and £502 respectively). The major employment sectors consist of the public sector, wholesale, motor retail and repair and manufacturing. In Suffolk 11 per cent of jobs are in manufacturing, higher than the England average of 9 per cent.

Suffolk is one of the safest counties in England. A Suffolk Police public survey showed 92.3 per cent of those questioned feel 'very' or 'fairly' safe where they live¹. This figure echoes the results of the most recent national British Crime Survey (BCS), which revealed that Suffolk residents' perception of anti-social behaviour (ASB) to be the second lowest in England and Wales according to the most recent survey (to December 2010).

Children and young people account for 23.45 per cent of the total population with one in six children in Suffolk living in poverty. The overall proportion of children experiencing poverty (15 per cent) is lower than that for England as a whole. (21 per cent).

¹ Results for the rolling 12-month period to 31st March 2011

However there are clear inequalities, with both Ipswich (22 per cent) and Waveney (21 per cent) experiencing higher levels of child poverty when compared to the rest of Suffolk and England as a whole. There is a strong link between poverty and poor health, as well as educational and social outcomes. An analysis in 2009 for Suffolk's Committee Safety Partnership identified 80 families as being 'high demand' and at the root of anti-social behaviour problems. Further analysis determined that the 10 worst offending families were responsible for 1 per cent of all crime in Suffolk.



Background

This project used customer insight tools and techniques to help Suffolk County Council (SCC) and its partners better understand the needs of 'troubled' families. The partners then applied the insight to the re-design of services, aiming to target support and interventions more effectively and efficiently.

Insight work was part of a wider programme of transformation focused on chaotic 'high demand' families which has been underway since Suffolk's 'Total Place' programme in 2008. The learning generated by these initiatives is informing the partners' approach to the Troubled Families agenda.

One of the triggers for this project was the finding by Suffolk's Community Safety Partnership that the 10 worst offending families were responsible for 1 per cent of all crime in Suffolk.

The project brought 15 senior practitioners from a range of agencies together to learn and apply customer insight tools and techniques in order to better understand the needs of high demand families. The practitioners who participated were drawn from the County and District Councils, the Probation Service, the Police and local third sector. These individuals came together as the 'Leadership Academy' for two days a week for 10 weeks during 2010 facilitated by Taylor Haig.

"The Leadership Academy has helped us to work better as a team of public servants, rather than as individual organisations."

Jonathan Owen, Ipswich Borough Council

The participants in the Leadership Academy:

- employed customer insight tools and techniques to pursue a 'collaborative inquiry' into the needs of the customer group
- developed their shared understanding of customers by accessing the experience and insight each participant brought
- developed trust and rapport between each other, and broke down barriers between organisations, thus supporting better knowledge sharing across a combined front-line.

Alongside the Leadership Academy, the partners piloted a 'Total Place' style approach to families with multiple problems, known as the Family Networks project. The Family Networks (FN) Project engaged two of the most demanding families in Suffolk. The project brought together a dedicated multi-agency team to work intensively with family members.

Much of the insight and learning generated by the Leadership Academy was focused on, and supported the same aims as, the Family Networks project.

Although there are only two families involved, the Family Network project comprised 44 people (of whom 23 were children) across 15 households (not including one family member currently in prison). The project's aim was to

- improve service delivery
- reduce long term dependency on public services in Suffolk.

As this case study will illustrate, the Leadership Academy together with the Family Networks project helped to inform and shape the development of a new operating model for Children and Young People's services.

Objectives

The Leadership Academy immersed participants in the use of customer insight tools and techniques to pursue 'collaborative enquiry', with the objective of helping to:

- engage in joint learning and development (an important aspect of the approach is that practitioners shared the experience and learnt new skills together at the same time)
- cultivate stronger relationships between practitioners
- facilitate learning between partners
- facilitate the understanding and application of a range of customer insight tools and techniques
- enable networking and informal knowledge sharing between practitioners across front line operations
- develop alternative ways of working.

"Mixing practitioners from different parts of the public sector has helped us recognise the commonalities across the services – we're all seeking a good outcome for families, but we're going down different pathways to get there, and we don't always share information on the way."
**Victoria Woods, Probation Officer,
Norfolk and Suffolk Probation Trust**

"The challenge is that people in the public sector seem to need permission to work differently. Having people rubbing shoulders with people from other organisations, helps to raise everyone's awareness of alternative ways of working."
**Keith Whitton, Director of Operations,
Anglia Care Trust**

Approach

Fifteen practitioners spent two days a week together for 10 weeks learning and applying a range of different customer insight techniques. The first part of the programme comprised of expert briefings on customer insight tools and techniques including socio demographic analysis and customer journey mapping.

During the second half of the programme, the participants divided into workgroups to apply the techniques on a particular issue. (For an example, see 'Costing Services' on page 11).

The overarching approach was based on 'collaborative inquiry whereby the participants jointly explored a practice or situation in order to improve their understanding and learn how to change things. (See text box opposite).

Working collaboratively

However, as well as generating insight through the learning of new techniques, the organisations also learnt from sharing their existing knowledge with others. For example, the cohort included a senior probation officer with experience of working in co-located multi-agency Integrated Offender Management teams. This multi-agency integrated model was one that the partners were seeking to emulate, and the probation officer brought experience of working in that way. (See 'Integrated services').

The Anglia Care Trust (ACT), a community sector organisation that employs a holistic 'whole family' approach to helping families, also participated and practitioners in the public sector benefited from ACT's methods and perspective.

The cohort progressed through the following steps and exercises, summarised in the sections that follow:

- framing the question
- mapping socio demographic data
- costing service delivery
- mapping customer lives
- making the business case.
- role-playing
- listening to customer testimony
- observing customers using services
- presenting findings.

Collaborative inquiry

Collaborative inquiry is a form of action research, which is grounded in the idea that knowledge is best gained through doing, and that research should engage the people who are the topic of the investigation or who 'do' the activity being investigated. The group employed customer insight tools and techniques – such as role-playing and ethnographic observation – to conduct action research.

Collaborative inquiry is an iterative process, comprising the following stages:

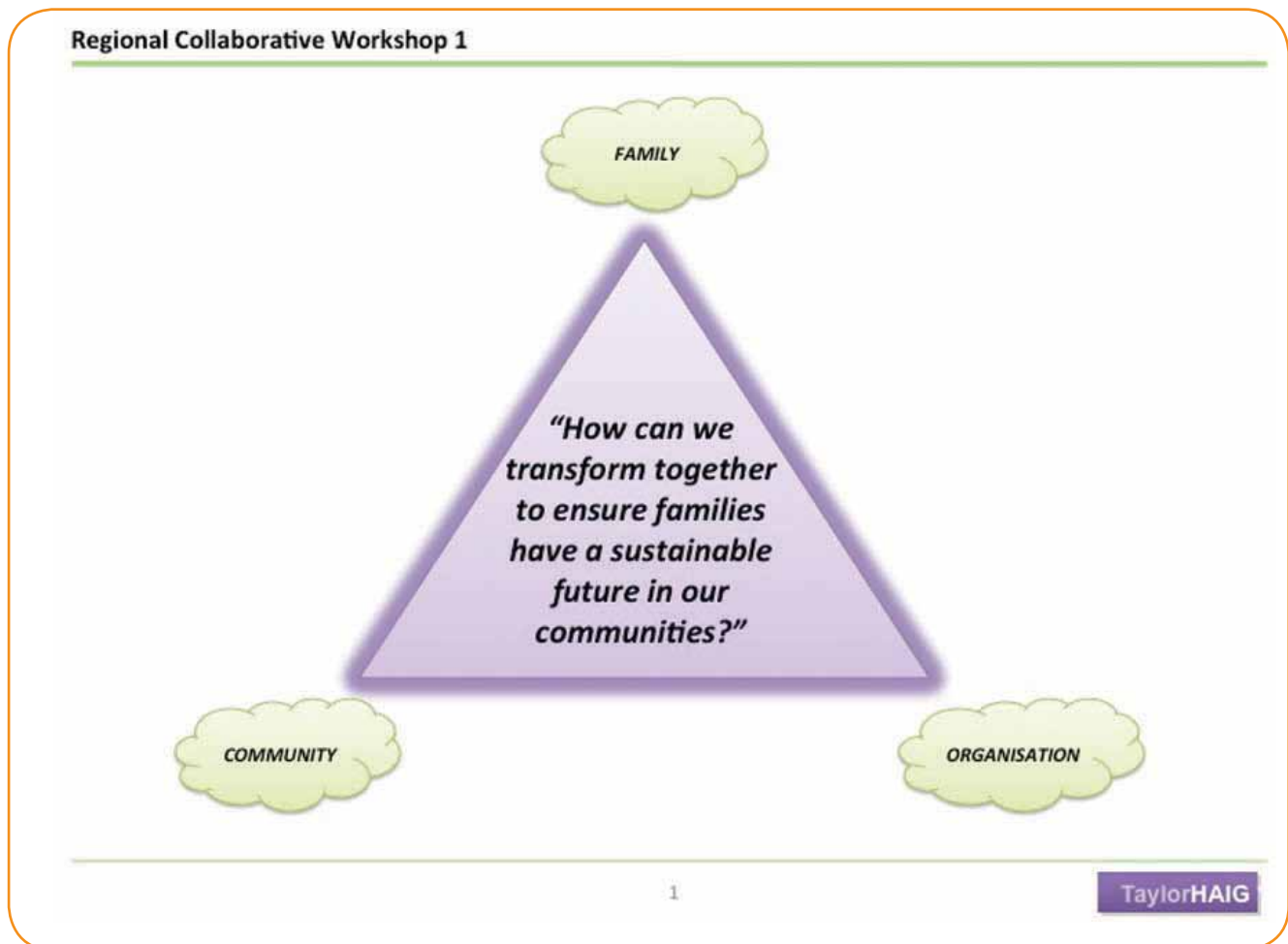
- **planning:** Begin by establishing propositions your group wishes to test or questions you wish to be answered.
- **action:** Agree on actions that can be undertaken, separately or together, to gain useful insights, and then initiate these actions
- **observation:** As your actions are undertaken, learn and reflect, and then share and discuss insights and observations
- **reflection:** As a group, use your collective insights to reflect on the initial question or proposition
- **generalisation:** On the basis of your reflections, you should adjust your understanding of the issue and/or your actions. The process can then begin again as you test your new ideas or approaches: Collaborative inquiry should be a continuous process where you keep developing deeper understanding and new practices.



Framing the question

The first task of the cohort was to 'frame the question' they would collectively address together. As the diagram below illustrates, the context for the inquiry was relationships within the organisation, the community and the families.

Figure 1. Context of the inquiry



After considerable discussion and refinement, the group agreed that the central question they were trying to address through the Leadership Academy was:

- "How can we transform together to ensure families have a sustainable future in our communities?"

The group also decided that there were two supplementary questions that they needed to address, namely:

- "What's the difference that made a difference?"
- "How do we sustain the change?"

Customer insight tools and techniques were then employed to investigate these questions.

Socio demographic mapping

Socio demographic mapping was one of the sources of insight the Leadership Academy used. The project cross-referenced socio demographic data for the County of Suffolk with the postcodes of the 50 families that made the highest demands on the Police. This indicated the socio demographic groups that were mostly likely to contain high demand families.

The analysis found that, of the top 50 'troubled' families, 25 were in postcodes characterised by ACORN as 'Hard Pressed'. This ACORN category contains the poorest areas of the UK. Typically unemployment is above average, the level of education is low, and those in work are likely to be employed in unskilled occupations. Household incomes are also low and there can be high levels of long-term illness.

“Social workers have been driven down and endlessly reductive path of procedures – endless procedures – all resulting from incidents where things went wrong. People think they can control what people do by telling them what to do – by procedurising it. But one of the results of that is we spend more time and attention collecting information when we are with families that actually listening to them.” **Allan Cadzow, Assistant Director, Children & Young People’s Services**

Figure 2. Acorn’s ‘hard pressed’ category

Struggling families	44 – Low income larger families, semis
	45 – Older people, low income, small semis
	46 – Low income, routine jobs, unemployment
	47 – Low rise terraced estates of poorly-off workers
	48 – Low incomes, high unemployment, single parents
Burdened singles	49 – Large families, many children, poorly educated
	50 – Council flats, single elderly people
	51 – Council terraces, unemployment, many singles
High rise hardship	52 – Council flats, single parents, unemployment
	53 – Old people in high rise flats
	54 – Singles & single parents, high rise estates

Moreover, 23 of the 50 families came from just five of these categories 44, 46, 48, 49 and 51. The project referred to these as 'High-Demand Family' (HDF) types.

The analysis found that 2327 (9.5 per cent) of Suffolk postcodes contained 'Hard Pressed' ACORN types. These postcodes contained:

- 38 per cent of all CYP clients in the county
- 24 per cent of all ACS clients in the county
- 32 per cent of all 16-18 year olds in the county who are NEET.

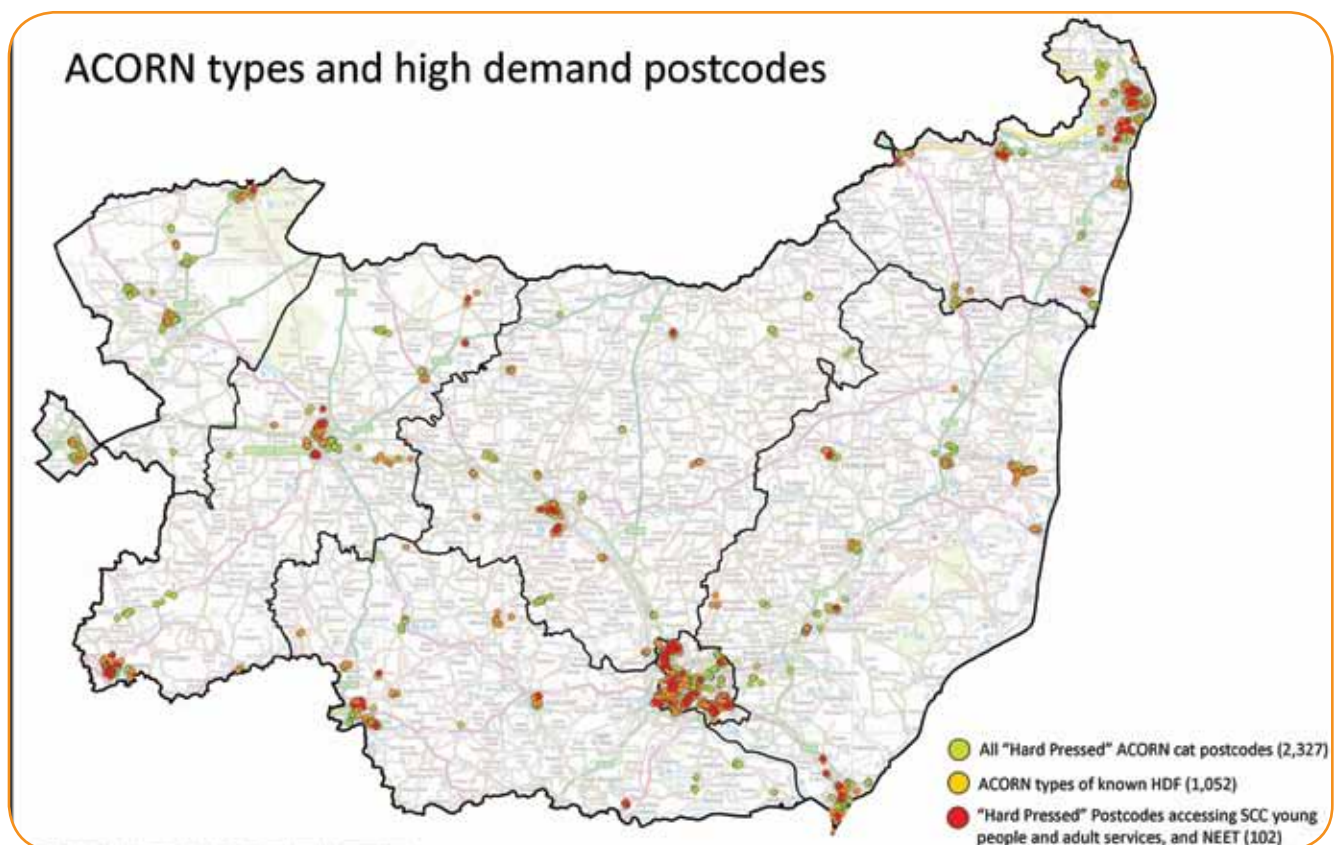
Suffolk has 1052 (4.3 per cent) postcodes featuring these specific 'HDF types'. In these postcodes were found:

- 23 per cent of all CYP clients in the county
- 8 per cent of all ACS clients in the county
- 20 per cent of all 16-18 year olds in the county who are NEET.

The project then identified Hard Pressed postcodes that have at least one CYP client(s), ACS client(s) and NEET(s) in residence, and discovered 102 postcodes had at least one of these types in residence. (See Maps below).

These maps indicate that South West Ipswich and the Triangle Estate are likely to have some of the highest concentrations of High Demand and Troubled Families. Socio-demographic analysis also revealed that there were pockets of communities in rural areas – such as Hadleigh – that may similarly require more proactive and preventative attention. One of the successes of this analysis has been to get high demand families on to the radar of senior managers from all of the partners in Suffolk.

Figure 3. High demand postcodes in Suffolk

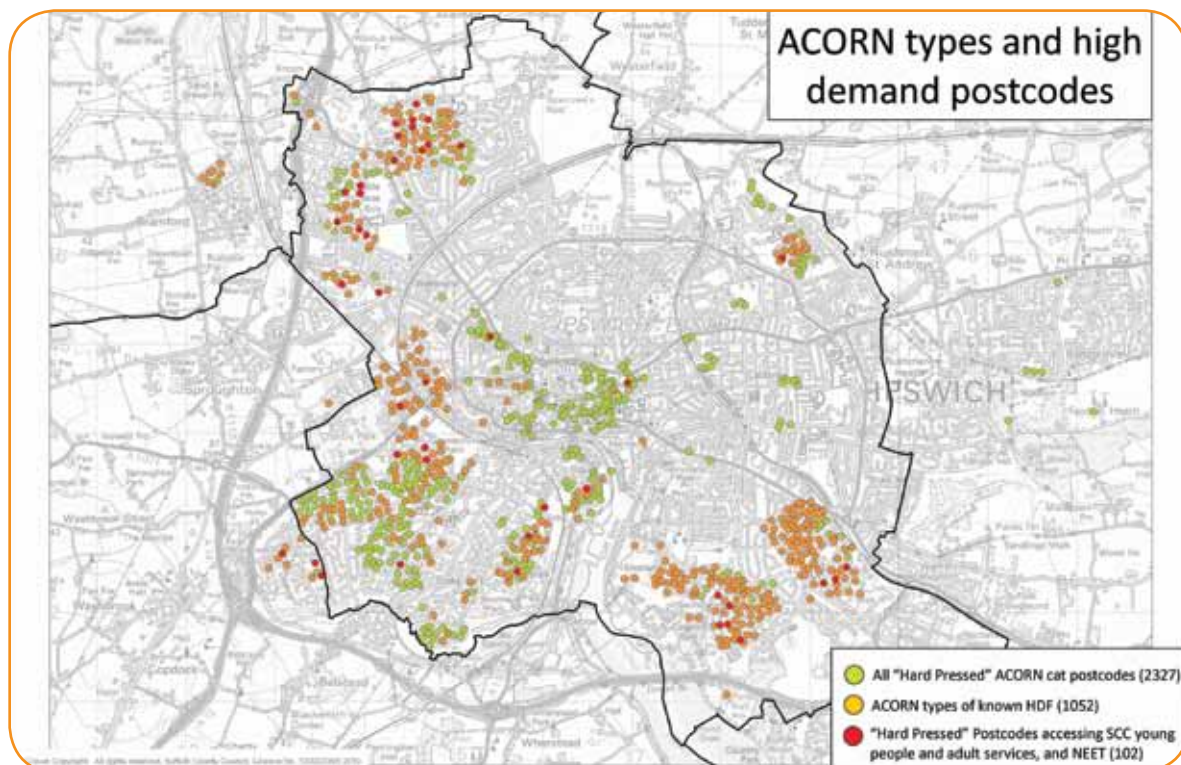


Source: Suffolk County Council, 2011

As well as indicating the geographical location of these families, assembling this data has also given the Service Providers a better understanding of the broad needs of high demand families. Taken together, the geographic concentration of these families and the range of their needs suggested adopting a community-based approach to the challenge.

This analysis has directly informed the 'Community Networks' initiative, which seeks to develop the capacity of the community in each locality to help them overcome their challenges. (See 'Implementation' below)

Figure 4. High demand postcodes in Ipswich



Costing service delivery

One of the groups worked together to try to establish the costs to the Council and the wider public sector of High Demand Families. The costing work focused on the two large families that were the subject of the Families Network Project. An understanding of the cost to the state and society was regarded as a critical factor in directing resourced and re-designing services. Costing figures delivered by this work informed the business case for Integrated Services. (See 'Redesigning C&YP Services')

To begin with, the team sought to calculate the cost to the public sector of each of the

high demand families over the course of the last full year.

The team spent considerable time reviewing data logged by practitioners in their systems. This proved to be challenging and consequently time-consuming, not least because the data was often incomplete and fragmented. The group found it difficult to make headway and reported the experience to be time consuming and frustrating. As a result of this, the Council decided to take a different approach and found that using professional estimates derived from totals of hours worked per week to be both quicker and more accurate than logged data.

Both families studied were both well known to and had a long history of engagement with all key agencies involved. The team estimated that the total public sector costs for 2009 were in the region of £370k (£205k for Family 1, and £167,206 for family 2) – this includes costs of being unemployed of about £190k. The largest proportion of other costs is attributable to the Police and Justice System.

Table 1. Costs to public services of the high demand families over preceding full year (2009)

Organisation	Family 1		Family 2	
	Total £	Comments	Total £	Comments
Police	£20,558	Events, arrests	£37,072	Events, arrests, PPO officer time
IBC Housing	£11,490	Unstable tenancies over extended periods of times, NSPs served	£5,090	Housing: unstable tenancies over extended periods of times, NSPs served
IBC ASB	£2200	Costs of ASB coordinator	n/a	n/a
SCC Children and Young People	£11,275	Costs of PRU, minor involvement of education and social care	£4,841	Social care support
SCC Adult & Community Services	n/a	n/a	£11,199	Social care support
Justice System	£60,208	Court action and justice outcomes – including community orders, prison sentences, probation. This includes permanent imprisonment of 1 adult.	£18,969	Court action and justice outcomes – including community orders, prison sentences, probation
Total	£105,400		£77,171	
DWP/Inland Revenue	£100,000	Cost of 10 adults being unemployed	£90,000	Cost of 9 adults being unemployed
Total	£205,400		£167,171	

Therefore, the total cost of the families to the public sector were in the region of £370,000 in 2009 – or approximately £9,000 per person. The team then estimated the costs of ‘Family Networks’ intervention, and the likely cost avoidances over the next five years resulting from this intervention.

Table 2. Costs of the intervention

Family Networks Team	Direct staff costs (including 15 per cent overhead costs for IT and accommodation)	£213,900
	Support costs for business support and activities	£15,800
High Demand Panel	Monthly 2hr meetings, average 15 people attending	£12,000
Total		£241,700
Total per person		£5,755

The principal costs of the Family Networks approach were staff related costs. The team involved had an integrated team of social workers, a police constable and family support workers, and a part time manager. There are some additional on-costs for business support, IT, accommodation plus a very small budget for activities.

Additionally, there are monthly panel meetings, bringing together representatives of key agencies.

The analysis found the total annual costs of the Family Networks approach to be £241,700, or an average of £5,755 per family member. The cost avoidances resulting from this style of intervention are estimated to split up to the different agencies involved as follows:



Table 3. Cost avoidance over five years

	Total (Family 1 + 2)			Family 1		Family 2	
	Total cost avoidance over 5 years	Average cost avoidance per year	Total cost avoidance over 5 years	Average cost avoidance per year	Total cost avoidance over 5 years	Average cost avoidance per year	
Police	157,815	31,563	68,057	13,611	89,758	17,952	
Suffolk County Council ACS	-32,301	-6,460	0	0	-32,301	-6,460	
Suffolk County Council CYP	238,352	47,670	171,052	34,210	67,300	13,460	
Ipswich Borough Council	50,657	10,131	31,157	6,231	19,500	3,900	
NHS (only costs related to Class A drug use)	15,225	3,045	6,000	1,200	9,225	1,845	
Justice system (incl. YOS)	251,306	50,261	32,586	6,517	218,720	43,744	
DWP (only costs related to homelessness)	48,165	9,633	32,955	6,591	15,210	3,042	
Cost of being unemployed - DWP and Inland Revenue	240,000	48,000	150,000	30,000	90,000	18,000	
TOTAL	969,219	193,844	491,806	98,361	477,413	95,483	

The overriding message that the cost modelling work made clear to partners (and influenced their approach to subsequent re-design work) was that the cost-to-benefit figures for taking a ‘whole systems’ approach to the families based on collaborative working, early intervention and prevention are of such a significant order of magnitude that the business case and ‘pay-off’ is compelling (even omitting the longer-term ‘life-time’ costs to the public purse – see ‘Mapping Customers’ Lives’).

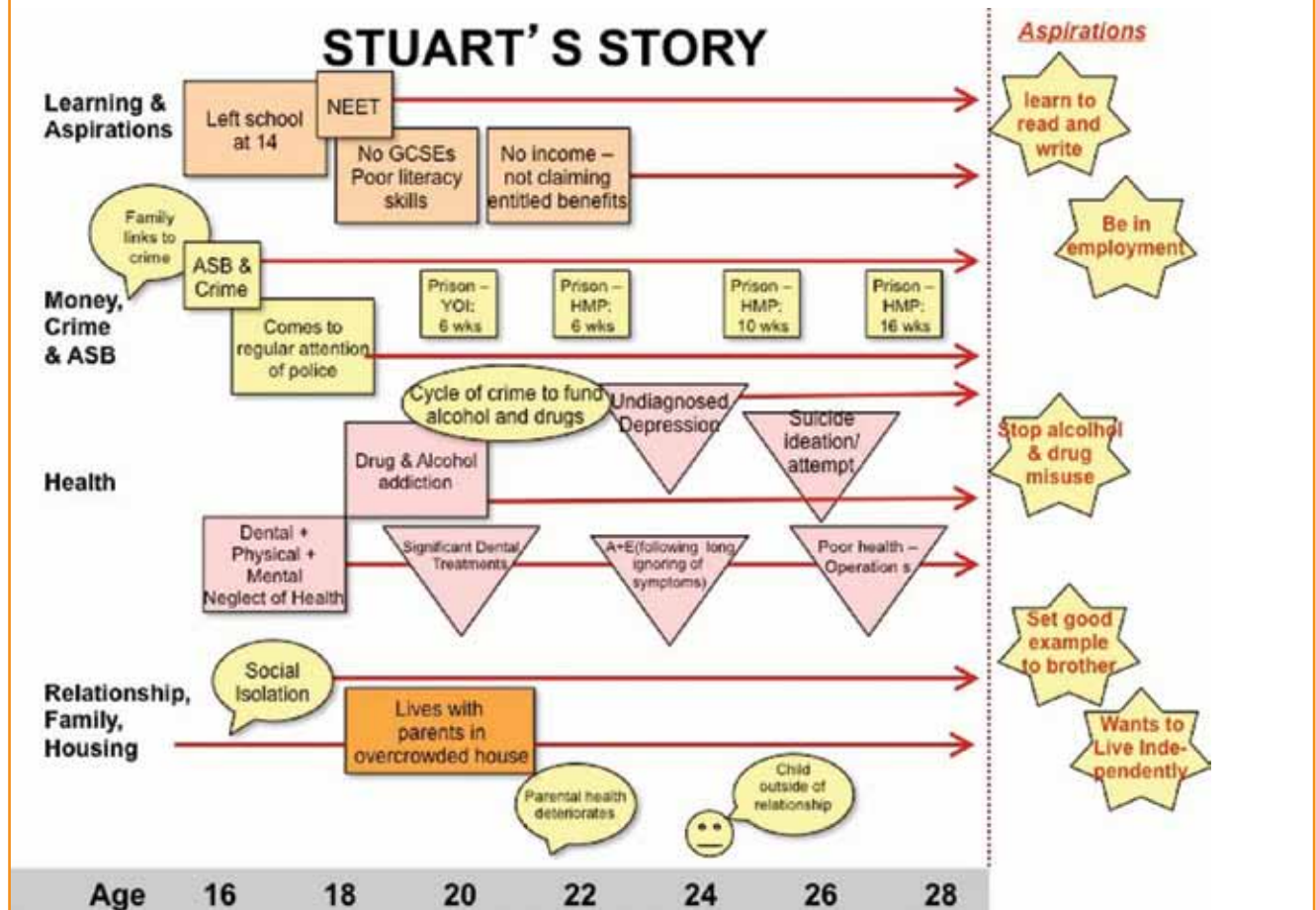
“The level of estimated savings is compelling, even with a significant error margin. - you can take the business case as given”.

Michael Moll, Business Development, Suffolk County Council

Mapping customer’s life history

The project mapped the life story of three members of the high demand families involved in the Family Networks project. The diagram below is the life story of a male member of one of the high demand families, and illustrates their life between the ages of 12 and 24.

Figure 5. Stuart’s story



Source: Suffolk County Council

The project then took data on the lifetime costs to the state and society of high demand individual's from the University of York and calculated costs based on the various life stages that been identified in the mapping exercise. They subsequently developed three scenarios depicting 'Stuart's' future life under different circumstances, and estimated the lifetime costs to the state and society of those different life paths.

Table 4. Stuart's life-time costs to the state

Circumstances	Characteristics	Cost or contribution to the public sector (age 16 to pension only)
Nothing changes for the better: Unsecure life in misery	Lifetime NEET Escalation in crime & custodial sentences Unsecure tenancy or homeless Class A drug use Fathering children out of relationship	-£1 to £2 million
Getting out of crime – 'Getting by'	Getting gradually out of crime Then becomes churner – occasional low paid work with longer unemployment spells	-£95,000
Reasonable purposeful, happy, self-sufficient	Assume not getting involved in crime in the first place Semi-skilled work, but churning in and out of employment	-£40,000

Role-playing

Role-playing was used as a way of generating insight through the experience of services from the perspective of the customer. This helped highlight how services are often designed around the provider rather than the customer. One role-playing exercise conducted was to visit Ipswich railway station and carry out a series of tasks while in the 'persona' of a disadvantaged outsider. For instance, one participant took on the role of an immigrant who could not speak English, while another member of the group was given blacked-out glasses to simulate impaired eyesight.

The 'immigrant' with no English was tasked with getting a train to the next station. She reported having a 'light bulb' moment when she encountered a ticket machine that was broken and customer services were on Platform 2 therefore a ticket was needed before she could get help:

"It made me think, 'what are we doing? A ticket machine that is out-of-order is difficult enough. How must it be for our customers?' And that made me think about the experience of our families are going through. And now when I'm sitting in a management meeting listing to a case I think 'if I was, in the mother's shoes, what would I be thinking about all this.'"

Jacci Spashett, Integrated Services Manager, Suffolk County Council

Listening to customer stories

The Leadership Academy also invited local people who had experienced Social Services to come and talk about their experiences. The group heard the story of one local young person – 'Annie' – who had been looked after intermittently all her life.

Annie attended one of the sessions and told the participants about her experience of the 'system'; she offered articulate and intelligent observations about the journey she had been on, and the choices that she had had to make. As well as outlining these choices she also talked about her perception of her journey. The participants reported finding her story and her experience of the system 'quite mind blowing – and it has stayed with us'.

For example, at one point Annie told how she had chosen to stay in care despite being given the opportunity to leave because she worried that if she left her younger brother would have no choice but to return to live with their mother. Annie remarked that she seemed to be the only one considering the wider context or implications of the situation.

The Community Gardens Group, which includes residents with an interest in Ipswich's parks and open spaces, also presented at one of the Leadership Academy days and spoke about their experiences and perspective. Dialogue with the Community Gardens Group continued following the Leadership Academy, and subsequently culminated in the refurbishment and re-employment of redundant greenhouses in Chantry Park, South West Ipswich. (See 'Community Networks').

Observing customers accessing services

Members of the Leadership Academy also spent time observing service users in the contexts where they access services.

One group spent time observing young people attempting to access housing and found that young people were asked to complete a variety of forms dependent on which service they accessed first. This was a very long and complicated process and the group noticed that the young people observed often found it easier to make alternative (often unsafe) arrangements rather than complete the forms in question.

“The Leadership Academy helped us to see the services from an outsider’s perspective. We recognise now that families do not see the situation like we do – through the priorities of school attendance or attainment, or housing, or antisocial behaviour services. In many cases, the families may not even understand what you’re talking about.”

Jacci Spashett, Integrated Services Manager, Suffolk County Council

Findings

The findings from the application of the different customer insight techniques highlighted that – in order to work more effectively with this customer group – the partners would need to:

Get beyond the presenting problem and focusing on the whole family

The family networks project highlights the importance of focusing on the ‘factors that cause the symptoms’.

The role-playing exercises, coupled with the direct customer testimony from ‘Annie’ also illustrated how different agencies working separately can fail to grasp the wider context or the underlying causes of customer behaviours. This clearly demonstrated that a holistic approach that treated the family as a whole system was necessary, the siloed system produced fragmentation and duplication of effort.

See the situation from the family’s perspective, and talk their language

The insight work revealed to participants’, their tendency to interact with families within the constraints of the scope of their responsibilities, resources and timescales – rather than in a way that makes sense to the family. Moreover, the cohort found that agencies often defined the issues facing a family in their own terms and from their own perspective; devoting their time and energy to resolving the issue ‘as they see it’, rather than understand the problem from the client’s perspective. The project found that this discouraged families from engaging in the change process.

Recognise the service and the wider public sector as a system, one that can create complexity and barriers to service users

The overarching finding was that services are often designed and delivered in a way that is orientated around the ‘producer’ rather than the ‘consumer’ of the service. The role-playing and persona exercises highlighted to participants how everything from physical premises to the language and terminology used during interaction produces complexity and a barrier between provider and client.

Lead with the most appropriate person and value front-line skills and staff

While the customer insight exercises highlighted the importance of trust in the relationship with families, the customer journey mapping and ethnographic observation indicated how fragmentation and duplication had the effect of undermining relationships with families. Consequently, the insight work indicated that families needed to have a say in deciding on a lead professional as well as how they are to engage with services. For instance, 'If the family has built a rapport with, say, a Health Visitor, then rather than all the services making contact, we will treat the Health Visitor as the lead professional and work through and with them.'

Leverage the knowledge and contribution that partner agencies can offer

Working collaboratively with insight tools helped participants to understand each other's roles, knowledge and priorities, and cultivated significant trust and rapport between individuals. On-going informal networking and knowledge sharing is already producing benefits for customers. (See 'Outcomes', text box on Knowledge Sharing)

Develop the capacity of the community to address its challenges

The socio demographic analysis demonstrated that many high-demand families were concentrated in certain areas – such as the Triangle Estate in Ipswich. This validated practitioners' perception that if individuals' lives are to be changed then the local community needs to be involved in solutions.

Furthermore, given the financial constraints public services face both now and in the foreseeable future, public services need to find ways to 'co-produce' solutions with local communities. For further information on how it is being affected in practice, see 'Community Networks' below.

Lead by example by demonstrating the behaviours and skills that will make a difference

The participants in the project also recognised the importance of the 'intangible' aspect of change, and the attitudes, behaviours and cultural changes that are necessary to engender trust, open communication, knowledge sharing and networking across frontline operations. The participants in the Leadership Academy recognise that the best way to encourage these behavioural traits is to demonstrate and champion them on a daily basis themselves.

These findings culminate in the insight that:

- clients need to be ready to engage with the intervention, and change is most sustainable when it is 'co-produced' with the family and the surrounding community
- service providers need to deploy their resources flexibly and where they make most impact. In some cases that might mean withdrawing.

The insight generated by the work the team carried out as part of the Leadership Academy informed the 'lessons learnt' reported by the Family Networks project summarised in the text box overleaf.

Suffolk's key learning from the family networks project:

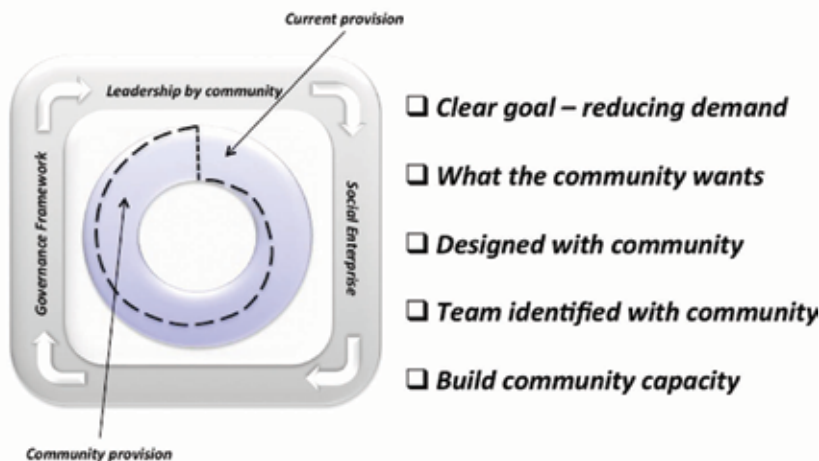
- whole family – Working with the whole extended family has been crucial to achieving change. It is important to secure the cooperation of influential and powerful family members
- flexibility – Public and voluntary sector teams need to be flexible in the way they work with families, taking account of the specific needs and aspirations of the family. A 'one size fits all' model is unlikely to be successful
- multi-agency – Appropriate agencies have to be able to work closely together. The mix of agencies directly involved may depend on the needs of each family
- no wrong door – Recommending a 'no wrong door' policy in which public services acknowledge their role in helping families deal with complex problems and commit to helping these families address their problems rather than deflecting to them to another agency
- high intensity – Allowing members of staff time to establish and reinforce relationships with family members is important to the success of the approach, particularly given that family members are likely to have a history of negative experiences with public sector services
- low intensity – Following a period of high intensity support, low intensity support may help family members continue their progress and to sustain changes. A family may sometimes have to be moved back to high intensity support should circumstances require this to happen. Evidence from implementation of Family Intervention Projects shows that workers staying involved for a longer time is closely linked to changes being sustained
- creating community links – It may be helpful to promote the development of community links which provide additional support for families
- communication between agencies involved – Strong commitment to the project from the agencies involved has enabled many of the barriers and blockages to be broken down and overcome.

“The reason why a lot of initiatives fail is because we do not pay enough attention to changing people’s actual mind-sets. We just impose things on people. And it’s actually dead easy to change structures and management lines, and other types of “paper change”. But changing cultures, and changing the way that people think and behave is much more difficult – but ultimately much more sustainable.”

Allan Cadzow, Assistant Director, Suffolk County Council

At a final presentation to the Leadership Collaborative (comprising Chief Executives and leaders from Councils, Police, health, the local community and third sector), the participants in the Leadership Academy articulated a vision for a new relationship between the public sector and the communities they serve. A vision focused on managing demand and developing the local community's capacity to address challenges itself. For further information on how these ideas are being pursued, see 'Community Networks' in the Outcomes section.

Figure 6. Our model



Insight from lean systems analyses

While the Leadership Academy was underway, Suffolk was also applying lean systems thinking to analyse the challenges and opportunities relating to Children and Young People Services. This investigation produced further insight, and many of the messages were consistent with the learning from the Leadership Academy. The additional insight generated by these analyses highlighted:

- the need to re-balance service delivery away from high cost interventions towards early intervention and prevention that genuinely reduces need.
- organisational complexity and the number of service access points lead to lack of clarity about referral pathways, high numbers of families receiving little or no service following referral and significant re-referral rates
- assessments not building on one another leading to duplication and inefficiency.
- poor mutual understanding of professional roles lead to misdirected service requests and missed opportunities for collaborative working
- lack of understanding about which other agencies may be involved with a child or family, confirmed by subsequent audits, show most referrals into social care that have assessments do not lead to a service
- empty / non purposeful work for compliance or defensive purposes
- the need to deal with service requests efficiently and effectively, get the right pathway to services and support and minimise hand-offs.

Articulating a vision for children and young people services

The findings generated by the Family Networks Project (together with the learning from the Leadership Academy and the Lean Systems work), culminated in Suffolk's vision for a new model of CYP services.

The insight generated by the project made a particular contribution to the design of the new 'Integrated Service', a key part of the new model – which has been implemented and operational since July 2011. For a summary of how the insight relates to the design features, go to the benefit map under 'Benefits'.

The customer insight generated by the project helped to shape the following features of the new model:

Integrated working

- bring together and target preventative services (Team Around the Child practitioners, Youth Support, Children's Centres, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Education Attendance, Parenting Support)
- include Social Care qualified staff in Integrated Teams
- develop an integrated approach to access, assessment, care planning, delivery and review
- implement step up and step down arrangements between Specialist and Integrated Services
- develop improved awareness of services across all practitioners to provide integrated packages of support to children, young people and families
- improve information sharing and integrated working with Partners including Schools, Police, Health, Mental Health, Voluntary sector.

Early intervention and prevention

- re-balance service delivery away from high cost reactive responses towards early intervention and prevention that genuinely reduces need
- avoid the need for escalation beyond Universal Services, and from Integrated Service Delivery to Specialist Services, through truly effective early intervention and prevention
- deliver Integrated Services through a 'Teams Around the Child' approach, for both lower level early intervention and high demand families, to address what may be multiple and inter-related root causes of a presenting issue or behaviour
- develop and implement an Information Strategy to help people to help themselves while ensuring relevant information is targeted to families at the right time
- maximise the use of community and voluntary services.

Behaviours

- enable lead professionals and Teams Around the Child to take 'ownership' of customers
- encourage trust, communication, information sharing
- look critically at current practices to continually improve
- promote collaborative behaviours between partner agencies.

"Having an understanding of the system allows us to act more flexibly – it allows us to step out of the system and work a way that is logical and that makes sense to the family."

Jaccci Spashett, Integrated Services Manager, Suffolk County Council

Outcomes

The following sections outline some of the most significant outcomes that the Leadership Academy has wholly or partly contributed to. These include the:

- redesign of Children and Young People's services
- development of 'Community Networks'
- improvements in knowledge and information sharing
- readiness for the Troubled Families agenda.

Redesign of children and young people's services

The customer insight and collaborative inquiry work undertaken as part of the Leadership Academy supported the development of the behavioural and cultural foundations critical to the successful delivery of Suffolk's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy for Children and Young People. The redesign of Children and Young People's services was part of the strategy.

"The Leadership Academy laid the foundations of more effective working together."

Chris Bally, Assistant Director (Business Development), Suffolk County Council

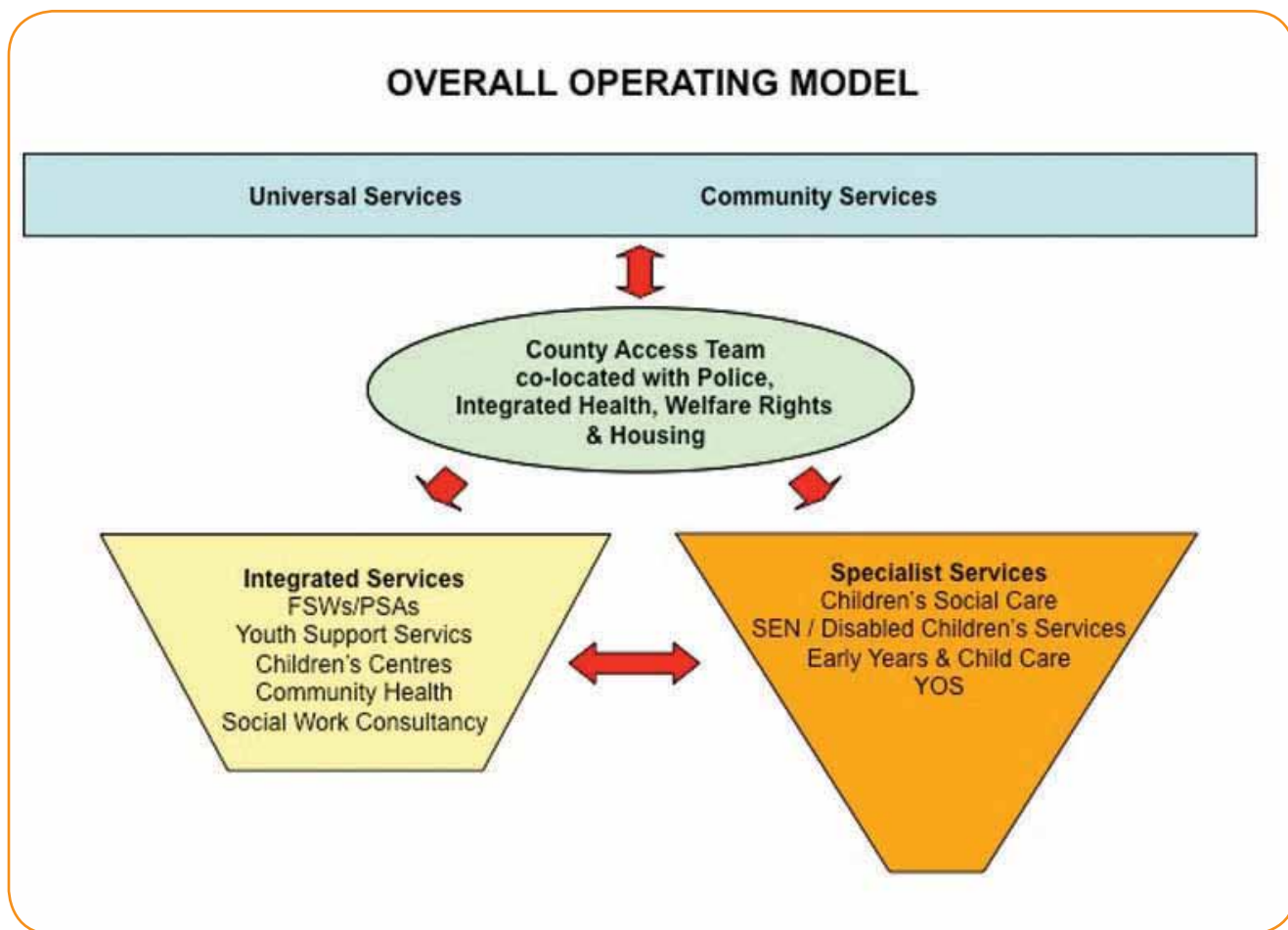
The overall aim of the new operating model in children and young people services is to make best use of available resources to enable early, more effective assessment and intervention to reduce the need for more costly specialist interventions. The restructured service has three key elements:

- a single point of customer access through an Integrated Access Team, working alongside Customer First, the Families Information Service co-located with the Police
- early intervention for children and young people with additional needs, but who do not meet the children 'in need' threshold for Specialist Services, is to be delivered by age banded Integrated Teams using the CAF as the key early intervention tool and a multi-disciplinary 'Team Around the Child' approach drawing on services provided from a range of sources including Children's Centres, Youth Support Services and Community Health resources
- streamlined Specialist Services with the number of Social Care teams reduced from 27 to 20 providing statutory services to children 'in need', those at risk of significant harm and children who are 'looked after'.

"Fundamentally the Leadership Academy helped the organisation is to recognise that the system was broken – not only from the point of view of the user, but also from the point of view of frontline employees."

Ronagh Witthames, Community Networks Officer, Ipswich Borough Council

Figure 6. New operating model



Shifting resources to Integrated Services over time based on a gradual reduction in the demand for more costly Specialist Services is a key part of the strategy.

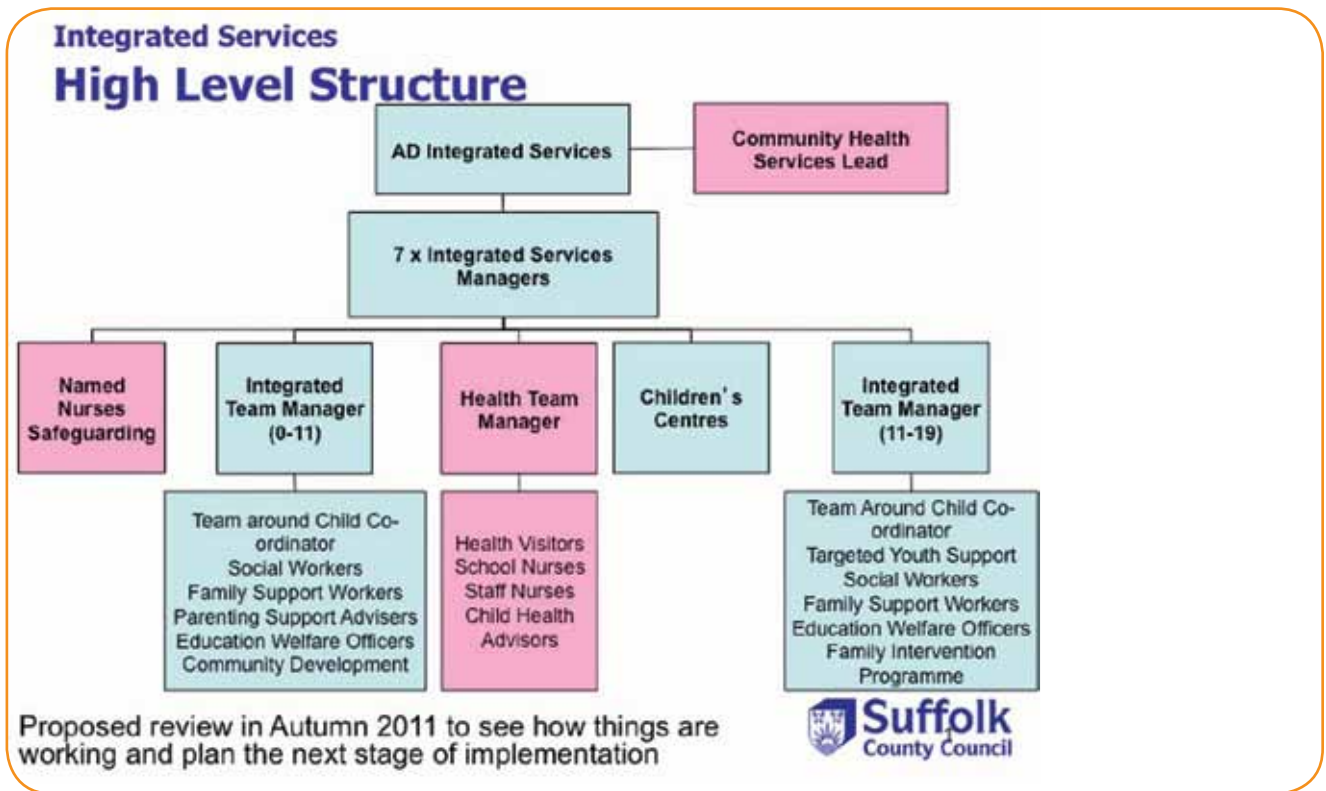
The integrated service has a joint management team, which shares office space. The integrated services manager also shares an office with the specialist services manager. This co-location supports informal information sharing and a greater understanding of each other's roles. The new organisational structures are outlined in the figure below.

The new operating model was fully implemented on the 1 July 2011. The impact of this new operating model is outlined under 'Benefits'.

"The atmosphere on the estate has improved. Recently, some young people on the estate were making a lot of noise and – whereas in the past I would, as an older person, just felt intimidated and hurried on by – I felt confident enough to challenge them. I actually ended up having quite a nice chat with them and found out that I knew several of their grandparents."

Resident of the Triangle Estate, Ipswich

Figure 7. Integrated services structure



Development of ‘community networks’

The workgroup that met through the Leadership Academy continued to meet, and together developed a bid for funding for a ‘Community Networks Officer’ whose roles is to broker better working between organisations in the high-need areas identified by the socio-demographic mapping – particularly the Triangle Estate and residential areas of South West Ipswich. The ethos driving the Community Networks initiative is to begin to develop the community’s capacity to solve the issues they face, and to try to tackle the issues facing residents ‘from the ground up’,

For example, the Community Networks Officer had been working with the Community Learning and Skills Development (CLSD) to set-up taster courses in arts and crafts in an effort to engage local people in training and learning (and to better understand the barriers that prevent residents pursuing personal development.)

Although these courses did not attract significant uptake the Community Networks Officer discovered that there are a number of local people with a passion for flowers, and subsequently launched a floristry course. This has been so successful that the original cohort of 15 residents have now completed an accredited floristry programme, and lobbied the Council to offer a level II floristry course.

The council supported this initiative with the conditions that the original group:

- helped to recruit a second cohort of 15 residents from the local community to start the beginner’s course
- created Christmas wreaths in their own time and ran stalls at the community fair in order fund the next course.

As well as encouraging local residents into learning and introducing them into community enterprises, this initiative has also illustrated how the two agencies working together can help provide better and more relevant opportunities for local people.

Community Networks have also worked with Ipswich's Community Gardens Group, following their presentation to participants in the Leadership Academy. The group drew the Council's attention to a row of redundant greenhouses in Chantry Park in South West Ipswich that had been unoccupied in recent times and had become a target for vandalism.

Following the contacts made at the Leadership Academy, the Community Networks officer worked with Ipswich's 'Active Lives' programme for older people and granted a licence for 10 older residents to refurbish and then use the greenhouses. The greenhouses now supply the flowers for the floristry course.

On the back of these successes, the Community Networks officer has supported local residents in establishing a 'Friends of Chantry Park' Group. Twenty residents attended the initial meeting and the Community Networks Officer is supporting them with developing a constitution. This will contribute to the park's efforts to achieve green flag status, which in turn could attract National Lottery funding. These connections would not have occurred without the Leadership Academy.

Improved knowledge sharing

Participants report much greater willingness and readiness to share knowledge and information informally. Whereas previously a practitioner from one organisation would have to understand and navigate another service in order to find the appropriate information or person – a task that could be perceived as potentially too time-consuming to even begin – increased trust and familiarity means participants can achieve the same, if not better, result through making a series of phone calls. This can help deliver outcomes that are more responsive and personalised to the client's needs (See text box).

For the perspective of the local Third Sector on the Leadership Academy and how it has promoted knowledge sharing, see Text Box overleaf.

“Getting the right people from the different agencies together in a room at the same time used to be a major challenge, but now they volunteer.”

Chris Bally, Suffolk County Council

Better information sharing between front line practitioners

The integrated services manager called a probation officer and fellow participant in the Leadership Academy to seek advice regarding the housing of prisoner who was soon to be released. The prisoner had been convicted of domestic abuse. His victim had moved to Ipswich to get away from the perpetrator, but the perpetrator had discovered where she was living and had applied for housing nearby.

Without needing to refer to the individual's specific case, the probation officer was able to readily explain to Integrated Services the standard legal conditions attached to a prisoners' probation licence. This led to discussions with the housing service regarding what they could legally do to prevent the perpetrator living in close proximity to the victim.

The housing authority decided that they could not support his application for housing within the Ipswich area as the offender had no prior connection to the town.

The conversations may not have occurred in the past, or would have required perseverance from the officer and would have left the victim waiting and anxious for longer.

Readiness for the trouble families agenda

The cohort of practitioners who have been through the Leadership Academy are now developing Suffolk's approach to the troubled families' agenda. The council's response to the Troubled Families agenda will require these new approaches to be scaled up, while extending and expanding the collaborative mind-set developed through the Leadership Academy.

Benefits

The insight generated through the Leadership Academy's collaborative inquiries, contributed directly to the remodelling of Children and Young People's Services as well as building on insight and learning generated by a succession of initiatives and projects that have followed Suffolk's 'Total Place' work in 2009.

The insight and collaboration that the Leadership Academy produced has permeated much of the thinking regarding how to transform services. The key contribution of the project has been to influence the attitudes, behaviours and culture of the partners. The trust that the process built has also helped to deliver better outcomes to customers. (See Text Box on 'Better information sharing').

The insight and learning generated by the Leadership Academy is also reflected in the design features of the Integrated Service. The diagram overleaf illustrates how the principles arising from the insight work are reflected in these design features. The diagram then summarises the nature of the benefits that are arising from the new model, including:

Reducing demand for more expensive specialist services

The benefits of the new approach are visible on several fronts. For example, the number of children subject to a child protection plan has been reduced by 146 between September 2011 and March 2012 – a result of more effective prevention and early intervention work brought by the new model.

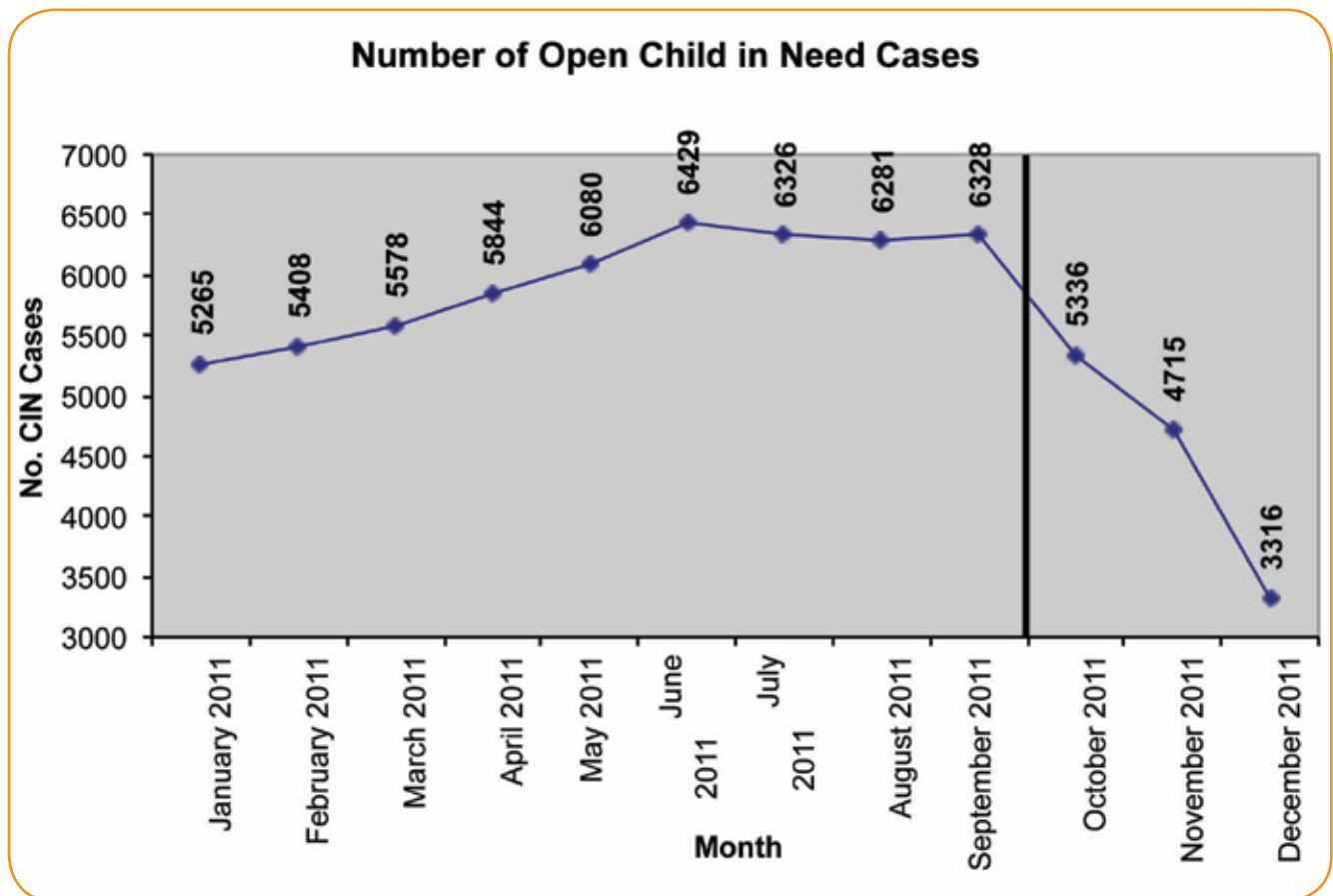
According to research by the Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University, the case management process of a CPP cost between £263 and £410 per child per month. If we apply Loughborough University's estimates, and if we assume the number children subject to a CPP remains stable, then the savings to SCC appear to be in the region of £590,000 over 12 months.

Reducing monitoring

The number of open 'child in need' cases has been reduced, as illustrated by the graph below. This is the result of a better and shared understanding of the service as a system and hence a focus on clearer roles, case ownership, and hand-overs within the system.

Whereas in the past social workers may have been reluctant to close a Child in Need case as this meant the child effectively leaving the system (and potentially re-entering due to the situation deteriorating), the new system allows Specialist Services to close the case confident that the child will continue to receive preventative support and oversight will be provided by the Integrated Services team and wider Universal Services.

The chart below gives you the profile of what has happened following full scale implementation of CYP New Operating Model.



Applying estimates of unit costs from the Personal Social Services Research Unit – a collaboration between LSE and the University of Kent – to calculate the costs avoided by closing open but inactive cases suggests a saving equivalent to at least £225,000 over 12 months.

Developing the capacity of families and communities

The shift towards early and preventative services is also reflected at the other end of the service spectrum in the progress Suffolk is making on CAF assessments. The number of families supported through the common assessment framework has quadrupled – in June 2011 79 CAFs were open, compared to 326 by January 2012. Much of this increase is due to the role that partners including schools and voluntary sector have in completing CAFs in the new model.

Informal feedback from local schools also indicates that the comprehensive assessment framework process is faster, and identifies families with needs earlier. Some of these benefits arise from the improvements in informal information sharing along the front line.

Practitioners are sharing assessments, enabling them to act more flexibly and proactively. This also illustrates the level of trust and confidence that people from different professional backgrounds and organisations have developed.

The financial benefits are not trivial. The findings from the High Demand Family Costing analysis indicated that the cost to public services of a high demand individual can be over £9,000 per year, but that pro-active and joined-up intervention – such as that promoted by CAF – can bring improvements in outcomes for that person that save the state over £23,000 over five years.

Reducing contact resulting in no further action

A sample of social care workflow between April and September 2009 indicated that 40 per cent of contacts resulted in no further action being taken. This represents in the region of 3,693 contacts per annum. According to research by Loughborough University², an initial contact and referral that produces no further action typically costs around £207. If we apply these figures to Suffolk County Council, a 30 per cent reduction in contacts resulting in no further action would equate to roughly £230,000 in costs taken out of the system per year.

These features and benefits are interwoven and form part of a much wider transformation programme, with the customer insight pursued as part of the Leadership Academy being only one part of that picture. However, the cumulative outcome is that since the work begun in 2010, Suffolk's CYPs has reduced costs by £7 million – and is scheduled to save a further £2.5 million in 2011/12 and 2012/13 while simultaneously increasing the capacity of the system to focus effort on priority cases.

These savings were achieved by:

- removing an entire layer of management
- ensuring that Social Care and Integrated Teams boundaries are contiguous -reducing staff by 190 (less in terms of FTE)
- bringing staff together as Integrated Teams
- reorganising teams according to school age groups, and becoming more family focused.

² Extension of the Cost Calculator to Include Cost Calculations for All Children in Need, Loughborough University, November 2010

Suffolk County Council requested a peer review of the service in March 2012 to gain an independent evaluation of its performance. Alan Wood CBE, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services at the London Borough of Hackney, led the review and provided the following feedback:

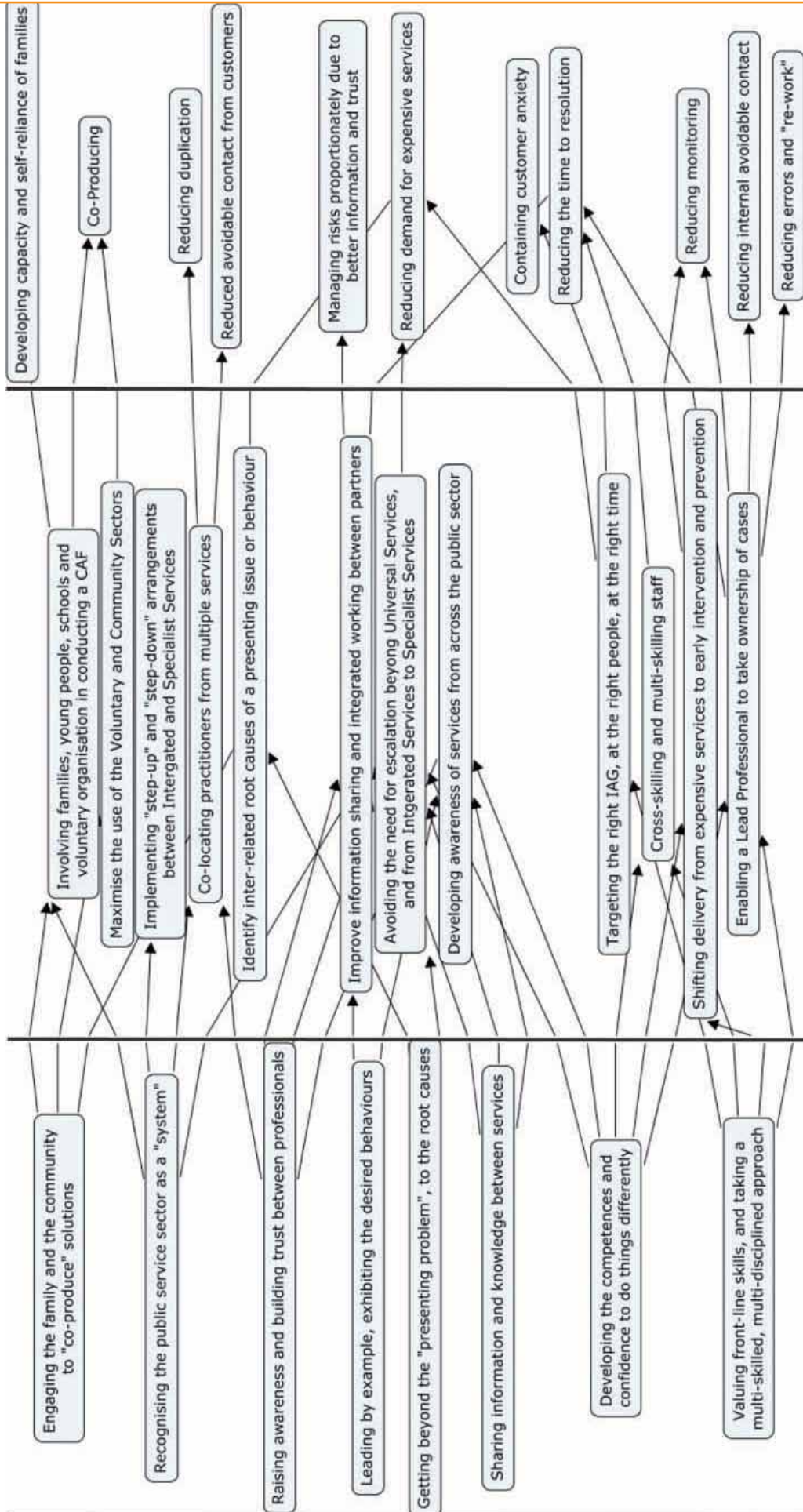
“Suffolk CYP staff demonstrate a remarkable energy, passion and can-do attitude. We have also been impressed by the enormous commitment of partners.”



Following the insight and learning generated by the LA, the participants committed to the following principles (See 'Findings', Page 18)

Reflected in the design features of the Integrated Service (See 'Articulating the vision', page XX)

Benefits to partners and customers (For examples, see below)



Family networks case study

Child – aged 12

- child in the later stages of primary school
- complicated family relationships (numerous step relationships)
- mother with mental health and substance misuse problems from the child's earliest years
- family dependent on benefits
- low educational attainment
- no behavioural issues
- loss and bereavement issues.

Before

- no agency involvement.

After

- health – now has glasses (which affected the child reading confidence)
- education attending dance class in the community, and attended gymnastics course funded by school
- completed bereavement work which included a project to share with family members.

Without engagement

- low educational attainment would have continued.

Individual families and children have felt the benefit of the collaborative work directly. One of the high demand families that the Leadership Academy focused on comprised 24 people. One of the first things identified about the family was that they weren't registered with a GP and had had no recent dental or optician check-ups.

The family were encouraged and supported to register and make health appointments. As a result of the collaboration nine of them registered for health services for the first time. This resulted in the discovery that the youngest child needed glasses. The child had lacked confidence and had some challenges at school but until that point no one realised that the child's eyesight was causing difficulties.

As a result of the collaborative working, the child now has glasses and is participating in positive activities in the school and community. (See text box for a summary of the 'Before' and 'After' details).



Governance and resourcing

Suffolk County Council won £50,000 in funding from the Customer-Led Transformation Programme to pursue the project. The project manager for the programme of work was provided by SCC's Business Development Team. The table below outlines how the funds were invested:

Figure 8. Resource table

Task	Budget
Programme design and facilitation	£20,000
Knowledge briefings for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social research techniques • customer journey mapping • modelling costs/developing a business case • persona development/role-playing 	£15,000
Data collation and analysis	£5,000
Facilitation of engagement process around neighbourhood level (Community Networks approach)	£5,000
Specialist input into service redesign	£5,000

Partners further contributed in kind in terms of staff resources, project management, accommodation, and event venues etc.

The project manager reported to the Suffolk Collaborative comprising:

- Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council
- Chief Executive of Suffolk PCT
- Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary
- Chief Executive of the University.

The visible sponsorship and support for the program from the participating organisations' leadership was critical to ensuring that the practitioners committed to the programme and made time available in their schedules to attend. One respondent commented that the senior managers' enthusiasm for the programme gave him 'permission' to spend time with people from other agencies on a programme with no predefined outputs.

Celebrating success: perspective of the third sector

"From the voluntary sector perspective it was a valuable experience, and we took some learning back in terms of how best to tell the story of the impact on the work that we do. We realise that we have to make the case to senior managers, commissioners and elected members for increasing collaboration and joint working. To make that case you need figures, but you also need succinct, quality stories."

So one of the outputs of the programme for us has been a series of short stories detailing the progress of our clients have made. The funny thing is, that having been prompted by the county council's Leadership Academy to start producing these stories, the Council has since seen them and been so impressed by the idea that they have decided to incorporate the same approach into their service."

Yvonne Durante, Anglia Care Trust

Challenges and lessons learnt

Taking a systems perspectives

One of the recurrent and underlying messages arising from the insight work is that practitioners need to be aware about each family's perspective regarding the services offered and their need to pool this 'insight' in order to build up a more comprehensive picture of that family.

The Leadership Academy also encouraged participants to step back and to look at services as a system – and how families behave within that system. In some cases, the old adage 'less is more' may apply

Seeing the services as a system, and supporting the sharing of knowledge informally across the front line, has fundamentally shifted the participants' mental models of families' needs, and how services need to be redesigned to better meet those needs. This drove many of the innovations which have resulted.

"Sometimes we need to be brave and offer less, because sometimes our intervention encourages dependency."

Jacci Spashett, Integrated Services Manager, Suffolk County Council

Costing services

To begin, the team spent considerable time reviewing the data logged by practitioners in their system. This proved to be challenging and consequently time-consuming, not least because the data was incomplete and fragmented.

The group found it difficult to make headway and the experience was quite frustrating. As a result, the Council decided to take a different approach and found that using professional estimates derived from the total hours of work per week was both quicker and more accurate than using data logged in systems.

Celebrating success

One of the recurrent themes of conversations across partners was the need for succinct stories that demonstrate the success of the work they do. (See text box above). Following the Leadership Academy, the Anglia Care Trust began to capture and share short stories that illustrated the success they were having with clients. Suffolk County Council have been so impressed by these stories, they have decided to emulate the same practice internally.

Partnership perspective

Participants report that they now have a better understanding of the:

- range of knowledge and capacity across the sector as well as the
- relationships necessary to facilitate networking of that knowledge going forward
- perspective, purpose and priorities of different agencies, and the work that they do

- value of good front-line skills, and of taking the time to understand the situation from the families' perspective
- opportunities to work together more closely – both formally and informally.

Attending the Academy

Many of the participants remarked that the value of the Academy was the frequent and rich contact they had with peers from other agencies. However, the same participants also commented that it was very difficult for them to attend the Academy two days a week for 10 weeks.

Although most of the participants attended most of the sessions, very few attended all. Some participants suggested spacing out the sessions fortnightly and conducting some of the meetings virtually. It is an open question whether this approach would have been as successful in generating trust between participants.

Action planning

The approach adopted by the Leadership Academy allowed participants to frame the question and set the agenda – and this instilled a sense of ownership of the process and its outcomes by participants. This sense of ownership is illustrated by the voluntary continuation of one of the workgroups focused on Community Networks.

However, although the meetings successfully sustained the relationship between participants, several participants have suggested that the subsequent sessions could have proven more productive had the group introduced some conventional project management processes – such as documenting a plan of action.

Next steps

Suffolk CYP services are continuing to seek efficiencies of £2.5 million in 2012/13 and 2013/14 respectively. The systematic management of workload and workflow enabled by the new operating model will make a major contribution to making these savings

Suffolk are also now a Phase 2 Community Budget area for Families with Multiple Problems, and the Council and partners are beginning to consider how they use Community Budgets to deliver a systematic and sustainable approach

Customer insight has also been written into the strategy the Council is developing to make the Troubled Families agenda.



Local Government Association

Local Government House

Smith Square

London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk

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