

Case studies

A few short case studies have been provided to demonstrate the types of outcomes that have been generated through the early stages of utilising this framework by the Communities Team. The examples are a selection only and not an exhaustive list of all the work undertaken or in progress across Chorley. More detailed background and impact information can be provided for these and other case studies.

Buttermere Parent and Toddler Group

This group aims to bring families together, to give them an opportunity to socialise and increase their confidence through play in a friendly, warm and safe environment. The group have been working hard with residents in the local area to build up trusted relationships with each other and services. Several residents have been identified as being vulnerable and in need of support and are able access help through the group which is more informal and often safer approach to accessing help when needed. Participants who attend also encourage residents who currently don't access the session to seek support from services due to their increased knowledge of the support available.

How this is different

Historically services would attempt to reach residents by holding their own sessions and try to advertise them locally. Uptake would often be poor due to several factors including:

- Lack of trust in services
- Stigma of attending a session to get help
- Ineffective communication channels – services not able to reach residents

This approach allowed the group to develop as a stand-alone group and decide which services they wanted to attend when they were ready. Trust was established between members of the group and services gradually. Residents can guide service providers in developing more effective ways to reach those who need help. This changes the relationship between service-users and service providers to a more co-designed / co-produced model and strengthens residents' relationships with services.

This group is meeting the needs of the community in wider ways such as running their own holiday clubs such as Fit and Fed which is developing their skills as well as using assets that exist in communities.

Clayton Residents Group

Similarly, in Clayton a new group of residents have come forward to develop a group so that they can start to influence change and create activities and opportunities for residents. The group have formed a constituted group which took a significant amount of time to develop due to the roles and requirements and the uncertainty this presented for those taking up positions within the group. An early project they influenced was the delivery of activity sessions for local children in the community centre to introduce them to the skills associated with sports such as boxing. Following this and with the support of the Community Engagement Officer they arranged for the Children and Families Service to run a positive parenting course, also from the community centre.

Other skill-based courses have been delivered which is helping the residents to volunteer and make use of the café area within the community centre such as Basic Food Hygiene and Emergency First Aid. This enabled the volunteers to hold sessions throughout the summer for families to come together and in a similar way to the Buttermere Mums project, they decided which services they wanted to invite to attend. The group have raised money for charity and as a result of improved local contacts, relationships and trust, a service to support those affected by drugs and alcohol is operating a satellite service from the community centre.

How this is different

It is likely that previously the length of time needed to establish the resident's group would have been classed as disengagement or reluctance and it may have been abandoned. An ability to spend time understanding the fears and motivations of residents allowed us to provide intensive support for a longer period to complete this phase. This built trust and demonstrated the commitment of the council to support this group. Another similar common theme in this project is the residents desire to decide which services they felt the community needed. As they are influencing the decision, they are encouraging attendance and raising awareness of the support available which is generating higher levels of attendance than previously seen when this type of service has been made available in the past.

Unlike previous examples of community development work, we have not moved back from providing support at the point a group has been established which although is successful in other circumstances, is often the point at which issues arise within a group where this type of engagement in their community is new and personally challenging.

Rural Areas – Health events

Through widespread and diverse conversations with residents across many of the rural areas mini health events have been arranged to meet the needs of residents who want to find out about the types of health services and advice available. These events are attended by people who are not necessarily unwell but are maybe considering extra steps to remain independent and physically active. These events act as a prevention approach and include information on home adaptations, physical health and support for self-management of health conditions. The events are held locally and in village halls and are relevant to all ages within a community.

How this is different

Health events may not have been prioritised in rural areas as statistically they may not be classed as high need. Health events are also usually held in town or city centre locations and people living in rural areas can miss out on vital advice due to the location. In addition, individual services find it hard to reach residents in these areas to raise awareness of their service. Working with the resident to set the event up helps to increase awareness of the event significantly through established informal and formal networks and communication methods.