



**Oldham**  
Council



# Oldham Public Health

Annual Report 2017

A health check on the population in Oldham

## Social Connection and Thriving Communities

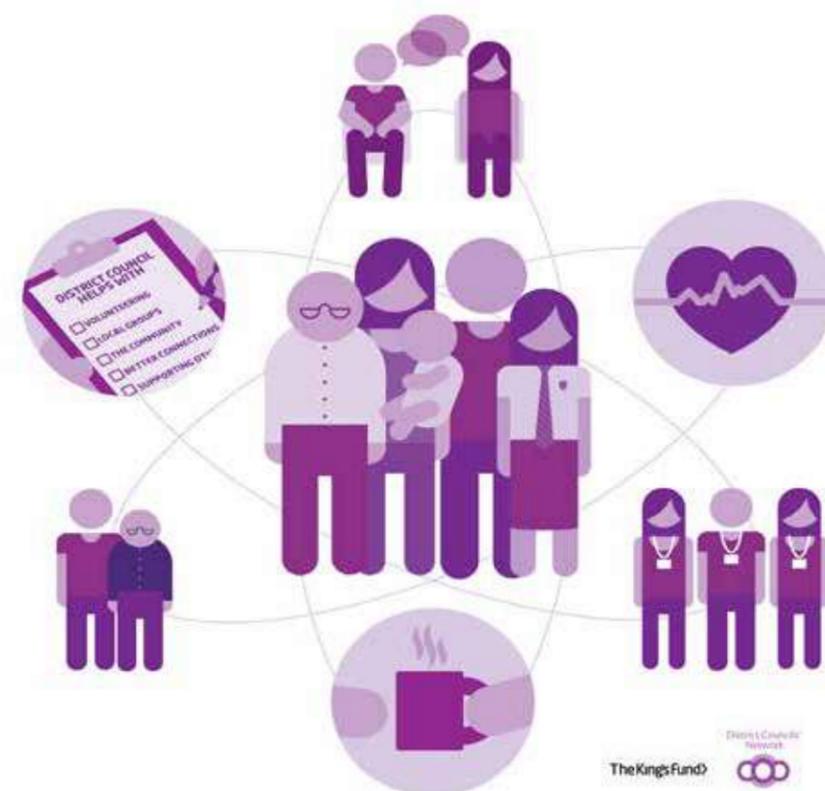
Oldham's Locality Plan in response to the devolution of health and social care responsibilities to Greater Manchester included Thriving Communities as one of the four key transformational programmes. This was a deliberate move in recognition of the power that resides in communities to make change happen.

The rationale for the programme is in recognising that active engaged citizens are the bedrock for empowered communities and social cohesion which in turn are core to reducing inequalities in health. A fundamental cause of inequalities in health is the relative lack of control and powerlessness of disadvantaged groups. Activity that can support disadvantaged groups to affect the use of public resources (e.g. participatory budgeting) will lead to improved health and wellbeing. The process of getting involved, together with others, builds upon social capital that leads to health benefits: feeling able to influence and control the living environment has psychological benefits and reduces the adverse health effects of stress.

Promoting active citizenship is about being involved in the community, residents having their say and taking part in decisions that affect them. It is a key part of creating an environment that supports good health.

The Thriving Communities Programme must be a development from everything that we have in Oldham that is good in this area. Earlier in this report the extent of voluntary activity in Oldham was noted. It is this willingness of people in Oldham to act and the evidence that taking such action is good for health and wellbeing that inspired the inclusion of the Thriving Communities programme in the development of a new approach to the health and social care system in Oldham. It is part of that emerging system and it is a priority in the Oldham Plan for partners across Oldham to support. The aim is to support people and communities in Oldham to work with their strengths in innovation, passion and commitment to double or treble the quantity of such activity across Oldham.

That this is achievable is evident from a few examples of what people in Oldham are doing. The following are examples of initiatives that have arisen from people living in Oldham following their passions and linking with other people to create something special.



Well-connected communities are good for health. Those with strong social relationships have a 50% higher survival rate than those with poor social relationships.

District councils are close to their communities, parish and town councils, and actively support volunteering, local voluntary groups and the development of community hubs.

## Inspiring a women powered pathway and a thriving women's community

### Inspire Women Oldham

In 2004 I began working in Oldham leading on Social Enterprise development (Oldham Collective-OMBC). In 2007 following the loss of funding I developed the Oldham Collective into a Social Enterprise; The Collective Partnership. The Collective Partnership developed with the aim of bringing like-minded organisations and individuals together to co-produce ideas and innovation in the community. Asset and place based working being at the heart of everything we do. Having spent over 25 years working in the third sector my passion and interests are focused on social value, community self organisation and the opportunities it brings, particularly to women in re-creating services and places they would want to live and bring up children. I believe that harnessing the assets that women have, creating both the space and culture for women to develop for themselves is key to sustaining thriving communities. My own journey through mental illness made me question how I was categorised and what I was offered to "fix me", and was one of the factors leading me to develop Finding Me, the Inspire Pathway and later Inspire Women Oldham.

In 2012 I began working alongside a group of local women delivering Finding Me. This journey led to the creation of the Inspire Women Network and later the development of an empowering and nurturing space for women in the centre of Oldham. Our approach is based on values, beliefs and purpose; requiring only that we are present, available and willing to grow and work alongside other women in a non-judgemental way. For almost five years we haven't stopped believing in the power of women helping other women, our values and ethos built on collective participation and ownership. In 2016 we secured £250k financial support from The National Lottery through the Women and Girls Fund, establishing an amazing space for women in Oldham town centre. Now happily settled in the new Centre we work to encourage all women to have a voice and co-produce services that overcome loneliness, isolation and disempowerment. Many of the women who engage in the centre have very long histories of medical and non-medical interventions, and almost all lacked positive social connections, a key factor in terms of lasting wellbeing.



The journey for Inspire Women Oldham (Inspiring Futures Partnership CIC) has been a collaborative one. This included foundations that are built on recognising women's assets with the ability to contribute to their own and other's journeys. Recognising their inherent strengths and contributions has been critical in shaping responses going forward. Inspire Women is a great example of co-producing – from a small group of women who engaged on Finding Me almost five years ago to now being viewed as a key partner locally, being part of the Early Help offer, gaining pledges from Women Leaders across Oldham, along with local and national award recognition for our pioneering approach. There is much interest nationally in terms of our structure that provides a pathway from which a woman can become a member initially, growing into an Associate role and later an Associate plus paid role. The structure is based on a cooperative asset model, that is gender specific and where leadership is amongst the many.



This structure ensures that the organisation sustains its collaborative/participatory approach. The Framework is based on a set of beliefs that recognises individual gifts and the importance of social connections, voice and place; inviting women to adapt and evolve the framework, further developing new uses and new connections within their communities. This approach encourages the creation of listening spaces, redefines power and begins from a place of equality and human connection.

As we move through 2017 one of our hopes is that organisations like Inspire Women who sit outside of mainstream health services are recognised and considered for both their value and impact. Mobilised and empowered women do not choose to act on the same issues or priorities of decision makers. The proposed devolution of power that exists within the notion of preventative work does not filter down. Inspire's approach considers the role/involvement of the woman and is designed to both encourage and enable her to be self directed. Working towards getting women's voices heard in Oldham is a large part of the future ambitions of Inspire. This is what they said to The National Lottery:

*" we want The National Lottery and other women to know that we are ordinary women who want to help other women see how valuable their lived experience is; we didn't set out to be where we are today; we never considered ourselves experts or professionals but our way has worked for us; we have always had a voice as individuals on this journey; we didn't have one before, we were seen as victims by everyone else; this was the space we became visible, where what had happened to us was seen as a strength not a weakness- we didn't need fixing or rescuing- this was the space where we put our "magic" together and this "magic" is recreated every time a woman joins us"*

**Inspire Women Associates**  
Sally Bonnie, Director The Collective Partnership,  
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Partners across Oldham, including the social housing and voluntary sectors, are working to promote community engagement and volunteering in the borough through wellbeing and health initiatives that include:

- BGreen (Coldhurst and St Mary's wards) – using an opportunity of installing energy efficient improvements in 1,400 homes to also address wider social issues in the area including health and getting people into work and, along the way, winning national awards in recognition of the value of this work.
- Get Oldham Growing – encouraging people to get involved in growing, cooking and selling local food and now expanding into a bigger programme that includes a greater focus on social enterprise and developments such as the Oldham Food Network and the Junk Food Oldham. This is now known as Growing Oldham Feeding Ambition to reflect the development into social enterprise and is set to become a major multi sectoral programme that is sustainable in Oldham

#### Recommended actions:

- Keeping the focus of the Thriving Communities programme, and investment plan, on working with communities, on providing the support mechanisms to generate and regenerate insight from communities into solutions that come from communities and for which funding support is available.
- Support the Growing Oldham Feeding Ambition programme to be ambitious to achieve an alternative model of food production for Oldham based upon community ownership and social interaction.

### Public Service Reform and a New Relationship with the Public

Oldham is a Co-operative Borough. This means that 'everyone does their bit and everyone benefits'. This is driving us to move away from a 'professional knows best' paradigm towards working with our citizens in a more supportive, brokerage role, helping them to solve problems and asking them what they can do for themselves.

We are changing the ways in which the public sector workforce provides services and changing the ways in which the public use the services and their expectations of the service provision. Generic service provision at the frontline seems to be a key to success. Empowering frontline staff to take decisions with clients about what is needed at that point and then acting on that decision is producing good outcomes.

Trust and relationships as ever are key to the reform – trust between partners and trust in the community to take control and do things for themselves. This is about designing new relationships with people and communities and service providers. It is not sufficient just to design new services.

#### We are taking this co-operative approach on a number of projects that include:

- Early Help – providing intervention at the earliest point to people who have a range of complex issues and are dependent on services. Early help will reduce the barriers to school attendance and employment that include crime, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and drug and alcohol use.
- Place based working in Holts and Lees and in Chadderton where the focus is on working with people in an area to resolve problems and how to integrate service provision.

#### Recommended action:

- Focus on a new relationship that supports communities to do things for themselves as the goal of public service reform.

### Public Health in Primary Care in Oldham

Primary care services – family doctors, practice nurses, pharmacists, dentists and others – are the part of the NHS that sees most people on a daily basis. It is also the part of the service that has the most potential to improve health and wellbeing.

Public health and primary care have a common goal of achieving the best health and wellbeing for their population; however, historically they have often operated independently of one another. Partnership working between public health and primary care can result in substantial and lasting improvements in the health of individuals and communities. Oldham currently has a wide range of programmes that involve public health and primary care working as partners. This is often as a part of another programme of work. We are looking to further develop a practical approach to putting public health in primary care in Oldham. Current activity in Oldham is summarised below.

#### Oldham Intelligent Learning Lab

The Oldham Intelligent Learning Lab is an opportunity for those working in primary care to work alongside partners within the health and social care system in Oldham. The Oldham intelligent learning lab is a fully funded, unique and accredited CPD project over a period of twelve weeks.

Participants in the current Oldham learning lab cohort include:

- GPs
- Practice managers
- Cluster business partners
- Oldham Council: public health, leisure, adult social care
- CCG governing body members
- First Choice homes
- Pennine Care Foundation trust

Participants work with colleagues in a multidisciplinary team, within their locality cluster to enhance their public health knowledge, hone their public health skills and contribute to the development of a specific locality asset based prevention plan for the local community.