

Early intervention redesign in Wolverhampton



3. The Revelation

The data revealed some key insights:

- 41% of Looked After Children were not previously known to the council
- 52% of all children who became looked after do so after reaching five years of age but only 34% of early help assessments are working with the over fives
- 68% of children became looked after due to abuse or neglect (root cause of demand)

A set of design principles were agreed that went on to be used to develop the new operating model.

“The principles were very much designed and owned by Wolverhampton staff. iMPOWER enabled staff, stakeholders and service users to consider their findings constructively and without blame, so that we could really re-focus on what we wanted to offer from our early help services.”

1. The Spark

Like most councils across the UK, the City of Wolverhampton Council’s Children’s Services was facing rising demand for its services against a backdrop of budget constraints.

The demand was reflected in the number of children in care, which was considerably higher than comparator authorities; it was more than twice the national average rate per 10,000 of the under-18 population.

The council had already undertaken a programme of work to reduce the numbers of children in care, but knew that it would only take them so far; a system-wide approach to managing demand was needed.

Together, the council and iMPOWER embarked on to the next phase of the council’s transformation journey: designing a new operating model for early intervention and prevention.

4. The Results

The co-designed new model for early intervention and prevention included key features of:

- A new 0-18 family-centred model, working with whole families
- An integrated approach focusing on flexible and responsive interventions
- Resources aligned to local need (through a new “service development” role, which will provide data and insight to understand local trends and inform commissioning decisions)

The future service will be managed from eight locality-based ‘Strengthening Families Hubs’ with a much greater focus on community outreach. Strengthening Families Workers will be based at the hubs, building key relationships and working with families before issues escalate.

“The partnership we developed with iMPOWER was great – it was a true collaboration, based on openness, honesty and co-production.”

2. The Chemistry

From the outset this was a collaborative project; City of Wolverhampton Council clearly understood what they wanted to achieve and it was iMPOWER’s role to bring a fresh perspective and challenge, expertise, facilitate discussions and build project momentum.

“The work undertaken in partnership with iMPOWER has been transformational in Wolverhampton! We were already on an improvement journey, but the open and creative relationship we developed with iMPOWER, using their experience, demand management methodology and project drive, has meant we have reviewed and re-designed a whole system for early intervention and prevention that should ensure a sustainable, effective, outcome-based model for the future.”

- Emma Bennett, Service Director

5. The Impact

The new EH model delivers improved outcomes, secured £2m savings, and acted as a catalyst for broader programme savings of £5.8m in 15/16, and £6.4m in 16/17. It also contributed to a reduction in the overall Looked After Children numbers; from 802 to 626. In March 2017 City of Wolverhampton children’s services were judged to be ‘Good’ by Ofsted. The new Early Help offer, and targeted edge of care services, were highlighted as particular strengths by the inspectors. iMPOWER are proud to have played a part in their journey.

CONTACT

For more information on this case study or our wider work in children’s services, please contact Olly Swann at oswann@impower.co.uk / 020 7017 8030

Our approach

iMPower develops solutions to complex social challenges that are bespoke to each client. However, our approach and our values remain constant

People with first hand **experience** in their field

Using behavioural insight to **manage demand**

Sustainable change

Impact: improving practice, saving money

Openness: sharing our emergent thinking

Understand the **whole system**

Users at the heart of design and delivery

Always **co-designed**

Clients **better equipped** to take on challenge of 21st Century public services



iMPower undertake review of prevention services. New model re-design project starts August 2015

Data analysis and workshops to understand root causes of demand for children in care

41% of Looked After Children were not previously known to the council; 68% of children became looked after due to abuse or neglect (root cause of demand)

New model focused on community outreach, integrated working via eight 'Strengthening Families Hubs'

Working with teams on workforce development and how roles will change for the front line

Workstreams set-up and lead by Wolverhampton staff

New model will contribute £1.97m of savings towards the council's wider children's transformation programme

Council has the tools and frameworks in place to take the programme forward

Case study to share results of our partnership. Project ends February 2016