

Making a difference with the unusual suspects in Bury

A short summary of our work for Bury Health and Wellbeing Board

Introduction

Summary written by Claire Haigh, Co-Founder and Director of Collaborate Out Loud CIC and Matthew Kidd, Director of Creative Inclusion Ltd. Both Claire and Matt have been working in Bury since 2019 to create spaces for seldom heard voices to be heard and spaces for the formal system to come together with communities and networks.

What we have done

The Elephants Trail Bury A brief history of the project and the outcomes Achieved

The Elephant's Trail is a project which was initiated six years ago to understand the conditions which allow for policymakers and professionals to work effectively in partnership with people and communities, in particular people who're experiencing multiple disadvantage. At the time many people in positions of power were speaking at events about the concept of coproduction and working in equal partnership 'doing with our communities and not to them', the Elephant in the room was that many people from communities who were present at these events didn't feel that the partnership was in any way equal. A small series of working groups were formed with people from a range of roles across the system, looking at whether we could apply the principles of coproduction to social issues in Greater Manchester such as families in the criminal justice system and the use of 'Spice' and other Novel Psychoactive Substances. From these working groups, we came up with six principles for working together.

1. Strengths, everyone has skills, knowledge, experience and many other qualities to offer
2. Power, share ownership, leadership and support between everyone
3. Relationships, positive relationships require time, respect and trust
4. Diversity, the process of working together and the language used must make sense for everyone
5. Knowledge, clearly value both lived experience and professional or 'learned knowledge'
6. Testing, being open to continually learn, adapt and refine what does and does not work

In 2019 The Elephants Trail selected Bury as one of its sites to test these six principles out. We recruited 9 individuals from communities in Bury to work as collaborators to help us adapt and refine the way we approach social issues such as homelessness and mental health. All of the collaborators have experienced different forms of social harms such as substance abuse, mental health, being a victim of violence and abuse and being a victim of discrimination on the basis of race, religion or sexuality. Since completing training with Collaborate Out Loud in early 2020, the individuals trained as collaborators have:

- Formed a collective called Bury Craftivists, running participatory activities with people on issues such as alcohol exposed pregnancies and living in temporary accommodation.
- Formed People over Profits Radcliffe CIC, a social enterprise which helps people to build on their strengths and aspirations. POP CIC are now running spoken word events, creating asset maps for communities and offering one to one coaching sessions.
- Formed a social enterprise called One Step Bury CIC which offers holistic support to people to support with physical and mental wellbeing. This organisation is being socially prescribed to via the Beacon Service and referred to by Motiv8. They have been helping people move into volunteer and paid roles by helping increase people's confidence.
- Taken on a disused council plot of land as a community allotment
- Published a series of podcasts about community responses and community activism across the borough
- Taken part in a participatory film project alongside The Guardian
- Co-written Bury's homelessness strategy
- Provided peer advocacy support to people who are homeless at The Manna House
- Taken on the task of graphic recording for Lankelly Chase's GM learning community
- Helped to facilitate hub meetings and to draft role profiles for Bury's community champion scheme
- Launched a project to tackle youth criminal exploitation

Please see the two links below which give more context around some of the work and what it is aiming to achieve

[Made in Bury YouTube Video](#)

We made a documentary about poverty by turning its subjects into film-makers

Sharing Power in Bury through Kind and Connected Communities

In June 2019 we started to do work in Bury with communities to help them have the skills to work differently with system leaders. This work is ongoing beyond the GMHSCP commission and the sketchnote below shows the things that the community achieved throughout the pandemic. These themes were collated into this 'Thank You' sketchnote through insight work that was done to understand the difference our work had made to communities. Two key activities that came out of this work were:

- a strong working relationship with the Elephant's Trail Bury, and the development of the community collaborator roles that are going from strength to strength today
- Community Collaborators in each of the five neighborhoods that started because of Covid-19 and to link the community hubs and have now turned into longer term collaborations between community members and groups.
- A legacy of connections and relationships that are allowing for different conversations and ways of doing things



Future plans

We have found it this week that we have secured just under £100k of funding for Bury to enable us to invest time and energy over the next 12 months in cementing the great work that has already been done as well as spreading the work to other area across the system. The table below summarises the activities we will undertake. These will take place at a neighbourhood level as well as Bury wide activities.

Supporting the public sector workforce to shift how it works with communities	Spaces to build connections and relationships between communities and public services	Building community capacity for change and co-production
A Co-production/design process to sense check the proposed structure and tweak/change elements were necessary		
Visually capture the journey, learning, and themes as we go		
Reverse mentoring – senior leaders committing time to understanding members of communities of place and identity in Bury (A critical friend perspective, providing support and challenge)	Establishing a Bury Citizens Panel that has diverse voices and can help to shape all elements of this work alongside system.	Support emerging community collaboratives in each of the 5 neighbourhoods to develop and work with public services through facilitated development workshops and skills development activities

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<p>Developing a community first mindset development programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 sessions over 6 months (including spaces that are hosted in the community by the community) • Learning circles in each neighborhood • Practical take away activities 	<p>Develop an inclusive messaging group, learning from the work that has happened through Action Together in Rochdale</p>	<p>The training of a further group of community collaborators, starting with communities not fully represented in the first cohort (e.g. BAME, Jewish and Polish communities) and working with them on their terms.</p>
<p>MaD Theatre Production to explore the impact of different ways of working with communities</p>	<p>Training and support for everyone entering into these spaces so they understand the context and parameters of their involvement (no wheeling in and out members of a community of place or identity at different stages of the decision-making process)</p>	<p>Developing coaching skills and capacity amongst the community</p>
<p>Practical tools and resources as to support the health and social workforce to co-produce with communities</p>	<p>Collaborative circles on neighbourhood challenges to utilise the strengths of all parties in creating new ways of working (bring people together to problem solve that would not normally be brought together)</p>	<p>Bury Craftivists will work alongside a group of people who don't engage with mainstream services to help them articulate how their trust could be repaired and restored</p>
<p>A reflection space for the senior leadership team to listen to people's experiences of the work and enable changes that will catalyse new ways of working.</p>	<p>A set of principles for co-producing with communities that can be spread beyond the neighbourhood teams</p>	<p>Dedicated community collaborator support in each neighbourhood to help work through the day-to-day challenges that this work will encounter.</p>
Momentum and sustainability of activities beyond the 12-month funding		
Evaluation report and video		
GM Wide learning and sharing spaces (events) and resources		

How we can support Bury to make these the default way of working across all sectors and services

Going forward alongside the GM Workforce Collaborative we are able to help teams, organisations and systems across Bury to work different with communities, in practice this could mean many things from creating space for conversations around team away days to be alongside a team as they co-produce a service with the unusual suspects. We know the value of lived experience and we have a collective of people who are skilled and able to support a different type of relationship between public services and communities.

Get in touch with us if you want to discuss this work further

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