

Improving Social Value connections in Oldham

One of the key areas of focus of the VCSE Commissioning and Investment Group is to influence how Social Value is thought of, measured and secured by commissioners and procurement colleagues. This case study describes how Oldham is working collaboratively to connect up private and public sector offers of support with their local community, and the pivotal role that VCSE Local Infrastructure plays in this.

Action Together, as the VCSE Local Infrastructure Organisation for Oldham, play a number of vital roles in the locality's approach to securing Social Value from local businesses and organisations, that meet local community need.

Building on their work to grow Employer Supported Volunteering in Oldham, Action Together Oldham has worked in partnership with Oldham Council and wider partners to create a broader understanding of the local Social Value asks from the community and offers from businesses and the public sector. In addition to Oldham's Needs Analysis, key partners have created simple database, managed by Action Together staff, which pulls together the intelligence they routinely gather on "offers and asks" for the locality.

Action Together are included within the Oldham Social Value Framework as the key contact for organisations wishing to connect with the community to develop their Social Value offer. Local Infrastructure staff use the database as an intelligence source when providing 1:1 support to connect and develop proposals between businesses and their local community. They also use the database to track when matches occur.

Overall, the work has meant that the Oldham system better understands "offers and asks" for the locality, and has a way of tracking successful matches. Next steps for this work include building the database functionality into their Customer Relationship Management System to provide greater efficiency and reporting ability; and working with Oldham Council to better understand what happens as a result of successful matches; and in particular, the impact for the community.



Learning from VCSE Local Infrastructure involvement in Oldham's Social Value Framework

1. VCSE Local Infrastructure organisations are best placed to act as the link and facilitator between local business and the community, due to:
 - a. The insight and connections that they have with their community, and
 - b. The capacity building function that they offer to local groups and organisations.
2. Identifying and tracking community asks and supporting matching discussions and proposal development all take local infrastructure resource, which needs to be funded through the core infrastructure contract or agreement.