

Neighbourhood Consultation on Employment & Skills in Langworthy – April 2009



Summary report

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project overview

The following report is based on findings taken from a local research and consultation project across 3 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the Langworthy ward of Salford.

The project took place between January to March 2009 and involved a team of 14 local residents being recruited, trained and supported in community research and consultation in order to conduct a series of interviews with residents from those LSOAs on a number of employment related issues.

The project sought to gain a greater insight into the local geography, resident perceptions and public service delivery of each area to support the development of a new local Working Neighbourhoods Team for the area.¹

A total of 204 residents participated in the consultation across the 3 LSOAs. In addition to the main part of the consultation, the project also incorporated case study material from members of the community research team who volunteered to share their experiences of employment related issues on film in order to form a short DVD film.

Salford City Council commissioned the Seedley & Langworthy Trust (SALT) to manage and coordinate all aspects of the project.

1.2 Background information – extent of the challenge at a local level

The Langworthy ward contains 4 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which feature within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) amongst the 41 neighbourhoods with the highest concentrations of worklessness across the city.

The average benefit claimant rate for the 4 LSOAs in Langworthy is 45.87% in comparison to the Salford average of 20.6% and the GB average of 14.2% over the same period. The table below illustrates the level of claimant rates for each LSOAs. For the purposes of this project – activity was focused on 3 of these areas, LSOAs *13, *15 & *26.

Claimant rates in selected LSOAs in Langworthy

(% working age population)

Map Ref	LSOA Code	2003 Ward	Claimant Rate	JSA Rate	IB Rate	LP Rate
*13	EO1005655	Langworthy	53.53%	12.06%	29.10%	7.24%
14	EO1005656	Langworthy	29.85%	3.69%	16.69%	5.62%
*15	EO1005658	Langworthy	54.67%	8.79%	28.93%	11.35%
*26	EO1005682	Pendleton	45.43%	9.29%	28.87%	3.47%

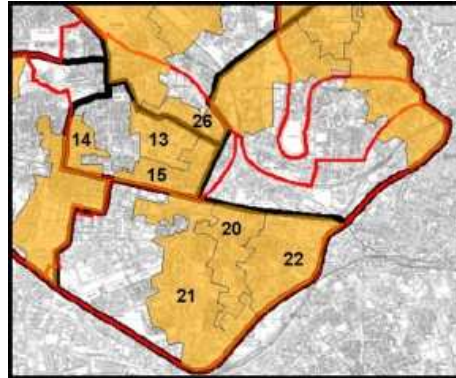
Source: DWP Nov 2006 – Nov 2007/ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2005

The consultation activity in these areas included Salford Precinct, Clarendon and Sutton estates. The consultation also included the area between Cross Lane and Albion Way which sits just outside of LSOAs 13 and 15.

1. Working Neighbourhoods Teams will be launched across areas of Greater Manchester in April 2009. They will have a clear focus on breaking down 'cultures' of worklessness and low skills through a highly integrated and mainstreamed 'whole public service' approach at neighbourhood level.

Ordsall & Langworthy benefit claim profile

The highlighted LSOAs for the consultation activity are shown on the map below:-



7 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Ordsall and Langworthy feature within the LAA amongst the 41 neighbourhoods with the highest concentrations of worklessness across the city. National Indicator 153 defines the worst performing neighbourhoods as those LSOAs with 25% or more of the of the working age population in receipt of DWP out-of-work benefits.

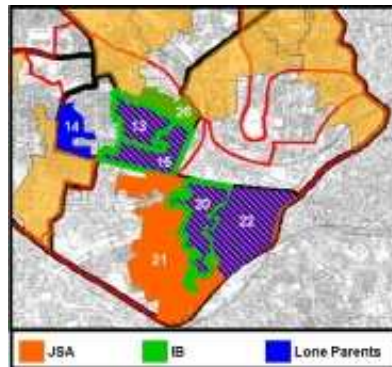
The average benefit claimant rate for the 7 featured LSOAs in Ordsall and Langworthy is **42.50%** in comparison to the Salford average of 20.6% and GB average of 14.2% over the same period. This is equivalent to **2,733** people reliant on DWP benefits and potentially affects in excess of **5,000** children.

LSOAs 15 and 13 in Langworthy are the **two worst performing neighbourhoods in the city** with more than 50% of the working age population in receipt of DWP out-of-work benefits. In fact, 4 out of the 10 worst performing neighbourhoods in the city are located in Ordsall and Langworthy (15, 13, 20, 26) each with a benefit claimant rate in excess of 40% of the working age population.

Map Ref	LSOA Code	2003 Ward	(% working age population)			
			Claimant Rate	JSA Rate	IB Rate	LP Rate
13	E01005655	Langworthy	53.53%	12.06%	29.10%	7.24%
14	E01005656	Langworthy	29.85%	3.69%	16.69%	5.62%
15	E01005658	Langworthy	54.67%	8.79%	28.93%	11.35%
20	E01005667	Ordsall	46.94%	7.92%	25.56%	8.33%
21	E01005668	Ordsall	32.14%	4.56%	18.10%	5.79%
22	E01005669	Ordsall	34.91%	5.74%	17.57%	7.15%
26	E01005682	Pendleton	45.43%	9.29%	28.87%	3.47%

Source: DWP Nov 2006 – Nov 2007/ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2005

Customer profile



Benefit claimant rates are consistently high across all three main benefit types with a spatial concentration in the Langworthy neighbourhoods LSOAs 13 and 15. The hub of Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants is in the northerly neighbourhoods of Langworthy bordering East Salford whilst pockets of Lone Parents claiming Income Support (LP) are found on the southern border of Langworthy and in to Ordsall.

Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)

- All featured LSOAs in Ordsall and Langworthy have JSA claimant rates that are significantly higher than the Salford rate of 2.8% and GB rate of 2.2% over the same period.
- 5 LSOAs have a JSA claimant rate in excess of 5% (13, 26, 15 and 20).
- LSOA 13 in Langworthy has the highest JSA claimant rate in Salford (12.06%).
- JSA rates are also high in LSOAs 26 (9.29%) and LSOA 15 (8.79%) in Langworthy.

Incapacity Benefit (IB)

- All featured LSOAs in Ordsall and Langworthy have IB claimant rates that are significantly higher than the Salford rate of 11.7% and GB rate of 7.2%.
- 4 LSOAs have an IB claimant rate in excess of 20% (13, 15, 26 and 20).
- IB rates are highest in LSOAs 13 (29.06%), 15 (28.93%) and LSOA 25 (28.87%) in Langworthy.

Lone Parents (LP)

- All featured LSOAs in Ordsall and Langworthy have LP claimant rates that are higher than the Salford rate of 3.1% and GB rate of 2.1%.
- 4 LSOAs have a LP claimant rate in excess of 7% (15, 20, 13 and 22).
- LSOA 15 in Langworthy has the highest LP claimant rate in Salford (11.35%).
- LP rates are also high in LSOAs 20 (8.33%) and 22 (7.15%) in Ordsall and LSOA 13 (7.24%) in Langworthy.

Map Ref	LSOA Code	2003 Ward	Male	Male Claimant Rate	Female	Female Claimant Rate
13	E01005655	Langworthy	270	52.43%	174	55.33%
14	E01005656	Langworthy	109	25.29%	124	35.46%
15	E01005658	Langworthy	205	52.56%	223	56.76%
20	E01005667	Ordsall	223	45.04%	200	49.26%
21	E01005668	Ordsall	165	29.10%	161	35.99%
22	E01005669	Ordsall	188	31.62%	185	39.03%
26	E01005682	Pendleton	358	51.22%	150	35.80%

Source: DWP Nov 2006 – Nov 2007/ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2005

Gender

- Male and Female claimant rates exceed 25% across all 10 featured LSOAs.
- In Langworthy, LSOAs 13 and 15 have benefit claimant rates in excess of 50% for both working age males and females.
- Benefit claimant rates for women are significantly higher than that for men in all but one of the featured neighbourhoods (LSOA 26 in Langworthy) where LP rates are lowest.

LAA Targets

Map Ref	LSOA Code	Ward	LAA Targets			Reduction in numbers
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
13	E01005655	Langworthy	47.91%	44.56%	41.20%	87
14	E01005656	Langworthy	24.29%	22.59%	20.89%	46
15	E01005658	Langworthy	47.65%	44.32%	40.98%	84
20	E01005667	Ordsall	41.80%	38.87%	35.94%	83
21	E01005668	Ordsall	29.23%	27.19%	25.14%	64
22	E01005669	Ordsall	30.44%	28.31%	26.17%	73
26	E01005682	Pendleton	40.16%	37.35%	34.54%	100

Source – Salford Agreement 2008-2011

Those highlighted areas for consultation are also situated near some of the highest concentrations of public service employment and skills provision within the city of Salford.

1.3 The role of the Seedley & Langworthy Trust (SALT)

The Seedley & Langworthy Trust (SALT) was commissioned by Salford City Council to manage and coordinate this project. In response to the brief and within the project proposal SALT outlined a community research approach to delivering this work which would involve facilitating and managing a team of local community researchers from across the 3 LSOAs and neighbouring areas to assist SALT with gathering informative neighbourhood data on each area in relation to employment and skills.

In addition to this element of the project SALT also recruited a local media team and independent film-maker to make a short documentary film – highlighting case studies from members of the community research team who volunteered to share their recent experiences of employment

related issues on camera. The intention here was to provide a greater insight into the personal impact these issues have on individuals and the challenges they face with the current employment and skills provision.

1.4 Community research approach – developing the community research team

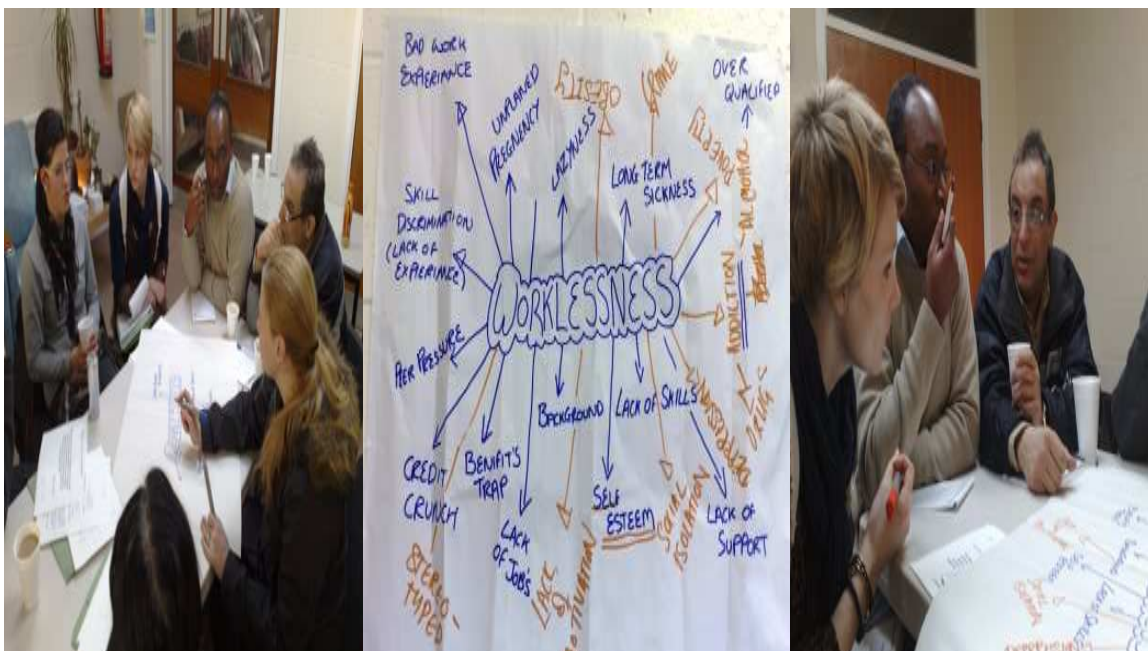
SALT recruited a community research team comprising of 14 (Salford based) residents – the majority of which live across the 3 selected areas. Recruiting local people to work as community researchers on this project was seen as being crucial in gaining a greater knowledge and understanding of each area’s local geography, resident perceptions and public service delivery in relation to employment and skills. This familiarity with both the areas and residents was seen as being vital to building trust and confidence around what is essentially a fairly complex and potentially sensitive issue.

In addition, it was a further intention to actively recruit local residents with current or recent experiences of the employment and benefits systems in order to fully understand and engage with residents through the consultation process. In particular, residents who were in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) 2 & Lone Parent (LP) rate were actively encouraged to participate in the project.

Community research training

Once residents had been recruited to the project they attended a 3 day training course in community research skills that covered the following themes and topics:-

- Role of community research & consultation
- Introduction to different types of research & consultation methods
- Analysis of project brief and main issue – “Worklessness”
- Research ethics – Market Research Society Code of Conduct and Health & Safety of Community Researchers
- Project planning



2. Incapacity Benefit has since been reformed by Government and replaced by the Employment and Support Allowance.

On successfully completing the training course the researchers then split into smaller research teams to cover each of the selected LSOAs. The team sought to consult with a minimum of 5% of each area's total population – representing a minimum of 201 residents being engaged in the consultation process.

The table below highlights each area's population against the desired response rates and number targets:-

LSOA No.	Total population	10% population	5% population target
26 – 024D	1,592	159	79
13 – 024A	1,136	113	56
15 – 024B	1,337	133	66
		Total	201

2. Methodology

2.1 Langworthy Employment & Skills Survey

The main consultation method which was adopted was the Langworthy Employment & Skills Survey (see Appendix 1). In order to maintain consistency the questions framework for the survey mirrored largely those that had been used previously as part of the 'Spotlighting' worklessness project in Little Hulton. The main themes from the survey focused on:-

- **Employment** – current status & perceptions of local employment opportunities
- **Spotlight on the issue** – norms & values towards employment and skills & cause and effect/impact on the individual, family & wider community
- **Spotlight on support services** – service awareness & take-up of support services

The research team conducted the survey through a series of door-step interviews with residents across those areas.

2.2 Case studies – short DVD film

In addition to the survey there was a general consensus between both the commissioner and SALT that it was important to try and capture through the research process some “real-life” stories and case study material of participants current and/or recent experiences of the employment and skills provision.

As a result, members of the community research team volunteered to share their experiences and tell their stories on camera through a semi-structured interview facilitated by a member of the SALT project team. Each story was captured and recorded by an independent film-maker who had been commissioned by SALT to produce a short DVD film – highlighting the central characters and their stories. This provided a significant opportunity to further explore and expand some of the issues formulated through the survey but also to highlight some additional emergent themes and key messages to arise from the project.

3. Setting the scene – Worklessness in Salford

3.1 Policy context

Worklessness has continued to develop and maintain significant political concern and priority over the last 5 years with a number of policy reforms geared towards trying to tackle worklessness both at national and local levels. This has been reflected in a number of key policy

initiatives targeted at worklessness and welfare reform policy, some of which are highlighted below:-

Worklessness and welfare reform policy

Policy	Date	Key messages
No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility	Aug 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * New expectations on benefit claimants * The replacement of Incapacity Benefit with the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) * Getting more parents into work. Lone parents with older children will be required to actively look for and take up employment * The abolition of Income Support and its replacement with the dual benefit system of JSA and the new ESA
Employment and support allowance regulations	March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) will replace Incapacity Benefit and Income Support * Incapacity Benefit and Income Support will continue to be paid to existing customers
Working for a healthier tomorrow – Review by Dame C. Black	March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Explores links between poor health and worklessness * The review advocates early interventions to prevent short-term sickness absence from progressing to long-term sickness absence

Longlands, Jackson, Brown & Smith (2009:93)

Such policy reforms have encouraged local authorities to become increasingly aware of the need for a more holistic approach to tackling worklessness and this is now reflected in a more integrated and coordinated approach from a range of public service partners at local level.

A framework of approaches for delivery

A more common shift in emphasis and approach towards tackling the worklessness agenda is being adopted across local authorities and is reflected in the table below:-

Frontline Project Deliverer	Types of approaches	Core Partners
3 rd sector:-	Outreach	Jobcentre Plus
Charities	Social Marketing	Providers of advice services
Social Enterprises	Retention/progression	Housing Associations
Development Trusts	Employer engagement	Local authority
Community organisations	Brokerage & support	PCT
	Health/well-being led	Condition Manager
	Training-based	Childcare Providers

Longlands et al (2009:41)

3.2 Local context – Spotlighting worklessness in East Salford

Salford City Council has responded to this shift in policy direction and practice towards the worklessness agenda by adopting a series of strategic and practical measures across the city similar and different to those highlighted above. The city's Local Area Agreement has identified 'Tackling Worklessness' as one of its key indicators with a specific measure (LAA Outcome 153) to reduce the benefit claimant rate in a number of neighbourhoods – including and focusing on Langworthy.

Salford City Council and its key partners began to adopt an innovative approach to gaining a greater understanding of this complex issue in 2007 when they introduced a process named 'Spotlighting' that focused on producing a swift and coordinated response to specific issues in specific areas across the city. The East Salford area (Broughton & NDC) was chosen to focus on worklessness and a key message that came out of the process was a need to have more of **"an integrated system that can engage, remove barriers and support people into skills & jobs"** Salford City Council (2007:24).

Some of the key findings to come out of that process are shown below:-

Summary of the key challenges for worklessness in East Salford

- Poor health and high levels on Incapacity Benefit
- Limited capacity of IAG and outreach
- Unclear role of 3rd sector
- Cultural barriers, low aspirations and travel horizons
- Negative employer perceptions
- Financial exclusion
- Inflexible and fragmented delivery system
- Commissioning system not designed to reach furthest away
- Weak local data and performance monitoring

Salford City Council (2007:29)

Summary of major challenges for worklessness across the city

- A 'new' approach to address worklessness
- Raise aspirations IN Salford
- A systematic approach to mapping skills
- Joining up health and employment
- Integration of commissioning and delivery systems
- Accessible services to excluded groups

Salford City Council (2007:33-35)

3.3 Working Neighbourhoods Teams (WNT)

Fast-forward to the present day and the employment and skills landscape in Salford continues to develop at pace with the forthcoming introduction and development of working neighbourhood teams (WNT) in Salford and across other areas of Greater Manchester.

The rationale for such an approach is again being steered by national policy with a clear focus and links towards skills and work and neighbourhood renewal. What is being advocated now is more of a neighbourhood-led approach that effectively utilises existing neighbourhood management structures to work together at neighbourhood levels to tackle worklessness.

The remit for WNT will be to:-

- Tackle deep seated worklessness
- Focus on those out of the labour market
- Tackle generational worklessness and aspirations
- Use a 'Neighbourhood Management' and 'whole system' approach
- A common but flexible approach across areas
- Deliver on critical shared priorities – connecting people with opportunity

Salford City Council (2009:5)

This approach will initially be launched and developed at specific areas across the city (of which Ordsall and Langworthy will be one) with the intention of a process of further roll-out to other areas later on this year and early next year. Salford City Council (2009)

4. Results

4.1 The overall picture across the 3 areas (survey results)

A total of 204 residents were consulted across the 3 highlighted areas during the consultation process with a breakdown of the desired against actual response rates/numbers shown below:-

Area – LSOA No.	Target	Actual/completed
26 – 024D	79	79
13 – 024A	56	76
15 – 024B	66	49
Total	201	204

Survey results – Section 1 – respondents profile

1.1)

Gender	Male	Female
	42%	58%

1.2)

Age	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Didn't respond
	25%	26%	25%	15%	6%	2%	1%

1.3)

Ethnicity	
White British	85%
Black African	8%
White Irish	2%
White other	2%
Black Caribbean/Black other	1%
Mixed/other ethnic group	1%
Didn't respond	1%

Section 2 – Employment

2.1)

Current status	*Non-working	**Working	Retired	Full/part-time education	Full-time carer	Didn't respond
	61%	24%	11%	2%	1%	1%

* Non-working comprising those unemployed, those unable to work due to long-term illness/sickness, looking after home and/or family in voluntary, unpaid work

** Working comprising those employed by someone else and self-employed

2.3) For someone who is unemployed and living in your neighbourhood, would you say their chances of getting a job are.....?

Very Good	Good	Average	Below Average	Very Below Average	No response/don't know
1%	7%	28%	34%	24%	5%

Section 3 – Spotlight on the issue

3.1) Employment and skills (supporting people into work) has been identified by the council as a high priority for the city and this area. What do you feel about this issue? Is it important to you?

High priority	Low priority	Don't know/no response
82%	12%	6%

3.2) How/to what extent does this issue impact on you, your family and the wider community?

A large extent	To some extent	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/didn't respond
76%	7%	6%	6%	5%

3.3/3.4) What barriers/factors do you feel that you face/affect your ability to get into or return to work?

Lack of skills & qualifications	28%
Lack of jobs	22%
Don't know/didn't respond	15%
Childcare support	13%
Low self confidence	9%
Health	4%
Benefits Trap	3%
Age	2%
Legislation	1%
Criminal record	1%
Discrimination	1%

Section 4 – Spotlight on support services

4.1) Are you aware of support services.....(service awareness)

Type of support	Yes	No	Don't know/no response
To help you into work	85%	12%	3%
To help you improve skills	78%	20%	2%
To help you into learning	76%	21%	3%
To support you with benefits	80%	18%	2%

4.2) Which services do/have you used?

Job Centre Plus	74%
Connexions	10%
Work & Skills Support	6%
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	4%
Learn Direct	4%
Age Concern	2%

4.3) Have the services been useful?

- What help have you got?

Welfare advice	40%
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Employment advice & support (CV writing, job applications etc...)	33%
Training advice & support	7%
Childcare support	4%
Training/work experience	4%
Don't know/no response	4%
Educational advice (college course)	2%
Access to ICT services – job search etc...	2%
Information, advice & guidance	1%
English language skills support	1%
Housing/accommodation	1%

4.5) How do you hear about services?

- Does your support service tell you about other relevant services?

Yes	55%
No	45%

- Do you think that the services you use link up and work together?

Yes	55%
No	45%

- Are there more useful ways we could let you know about services?

More advertising/publicity	56%
Leaflets	15%
Letters	8%
Newspaper adverts	7%
Local publicity	4%
E-mails	4%
Local publicity	4%
More could be done	4%
More one to one advice	1%
Community consultation & engagement	1%
Outdoor advertising	1%
Phone calls	1%

4.6) How did you decide what support (training/other etc) you needed?

Personal decision	Advisor support	Friends/family support
70%	25%	5%

4.7) Do you know if anyone has considered your options for/ with you?

Yes	No
31%	69%

4.8) Did people take time to understand your support or training needs?

- Were your personal circumstances considered (e.g. caring responsibilities, skills levels, location etc?)

Yes	No
57%	43%

- Were there options?

Yes	No
58%	42%

4.9) What additional information was used to help understand your needs?

	Yes	No
Certificates	62%	38%
CVs	62%	38%
Previous skills assessments	56%	44%
Action plans	48%	52%

4.10) Do you feel the support you received reflects positively or negatively your situation in terms of the time you may have been receiving benefits or the time you've been unable to find work?

- Has the way you have been supported made you feel valued?

Yes	No
46%	54%

- If you have been out of work for a long time, has extra effort/support been given to help you?

Yes	No
31%	69%

4.11) Do you feel like a valued customer?

- Do you feel the service is tailored to you as an individual/meet and understand your personal/particular needs?

Yes	No
42%	58%

- Does the system/support you have received make you feel like a person or just a statistic?

Person	Statistic
40%	60%

4.12) How did you engage with the services you use?

- Did they contact you?

Yes	No
67%	33%

- How did they contact you?

Post/letter	55%
Telephone	40%
Personal visit	3%
E-mail	2%

- How did you feel about that?

Happy	92%
Unhappy	6%
Apprehensive	2%

- Was it a positive experience/feeling?

Yes	No
78%	22%

- Were you worried at all? (losing benefits?)

Yes	No
60%	40%

- Were you happy that help was available and being offered to you?

Yes	No
91%	9%

- Did you contact the service?

Yes	No
87%	13%

- How did you contact them?

Personal visit	58%
Telephone	39%
E-mail	2%
By post/letter	1%

- Was it easy/difficult?

Easy	Difficult
73%	27%

- Did you get advice/support from elsewhere?

Yes	No
31%	69%

- Were you signposted/referred?

Yes	No
39%	61%

- Do you think people know help is available?

Yes	No
77%	23%

4.13) What do you think about the support you are getting?

- Has anyone ever asked you what you think should be available?

Yes	No
18%	82%

4.14) Do you think the people you have dealt with/worked with have helped? /did they take time to understand your circumstances?

- Do you know exactly what they do?

Yes	No
48%	52%

- Do you think they have the skills/experience to help you properly?

Yes	No
69%	31%

- Do they support you on an on-going basis i.e. always someone to turn to for help/guidance?

Yes	No
44%	56%

4.15) In terms of the support you have accessed do you feel inhibited by rules/barriers?

- Does it take too long to work through any training/skills plan devised?

Yes	No
51%	49%

- Has training been limited in terms of time you've been able to dedicate due to impacts on your benefits or your lifestyle?

Yes	No
53%	47%

- Has it been crammed in?

Yes	No
41%	59%

- Have you had to leave training because you've found work or for other reasons?

Yes	No
41%	59%

4.16) What things have worked and what things have not worked?

- Was it a course you might have been on (excellent, average, not that good)

Excellent	55%
Not that good	23%
Average	22%

- A person (not that helpful, really helpful, didn't really understand, didn't care, cared but couldn't help)

Really helpful	53%
Not that helpful	20%
Cared but couldn't help	11%
Didn't care	9%
Didn't really understand	7%

4.2 Case studies

The case study material highlighted below was captured through a series of semi-structured interviews with members of the community research team all of whom volunteered to share their experiences for the purposes of the project. Each of the participants weren't at the time of filming in any form of paid employment and each was in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (previously known as Incapacity Benefit).

Debbie's Story

Debbie lives in the Pendleton area and has been out of work for the last 6 years due to illness which was triggered by a series of personal and work-related issues that affected her health and well-being. She was diagnosed as suffering from depression and was finally given access to support in the form of counselling.

Debbie felt that the initial delay in being able to access the necessary support available and the subsequent lack of continuity surrounding that support significantly affected her condition and general well-being. As a result she felt ill-equipped to re-enter the labour market at that particular time and subsequently for a long period afterwards.

Much of what she has felt has been frustration at a system not appearing to understand her as a person that's focused largely on her condition and what she can't rather than can do. Debbie felt that more individualised and tailored support at that early stage would have greatly benefited and accelerated her improvement towards getting better and feeling much more confident and well-equipped to seriously consider returning to and staying in employment.

This need for a more personalised and tailored approach to support is certainly in evidence more now for Debbie and has been reflected in an increasing confidence gained through involvement in and with a number of local organisations and subsequent projects in a voluntary capacity that has captured her long-standing interest and passion for the creative arts.

Debbie remarked on the positive and valuable support she had received from her health trainer, who signposted her to a local mental health arts project. Her passion for the creative arts has been further supported and developed by becoming involved with a local community development trust whose training & learning co-ordinator signposted her to the Salford Community Media Partnership (SCMP)³ where she has accessed a number of media courses and is now working towards the launch of the first exhibition of her artwork in the summer of this year.

Her confidence is now buoyed by the fact that through recently accessing this local network of outreach and frontline support that she now feels she is discovering her potential and fulfilling a long-standing ambition of developing her passion for the creative arts that utilises her skills and interests.

Paul's story

Paul also lives in Pendleton – he tells us his story below:-

“I was at really low ebb at the time. It was a week into January and all my New Year resolutions had gone belly up. It was really depressing. In June last year I had finally decided to change my life, from a hedonistic, criminal existence to a ‘normal’ life, a life away from drugs and crime. In June I started treatment to help me deal with my addiction and successfully completed a detox programme. In January I was finding it difficult to say the least and had been bored silly, staring at four walls and isolating myself. A recipe for disaster!

Little did I know that January 15th would be the day that was to put me on the path to the beginning of my final transition which was to have a significant and profound effect on my mental and physical health? I left my flat that morning, and as I left the block onto the shopping precinct I encountered an information stand promoting training and employment opportunities available through the Seedley & Langworthy Trust.

I was immediately drawn to the (SCMP) media training in particular the Creative Writing & Performance, but what struck me was the access to so many other courses and the Community Researcher training.

A few days later I visited Linda (the Training & Learning Co-ordinator) at the SALT shop and we talked more about where I am at and what I wanted to achieve. We talked about a variety of opportunities that were available to me and I was introduced to other members of staff who were able to support me in different ways.

A few weeks after our initial meeting, I had completed the Community researcher training along with 13 other local people. We are now working on a consultation which we helped to design and I have also been interviewed for a film which is being produced as an extension of the consultation that is taking place about employment and skills.

3. SCMP is made up of a diverse and experienced range of voluntary & community organisations in Salford offering specialist support in theatre, radio, film, journalism, photography and more as well as other organisations offering training space, community engagement, information, advice and guidance. Key local organisations include CRIS (Creative Industries in Salford), The Langworthy Cornerstone, Salford Arts Theatre, Salford City Radio, OCA, The Angel & SALT.

I have started the SCMP Creative Writing & Performance course, as well as Journalism and Graphic Design and helping to produce the SCMP magazine. I visit the resource centre regularly now and I am also booked on Reiki training. I found a leaflet about Nordic Walking and now go every weekend on a guided walk in Salford which is helping me to stay fit. I have done some leaflet delivery for SALT and I am very interested in doing some voluntary work for SALT alongside which I may be able to do a NVQ in information and advice. And all for free!!

What is really telling in this story is the level of transition that Paul has experienced in such a short period of time. He has gone from being fairly isolated, disengaged, vulnerable and at risk of returning to his former life – to within 2 months being heavily engaged and stimulated by a variety of new activities.

What is vital here again is the individual and personalised support that Paul has received which has opened up a range of local opportunities and possibilities that he previously wasn't aware existed. His is undoubtedly gaining confidence from the support he's receiving and utilising the opportunities on offer to him.

All of the undoubted progress that Paul's recently made is also mixed with personal apprehension about a forthcoming assessment of his current situation that may see his benefit entitlement changing from Employment and Support Allowance to Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). This potential change is of concern to Paul as he feels it may then affect his ability to continue doing this community and voluntary work if he's expected and pressured to re-enter the workplace on a more immediate and full-time basis.

He recognises that this is his ultimate goal to leading a more independent life but his prime concern currently is feeling that he may not yet be fully ready to return to work in that capacity.

5. Analysis

5.1 Overall picture

The consultation which was undertaken yielded a number of findings which will now be explored in further detail in regards to the survey data and the individual case studies.

Survey data

With regards to section 2 and perceptions of local employment opportunities just over **(58%)** of respondents felt someone's chances of getting a job in their neighbourhood were fairly limited. This perceived lack of job opportunity was also related to job availability as **(22%)** of respondents identified lack of jobs in the area as being a key barrier and factor to accessing employment opportunities.

In terms of findings from section 3 of the survey which focused on spotlighting the issue of employment and skills (supporting people into work) it revealed that the majority of respondents **(82%)** would appear to place high value on the importance of the employment and skills agenda for the area and the city as it was identified as significantly impacting on them on a number of levels (personal, family & wider community).

Lack of skills & qualifications were identified as the main barrier and factor affecting peoples' ability to get into or return to work with nearly a third **(28%)** of respondents identifying this as a major issue despite considerable investment and resources being targeted at those areas in particular to address the issue of local skill shortages. This is also despite high awareness levels of support services being shown with respondents being aware of:-

- Help into work **(85%)**
- Help improve skills **(78%)**
- Help into learning **(76%)**

In terms of support services (section 4) of the survey – respondents' awareness of support services on offer to them appeared to be generally good with an average of **(79%)** being aware of services to support them into work, into learning, to improve skills and support with benefits with the main bulk of this support being accessed through Job Centre Plus **(74%)**.

In terms of service take-up the main help respondents had received was around welfare/benefits advice **(40%)** and employment advice and support **(33%)** which included support such as assistance with CV writing and job applications. What was interesting here was that only **(7%)** had accessed training advice and support.

Although service awareness appears to be generally good amongst most respondents a significant number **(45%)** felt they hadn't been signposted or made aware of other potentially relevant services. This is further reflected in the case study material where each of the participants had found out about and accessed their current range of support through local outreach & engagement routes rather than a traditional signposting or referral route.

It would appear that there seems to be a lack of awareness from some agencies as to the support on offer at local level and that a greater awareness of such services combined with more advertising and publicity **(56%)** of those and other services would give people more of an informed choice of what's potentially available on offer to them and geared towards their particular interests and needs.

This seems particularly telling considering the relatively small number of respondents who'd accessed mainstream training advice and support but those in the case study material that had accessed local community-based courses that were having major positive impacts on their lives.

The overall picture of the customer experience in terms of engagement with services is fairly mixed in the sense that the initial contact with services appears good – with **(78%)** of people finding the initial experience positive and the system relatively easy to access **(73%)** but less positive in terms of the effectiveness of that support on a more consistent basis.

A significant number of respondents felt they'd had a negative customer experience in terms of accessing support with **(54%)** not having felt valued and **(58%)** not feeling that the service on offer was geared enough towards understanding their particular needs. In addition to this, **(60%)** felt like the system wasn't personalised enough to understand their needs and treated them more like a statistic.

These experiences would appear to reflect much of the recent thinking and growing appreciation around why future support should be more personalised and made available quicker. Indeed Longlands et al (2009) recommend that such support should be made available to customers from day 1 and that such support be tailored to specific client groups and localities.

Such experiences appear to indicate that there is still some distance to travel in reaching the final destination point that confidently offers a more integrated system that can engage, remove barriers and support people into skills and jobs.

6. Key Messages

- Project has reinforced the value and importance of adopting a more personalised package of support to customers.
- Engagement & Outreach work were acting as crucial tools in supporting individuals with local training & volunteering opportunities through local community providers.
- An increasing emphasis on such approaches (central to the new Working Neighbourhood Team model) will be crucial to future success across the city.
- Need for a concerted effort on converting customers positive attitudes towards employment & good levels of service awareness into successful work-related outcomes for customers of employment & skills services.

References

Longlands, S., Jackson, M., Brown, G. & Smith, J. (2009) Making it work: Analysing different ways of tackling worklessness , Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES).

Salford City Council (2007) Spotlighting presentation – Worklessness in East Salford (Broughton & NDC, December 2007.

Salford City Council (2007) The Salford Agreement – 2008 – 2011

Salford City Council (2009) Developing Working Neighbourhood Teams in Salford – Stakeholder Briefing, February 2009.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Langworthy Employment & Skills Survey

Appendix 1



Neighbourhood Consultation on Employment & Skills

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon, my name is..... working on behalf of the Seedley & Langworthy Trust (SALT). We are currently conducting a survey about employment and skills in your area on behalf of Salford City Council. The reason for doing the survey is to gain a better understanding of the issues concerning employment and skills provision in the area. All the information given will be treated in the strictest of confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that your personal details will not be shared with any third party without your prior consent.

Would you like to help with the survey?

SECTION 1 – Respondents Details

1.1 Gender

Male	1	Female	2
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1.2 What age group are you in?

16-24	1	50-64	4
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25-34	2	65-74	5
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35-49	3	75+	6
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1.3 Which of these groups do you consider yourself to belong to?

White – British	1
White – Irish	2
White – Other	3
Indian	4
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	6
Black – Caribbean	7
Black – African	8

Black – Other	9
Chinese	10
Mixed	11
Other Ethnic Group (please state).....	12

SECTION 2 – Employment

2.1 Which of the following applies to you? (Circle all that apply)

	Yes	No
Self employed	1	2
Employed by someone else	1	2
Unemployed	1	2
Unable to work due to long-term sickness	1	2
Retired	1	2
Full time carer	1	2
Looking after home and family	1	2
In full time education	1	2
In part time education	1	2
On maternity leave	1	2
In voluntary, unpaid work	1	2

2.2 If you are working where your job is located?

2.3 For someone who is unemployed and living in your neighbourhood, would you say their chances of getting a job are...?

Very Good	1
Good	2
Average	3
Below Average	4
Very Below Average	5
No response/don't know	6

Section 3 – SPOTLIGHT on the issue

3.1	Employment and skills (supporting people into work) has been identified by the council as a high priority issue for the city and this area. What do you feel about this issue? Is it important to you?

3.2	How/to what extent does this issue impact on you, your family and the wider community?
3.3	What barriers do feel that you face to get into or return to work?
3.4	What factors affect or influence your ability to get into or return to work?

Section 4 - SPOTLIGHT on Support Services

4.1	What support services are you aware of
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help you into work? • To help you improve skills? • To help you into learning? • To support you with benefits?
4.2	Which services do/ have you used?

4.3	Have the services been useful?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What help have you got?
4.4	Are there services you would like/ need but do not have access to?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact does this have?
4.5	How do you hear about services?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your support service tell you about other relevant services? • Do you think that the services you use link up and work together? • Are there more useful ways we could let you know about services?
4.6	How did you decide what support (training / other etc) you needed?
4.7	Do you know if anyone has considered your options for/ with you?

4.8	Did people take the time to understand your support or training needs?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were your personal circumstances considered (e.g. caring responsibilities, skills levels, location etc?) • Were there options?
4.9	What additional information was used to help understand your needs?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates/ qualifications • CVs • Previous skills assessments • Action plans
4.10	Do you feel the support you received reflects positively or negatively your situation in terms of the time you may have been receiving benefits or the time you've been unable to find work?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the way you have been supported made you feel valued? • If you have been out of work for a long time, has extra effort/ support been given to help you?
4.11	Do you feel like a valued customer?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel the service is tailored to you as an individual/ meet and understand your personal-particular needs? • Does the system/ support you have received make you feel like a person or just a statistic?
4.12	How did you engage with the services you use?
	<p>Did they contact you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they contact you? • How did you feel about that? • Was it a positive experience / feeling? • Were you worried at all? (losing benefits?) • Were you happy that help was available and being offered to you? <p>Did you contact the service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you contact them? • Was it easy / difficult?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you get advice/support from elsewhere? • Signposted / Referred? • Do you think people know help is available?
4.13	What do you think about the support you are getting?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has anyone ever asked you what you think should be available? • What do you think should be made available so support you so you can get back into work and stay in work?
4.14	Do you think the people you have dealt with/ worked with have helped/ did they take time to understand your circumstances?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know exactly what they do? • Do you think they have the skills / experience to help you properly? • Do they support you on an on-going basis i.e. always someone to turn to for help / guidance?
4.15	In terms of the support you have accessed do you feel inhibited by rules / barriers?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it take too long to work through any training / skills plan devised?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has training been limited in terms of time you've been able to dedicate due to impacts on your benefits or your lifestyle? • Has it been crammed in? • Have you had to leave training because you've found work or for other reasons?
4.16	What things have worked and what things have not worked?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it a course you might have been on (excellent, average, not that good, a referral (to the right place, the wrong place) • A person (not that helpful, really helpful, didn't really understand, didn't care, cared but couldn't help) • Any other things you found helpful

**THANK THE PERSON FOR THEIR TIME AND COOPERATION IN
COMPLETING THE SURVEY**

To be completed by the interviewer:

Interviewers Number:	
Interviewers Name:	
Date:	
Name of Interviewee:	
Address of Interviewee:	
Post code:	
Patch Number: e.g. 26, 13 or 15	
Phone Number:	

Declaration:-

I have conducted this interview according to my instructions and within the MRS Code of Conduct to the best of my ability.

Signature:

.....