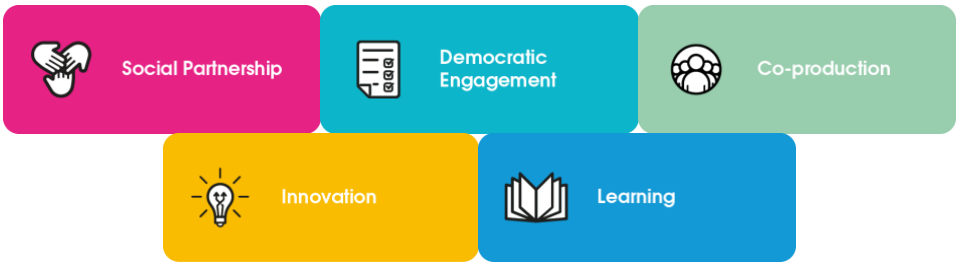
Co-operative Councils Innovation Network

EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Rochdale Council

Cooperating through Good Help in Rochdale

In 2021, Rochdale Borough Council outlined a plan for Good Help in the borough through a previous case study. What happened next?

Our intention was to embed the approach into the parts of the system that have contact with people to support the building blocks of a good life in the borough. This included putting Good Help into strategies; understanding how people experience it so that we can do more and building that in to our workforce and organisational development; commissioning and services.

Outputs wise, the overall metrics really helped us assure ourselves that things are happening (numbers of people attending trainings; new good help programmes being set up). We set these metrics as the steps towards Rochdale Borough being a Good Help "Place": We can't claim that by achieving these, we are all "doing" good help everywhere in the borough with high demand, low resources and crises on many fronts. Of course not: There are times when "any" help is vital, whether it fits the characteristics of good help or not.

The "state of help" in our system is too fluid to pin down to a fixed definition or metric. But Good Help is about culture change so it's also true that by focusing our attention on the *way* we do our help, we can move beyond the sugar rush of achieving metrics. We can share an understanding of what makes those metrics meaningful; building trust and relationships so that we can solve problems in proximity to their origin in ways that make sense to us all.

1. Recognising and building upon the influence and control that each person brings (**power sharing**)?

2. Having conversations that enable people to feel safe and ready to take action for themselves (**enabling language**)?

3. Helping people define their own purpose and plans, and responding to their individual needs (**tailoring**)?

4. Offering practical and emotional support that helps people take and sustain action, then stepping back as they build confidence to take action alone (**scaffolding**)?

5. Helping people connect with and take action with other people they identify with (**role models and peer support**)?

6. Expanding opportunities for people to take action (**opportunity making**)?

7. Sharing information between practitioners and the people being supported (**transparency**)?

Characteristics of good help

So what's changed as a result? We can now "see" the language and approach of Good Help in so many parts of our system. Using the tools has been really useful in creating neutral, shared space for innovation. Because Good Help doesn't belong to any part of the system; it belongs to the borough. And specifically to the borough's shared vision for people, place and prosperity. The more we can use service neutral "lenses" to look at, and improve our system, the more we can solve problems cooperatively and create shared opportunities and solutions.

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