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FUELLING CONNECTIONS

(THE CONCEPT)



An on-line community hub that provides a platform for people to get expert advice and share information about saving money in the home, with a key focus on reducing the cost of energy.

The hub primarily supports disadvantaged people classified as being in 'fuel poverty' who are struggling to pay bills and are having to choose between eating and heating.

Here we present the achievements from the three pilot projects: Don Valley in collaboration with Caroline Flint MP and The Wellness Centre, Tower Hamlets in collaboration with Jim Fitzpatrick MP and Poplar Harca, and Truro and Falmouth in collaboration with Sarah Newton MP's office.



FUELLING CONNECTIONS

(THE RESEARCH)

Fuelling Connections was developed following research into the reality of the lives of people living in fuel poverty. Key learnings from this research that informed the creation of Fuelling Connections was that:

- Householders often prioritised paying phone and internet bills over food and energy
- Many householders were isolated and may not have left their homes for several days
- Householders did not identify as being in 'fuel poverty'
- Householders did not see their problems as being solely related to energy but rather part of a wider set of issues
- There was a lack of cohesion among existing support services



OUR APPROACH

CREATING STRONGER COMMUNITIES



Based on this research we decided the project tackling these issues should:

- Utilise social media: Much of the existing messaging around fuel poverty was being published in a space householders weren't using. It was important the project should operate in a space where conversations were already happening.
- 2. Strengthen collaboration: The lack of cohesion among local services had eroded trust with householders and made it difficult for them to access support. A key aim for the project was that it supported organisations in forming stronger connections in the community.
- 3. Be tested and adaptable: We chose to pilot the concept and in a rural and urban area and create a how to kit for groups to replicate, sharing best practice across communities and householders



WHAT WE DID



- Engaged local MPs and worked together to identify existing local resources available to support households struggling to pay bills.
- 2. Identified at least one coordinator in each area and prepared them to run a local Facebook page to provide advice and support, and liaise with stakeholders.
- 3. Created a content plan based on information householders are most interested in money saving schemes, eating well for less, best energy deals etc.
- 4. Provided a regular stream of useful information and a network of organisations able to answer questions or give additional support.
- Undertook a targeted local recruitment programme to encourage people to become involved in the groups.
- Undertook interviews to evaluate the impact of the programme and identify areas for improvement.

HEADLINE IMPACTS

Fuelling Connections is the first project of its kind to tackle the issues associated with fuel poverty through an engaging, interactive online platform.

ACROSS THE THREE LOCATIONS:

- 1,354 households recruited to one of three local pages.
- 96 stakeholders engaging locally across the three pages.
- 653 posts sharing advice on saving money in the home.
- 143, 297 reach through Facebook alone. (The number of unique users who saw content.)
- 1,444 engagements* with advice shared. (The number of people who reacted, commented, liked, shared or clicked on a post)

31 PIECES OF PRESS COVERAGE. TOTAL REACH OF 4 MILLION PEOPLE.



1

POPLAR AND LIMEHOUSE

POPLAR AND LIMEHOUSE

ACHIEVED:



432 HOUSEHOLDS, FACEBOOK REACH OF 42,565

AIMS	ACHIVED	
Provide relevant and consistent communications daily posts.	 275 posts on saving money on bills, home efficiency, health, local events and services. 	
Create a stronger collaboration 30 local stakeholders feeding in to the page.	 2 local co-ordinators recruited. 28 stakeholders engaged. (Either attended the roundtable or fed information into the page) 	
Connect householders to local support - Recruit 200 householders inc. 50 new to local services.	 432 householders joined the page. Reach on Facebook of 42,565 since January. 	
Share best practice within communities 50 householders sharing their own advice.	326 comments and shares of posts.	



FUELLING CONNECTIONS IN ACTION







STARTING CONVERSATIONS



sights Publishing tools





Empower TowerHamlets ▶ Fuelling Connections - Poplar and Limehouse

Yesterday at 09:24 · 🚱

Could you be an Energy Champion? We're on the hunt for our next group of champions to start our accredited course NEXT WEEK!

The free course helps you learn all about how to save money on your energy bills, while building your CV. We'll also have lots of volunteering opportunities after the course for you to share what you've learned with the community.

Residents from these housing providers are eligible: Tower Hamlets Homes, Tower Hamlets Community Housing, Gateway Housing A... See more





WHAT LOCAL PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE PROJECT



Jo Goodman – Bromley by Bow Centre I've been very impressed with the page – the content seems to be fun, relevant and accessible, helping to remove the stigma of talking about money. A lot of the content seemed to be about general money saving which I think was positive as it made it more engaging than only talking about energy.

Babu Bhattacherjee from local support group Poplar Harca: "Fuelling Connections is a fantastic way to share ideas and to reach out to the Poplar and Limehouse community and we are strong supporters of the initiative. For isolated residents this a valuable, and often essential, community resource that will make all the difference in the colder months."

Anne McDonald local mother of four – 'I think the Fuelling Connections page is an absolutely brilliant community, it's a great way to talk to and share ideas with other Mum's and get tips on saving money around the house and reducing energy bills.'

Jim Fitzpatrick, MP for Poplar and Limehouse

Fuelling connections has been a simple and effective way to ensure that help provided by local fuel poverty agencies reaches those most in need. It is easily scalable and I would encourage other MP's to launch this project in their constituencies.'

Rachel Jones local mother of three 'I think it's great for people that don't know how to budget it puts all the information at hands reach'

Rachel Salmon local mother of one 'Everyone's different, some tips work for some people and some things don't, what's nice about Fuelling Connections is that each person who shares a tips comes from a different background and they get to share a way they save money in their homes which is great...pennies make the pounds and pounds make the hundreds'

2

DONCASTER

DONCASTER

ACHIEVED:

422 HOUSEHOLDS AND REACH OF 33,162

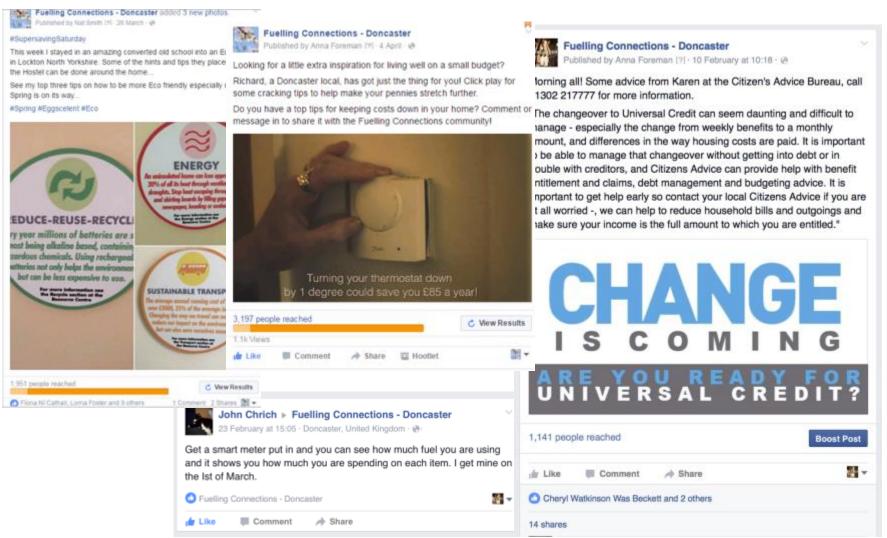
AIMS	ACHIVED
Provide relevant and consistent communications daily posts.	 247 posts on saving money on bills, home efficiency, health, local events and services.
Create a stronger collaboration 30 local stakeholders feeding in to the page.	 1 local co-ordinator recruited. 22 stakeholders engaged, either attended the launch or fed into the page.
Connect householders to local support - Recruit 200 householders inc. 50 new to local services.	 422 householders joined the page. Reach on Facebook of 33, 162 since January.
Share best practice within communities 50 householders sharing their own advice.	258 comments and shares of posts.





FUELLING CONNECTIONS IN ACTION





STARTING CONVERSATIONS









STARTING CONVERSATIONS





Fuelling Connections - Doncaster

Published by Nat Smith [?] Like This Page · 7 February · ❸

I'm under my duvet keeping warm ready to watch the superbowl!

How do you keep warm at night?

#sb50 #warm



Judith Cowie

Chronological *



Judith Cowie If your feet are warm, it really helps to feel warm all over. I wear bedsocks in the winter, it makes such a difference!

Unlike · Reply · Message · ♠ 2 · 12 February at 12:16



Fuelling Connections - Doncaster Thanks Judith Cowie look out for a future feature on 'knit yourself warm' we'll be connecting people to easy sock patterns!

Like · Reply · Commented on by Nat Smith [?] · 12 February at 12:20



Write a comment...





Glinda Street very good point..we don't haggle enough in this country..go to the markets across the channel and you'd be the odd one out if you didn't!.



Fuelling Connections - Doncaster Thank you. If you have any tips yourself please share with us $\textcircled{\c U}$

Like · Reply ·

1 · Commented on by Nat Smith

1 · 10 January at 22:43



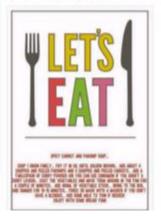
Glinda Street I tend to buy in bulk and make up meals then freeze...or chop up veg and freeze...and when i haggle I always say 'WHAT would that work out if I was to buy more.' rather than 'IS it cheaper..' because you virtually always get a discount is you give them n... See more

Unlike · Reply · Message · ♠ 1 · 11 January at 02:55



27 December 2015 - Perrature, United Gogdom - 🕪

Do you have any Carrots and Parsnips left from Christmas? If you do try this lovely warming "Spicy Carrot and Parsnip Soup"... Ummm eyum





Glyn Butcher ▶ Fuelling Connections - Doncaster

23 December 2015 · 🚱

Just a quick tip to save money the winner put silver paper behind your radiators it makes your rooms warmer... what do you do to save money on your heating bills













WHAT LOCAL PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE PROJECT



Kelly Hicks, local coordinator from The Wellness Centre comments: "What's really important is that it's run by the people who have to make tough decisions every day. When people start talking and sharing tips with each other they realise their not on their own".

Rob Foster, local resident 'I found the site really easy to use and now I make lists to help me make my money stretch futher'

Welcoming the new campaign, Don Valley MP Caroline Flint said: "Fuelling Connections is a ground breaking initiative. Every week, there are local families struggling to meet their everyday fuel bills. And any day now, the weather could take a cold turn. This Facebook community should be a melting pot of great ideas, connections and advice to help cut those bills. I hope many local people will join and share this on Facebook and beyond."

Lucy Moorhouse, a local resident 'I think everything being shared is really interesting, I love the feel and look of the page. It's really friendly and welcoming'

AGE UK, I don't know whether the age profile of our service users has had an impact...as time goes on of course, older people will be very familiar with technology and social media.

TRURO AND FALMOUTH

TRURO AND FALMOUTH

ACHIEVED:



AIMS	ACHIVED SO FAR
Provide relevant and consistent communications daily posts.	 231 posts on saving money on bills, home efficiency, health, local events and services.
Create a stronger collaboration 30 local stakeholders feeding in to the page.	 Collaborating with Sarah Newton MP's constituency office to co- ordinate group locally. 46 stakeholders feeding into page regularly.
Connect householders to local support - Recruit 200 householders inc. 50 new to local services.	 500 householders joined the page. Reach on Facebook of 67,570 since January.
Share best practice within communities 50 householders sharing their own advice.	 206 comments and shares of posts.





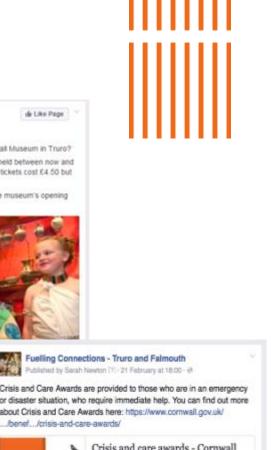
FUELLING CONNECTIONS

IN ACTION









what's on at the royal cornwall muse events | enjoy truro

Monsters will also have a big public program accompdetails and to book tickets please see the What's on P ENJOYTRURO CO LIK I BY TOTALLY TRURO

Stydia Post, Dee Dee Flower and 12 others Comment A Share Hor

Crisis and Care Awards are provided to those who are in an emergency

or disaster situation, who require immediate help. You can find out more about Crisis and Care Awards here: https://www.comwall.gov.uk/



Crisis and care awards - Cornwall Council

Crisis awards are for those in emergency or disaster situations to help them and their families with immediate needs. Care awards help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in their... DORNWALL GOVUR



STARTING CONVERSATIONS

Qualifying benefits claimants could have their old in-efficient boilers replaced completely free of charge, or heavily subsidised via the ECO scheme. DO you.





BOILERGRANTS ORG UK



WHAT LOCAL PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE PROJECT



Lorrie Eathorne-Gibbons, Mayor of Truro, 'This sounds like a wonderful scheme.'

Raphael Fernandez, a local resident, 'I have been having a look at the web page and I think that it is really interesting. It is very interesting to have a page committed to giving advice to people interested in making their home more energy efficient.'

Sarah Newton, MP for Truro and Falmouth Poplar comments:

"Fuelling Connections is a new way of letting people living on low incomes in Truro and Falmouth know about what they can do to stay warm and well. There are many people and organisations that are working hard to help local people with low incomes improve their lives. Fuelling Connections is a useful communication tool to help connect people who would like some help with those who want to provide it."

Sophie Sweatman, resident 'People don't realise the difference they can make if they look at the positive influence they can have. You guys are posting the positive up on the Facebook page'

4.

EVALUATION



The **roundtable events were integral** in mapping out the services already available and strengthening connections between organisations.

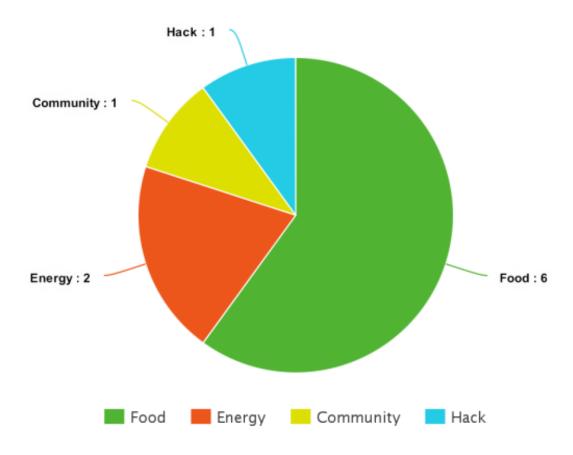
The key demographic engaging with the pages is women aged between 45 and 64

People responded well to receiving a broad range of content to do with energy and saving money in the home. Recipes, hacks and community event information were the most popular posts.

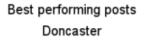


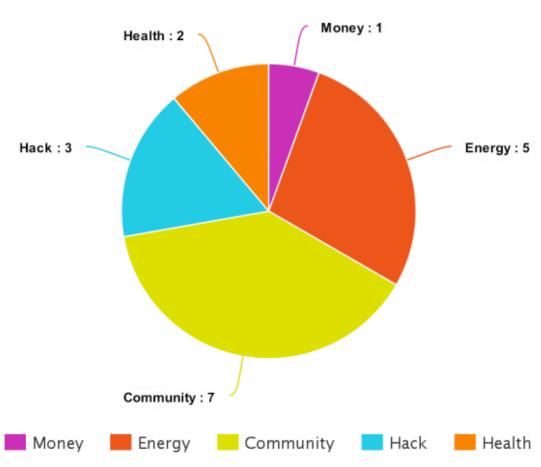


Best performing posts Truro and Falmouth



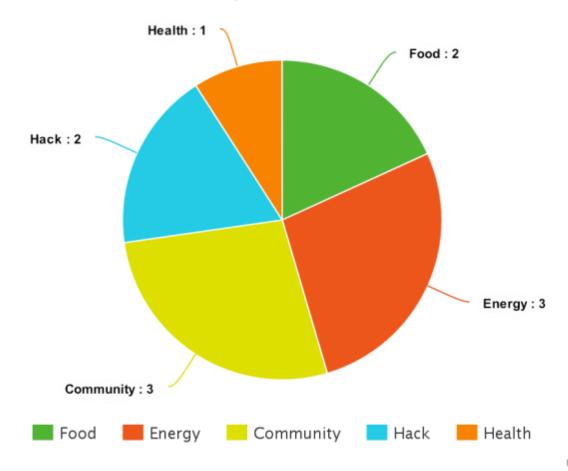








Best performing posts Poplar and Limehouse





Communicating information, support and advice using a range of mediums increased engagement. Videos proved to be the most successful way of engaging householders. Two videos featuring local residents have 1886 unique views between them.

Residents responded well to the informal tone of the page. Householders saw the page as 'inviting', 'friendly' and 'positive'.





Achieving consistent engagement from local organisations was a struggle throughout the pilot. In Doncaster it was suggested this could be because of tensions between existing organisations. This was less of a problem in Truro and Falmouth as organisations were sending information directly to the MP's office.

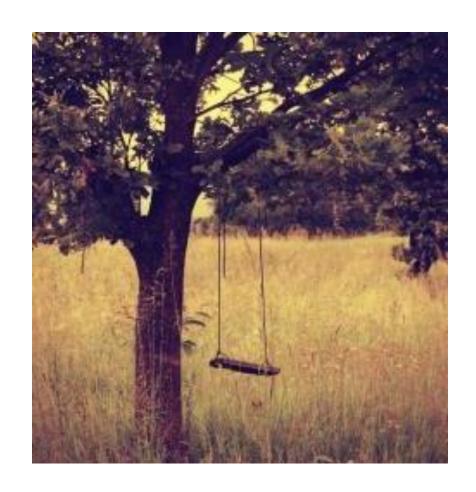
Due to the platform used for the project it was difficult to measure if householders took the 'next step' and were connected with a local support service. We did however conduct interviews to measure impact for the householders and the biggest impact was that the pages helped to build confidence.



AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT



- Enhance the evaluation methodology for assessing the longer-term impact of the engagement.
- Improve the quality of the national information provided to households.
- Create new on-line interventions to make it easier for households to measure and save energy at home.
- Improve information sharing between communities.



NEXT STEPS



- 1. We are creating a Fuelling Connections
 How to Guide for other constituencies to
 replicate what worked well.
- 2. We will organise an awareness raising event at the House of Commons hosted by Sarah Newton MP to ask more MP's to support the initiative in their constituencies.
- 3. Seeking funding for supporting the expansion of the initiative.

If you have any questions please email sarah@hubbub.org.uk



