



IN MANCHESTER IT'S A MUCH MORE COSMOPOLITAN FEEL TO THE PLACE. THERE IS MUCH MORE OF A GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF DIFFERENCE THAN THERE IS HERE IN OLDHAM

I'VE ALWAYS SAID 'OLDHAM HAS BEEN A GOOD HOME TO ME' SO I WANT TO STAY HERE

PEOPLE JUST USE OLDHAM AS A DORMITORY. THEY GO INTO MANCHESTER TO WORK. THERE IS A BIG ARGUMENT ABOUT WHETHER THE METROLINK ACTUALLY BRINGS PEOPLE INTO OLDHAM OR TAKES PEOPLE OUT OF OLDHAM

DESPITE ALL THE NEGATIVE THINGS OLDHAM HAS STILL GIVEN US SO MUCH AND I THINK YOU SHOULD NEVER FORGET YOUR ROOTS. OLDHAM IS MY ROOTS. OLDHAM IS MY FOUNDATION AND I WISH MY KIDS WOULD MAKE A GOOD LIFE HERE



Residents of Oldham frequently made reference to Manchester. There was a sense that a lot of the investment in the region has been concentrated in Manchester to the neglect of outlying areas. A 2016 Joseph Rowntree Foundation report into 'uneven growth' across the UK described how relative economic decline was particularly concentrated amongst smaller northern towns. So-called 'overshadowed places', located next to larger cities where economic activity and growth is largely focused, were identified as being particularly vulnerable. Residents discussed such concerns, fearing that Oldham's proximity and connections to Manchester might divert jobs and investment away from the town. Residents were also concerned that city devolution might not rectify this. Within media and political accounts of the 'left behind' apparently metropolitan, larger cities like Manchester are often contrasted with deprived post-industrial towns which are stigmatized as places of racism and poverty. While this ignores the presence of these challenges in larger cities, residents in some ways endorsed these ideas, contrasting what they viewed as a relative lack of integration in Oldham, with the 'cosmopolitan' feel of Manchester. Residents also expressed a strong sense of pride in being from Oldham. Irrespective of racialised identity, residents expressed a strong identification with Oldham as 'home'. There was also a strong desire to see greater opportunities and more investment in the town, with a particular emphasis placed on younger generations being able to imagine their futures there.

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