Annual Report

1st April 2025 –
31st March 2026



This report is a public document.

It can be accessed on the website of Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership: https://www.olscb.org/about/publications/

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Report compiled and written by Oldham Safeguarding Partnership, Business Unit

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Contact details:

Jayne Haigh
Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager
Rock Street Resource Centre
Rock St
Oldham
OL1 3UJ

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Foreword

Welcome to the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2025–2026. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the work undertaken over the past year to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people across Oldham.

Throughout the year, the Partnership has continued to enact its multi-agency safeguarding arrangements with consistency, commitment and a shared sense of purpose. Our collective efforts reflect the responsibility we hold as system leaders to protect children, strengthen families and ensure that safeguarding remains a priority across all agencies.

This report highlights the Partnership's ongoing commitment to improving safeguarding practice and understanding the impact of our work on local children, young people and families. It demonstrates how our vision and values have been embedded across operational activity; from the work of our subgroups and audit cycles to the delivery of high-quality training and the strengthening of frontline practice.

Learning remains central to our approach. Over the past year, we have continued to respond to serious incidents, undertake local child safeguarding practice reviews and incorporate national learning into our local system. This has enabled us to refine our practice, challenge ourselves and drive improvements where they are most needed.

We have also taken significant steps to strengthen the role of education partners within our leadership and governance arrangements. Their enhanced involvement has broadened our system-wide perspective, enabling us to better identify emerging themes, trends and opportunities for improvement.

This year's report also reflects the Partnership's preparation for the implementation of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. The revised guidance places a renewed emphasis on strong multi-agency leadership, clearer accountability, earlier and more preventative support, and a deeper understanding of the lived experience of children and families. Throughout 2025–2026, we have begun aligning our local arrangements with these expectations; strengthening our early help pathways, enhancing our approach to relational and restorative practice, and ensuring that children's voices and experiences are central to our decision-making. This work positions Oldham well for the transition to the new national safeguarding framework.

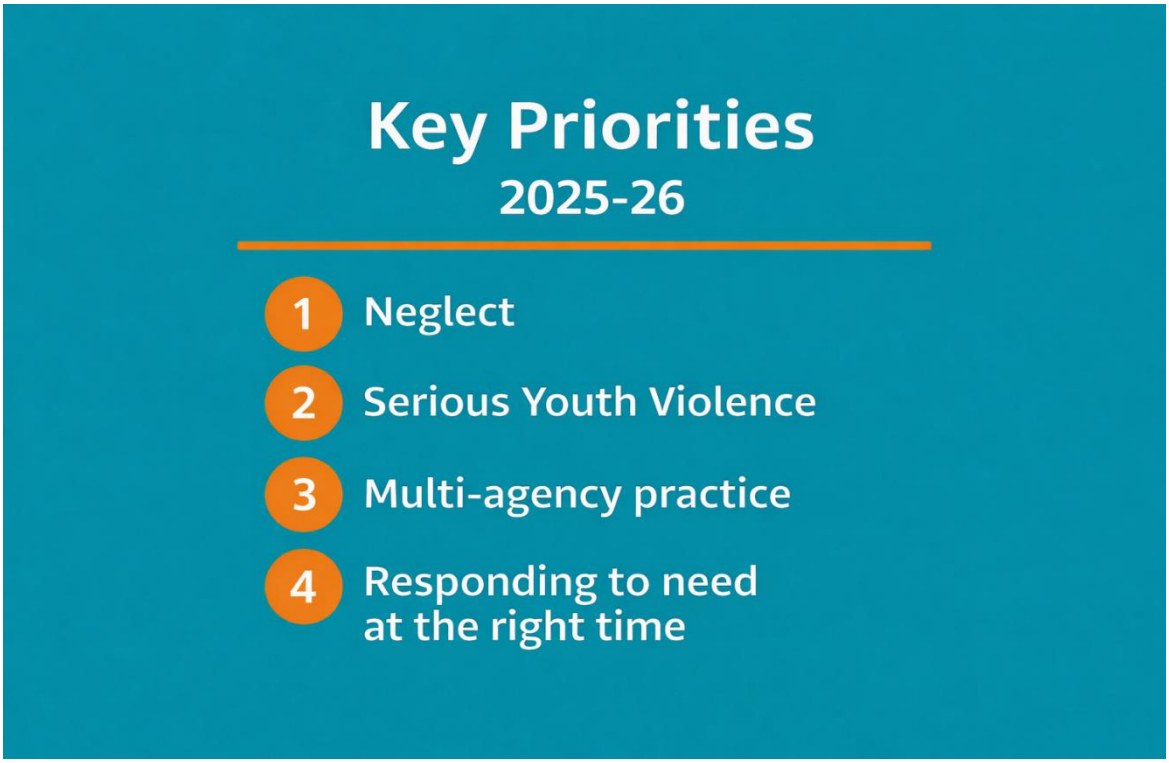
About Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership is a statutory, multi-agency organisation partnership coordinated by the partnership business unit. OSCP is structured to provide strong collaboration, scrutiny and assurance, and to drive and enable co-ordination of safeguarding activity. We are pleased that you are taking the time to read this report, which outlines continuing progress in the multi-agency work to protect and safeguard children and young people at risk in Oldham. The main objective of OSCP is to gain assurance that local safeguarding arrangements, comprised of partner agencies and organisations working together effectively and individually to support and safeguard children who are at risk or abuse and or neglect.

What you will find in the report and its purpose.

This annual report is a collaborative publication from our statutory safeguarding partners, providing an analysis of the partnership's activities during 2025–2026. It outlines the actions taken by safeguarding partners and relevant agencies in relation to safeguarding arrangements, and evaluates the effectiveness of these measures in practice

Our report this year is written against these priorities:



Reflections from our Statutory Partners

Oldham district of Greater Manchester Police has seen stability within the Senior Leadership team at Oldham for over 12 months now which has assisted with consistency and delivery of change. Child protection was set as a priority in 2024 and remained a priority for the district throughout the 25/26 financial year.

As a district we have implemented our own internal child protection plan to ensure that we improved our policing response. We have seen great improvements in our response child protection, although we still have work to do.

Throughout the last 12 months we have implemented a lot of changes to improve our outcomes for victims of crime. We have introduced the CCAT role, who provide specialist support and investigation plans for Child Protection crimes, we have improved our tracking of our Child Protection related crimes, escalating cases with the CPS where we believe there are unacceptable delays. Our approach has seen an increase in positive outcomes, last year was the best performance year for Oldham for Child protection crimes. We also continue to push outcome 22 and divert children from the justice system where we can – we are one of the biggest users of this outcome in the GM area. Our shift pattern has been changed to ensure that Child Protection specialist trained officers are contactable at evenings and weekends, rather than just office hours.

We have moved to a centralised force system for Op. Encompass to ensure that there are no delays in referrals for children who need help following a Domestic Abuse incident and we have now gone live with Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO), which can help us protect children in domestic abuse situations.

We have caried out a lot of work with our prevention hub, partners and OFSTED in relation to our response to private care providers and to mitigate the risks of children from out of the area that are placed within these homes.

Force wide, Greater Manchester Police continue to strive to improve in all areas and recognise child protection is a priority. The force has standardised the Complex Safeguarding teams and introduced cohort and crime management procedures. A vulnerability CORE has been established to provide consistent safeguarding across GMP. The CORE also provides central liaison with GMCA and boroughs. This does not replace local partnerships but supports standardised delivery and policy development.

The support and joint agency working within the Oldham Safeguarding Partnership is strong and this, along GMP's commitment to continual improvement, will make Oldham a safer place to live, work and visit.

The leadership within Oldham District remains focused on continuing to build and develop the excellent partnership we have already established. We are working hard, together, to embed the changes outlined in working together but also to embed learning from case reviews throughout our organisations. We recognise that we need to make the learning relevant to the target audience and ensure that it lands with our front line to embed the learning and result in real change.

We have made clear our commitment to provide well defined objectives and ensure that we put the right measures in place across the partnership to be able to demonstrate real change and tangible outcomes.

Estelle Mathieson, Chief Superintendent, District Commander, Oldham

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

Since taking up the role of Director of Education and Early Years in December 2025, it has been clear to me that education is viewed as a key strategic partner within the Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership. I have been encouraged by the strong safeguarding ethos across the sector and by the fact that safeguarding has been judged to be effective across all schools and settings during the past year. Schools and providers engage positively with safeguarding activity, regardless of governance arrangements, and senior representation within the partnership supports the effective dissemination of priorities and learning across the system.

Safeguarding activity within education is supported by the Safeguarding Adviser for Education, whose work provides valuable challenge, intervention and support across schools, early years settings and alternative provision. Regular engagement with Designated Safeguarding Leads, combined with a comprehensive programme of training, quality assurance and targeted support, has contributed to consistent safeguarding practice and strengthened local arrangements.

There is clear evidence that safeguarding arrangements are effective in practice. This includes strong participation in safeguarding networks and training, structured quality improvement support for early years settings, and routine quality assurance of alternative provision. Where concerns have been identified, these have been escalated appropriately, with additional visits and support provided to ensure safeguarding issues are addressed.

Learning from scrutiny and recent activity has highlighted areas requiring further consideration, particularly in relation to oversight of independent and out-of-area provision. Work is underway to review current quality assurance and safeguarding arrangements in these areas to ensure that all children and young people placed in education settings are appropriately safeguarded.

Looking ahead, ensuring that safeguarding remains effective in all mainstream schools and settings continues to be a core priority. Improvements in school attendance are a significant achievement and an important protective factor. In the year ahead, my focus will be on strengthening oversight and practice in relation to Children Missing from Education and Elective Home Education, to further enhance safeguarding arrangements across Oldham.

Paul Tinsley, Director of Education and Early Years (Oldham LA)

Oldham Council

NHS Greater Manchester (NHS GM) has continued to fulfil its role as a joint statutory safeguarding partner within the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP), demonstrating strong leadership, governance and commitment to the safeguarding agenda throughout 2025–26. During a period of organisational transition, including changes to executive safeguarding leadership, continuity of accountability and oversight has been maintained, ensuring safeguarding remains a clear priority.

Health representation across partnership meetings and subgroup activity has remained robust, enabling effective multiagency working and supporting improvements in early identification, information sharing and child-centred practice. NHS GM has played a key role in embedding learning from local and national reviews, audits and inquiries, strengthening practice and contributing to system-wide improvement.

Statutory safeguarding responsibilities continue to be discharged through the Chief Executive as Lead Safeguarding Partner, supported by the Chief Clinical Officer and senior safeguarding leaders. Delivery of safeguarding functions is undertaken through Designated Safeguarding Teams across all GM localities, ensuring consistent professional leadership and oversight.

Implementation of the NHSE Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework (SAAF) has further strengthened governance, provider assurance and risk management arrangements. This has supported improved scrutiny, informed commissioning decisions and reinforced continuous improvement across the health system.

NHS GM remains committed to strong partnership working, recognising the progress made across Oldham in strengthening safeguarding arrangements and improving outcomes for children and families. Ongoing focus will ensure that learning continues to be embedded in practice, with safeguarding kept at the heart of service delivery..

Andrea Edmondson - Associate Director Quality & Safety (Oldham)
NHS Greater Manchester

NHS
Greater Manchester

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership has continued to provide strong strategic leadership and effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements across the borough. Through robust governance structures, a comprehensive performance framework, quality assurance activity, and effective multi-agency scrutiny, the Partnership has been able to assure itself that safeguarding responsibilities are being discharged effectively and in line with statutory requirements.

Evidence from performance reporting, multi-agency audit activity, and practice reviews demonstrates continued improvement in the consistency and quality of safeguarding practice. This includes strengthened responses to neglect, domestic abuse, and child exploitation, alongside growing confidence amongst practitioners in applying the Continuum of Need to ensure that children and families receive the most appropriate support. The ongoing development of the Learning and Improvement Hub and Performance Sub-Groups has enhanced the Partnership's ability to translate assurance findings into meaningful improvements in frontline practice and service delivery.

Partnership efforts have remained firmly focused on improving outcomes and experiences for children, young people, and families. The continued development of Family Hubs, integrated early help services, and family-centred approaches has improved access to support at the earliest opportunity, helping families to receive the right help at the right time. Feedback from children, young people, and families has played an increasingly important role in shaping service development, strengthening our commitment to co-production and ensuring that lived experience informs strategic decision-making.

Learning from serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, audits, and independent scrutiny has continued to drive improvement across the partnership. Recommendations have been translated into clear action plans and thematic learning, which have been embedded through training, practice guidance, supervision, and ongoing quality assurance activity. This has strengthened organisational learning and supported a culture of continuous improvement across all partner agencies.

Our most significant achievement during the year has been the successful mobilisation of the Families First Partnership Programme and the collective commitment of partners to transforming services for children and families. This ambitious programme has strengthened multi-agency collaboration, created greater opportunities for integrated working, and established a strong foundation for future reform, with children and families at the centre of service design and delivery.

As we look ahead to 2026/27, the Partnership remains committed to maintaining strong safeguarding arrangements, strengthening early intervention and prevention services, and continuously improving the quality and impact of practice. Through effective partnership working, learning, challenge, and innovation, we will continue to work together to promote the safety and wellbeing of every child in Oldham through effective partnership working, learning and continuous improvement

Julie Daniels - Executive Director of Children & Young People (DCS)

Oldham Council

Our Vision


OUR VISION
For everyone to work together to ensure that all children and young people are safe and feel safe within their homes, schools and communities.
OUR STRATEGIC AIMS
1
Excellent practice is the norm across all practitioners in Oldham.
2
Partner agencies hold one another to account effectively and escalate where necessary.
3
Children get the right help, at the right time by the right people at the earliest opportunity.
4
A culture of learning and workforce development is embedded across the children's workforce
5
Information is shared effectively to promote the safeguarding of children.
6
The public feel confident that children are safeguarded and protected

The Local Context

OLDHAM
IN GREATER MANCHESTER



- One of 10 Local Authority Areas in Greater Manchester
- Collaborating Regionally & Sub-Regionally
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority Partner
- Part of the GM Safeguarding Partnership

POPULATION SNAPSHOT

82,393 Children & Young People Aged 0-25

251,560 Total Population

61,700 under 18

5% Decline Projected

6th Largest in Greater Manchester

CHILD POVERTY IN OLDHAM

42.9% Children Under 16 in Poverty

2nd Highest in Greater Manchester

Top 10 in the UK

DIVERSITY IN OLDHAM

33% of the population are from ethnic minority background

Profile of Safeguarding in Oldham

Contacts to MASH

22,203 contacts received → **4,233** contacts progressed to referrals

Targeted Early Help Referrals

3,178 referrals made

Section 47 & Children Looked

1,969 Section 47 enquiries

622 children looked after (March 2026)

Child Protection Plans

413 children subject to a child protection plan (March 2026)

Elective Home Education

510 children electively home educated (Spring term 2025/26)

Partnership working

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partners work together to promote a child-centred approach to safeguarding. This includes listening to children, empowering families, and providing services that are professional, evidence-based and effective. Partners are committed to continuous learning, improvement and constructive challenge, drawing on lessons from day-to-day practice.

OSCP continues to strengthen how partners collaborate, scrutinise, assure and coordinate safeguarding activity. *Working Together 2026* highlights the importance of strong, joined-up leadership and clear accountability in effective multi-agency safeguarding. These arrangements bring together organisations and agencies to improve outcomes for children.

Lead Statutory Partners (LSP's)

The Lead Statutory Partners provide leadership and drive the changes set out by government. In Oldham, these are the Chief Executive of Oldham Council, the Chief Executive of NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care, and the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police.

The LSPs have strategic oversight of policy, resources and practice. They speak with authority, take decisions, and jointly hold responsibility for the involvement and oversight of all relevant agencies. The partners are committed to reviewing ways of working, building on strengths and holding agencies to account. In April 2025, Oldham LSPs signed and shared a commitment to the North West Memorandum of Understanding, supporting a strong, joined-up leadership approach and clear accountability across partnerships.

Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP'S)

Each Lead Statutory Partner has appointed a Delegated Safeguarding Partner. In Oldham, these roles are undertaken by the Executive Director for Children and Young People (DCS), Oldham Council; the Chief Nurse Executive, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board; and the Oldham Divisional Commander, Greater Manchester Police.

Over the past year, safeguarding agencies across Oldham have demonstrated a clear and sustained commitment to improving responses for children and young people.

Executive and Partnership Decision Making

Strategic Safeguarding Executive meetings have taken place bi-monthly throughout the year, with consistent attendance from key partners.. These meetings focus on timely, decisive partnership action to safeguard children at risk of harm or abuse. Partners also provide evidence on the effectiveness of their safeguarding arrangements, enabling challenge, scrutiny and assurance.

Business unit

The Business Unit provides the management and support functions of the partnership. Long-standing team members have helped ensure safeguarding arrangements remain stable, consistent and effective. Staffing has been largely stable over the past 12 months, enabling the team to build skills, confidence and capacity to support the partnership and drive ongoing improvement.

GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

These multi agency safeguarding arrangements refer to the Borough of Oldham, which is one of ten local authorities within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) area. Whilst the responsibility for delivering the legislative requirements of Working Together 2026 locally is solely the responsibility of Oldham Council, NHS Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester Police, wider collaboration across Greater Manchester is in place to support the strategic leadership and implementation of our arrangements. This is in recognition that some matters will be common challenges for local partnerships and because two of the statutory partners operate across the GM footprint

Arrangements are in place for Lead Safeguarding Partners to meet three times a year as the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children and Young People's Alliance (GMSA). Through this forum, they provide collective leadership and deliver mutual assurance of strategic and operational safeguarding partnership arrangements for children and young people in Greater Manchester.

The Safeguarding Alliance is the dedicated forum where the Lead Safeguarding Partners can:

- Set direction, oversee GM priorities, and model collaborative working.
- Bring, explore and problem solve city-regional strategic and system wide issues.
- Agree the financial resources required including individual agency contributions for safeguarding partnerships.
- Provide mutual challenge and accountability.
- Receive high level performance and quality assurance information and key system learning.
- Receive updates from the Complex Safeguarding Executive.

In addition, there are a number of collaborative workstreams that are supported by the GMCA and SSCP is committed to continuing to work with partnerships across the northwest to support sector led improvement.
During the period covered by the report, the GMSA has undertaken work to determine the resources required to deliver the statutory functions of safeguarding partnership arrangements, received assurance about the findings of the Mayoral Independent Assurance Review into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Greater Manchester and safeguarding performance across the region and considered the changes within NHS reforms. This has resulted in regional work to review SARC capacity, work to identify optimal delivery model for the statutory functions of safeguarding partnership arrangements and enabled constructive dialogue and challenge about the responsibilities of Lead Safeguarding Partners and the impact of the changes within NHS and GM ICB for safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

In 2026-27, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed against the new Working Together 26 guidance, including a review of the Alliance's membership with the ambition to strengthen the role of independent scrutiny moving forwards. Statutory partners will also seek to identify safeguarding functions that can be best delivered on a wider footprint (cluster, GM or NW) and ensure there is strategic oversight of national reforms, such as Families First that will have most significant implications for safeguarding practice.

North West Regional Improvement Plan Pilot

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership have engaged in the NW RIPP over the last 12 months. Partners have embraced the support and opportunities to access workshops and training to enhance and strengthen partnership working and effectively evaluate progress.

The pilot has helped Oldham strengthen collaboration and partnership working. The pilot has provided a structured, evidence-informed approach helping build confidence, consistency, and a shared purpose in delivering improved outcomes.

Throughout the year, partners benefited from:

- Targeted training sessions designed to build skills in data use, self-evaluation, and improvement methodology. These sessions brought together colleagues from across the region, creating a shared language and strengthening cross-area learning.
- Practical tools and resources hosted on the Regional Improvement Hub, including templates, diagnostic tools, case studies, and step-by-step guides. These resources have enabled Oldham to apply improvement approaches consistently and with confidence.
- Ongoing facilitation and coaching, supported Oldham to identify priorities, plan improvement activity, and monitor progress in a structured and sustainable way.

Feedback from partners has highlighted the value of having a clear regional framework, accessible tools, and a supportive network to draw on. The pilot has not only strengthened local capacity but has also created a foundation for a more coherent and collaborative approach to improvement across the North West.

With the pilot funding now concluded, the partnership is focused on sustaining momentum by embedding the learning into everyday practice. Colleagues will continue to use the resources, templates and training materials available through the Hub to support consistent improvement activity across the region.



Key activities and decision making

During 2025 and 2026, the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) operated through a number of principal groups that met regularly throughout the year, providing strategic leadership and assurance for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across the borough. These arrangements are underpinned by strong, joined-up leadership, clear accountability and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people.

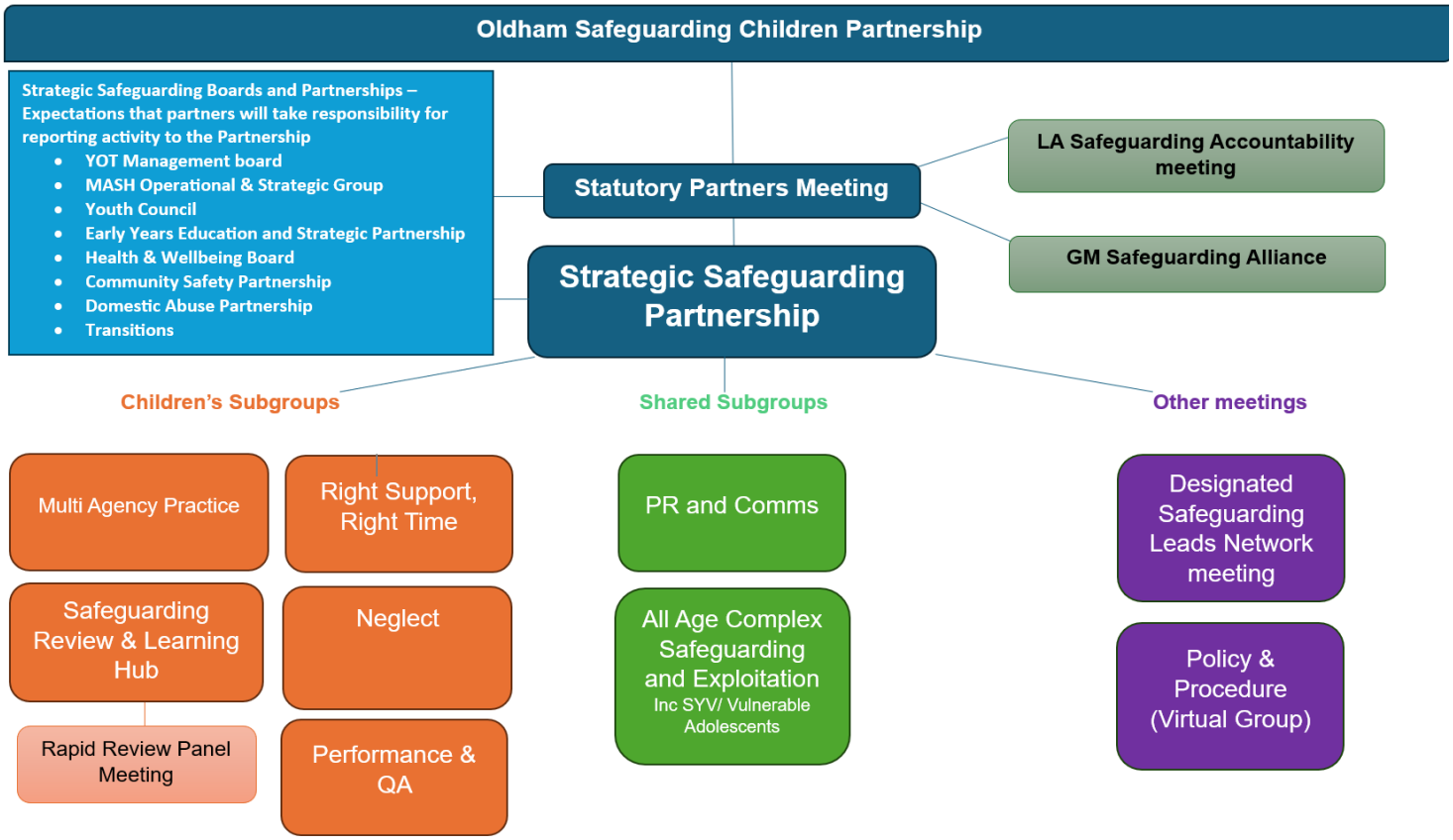
Strategic direction is provided by the **Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership**, which sets priorities, oversees performance and budget, and holds partners to account through scrutiny and challenge. Statutory leadership is exercised through the **Statutory Partners Meeting**, bringing together the Local Authority, Police, Health and Education. Lead and Delegated Safeguarding Partners play an active role in collective decision-making, ensuring accountability and alignment across agencies.

Delivery and oversight of safeguarding activity are supported through a range of subgroups with clear functions. **The Safeguarding Review and Learning Hub** leads partnership learning and improvement, overseeing Child Safeguarding Reviews, Rapid Reviews, serious incident consideration, audits, training and performance analysis. This ensures learning is translated into meaningful change in practice.

The Rapid Review Panel convenes as required to respond promptly to serious incidents, undertaking reviews within national timescales. **The Performance Subgroup** provides quality assurance across the partnership, analysing data, audits and review findings to identify trends, risks and areas for improvement, and to test whether actions have resulted in sustained change. **Task and Finish Groups** are established to deliver time-limited, priority work as required.

Formal assurance is strengthened through **quarterly Safeguarding Accountability Meetings** with the Chief Executive and Councillors, alongside **termly Designated Safeguarding Lead Networks** supporting effective safeguarding arrangements across schools and colleges.

The Partnership continues to adopt Greater Manchester safeguarding policies, supported by a virtual **Policy Subgroup** that ensures procedures remain current, effective and informed by learning and information-sharing best practice.



Activity and Impact – Serious Youth Violence

Serious Youth Violence Priority 2025– 2026

Serious Youth Violence (SYV) remained a strategic priority for the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) during 2025–2026. Partnership activity focused on prevention, early intervention, disruption of harm, and strengthening contextual safeguarding arrangements to improve outcomes for children and young people at risk of violence, exploitation and offending.

Activity

Strengthening the Partnership Response

A Serious Youth Violence Action Plan was developed and overseen through the Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup, aligned to the Oldham Serious Violence Reduction Strategy. Performance monitoring was enhanced through scrutiny of key indicators, including exclusions, attendance and part-time timetables.

Partners continued to strengthen intervention pathways through:

- The Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce, bringing together education, Youth Justice and Children's Social Care.
- Embedding of the Navigator Programme within the Royal Oldham Hospital Emergency Department to support young people affected by violence.
- Enhanced Early Help pathways to improve consistency of safeguarding responses.
- Turnaround-funded interventions for young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Therapeutic and Targeted Support

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) continued to play a key role in supporting children vulnerable to offending, exploitation and serious violence. Therapeutic and trauma-informed interventions delivered through the TOG Mind and YJS partnership provided support to young people experiencing emotional wellbeing difficulties, offending behaviours and exploitation-related risks.

Disruption and Community Safety

The partnership strengthened its disruption activity through 11 major multi-agency operations, including Operation Vulcan, ARMADA and Venture. Work focused on identifying habitual knife carriers, disrupting exploitation and organised criminality, and improving cross-border intelligence sharing across Greater Manchester.

A multi-agency Stop the Bleed programme was also developed to equip practitioners with the skills and confidence to engage young people in conversations about serious violence and emergency first aid.

Prevention and Education

Prevention remained a significant focus, with more than 6,200 young people receiving education and awareness sessions on exploitation, healthy relationships, knife crime and online safety. The Pol-Ed programme was expanded across secondary schools and alternative provision settings, alongside detached youth work, creative arts projects and immersive learning opportunities.

Impact

Partnership activity has strengthened identification, intervention and prevention across the borough. Key outcomes include:

Complex Safeguarding Hub Activity

- **129** referrals received by the Complex Safeguarding Hub
- **73%** progressed to direct intervention
- **74** young people received targeted exploitation support

Comparison with 2023/24

- **74** young people supported in 2024/25
- **62** young people supported in 2023/24

Outcomes Following Intervention

- **81%** demonstrated reduced levels of risk
- **94%** were connected to ongoing support services
- **71%** re-engaged in education, employment or training
- **86%** secured stable accommodation
- **63%** reduction in missing episodes

The Navigator Programme engaged 147 young people within the Emergency Department, with 62 receiving ongoing support and 38 diverted from further police involvement.

The Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce contributed to a 19% reduction in exclusions, while improved information-sharing arrangements between Oldham College and Greater Manchester Police resulted in a 42% reduction in accidental bail breaches.

Improving Wellbeing and Disrupting Exploitation

Therapeutic support delivered through **TOG Mind** and the **Youth Justice Service (YJS)** supported **112 young people**, helping to improve wellbeing and reduce vulnerability.

Impact of Therapeutic Support

- **71%** reported improved emotional wellbeing
- **54%** reduction in missing episodes among participating young people

Disruption and Enforcement Activity

Multi-agency disruption activity continued to target exploitation and organised criminality across the borough, resulting in:

- **164** investigations relating to exploitation and organised criminality
- **11** major multi-agency operations
- **17** arrests through *Operation Sherwood*

Children's Voice

Children and young people continued to influence service development through lived-experience forums, Youth Inspector activity, thematic reviews and consultation events.

Their feedback directly informed:

- Professional training delivered to more than 750 practitioners.
- Development of the Navigator Programme.
- Curriculum content through the CELLS Project and learning initiatives.
- Improvements within complex safeguarding governance and review activity.

Young people consistently highlighted the importance of trusted relationships, accessible support, being listened to and involvement in decisions affecting their lives.

Challenges

Whilst positive progress has been made, challenges remain in:

- Responding to emerging risks linked to exploitation and serious violence.
- Maintaining strong cross-border intelligence-sharing arrangements.
- Further improving information sharing between agencies.
- Increasing preventative support for younger children before risks escalate.
- Ensuring services can evidence long-term outcomes

Next Steps 2026–2027

The partnership will focus on:

- Increasing preventative interventions for children vulnerable to exploitation and serious violence.
- Further developing the Navigator Programme through mentoring and community-based follow-up support.
- Expanding exploitation screening across health services.
- Increasing disruption activity targeting knife crime, exploitation and serious violence hotspots.
- Strengthening intelligence sharing between education, police and safeguarding partners.
- Extending the CELLS and Pol-Ed programmes into post-16 settings.
- Increasing youth work provision in identified high-risk locations and during school holidays.
- Embedding the Stop the Bleed initiative across communities.
- Expanding workforce development around trauma-informed practice, exploitation and contextual safeguarding.
- Ensuring children's voices continue to influence service design, improvement and evaluation.

Overall, partnership activity during 2025–2026 has strengthened prevention, intervention and disruption efforts in relation to serious youth violence. The focus for 2026–2027 will be on earlier intervention, enhanced partnership intelligence, and demonstrating improved outcomes for children and young people at risk of violence and exploitation.

Activity and Impact – Neglect

Neglect Priority 2025–2026

Neglect remains a key priority for the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP). During 2025–2026, partners focused on strengthening the multi-agency response through workforce development, improved data and intelligence, enhanced use of assessment tools, and greater involvement of children and young people in shaping local priorities.

Activity

Strengthening Practice and Early Identification

The partnership continued to develop practitioner knowledge and confidence through neglect-focused training, including the introduction of Virtual Reality (VR) learning to increase understanding of children's lived experiences. An Early Help Neglect Checklist was introduced to support earlier identification and intervention, while the Workforce Development Strategy was updated to reinforce professional curiosity, reflective supervision, and understanding of factors that can contribute to neglect.

Improving Intelligence and Resources

A broader neglect dataset was developed, incorporating information on repeat referrals, deprivation, fuel poverty, parental substance misuse, oral health and childhood obesity. This has improved the partnership's ability to identify trends and target support.

New resources were also developed, including Emotional Neglect and Educational Neglect assessment tools, alongside the ongoing development of an Oldham Neglect Toolkit.

Embedding GCP2 and Quality Assurance

GCP2 training continued across partner agencies, with 104 practitioners trained. Assurance activity, including audits and thematic reviews, focused on improving the quality of assessments, management oversight and the consistent use of neglect tools across agencies.

Listening to Children and Young People

A new participation group was established with Action Together, and engagement sessions were delivered through Youth Services and Positive Steps. Young people directly influenced the refreshed Neglect Strategy and developed resources to help professionals better understand their experiences of neglect.

Impact

Partnership activity has strengthened practitioner confidence in recognising neglect earlier and understanding cumulative harm.

Key evidence of impact includes:

- 104 practitioners trained in the use of GCP2.
- Nine Early Help cases utilised GCP2, resulting in seven families receiving targeted support and two cases escalating appropriately where risks increased.
- Four families demonstrated measurable improvements, including safer home environments, improved routines and stronger family safety planning.
- GCP2 assessments informed targeted interventions, including referrals to housing support and mental health services.

- Children and young people have had a greater influence on strategic planning through participation and engagement activity.

Education partners also extended neglect awareness, with training delivered to Oldham College and development of a Primary School Neglect Toolkit to support earlier identification of concerns.

Partners such as First Choice Homes Oldham reported increased confidence in recognising neglect, with 24 child neglect safeguarding concerns raised and referred appropriately, contributing valuable information to multi-agency assessments and planning.

Challenges

Despite good progress, challenges remain:

- Inconsistent use and completion of GCP2 assessments across agencies.
- Workforce capacity pressures affecting implementation.
- The need to strengthen evidence of the impact of interventions.
- Improving the use of data to understand trends, disproportionality and children's experiences.
- Increasing engagement from voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

Next Steps 2026–2027

The partnership will focus on:

- Delivering the refreshed Neglect Strategy and Action Plan.
- Further embedding and assuring effective use of GCP2.
- Launching and evaluating the Oldham Neglect Toolkit.
- Rolling out Early Years and Primary School neglect identification tools.
- Strengthening performance reporting, data analysis and strategic challenge.
- Increasing the use of case studies and lived-experience evidence to demonstrate impact.
- Embedding restorative, strengths-based approaches across services.
- Ensuring learning from reviews, audits and assurance activity leads to measurable improvements for children and families.

Overall, partners have continued to strengthen the response to neglect across Oldham. The priority for 2026–2027 will be demonstrating the difference this work is making to children's safety, wellbeing and outcomes, while achieving greater consistency in practice across the partnership.

Activity and Impact

Responding to need at the right time

Responding to need at the right time priority 2025–2026

Early intervention remains a key priority for the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP). During 2025–26, partners strengthened early help pathways, enhanced multi-agency working and developed workforce capability to respond to increasingly complex safeguarding needs, including sexual abuse, domestic abuse, adolescent wellbeing, self-harm and suicide risk.

Activity

Throughout the year, partners worked together to improve the identification of need and provide timely support for children and families.

Health services, including the 0–19 Service, continued to identify needs through universal contacts with families, while First Choice Homes Oldham utilised their access to family homes to identify and escalate emerging safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity. Open-access provision through TOG Mind's Take 5 Hub provided rapid access to emotional wellbeing support, helping to prevent escalation and facilitate onward referrals where required.

Progress was made in strengthening multi-agency arrangements through improved information sharing, enhanced MASH processes and the introduction of weekly multi-agency audits to support continuous improvement in front-door decision making.

During 2025–26, partners also continued preparations for the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme and the development of Family Help arrangements. Activity focused on strengthening early intervention, enhancing multi-agency collaboration, increasing the involvement of family networks in decision making and preparing for key developments, including Family Group Decision Making and Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams.

Workforce development remained a priority, with training delivered across the partnership on contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed practice, sexual abuse, domestic abuse and adolescent suicide prevention. Domestic abuse services trained more than 400 frontline practitioners, strengthening confidence in risk assessment, safety planning and responding to disclosures. Suicide prevention training, including the expansion of STORM-trained practitioners, further enhanced partners' ability to identify and respond to emotional distress and suicide risk.

Family Hubs, community services, domestic abuse support services and probation colleagues also played an important role in providing timely support, reducing risk and helping families access support before concerns escalated.

Impact

Partnership activity has contributed to earlier identification of need, enabling more children and families to access support before difficulties escalate into statutory intervention.

Improved information sharing and strengthened MASH arrangements have enhanced decision making and care planning, while workforce development has increased practitioner confidence in responding to domestic abuse, sexual abuse, emotional wellbeing concerns and suicide risk.

The continued development of Family Hubs, community-based services and open-access support has improved access to help and reduced barriers for families seeking assistance. Investment in suicide prevention has also increased practitioner confidence and strengthened support for vulnerable adolescents experiencing emotional distress and self-harm.

Collectively, these developments have strengthened Oldham's ability to provide coordinated, trauma-informed support for children, young people and families.

Next Steps

During 2026–27, partners will continue to support the implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme and the introduction of Family Help arrangements

Key areas of focus include:

- Delivering earlier intervention through a whole-family approach.
- Strengthening multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working.
- Improving information sharing and intelligence-led decision making.
- Further developing community-based support through Family Hubs and local networks.
- Strengthening responses to contextual safeguarding, exploitation and sexual abuse.
- Continuing to develop adolescent emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention pathways.
- Building a skilled and integrated workforce with shared practice standards.
- Ensuring children and families experience consistent, trusted and relationship-based support.
- Monitoring implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme and Family Help arrangements through governance, quality assurance activity and performance reporting.

By continuing to invest in prevention, partnership working and early help, Oldham will further strengthen its ability to ensure children, young people and families receive the right help at the right time.

Activity and Impact - Multi agency practice

Multi agency practice priority 2025–2026

During 2025–26, partners continued to strengthen multi-agency practice to ensure children and families receive coordinated, child-centred support at the earliest opportunity.

A multi-agency workshop involving statutory partners, education, health, police, housing and the voluntary and community sector helped define Oldham's shared vision for high-quality practice. This reinforced the importance of a whole-family approach, shared ownership of risk, professional curiosity, the consistent application of thresholds, and anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice. The learning has informed the development of a new practice framework and the priorities of the Multi-Agency Practice Group. Throughout the year, partners have also used workforce development, quality assurance activity, engagement with children and families, and analysis of safeguarding data to strengthen their understanding of disproportionality, inequality and the experiences of diverse communities, helping to inform more inclusive safeguarding practice.

Partners also continued preparing for the Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP), Family Help reforms and forthcoming national changes, strengthening understanding of early help pathways and multi-disciplinary working.

A key area of activity was the mock Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) focused on child sexual abuse within the family environment. The review highlighted stronger identification of risk, greater confidence in the use of CSA tools and improved safeguarding planning. Learning has informed the ongoing development of local CSA pathways and resources.

The Multi-Agency Child Protection Training (MACPT) Group continued to strengthen safeguarding practice through updated training programmes, test and learn activities, and shared learning events. Training and development across agencies has reinforced the importance of hearing the child's voice, professional challenge and information sharing.

Effective information sharing remained central to safeguarding activity throughout the year. Partners worked together through MASH, Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need meetings, Team Around the Family and Team Around the Adult meetings, MARAC, MAPPA, strategy discussions and other multi-agency forums to ensure risks were identified, assessed and managed effectively. Housing, health, probation, domestic abuse services and voluntary sector partners all contributed valuable information to support decision-making and coordinated planning for children and families.

Professional challenge continued to be demonstrated across the partnership, particularly in complex cases involving child sexual abuse, children with complex health needs and safeguarding responses where agencies sought further clarity to ensure a proportionate, child-centred and trauma-informed approach.

Children's voices continued to inform practice through direct work undertaken by health, education and voluntary sector services, routine feedback mechanisms and a stronger focus on understanding children's lived experiences. Partners have continued to embed approaches that ensure children's views inform assessment, planning and decision-making.

Impact

The strengthened multi-agency approach has had a positive impact on children, young people and families across Oldham.

Families are receiving more coordinated and timely support, with improved information sharing reducing duplication and helping practitioners develop a more complete understanding of need and risk. Increased collaboration between agencies has strengthened safeguarding planning and improved the consistency of support provided to families.

The learning from the mock JTAI and ongoing workforce development has increased practitioner confidence in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse and other complex safeguarding concerns. Practitioners report greater confidence in recognising risk, using safeguarding tools and undertaking effective multi-agency planning.

Children's voices are being heard more consistently within safeguarding processes, supporting services to better understand lived experience and tailor support accordingly. The increased involvement of education settings, health services, community organisations and specialist services has strengthened the network of support around children and improved opportunities for earlier intervention.

The partnership's commitment to shared ownership of risk and constructive professional challenge has contributed to more timely decision-making, stronger safeguarding responses and improved outcomes for children and families.

Next Steps

During 2026–27, partners will continue to build on this progress by:

- Embedding the Family Help model and Families First Partnership Programme reforms.
- Strengthening early intervention and whole-family approaches.
- Developing the new multi-agency practice framework and shared practice standards.
- Improving understanding and consistent application of thresholds across agencies.
- Expanding multi-agency induction, training and reflective learning opportunities.
- Strengthening CSA and CSE pathways and increasing confidence in the use of safeguarding tools.
- Continuing multi-agency audits, learning reviews and quality assurance activity.
- Enhancing information sharing, intelligence gathering and use of data to inform practice.
- Strengthening mechanisms for capturing and responding to children's and families' voices.
- Supporting effective professional challenge and escalation where required.
- Building on learning from the mock JTAI and preparing for future inspection activity.

By continuing to strengthen partnership working, shared accountability and child-centred practice, safeguarding partners will ensure children and families in Oldham receive effective, coordinated support that improves outcomes and keeps them safe.

Voice of Children, Young People and Families

Listening to the voices of children, young people and families remains central to safeguarding practice across Oldham. During 2025–26, partners gathered feedback through participation activities, reviews, audits, conferences, direct work and service evaluations. This feedback continues to shape practice, influence service development and inform the design of Family Help arrangements across the partnership.

Through engagement activity linked to the Families First Partnership Programme, children, young people and families highlighted the importance of trusted relationships, early support and joined-up services. They told us they value professionals who are kind, respectful, listen to their views and take time to understand their individual circumstances. Families also emphasised the importance of receiving support early and not having to repeat their story to multiple professionals.

Children and young people shared concerns about school, friendships, bullying, loneliness, transitions and emotional wellbeing, while families highlighted challenges relating to children's safety, SEND support, access to services and wider pressures affecting family life. These views continue to inform service improvement and partnership priorities.

Across the partnership, children's voices are influencing both individual support and wider service development. Children's Social Care captures the views of children and families through assessments, child protection conferences, reviews and quality assurance activity. The Voice Steering Group brings together learning from engagement activity to identify key themes and support improvement. The Children in Care Council and Care Leaver Forums continue to influence corporate parenting priorities, while Youth Justice Service gathers regular feedback from children, parents, carers and victims through its *Your Opinions Matter* programme to shape service delivery. Health partners, including Northern Care Alliance and TOG Mind, seek direct feedback from children and young people to improve services, while education partners gather pupil voice through SEND participation activity, student forums and school-based engagement.

Children, young people and families told us:

"Other families are really lucky to have her support them."

"An amazing Early Help worker who consistently goes above and beyond."

"I have felt heard and supported. Thank you for all you have done for him and us."

"Overall, the support that has given to A has been brilliant. He has been shown compassion and empathy throughout. You have been patient and kind."

"I really enjoyed our waffles (chats). You have been reliable, so I have been able to open up and talk about things."

What We Have Learned

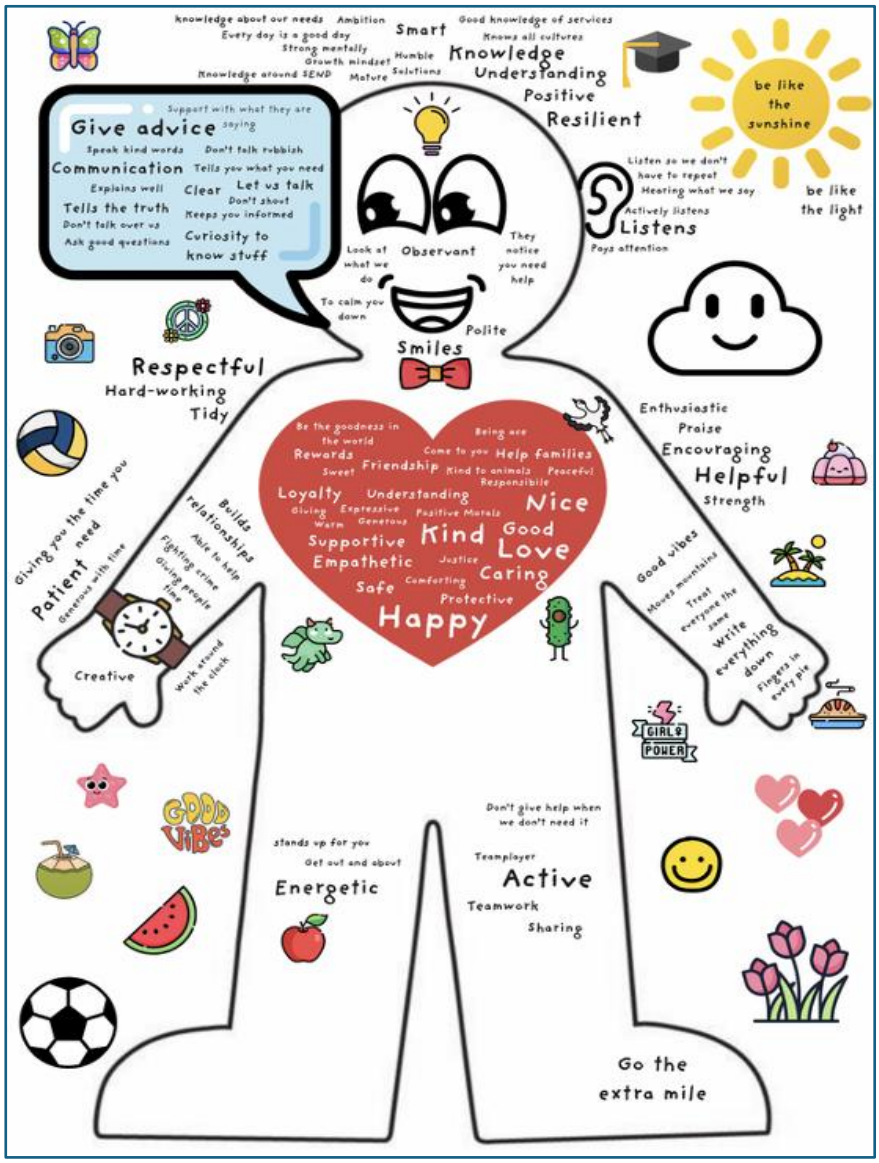
Feedback from children, young people and families has reinforced the importance of:

- Providing help at the earliest opportunity.
- Building trusted, relationship-based support.
- Listening to and involving children and families in decisions that affect them
- Recognising strengths as well as needs.
- Delivering coordinated support through effective multi-agency working.

Looking Ahead

During 2026–27, the Partnership will continue to strengthen opportunities for children, young people and families to influence safeguarding practice, quality assurance activity and the ongoing development of Family Help arrangements. We remain committed to ensuring that the voice of the child is a golden thread running through all aspects of safeguarding practice and decision-making across Oldham.

Image: Findings from a Families First Partnership engagement event with children, young people and families, exploring the qualities families value in a Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) view larger image

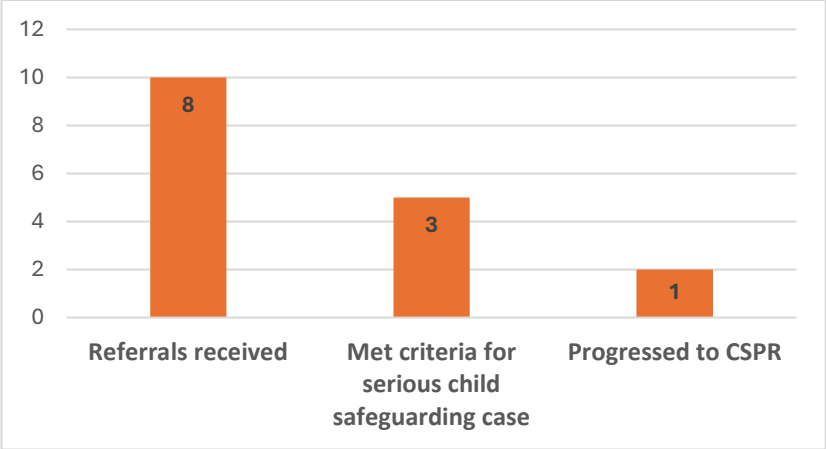


Learning & Quality Assurance Activity

Case Reviews

The Safeguarding Partnership has a statutory duty to review serious child safeguarding cases with the aim of identifying learning, improvements in practice and protecting children from harm.

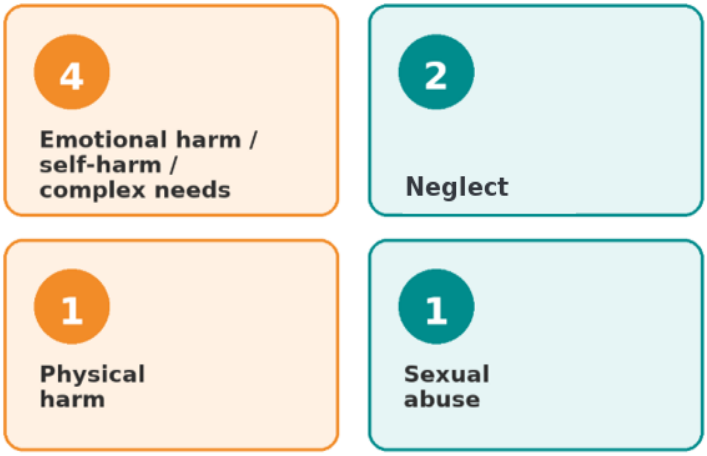
A serious child safeguarding case is one in which, “abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected, and the child has died or been seriously harmed.” (WT 2026)



During 2025–26, the partnership received:

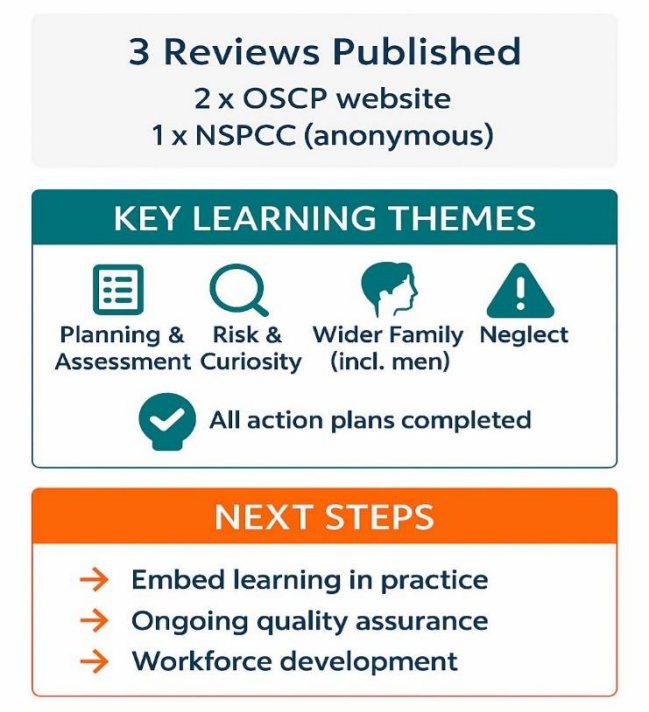
- 8 referrals received
- 5 criteria for serious harm not met *(2 NFA, 2 BLR, 1 Management Review)*
- 3 Rapid Reviews completed
- 2 cases concluded at Rapid Review with learning identified
- 1 Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR)

Themes of referrals



Published reviews in 2025/26

During 2025/26, the Partnership published **three Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs)** relating to incidents that occurred in 2021/22. Publication was necessarily delayed while criminal investigations progressed and to ensure that the welfare of the children involved remained protected.



Learning from LCSPRs is only valuable if it leads to action. Progress is monitored by the Safeguarding Review and Learning Hub Subgroup. Agencies will evidence impact through follow-up review meetings.

Repeat learning will be explored to identify why previous actions were ineffective and whether system-wide change is needed. Learning will be embedded through policy and practice changes, training, briefings, 7MB, newsletter, and partnership-wide communication to improve outcomes for children and families.

Examples of Effective Safeguarding Practice

Reviews undertaken during 2025–2026 highlighted a number of examples of effective safeguarding practice across the partnership. While not present in every review, several recurring strengths were identified. These included practitioners building strong relationships with children and families, ensuring children's voices were heard and influencing assessment, planning and decision-making. Professionals demonstrated persistence, compassion and advocacy, particularly when supporting children and families through periods of vulnerability or crisis.

Schools and colleges were frequently recognised as important protective factors for children and young people, providing stability, emotional wellbeing support, practical assistance and trusted adult relationships.

Several reviews also highlighted the positive impact of strong management oversight and professional challenge. Collectively, these examples of good practice demonstrate the value of effective partnership working and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people.

Thematic Learning from Practice Reviews and Partnership Learning

This section outlines the key thematic learning identified through safeguarding practice reviews and partnership learning during 2025/26. It highlights the Partnership's ongoing commitment to learning from reviews, strengthening multi-agency practice, and improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

While progress is evident, embedding change across the system remains an ongoing priority, and this section reflects both the impact achieved to date and the areas requiring continued focus.

Ongoing audit, quality assurance and learning activity will continue to test and strengthen this position.



Workforce Development and Training

Partnership learning highlighted the importance of a well-trained, confident workforce able to recognise risk and respond appropriately. Areas of learning included the Mental Capacity Act, trauma-informed practice, cultural awareness, and specialist safeguarding topics. The Partnership has used this learning to strengthen a coordinated multi-agency training offer and place greater emphasis on understanding the impact of training on practice.

What we have done

- Delivered coordinated multi-agency training programme
- Embedded learning from reviews into supervision and practice

What has improved

- Increased practitioner confidence
- More consistent safeguarding practice

Impact for children

- Higher quality interactions with professionals
- More effective safeguarding responses

Child Voice and Lived Experience

Learning consistently emphasised the need to better understand children's lived experiences and ensure their voices influence safeguarding decision-making. Reviews identified opportunities to improve how practitioners communicate with children and record their views. Partnership activity has focused on embedding child voice as a golden thread across assessment, planning, and review processes.

What we have done

- Embedded expectations that children's lived experience is captured in assessments
- Delivered partnership briefing and training
- Strengthened management oversight through supervision and QA processes

What has improved

- Practitioners demonstrate increased focus on children's voices
- Greater use of professional curiosity

Impact for children

- Children are more visible within assessments
- Decisions are more child-centred and reflective of lived experience

Quality of Assessment, Planning, and Oversight

High-quality assessment and planning were identified as critical to effective safeguarding. Learning highlighted the importance of clear referrals, analytical thinking, consideration of family context, and robust management oversight. The Partnership has prioritised strengthening reflective supervision, audit activity, and assurance processes to support consistent, timely decision-making.

What we have done

- Strengthened QA frameworks and practice standards
- Delivered training on analysis, risk and parenting capacity

What has improved

- Assessments are more analytical and consistent
- Increased oversight and challenge from managers

Impact for children and families

- Earlier identification of risk
- More timely and appropriate support



Transitions, Care Leavers, and Cross-Service Working

Several reviews identified increased risk at transition points, particularly as young people move between services or into adulthood. Learning reinforced the need for early planning, clear pathways, and strong joint working between children's and adults' services. Partnership improvement activity has focused on reducing the risk of children and young people losing support during transitions.

What we have done

- Strengthened handover and transition processes
- Improved coordination between services

What has improved

- Better planning during transitions
- Increased clarity around roles and responsibilities

Impact for children and young people

- More consistent support
- Reduced risk of children being lost between services



Multi-Agency Practice and Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding depends on strong collaboration between agencies. Learning consistently identified the need for improved information-sharing, clearer multi-agency chronologies, and opportunities for joint professional challenge. The Partnership has worked to strengthen multi-agency communication and promote shared responsibility for safeguarding decisions.

What we have done

- Strengthened MASH/front door arrangements
- Improved health information sharing systems
- Refreshed escalation policy
- Introduced multi-agency oversight mechanisms

What has improved

- Better coordination between services
- More effective information sharing

Impact for children and families

- More joined-up responses
- Reduced risk of fragmented safeguarding



Safeguarding Assurance, Governance, and Learning

Partnership learning highlighted the importance of clear arrangements to ensure learning leads to real change. Themes included the dissemination of learning, tracking of actions, and testing impact through audits and thematic reviews. Governance arrangements continue to be strengthened to provide assurance that learning informs improvement activity.

What we have done

- Strengthened governance and quality assurance processes
- Introduced multi-agency audit and case evaluation
- Improved tracking of learning

What has improved

- Increased oversight of practice
- Greater accountability across agencies

Impact for children and families

- More consistent safeguarding responses
- Greater assurance that risks are acted upon



Vulnerable Groups and Targeted Safeguarding

Learning across the year identified specific risks for vulnerable groups, including babies, children who go missing, children in care, large family groups and those experiencing exploitation or additional barriers to support. The Partnership has used this learning to promote targeted, proportionate safeguarding responses that reflect children's individual circumstances and needs.

What we have done

- Strengthened focus on vulnerable groups through targeted safeguarding approaches, training, and pathways
- Embedded workforce development on risk, cumulative harm, and professional curiosity
- Introduced tools to support understanding of complex family dynamics

What has improved

- Improved identification of vulnerability and risk
- Increased practitioner confidence and understanding of underlying causes of harm
- More consistent and tailored safeguarding responses

Impact for children and families

- Earlier identification of risk, reducing escalation
- More personalised and responsive support
- Improved protection for those most at risk

Multi agency audits

Multi-Agency Case Evaluation (MACE): Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment

Following the partnership's Multi-Agency Practice Week focus on child sexual abuse in the family environment, a Multi-Agency Case Evaluation (MACE) was undertaken using the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) methodology. Six cases were reviewed through partner chronologies, assessments and self-evaluations, supported by independent scrutiny, enabling the partnership to test learning, review practice and identify areas for further improvement across the partnership

Significant Strengths

- Strong trauma-informed practice.
- Timely and effective multi-agency safeguarding responses.
- Education-led safeguarding that supported identification and protection.
- Effective information sharing between agencies.
- Integrated therapeutic support for children and families.
- Trusted professional relationships that enabled children to disclose abuse.
- Swift protective action when risks were identified.

Areas for further development

- Inconsistencies in the quality of chronologies and assessments.
- Variable attendance at multi-agency meetings.
- Opportunities to strengthen joint working between police and safeguarding teams.
- Limited understanding of Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) pathways.
- Household-level risks not always being fully explored.
- The child's voice not consistently influencing decision-making.

Partnership response

- Strengthen the early identification of child sexual abuse.
- Improve the quality and consistency of CSA-specific assessments.
- Standardise expectations for strategy meetings and core groups.
- Enhance collaboration between police and safeguarding services.
- Improve health and SARC pathways.
- Reinforce the central role of education in safeguarding.
- Implement cross-border intelligence-sharing arrangements Develop reflective practice opportunities to increase professional curiosity and consistency.
- Develop reflective practice opportunities to increase professional curiosity and consistency.

Impact for Children and Families

The review demonstrated that children benefit from trusted relationships, timely protection, trauma-informed support and strong education-led safeguarding. The learning identified through this evaluation will help partners identify child sexual abuse earlier, respond more effectively to risk and ensure children and families receive coordinated, safe and meaningful support.

Section 175 Safeguarding Audit: Education Assurance

What we did

During 2025/26, Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership undertook a detailed analysis of Section 175 safeguarding audit returns from schools to provide assurance that education settings are meeting their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

At a glance

103 out of 107 of schools returned the audit that is 96%
10 safeguarding standards reviewed
137 questions used to assess practice
Action plan developed to address key findings

What is working well

The audit identified strengths in:

- Recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Safeguarding within the curriculum.
- Safer recruitment and safe practice.
- Multi-agency and partnership working.
- Early Help awareness and information sharing.

Areas for further development

The audit also identified areas where further support and improvement are needed, including:

- Staff training and awareness.
- Digital safety.
- Prevent risk assessments.
- Private fostering awareness.
- School transport and external provider arrangements.
- Operation Encompass processes.
- Local safeguarding priorities, including serious youth violence and complex safeguarding.

What we are doing in response

An education safeguarding action plan has been developed to address the findings. Actions include:

- Sharing updates through DSL Networks.
- Developing and promoting safeguarding guidance and resources.
- Strengthening links with the Complex Safeguarding Team.
- Promoting Operation Encompass and Prevent resources.
- Developing training on online safety, AI and harmful sexual behaviour.
- Supporting schools with safeguarding policy templates and safer recruitment guidance

Impact and next steps

The findings will be used to strengthen the DSL training offer, support consistent safeguarding practice across schools and ensure learning is shared through education networks. Progress against the action plan will continue to be monitored by the partnership.

Education

During 2025–26, education partners:

- Continued to strengthen safeguarding practice through a comprehensive training programme for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), school leaders and wider staff groups.
- Prioritised attendance improvement, recognising the link between attendance, safeguarding, wellbeing and educational attainment.
- Developed and launched multi-agency Educational Neglect Guidance to support earlier identification of concerns, clearer thresholds and more effective interventions.
- Strengthened support for children known to Children's Social Care through coordinated work between schools, Social Workers, Early Help, the Virtual School and Inclusion Services, including earlier escalation of concerns and improved information sharing.
- Supported delivery of Oldham's SEND and Inclusion Strategy through SENCO networks, SEND surgeries, strengthened partnership working and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) support.
- Maintained a focus on Early Years development through the Early Language Support for Every Child programme and introduction of the Early Years Neglect Tool, promoting earlier identification of need and improved school readiness.
- Worked collaboratively with Public Health, Pennine Care, Greater Manchester Police, Children's Social Care, School Nursing, Mental Health Support Teams, Youth Services, Community Safety and voluntary sector organisations to improve referral pathways and access to support for children and families.
- Delivered preventative safeguarding education through assemblies, curriculum sessions and professional development covering:
    - Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
    - Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
    - Harmful sexual behaviour
    - Consent and healthy relationships
    - Child-on-child abuse
    - Stalking and harassment
- Developed and delivered additional staff training in preparation for the revised RSHE guidance, increasing confidence in addressing topics such as misogyny, violence against women and girls, sexual violence and non-fatal strangulation.
- Strengthened the local response to self-harm and suicide prevention through accredited STORM training, with the first intermediate-level course delivered to DSLs, pastoral staff and school counsellors.
- Supported schools and alternative provision settings through safeguarding audits, joint assurance visits, training, advice and support on emerging safeguarding concerns.
- Developed the Prevent Handbook for Education in partnership with schools and Community Safety colleagues, promoting consistent and confident practice across educational settings.
- Continued to strengthen safeguarding partnership arrangements through active DSL networks, increased engagement with independent schools and contributions to governance, learning reviews and partnership improvement activity.

Education: Impact

- This work has strengthened safeguarding practice, partnership working and outcomes for children and young people across Oldham.
- Practitioners reported increased confidence in recognising concerns, assessing risk and responding effectively to neglect, exploitation, contextual safeguarding, harmful sexual behaviour and child sexual abuse.
- Staff demonstrated greater confidence in discussing sensitive issues with children and young people and identifying when specialist intervention is required.
- STORM training improved professional confidence in supporting children and young people experiencing self-harm or suicidal thoughts, including undertaking safety planning, managing risk and working effectively with families and partner agencies.
- Attendance continued to improve, with Oldham's secondary attendance rates amongst the strongest nationally and persistent absence reducing across both primary and secondary schools.
- Increased recognition of educational neglect as a safeguarding issue has supported earlier intervention, improved understanding of family need and strengthened access to support services.
- Inclusion remains a key strength across Oldham, with significant reductions in exclusions, particularly in primary schools, reflecting the impact of collaborative inclusion and early intervention approaches.
- Progress within the SEND partnership has been recognised through strengthened governance, improved accountability and positive feedback from Ofsted and CQC regarding improvement against previously identified areas of concern.
- Schools reported increased confidence in preparing for implementation of the revised RSHE guidance, including reviewing policies, auditing curriculum provision and planning for new safeguarding content.
- Responsive safeguarding training and support strengthened safeguarding culture within schools, increasing awareness of professional responsibilities and confidence in recognising, reporting and responding to concerns.
- Continued investment in speech, language and communication support, together with wider family support services, has strengthened the foundations for children's learning, development and school readiness.

Next Steps

During 2026–27, education partners will continue to strengthen safeguarding, inclusion and educational outcomes through both frontline practice and strategic partnership activity. Priorities include:

- Strengthening education representation and influence within OSCP governance and sub-groups.
- Establishing Working Together task and finish groups to support implementation of national reforms and strengthen multi-agency practice.
- Further embedding the Family Help model and Families First Partnership reforms.
- Continuing to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, particularly for children known to Children's Social Care.
- Embedding Educational Neglect Guidance across schools and partner agencies.
- Continuing implementation of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and supporting inclusive practice across all educational settings.
- Improving Early Years outcomes through a focus on school readiness, speech, language and communication development, and family support.

- Expanding delivery of STORM self-harm and suicide prevention training across the children's workforce.
- Delivering enhanced professional development in preparation for updated RSHE guidance and proposed changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education, with a focus on misogyny, violence against women and girls, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.
- Strengthening responses to harmful sexual behaviour, contextual safeguarding and serious youth violence through targeted training and curriculum support.
- Expanding opportunities for multi-agency learning, reflective practice and professional challenge.
- Continuing to strengthen DSL networks across all education phases, including independent schools and alternative provision.
- Developing stronger mechanisms for capturing the views and experiences of children and young people, including those with SEND.





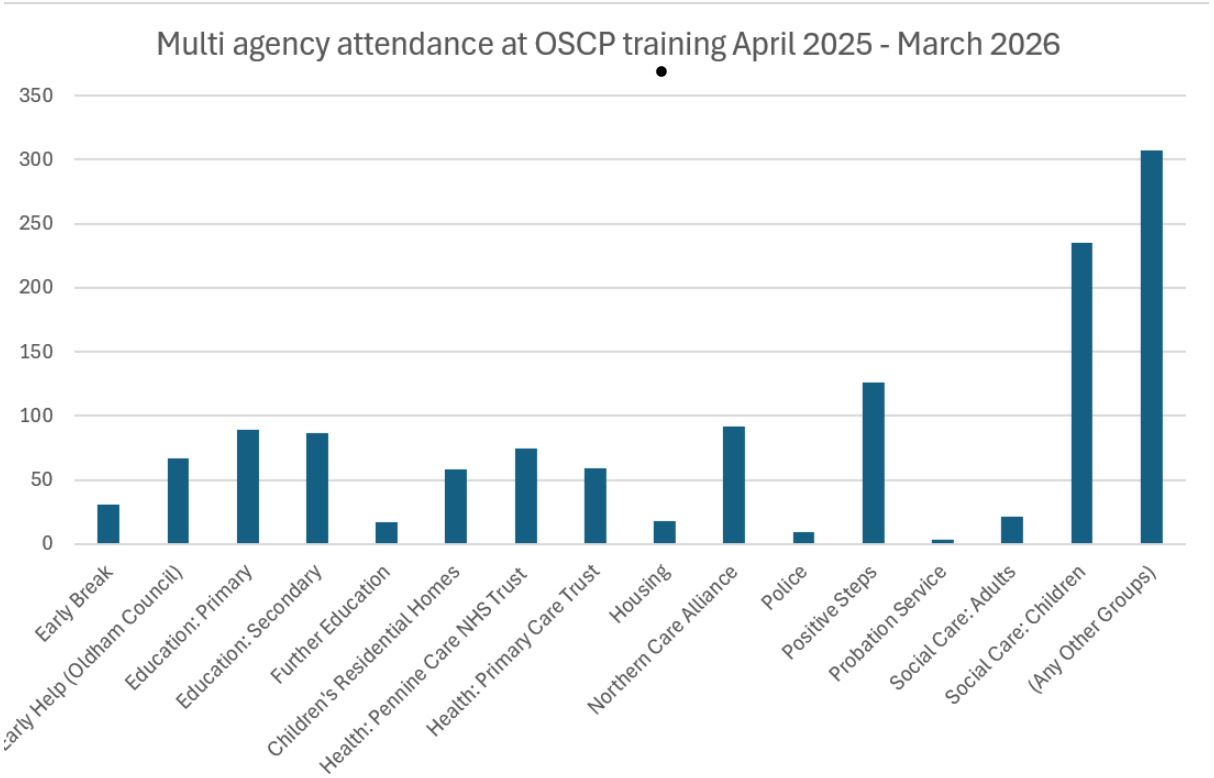



Training

51 training sessions held

1,294 multi-agency practitioners attended

- Understanding Exploitation
- Continuum of Need – Lunch & Learn
- Stressed Out Brain
- Meet the team – Child Protection Investigation Unit webinar
- Making a Child Protection Referral
- Introduction to Early Break
- Referring into Complex Safeguarding – Lunch & Learn
- Neglect Matters
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities
- Professional Challenge
- So-called Honour Based Violence
- Neglect Advanced
- Perinatal Mental Health
- Early Break – Substance Misuse awareness – Lunch & Learns
- Trauma Responsive to Hidden Harm
- STORM
- Stop the Bleed
- Safer Recruitment



Feedback from attendees:

Informative presentation which highlighted many key areas to develop my knowledge

Learnt a lot about other services and where to look for information

Very insightful and delivered in a way that opened conversation and kept attention



Training was good as it refreshed my knowledge and kept me up to date on new information

Training was very informative and full of useful information. The activities set were very useful

Very informative, lots of important information/knowledge to take away and implement

Brilliant information, delivered well, best training I have been on in a while. Very knowledgeable professionals delivering the training

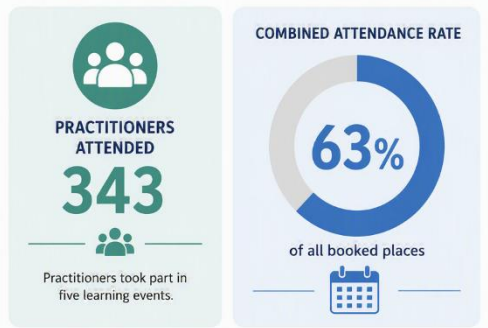
The information was clearly delivered, lots of information, practical activities & time to talk across multi-agencies

Very in-depth session, was interactive and gave professionals the opportunity to engage in the content

Practice Week 2025 – Intrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse

The Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership delivers an annual multi-agency Practice Week aligned to learning from reviews, local priorities and emerging safeguarding themes. The programme aims to strengthen workforce knowledge, confidence and multi-agency practice through a combination of training, learning events and reflective discussions.

During Practice Week 2025:



Practitioners attended from across Children's Social Care, Health, Education, Youth Justice, Probation, voluntary sector organisations and other safeguarding partners.

A deep-dive training evaluation was undertaken by the Training and Learning Network; however, due to the limited number of returns, this activity was discontinued.



Practitioner Confidence in Responding to Child Sexual Abuse: Feedback Summary

Confidence questionnaires were used throughout the programme to identify emerging learning needs and inform future workforce development. Overall, confidence levels were high, with more than 80% of practitioners reporting that they felt confident or reasonably confident across all areas. Participants reported the highest confidence in recognising indicators of child sexual abuse and responding to disclosures (97%), and in working directly with vulnerable children (94%). Lower confidence was identified in talking to children about sexual abuse, implementing trauma-informed practice, and supporting children and families where sexual abuse is a concern. In response, additional targeted training was commissioned through the Centre of Expertise and incorporated into the partnership training programme, with an enhanced offer also made available to Children's Social Care.



Key Activity Updates

White Ribbon – Two Weeks of Action

Working with people with lived experience, Reel and domestic abuse partners, a support leaflet was developed for family and friends of those experiencing domestic abuse and coercive control. Plans are underway to develop a complementary online learning resource and incorporate lived experience into website development.

Youth Voice and Community Engagement

As a White Ribbon Champion, the Training Consultant supported Oldham Youth Council's conference for young men exploring masculinity and misogyny. Students from Blue Coat School also designed and delivered peer training on gender-based abuse, receiving recognition from the Mayor of Oldham for their contribution.

Culturally Informed Practice

Work has begun to strengthen anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice through engagement with the North West Fairness and Belonging workstream, supporting future learning and workforce development opportunities.

Partnership Training and Collaboration

Partnership training continues to align with wider Family First reforms. A dedicated Family First Training Consultant will support a coordinated approach to workforce development and service reform once in post, helping to reduce duplication and strengthen partnership learning.

Next Steps

- **Increase multi-agency participation**, particularly from sectors with lower attendance during Practice Week, including **Police, Housing, Primary Care, Probation and Further Education**, to ensure a consistent partnership approach to safeguarding.
- **Embed learning into everyday practice** by strengthening professional curiosity, particularly where concerns exist without disclosure, and ensuring children's voices and lived experiences are clearly reflected in assessments, plans and decision-making.
- **Further develop child-centred and trauma-informed practice** through targeted learning on communicating with children, managing disclosures, recognising trauma, and supporting practitioners to have confident and effective safeguarding conversations.
- **Continue to use confidence data to shape the training programme**, commissioning targeted learning where gaps in practitioner confidence are identified and aligning future development opportunities with partnership priorities and emerging learning.

Online Impact

In 2025/26, more people used the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership website than in the previous year. This has helped strengthen its role as a key place for sharing safeguarding information and supporting professionals. The website has made it easier for partner organisations and the wider community to find guidance and learning resources, and it has helped increase engagement. Overall, the website now works as a useful hub that supports working together, learning, and good safeguarding practice.

Website Performance



Newsletter

There are now more than **1600 subscribers** to the fortnightly Oldham Safeguarding Bulletin

on X @SafeguardOldham

During 2025-26 tweets have been seen more than **7000 times**

Financial Breakdown

Working in partnership means organisations and agencies should collaborate on how they will fund their arrangements.

The table below shows the partnership's income and key expenses over the past 12 months. Staff costs include:

- Business Manager (FT)
- Business Coordinator (FT)
- Partnership Support Officer (FT)
- Training Consultant (PT)
- Training Officer for Education (PT)
- Safeguarding Advisor for Education (FT)
- Lead for Child Employment and Entertainment (PT)

The Partnership Business Unit, is now fully staffed, provides logistical, administrative, and development support. A summary of other costs is provided in the table

The OSCP budget is agreed annually and funded by partner contributions, which have remained static for some years. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) manages the budget for Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and determine GMP contribution to Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership. Positively it has been proposed a 3% inflationary increase for the 2026/27 financial year.

During 2025–26, OSCP experienced notable financial pressure due to increased demands on resources. Despite these challenges, careful and effective budget management ensured that sufficient funding was maintained to support all key elements of the partnership's arrangements.

The partnership operates an underwritten budget. Any year-end surplus is returned to the local authority, and any deficit is met by the local authority, ensuring the budget breaks even.

Income 2025/26		**Expenditure 2025/26**	
Local Authority	153,739.77	Business Unit Salaries	342,647.16
Integrated Care Board (ICB Oldham)	71,366.93	Training	3,062.39
GMCA (GMP)	14,750.00	Travel Expenses	312.30
Service Level Agreements (Academies and Independent schools)	70,299.93	Events	793.75
Probation	3,500.00	Service Delivery	3,734.60
Dedicated schools grant (DSG)	110,000.00	Subscriptions/Memberships	820.00
Other recovery of costs	5,426.30	Overheads	61,710.00
Public Health	23,840.00	Independent Scrutineers/Independent Reviewers	39,842.73
Total Income 25/26	**452,922.93**	**Total Expenditure 25/26**	**452,922.93**

Scrutinising the Safeguarding Children Partnership in Oldham

The role of Independent Scrutiny I am pleased to introduce myself as the Independent Scrutineer for the Oldham Safeguarding Partnership. I joined the partnership towards the end of January 2025.



Vicky Buchanan
Independent Safeguarding Scrutineer

The role of the Independent Scrutineer is to carry out the independent scrutiny function as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023 / 2026). The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. Safeguarding partners should ensure that scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

Independent Scrutineer Annual Report 2025/26
Following my review of the partnership, I have produced this year's Independent Scrutineer report. **Read the full report**.The report is based on an evidence-based methodology, as set out in the Association of Safeguarding Partners' **Six Steps to Scrutiny Framework**.

Step 1 – Strategic Leadership and Governance
Focus: Vision, governance, and leadership accountability.

Step 2 – Accountability Across Statutory and Relevant Agency Partners
Focus: Data management, assurance, and constructive challenge, safeguarding with babies, children, young people, families and communities.

Step 3 – Collaboration
Focus: Multi-agency working, quality assurance, and collective accountability.

Step 4 – Voice, Experience and Influence
Focus: Participation, equality, and representation throughout strategy and practice.

Step 5 – Managing and Integrating Learning from Review, Research and Scrutiny
Focus: Learning culture, integration of evidence, and systemic improvement.

Step 6 – Workforce Development, Training and Continuous Improvement
Focus: Capability, confidence, wellbeing, and reflective culture.

I have included my recommendations below which have been accepted by the partners

Summary and Conclusions

There are many strengths to build on for the Oldham Safeguarding Partnership and many of the building blocks are in place to support strong safeguarding practice despite the challenges facing all agencies in relation to national reforms, changing landscapes of organizations and increased demand for services. Evidencing the impact of all the activities undertaken by the partnership can be challenging and it is important that we strengthen the evidence of how we make a difference and improve the experiences of Babies, Children and Families in Oldham.

Recommendations to the partnership for the Next 12 Months

1. To ensure that implementation of the Families First Reforms supports the development of an Integrated Front Door to ensure that families get the help they need at the earliest opportunity.
2. Multi - Agency Data to be strengthened to ensure it aligns with the OSCP priorities.
3. Independent scrutineer to revisit learning from CSA work with practitioners across the partnership.
4. To strengthen the voice and influence babies, children and families ensuring we hear from marginalized and seldom heard groups.
5. To ensure that actions from the QA, and Review are having the desired impact on practice improvement and achieving positive outcomes for Babies, children and families.
6. To Strengthen the evidence of how we are making a difference and improving the experiences of Babies, Children and Families.

Whilst there is always much to do to ensure we continuously improve our safeguarding practice I am confident that Oldham's Safeguarding Partnership will rise to the challenge, and our practitioners will continue to work tirelessly to ensure our children are safeguarded.

Overall Effectiveness and Looking Ahead

Overall Effectiveness

The Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership continues to demonstrate effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Partners work collaboratively to identify risk, respond to concerns, share information and promote the welfare of children and young people. Strong engagement across agencies, effective governance, a commitment to learning and improvement, and increasing focus on early help and Family Help reforms provide a solid foundation for continued progress. While areas for further development remain, the Partnership can demonstrate that multi-agency arrangements are making a positive difference to children, young people and families across Oldham.

Looking Ahead: Our Areas of Focus for 2026–27

Embedding Families First and Family Help

- Supporting implementation of Family Help arrangements.
- Increasing use of Family Group Decision Making.
- Strengthening family network involvement.

Strengthening Multi-Agency Practice

- Improving MASH pathways and information sharing.
- Embedding the Multi-Agency Practice Model.
- Strengthening professional curiosity and challenge.

Voice of Children and Families

- Increasing participation and co-production.
- Improving mechanisms for feedback and engagement.
- Ensuring lived experience informs service improvement.

Tackling Vulnerability and Harm

- Embedding the Neglect Strategy.
- Strengthening responses to exploitation.
- Increasing early intervention for vulnerable adolescents.

Learning, Assurance and Impact

- Continuing to learn from reviews, audits and inspections.
- Strengthening multi-agency quality assurance.
- Improving measurement of impact and outcomes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Strengthening anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Understanding and addressing disproportionality.
- Using data and lived experience to tackle inequalities.

The safeguarding partners remain committed to working together to ensure that all children and young people in Oldham are safe, feel safe and receive the help, support and protection they need to thrive. The Annual Report will continue to evidence the impact of safeguarding arrangements on outcomes and lived experiences for

children, young people and families and will provide transparent assessment of progress against partnership priorities

Appendix 1 - Statements from Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership agencies.

In addition to the Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual Report—which outlines local safeguarding trends, partnership actions over the past year, and priorities for the year ahead—individual agencies are invited to contribute highlights of their own safeguarding activity. These contributions are published as **single agency reports** providing further insight into the breadth and depth of safeguarding work across Oldham

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Visit our website:
www.olscb.org

Contact us by email:
OSCP.Group@oldham.gov.uk