

Training Report

Oldham Safeguarding
Children Partnership



Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Partnership Board members with an update on key partnership activity progress against agreed areas of work.

Safeguarding children effectively requires a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. By delivering multi agency training Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership aims to provide staff with good quality training that enhances inter agency communication, cooperation and provides a place to reflect on practice. New research, legislation and national/local learning means that there is a continuous demand to update members of the workforce. An effective means to achieve this is using skilled and experienced practitioners who can share their knowledge and expertise.

The training pool continues to be the core delivery system for training which enables us to be Oldham centric in our work, all evaluation forms tend to reference the benefit of receiving local knowledge from local staff/services. We have devised a comprehensive person specification for training pool members and offer a train the trainer course to all our pool members.

Training delivery systems -

- Classroom based learning.
- e-learning
- Webinars
- Briefings
- Audits and workshops
- Newsletter
- Quarterly safeguarding training spotlight
- Conferences/events
- 7-minute briefings
- OSCP twitter
- OSCP website
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact

Training activity

51

training sessions held

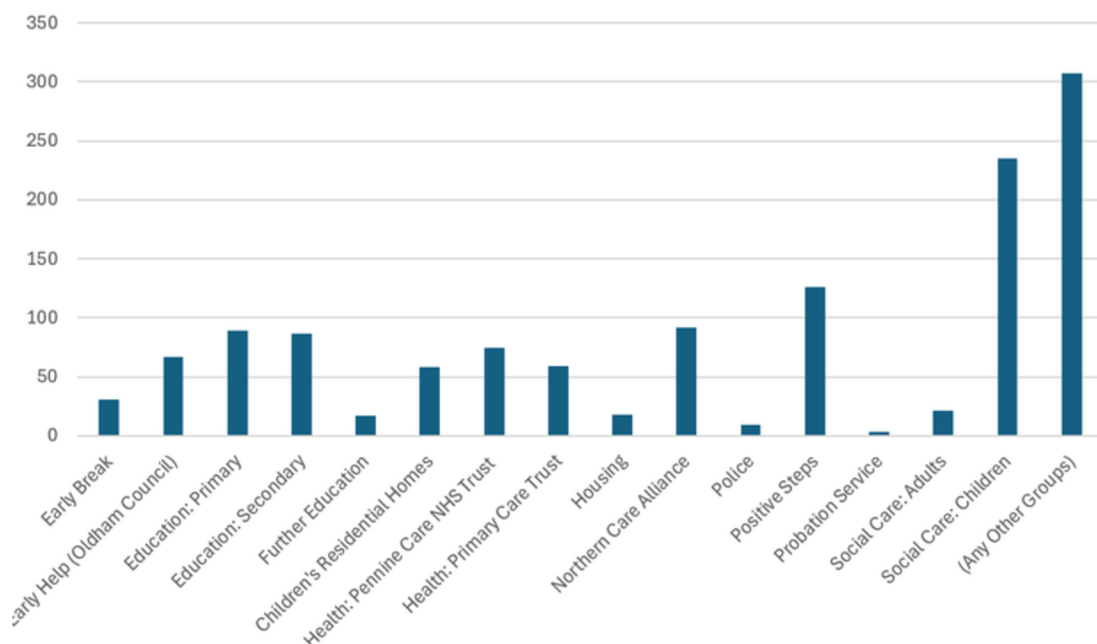
1,294

multi-agency
practitioners attended



- Youth Justice, Turnaround, Prevention and Diversion webinar
- 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 Responsiveness to Hidden Harm
- STORM
- Stop the Bleed
- Safer Recruitment

Multi agency attendance at OSCP training April 2025 - March 2026



Practice Week Activity 2025

Intra familial child sexual abuse

We develop an annual multi-agency practice week linked to learning reviews and partnership's priorities. These weeks enable us to share learning, practice, and research between agencies. All partners are involved in planning and contributing to practice weeks as well as conducting a brief training needs analysis with their own services on the subject matter. We developed a set of confidence questions, the aim being to support further training offers.



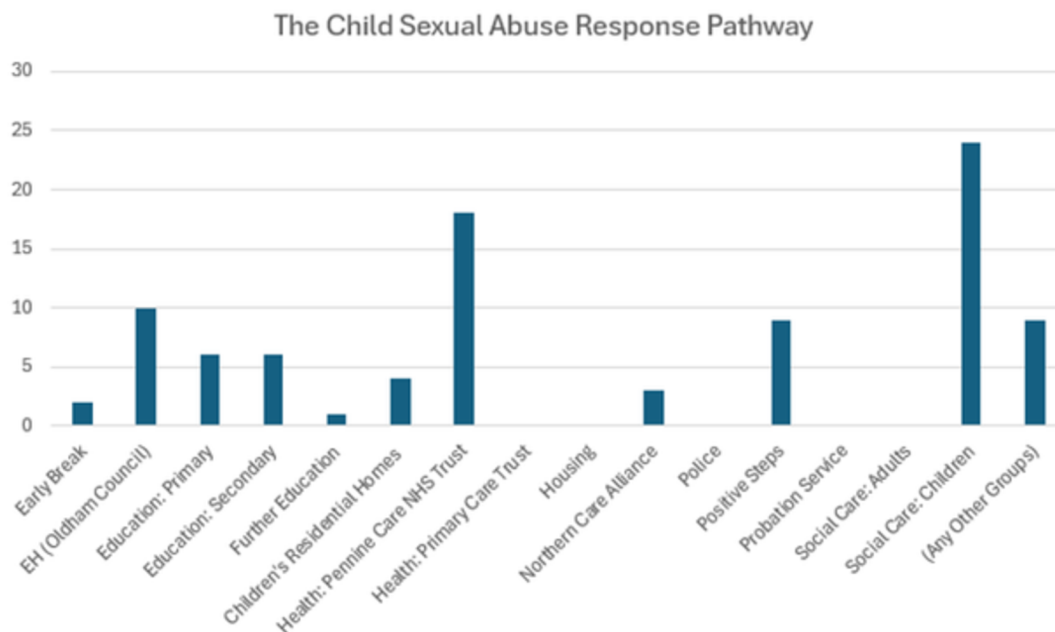
Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Child Sexual Abuse Practice Week

13th—17th October 2025



Training Offer



61% attended (39% that applied, did not attend)

Overview

The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway training has been delivered across the partnership to strengthen the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse, improve professional confidence, and support consistent safeguarding practice across Oldham.

The training attracted attendance from a broad range of safeguarding partners, with particularly strong engagement from Children's Social Care, Pennine Care NHS Trust, education colleagues and the Probation Service.

A total of approximately 92 professionals attended the training sessions from across the partnership.

The attendance profile demonstrates good engagement from statutory safeguarding partners, although participation from some sectors, particularly Police, Housing, Adult Social Care and Primary Care, was more limited and will require further attention.

The training aimed to improve practitioners' understanding of:

- The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway and how it supports children and families.
- Identification of indicators and presentations of child sexual abuse.
- The roles and responsibilities of different agencies within the safeguarding system.
- Information sharing and multi-agency decision-making.
- Available support services and routes for referral.
- Professional confidence in recognising, responding to and escalating concerns.

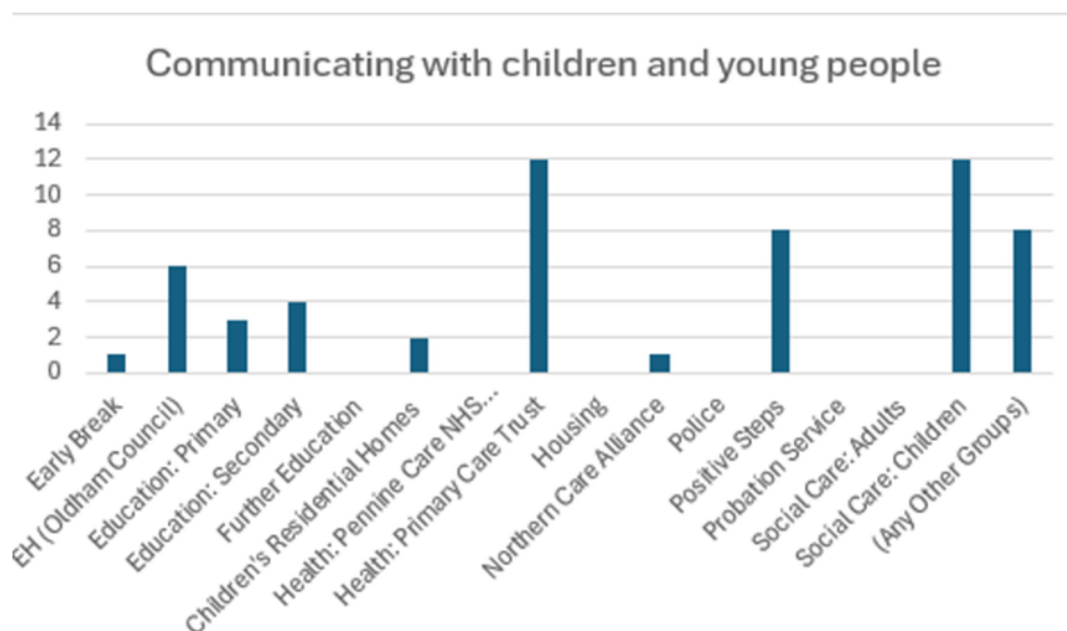
The multi-agency nature of the sessions also provided opportunities for practitioners to develop a better understanding of partner agency responsibilities, strengthening collaborative safeguarding practice.

Strategic Impact

The training contributes to the partnership's safeguarding priorities by:

- Increasing workforce awareness and capability in responding to child sexual abuse.
- Promoting a consistent, child-centred response across agencies.
- Strengthening multi-agency understanding of pathways and escalation processes.
- Supporting earlier identification and intervention.
- Improving professional confidence in responding to disclosures and concerns.

The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway training has achieved strong engagement across key safeguarding sectors and has strengthened the partnership's collective understanding of responding to child sexual abuse. Continued focus on embedding learning and increasing participation from currently underrepresented agencies will further support a consistent, effective and child-centred safeguarding response across Oldham.



58.76% attended (41.24% that applied, did not attend)

The Communicating with Children and Young People training was delivered to strengthen practitioners' skills and confidence in engaging directly with children and young people, ensuring that their voices, experiences and lived realities inform safeguarding assessments, planning and decision-making.

The training attracted a broad range of attendees from across the partnership, with particularly strong engagement from Health, Children's Social Care and voluntary sector partners. This demonstrates a continued commitment to embedding child-centred practice across the safeguarding system.

Approximately 57 professionals attended the training from a range of agencies.

The training supported practitioners to develop their ability to:

- Build effective and trusting relationships with children and young people.
- Use age-appropriate communication techniques.
- Engage with children who may find it difficult to express their wishes and feelings.
- Recognise and respond to barriers to communication, including trauma, disability and neurodiversity.
- Ensure the child's voice is clearly evidenced within assessments, plans and decision-making.
- Understand how effective communication contributes to better safeguarding outcomes.
- Reflect on professional curiosity and how to gain a deeper understanding of children's lived experiences.

The training reinforced the principle that safeguarding practice should not only be about working with families but also about hearing directly from children and understanding their individual experiences.

Strategic Impact

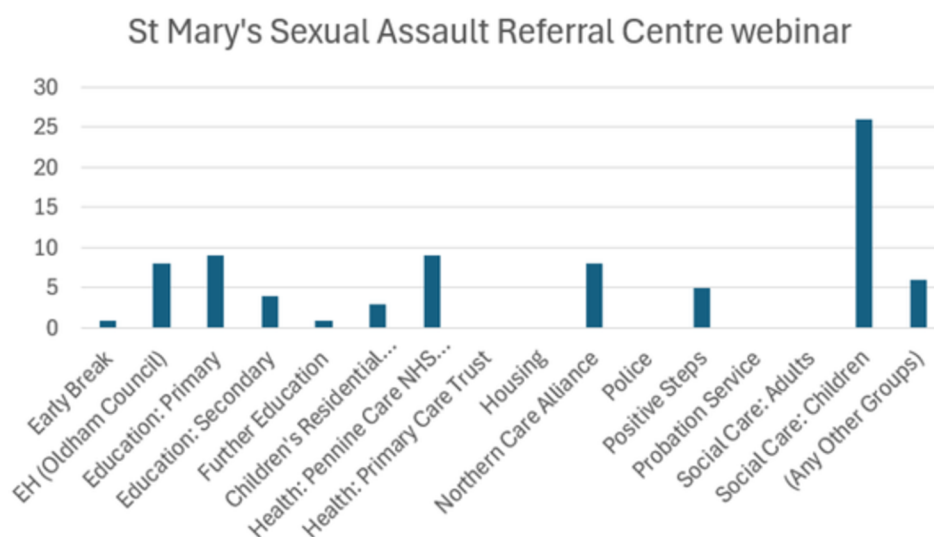
This training supports several key safeguarding priorities across the partnership by:

- Strengthening child-centred practice.
- Improving the quality of direct work undertaken with children and young people.
- Supporting compliance with statutory expectations regarding the voice of the child.
- Increasing practitioner confidence in having difficult but necessary conversations.
- Enhancing assessment quality and decision-making through improved understanding of children's experiences.

The training contributes to a culture where children's views and experiences are central to safeguarding practice and service delivery.

Conclusion

The Communicating with Children and Young People training has made a valuable contribution to strengthening child-centred safeguarding practice across the partnership. Strong attendance from Health, Children's Social Care and voluntary sector partners reflects a commitment to ensuring children are heard and understood.



53.33% attended (46.67% that applied, did not attend)

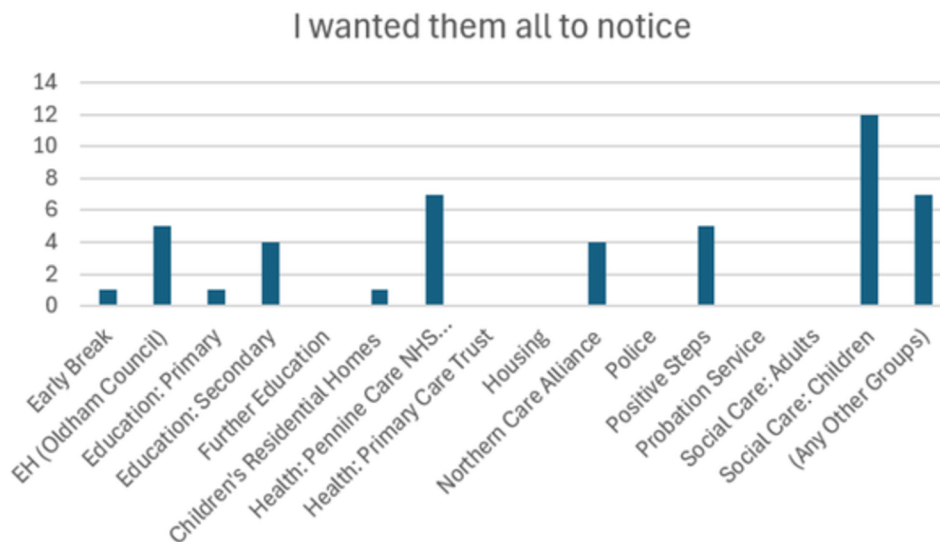
The training helped practitioners to understand the service offer and when and how to refer in. A comprehensive overview Saint Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) history and current service offer was provided.

Information on how comprehensive and coordinated forensic services are carried out relating to children and young people was discussed, including what will happen during the forensic examination.

The range of counselling and aftercare services and how to access these were provided with agencies' roles and responsibilities were clarified.

This training supports staff understanding of the referral pathways to St Marys and SARC service offer to children and young people alongside demystifying myths around forensic examinations., and when and how to refer.

The aim of the session was to Increase workforce awareness and capability in responding to child sexual abuse, whilst promoting a consistent, child-centered response across agencies



55.29% attended (44.71% that applied, did not attend)

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel report, "I wanted them all to notice," highlights systemic failures in identifying intrafamilial child sexual abuse, focusing on missed behavioral cues and over-reliance on direct disclosures. Key findings emphasise that practitioners often failed to act on risk indicators, improperly closed cases following police inaction, and ignored parental factors which the webinar highlighted.

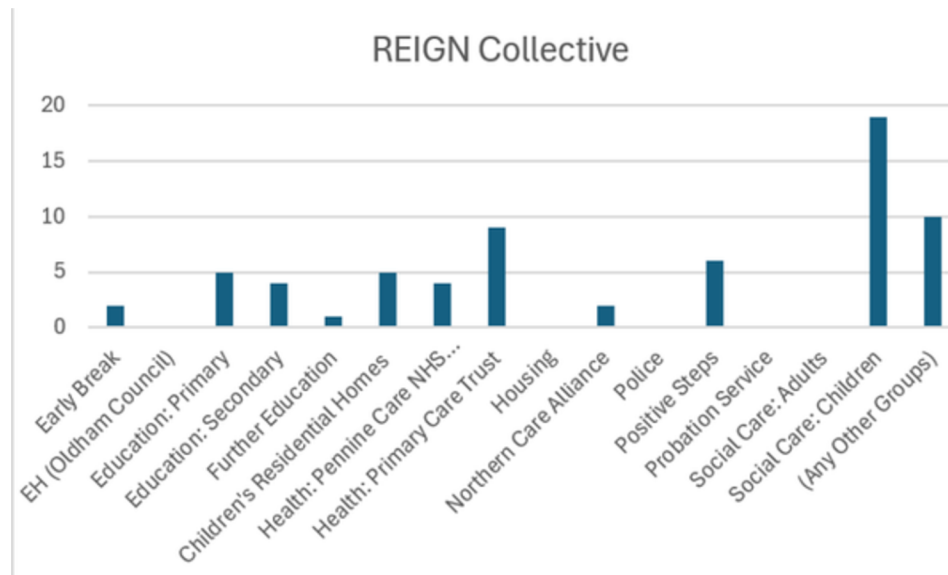
Attendance reflected a broad multi-agency commitment to improving the recognition of children's lived experiences and ensuring that opportunities to identify harm are not missed.

Approximately 47 professionals attended the training from across the partnership. The training supported practitioners to:

- Understand the key findings of the report
- Increase professional curiosity when working with children and families.
- Reflect on how assumptions and professional biases can affect safeguarding practice.

In addition, the training directly supports safeguarding priorities by promoting a culture of professional curiosity and multi-agency working across the partnership and strengthening practitioners' ability to identify risk and vulnerability at an earlier stage.

The training supports the partnership's commitment to ensuring that children's voices, behaviours and lived experiences are recognised, understood and acted upon appropriately.



85.9% attended (14.1% that applied, did not attend)

REIGN Collective Training Impact

The REIGN Collective session successfully engaged a diverse range of practitioners from across the safeguarding partnership, with particularly strong representation from Children's Social Care, Health partners, Education settings and voluntary sector organisations. The multi-agency attendance provided valuable opportunities for participants to learn from different professional perspectives and strengthen understanding of shared safeguarding responsibilities.

The training contributed to increased awareness and professional curiosity around issues relating to exploitation, vulnerability and trauma-informed practice. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the lived experiences of children and young people, challenge assumptions and consider the barriers that individuals may face when seeking support. The involvement of REIGN Collective brought an authentic perspective that helped practitioners connect policy and procedures with real-world experiences.

The broad representation from frontline services is likely to have strengthened practitioners' confidence in identifying indicators of risk and responding in a more coordinated and person-centred way. The session also supported the partnership's objective of improving contextual safeguarding approaches through greater understanding of the environments and relationships that can influence harm.

Feedback and expected learning outcomes suggest participants would have:

- Developed a deeper understanding of the experiences of children and young people affected by exploitation and trauma.
- Increased confidence in recognising vulnerability, risk indicators and emerging concerns.
- Enhanced understanding of trauma-informed and relationship-based practice.
- Strengthened professional curiosity and reflective practice.
- Improved awareness of the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies.
- Increased confidence in sharing information and working collaboratively to safeguard children and young people.
- Reflected on unconscious bias and how this can influence professional decision-making.

Confidence questions

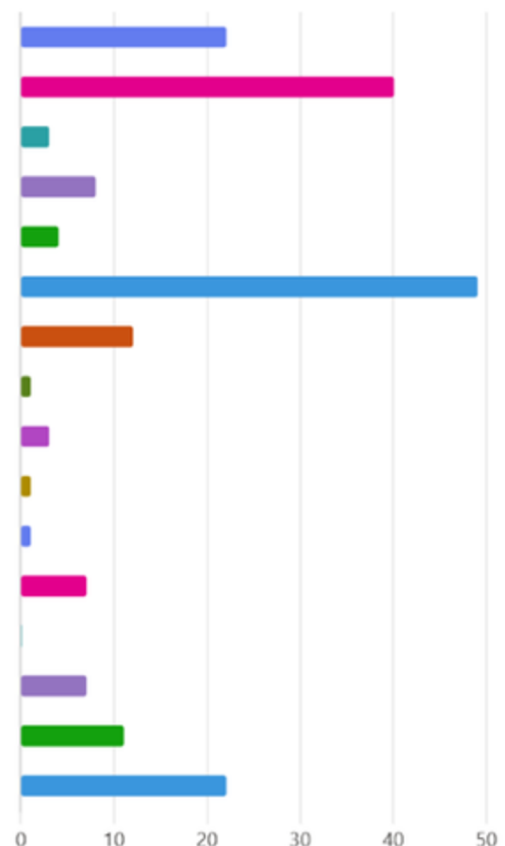
The confidence questions are designed to support a proactive approach to workforce development by enabling training needs to be identified at an early stage and addressed through targeted learning opportunities.

Confidence question data was requested on three separate occasions. The responses received indicated that most respondents reported either high or reasonable levels of confidence. Where lower levels of confidence were identified additional targeted training sessions were made available by the Centre of Expertise. These sessions were subsequently circulated and incorporated into the partnership training calendar.

An enhanced training programme has been made available to Children's Social Care through the Centre of Expertise.

1. Which agency/sector do you work for?

Children's Social Care	22
Early Help	40
Pennine Care	3
Primary Care	8
Northern Care Alliance	4
Primary Education	49
Secondary Education	12
Further Education	1
Children's Residential Homes	3
Early Years	1
Probation Service	1
Early Break	7
Police	0
Youth Service	7
Voluntary sector	11
Other	22



Identifying Signs and Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse

Almost all participants (97%) felt at least reasonably confident in recognising signs and indicators of child sexual abuse following the training. The low proportion of practitioners reporting a lack of confidence indicates that the session was effective in raising awareness and strengthening practitioners' ability to identify potential concerns.

2. How confident are you in identifying signs and indicators of child sexual abuse



Identifying the Risk of Sexual Harm in the Absence of Disclosure

This was the area where confidence was lowest. Whilst 89% of participants felt at least reasonably confident, only one quarter described themselves as fully confident. This reflects the complexity of identifying sexual harm when a child or young person has not made a disclosure and suggests that practitioners would benefit from additional opportunities to develop their knowledge and professional curiosity in this area.

3. How confident are you in identifying the risk of sexual harm in the absence of disclosure

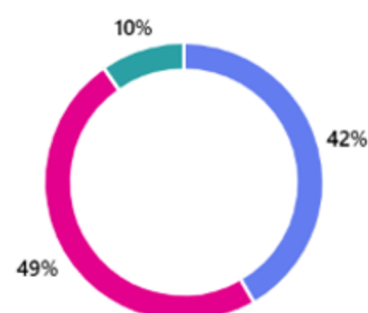


Understanding the Stages of Sexual Development in Children

The findings demonstrate a good level of understanding overall, with 91% feeling either confident or reasonably confident. However, the proportion of participants who expressed a lack of confidence suggests there remains a need for continued learning around distinguishing between developmentally expected behaviours and behaviours that may indicate risk or harm.

4. How confident are you in understanding the stages of sexual development in children

● Confident	77
● Reasonably confident	90
● Not confident	18

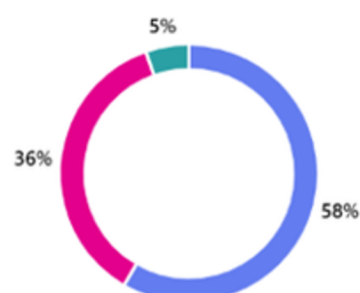


Working Directly with Vulnerable Children

This was the area where participants reported one of the highest levels of confidence, with 94% feeling either confident or reasonably confident. This suggests the training successfully built upon existing practitioner skills and reinforced confidence in engaging with and supporting vulnerable children. The findings indicate that attendees feel well equipped to apply safeguarding knowledge in their day-to-day practice and work effectively with children who may be at risk of harm.

5. How confident are you in directly working with vulnerable children

● Confident	108
● Reasonably confident	67
● Not confident	10

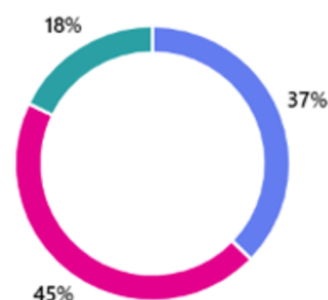


Talking to a Child About Sexual Abuse

Whilst 82% of participants felt either confident or reasonably confident, this was one of the areas with the highest proportion of practitioners reporting a lack of confidence. This reflects the sensitive and complex nature of undertaking conversations about sexual abuse. Practitioners may remain concerned about using appropriate language, responding to disclosures, and managing the emotional impact of these conversations.

6. How confident are you in talking to a child about sexual abuse

● Confident	69
● Reasonably confident	83
● Not confident	33

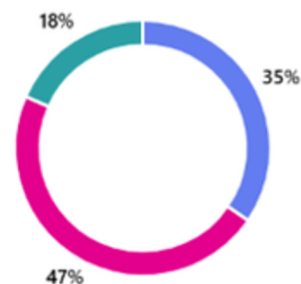


Implementing Trauma-Informed Principles When Working with Children and Families

Although 82% of attendees reported feeling confident or reasonably confident, nearly one in five practitioners reported a lack of confidence. This indicates that while participants understand the concept of trauma-informed practice, some may feel less confident in translating these principles into day-to-day interactions, assessments, and interventions. This reflects a learning need seen nationally, where practitioners often require ongoing support to embed trauma-informed approaches consistently across services.

7. How confident are you in implementing trauma informed principles when working with children and families

● Confident	64
● Reasonably confident	87
● Not confident	34

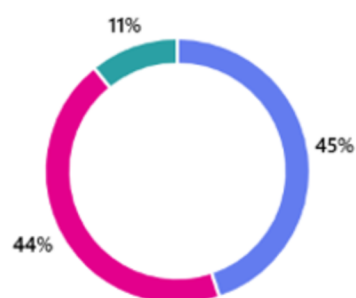


Recognising Factors That Impact on a Parent's Ability to Safeguard Their Child from Sexual Abuse

The results demonstrate a strong level of confidence overall, with 89% feeling either confident or reasonably confident. Practitioners appear to have developed a greater understanding of the factors that can affect parental protective capacity, including issues such as vulnerability, coercion, trauma, substance misuse, domestic abuse, and lack of awareness of risk. This increased understanding supports more balanced assessments of family circumstances and safeguarding needs.

8. How confident are you in recognising factors that impact on a parent's ability to safeguard their child from sexual abuse

● Confident	83
● Reasonably confident	82
● Not confident	20

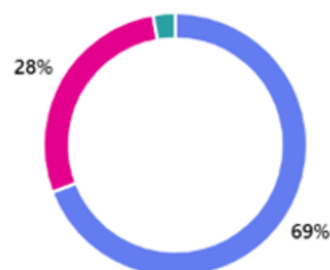


Knowing What to Do if a Child Verbally Discloses Sexual Abuse

This represents the strongest confidence rating across all areas assessed. A total of 97% of attendees reported feeling confident or reasonably confident in responding to a verbal disclosure of sexual abuse. This suggests the training was highly effective in reinforcing safeguarding responsibilities, referral pathways, and practitioners' understanding of the immediate actions required when a child discloses abuse. The very low proportion of participants who remain unconfident demonstrates a strong level of workforce readiness to respond appropriately when concerns are raised.

9. How confident are you in knowing what to do if a child verbally discloses sexual abuse

● Confident	128
● Reasonably confident	52
● Not confident	5

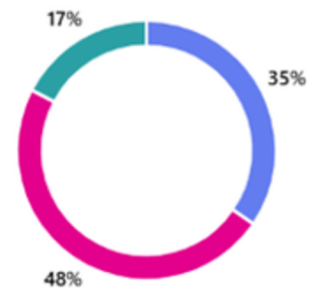


Supporting Children and Families Where Sexual Abuse is a Concern

Whilst 83% of participants felt confident or reasonably confident, this was one of the weaker areas of confidence. Supporting children and families following concerns of sexual abuse often requires practitioners to navigate complex family dynamics, trauma responses, risk management, and multi-agency support arrangements. The findings suggest that while the training improved awareness, many participants would benefit from further practical guidance on supporting children and families through ongoing safeguarding interventions.

10. How confident are you in knowing how to support children and families where sexual abuse is a concern

● Confident	64
● Reasonably confident	89
● Not confident	32



Recommendations for Next Steps for the Partnership 2026 - 2027

The combined learning from Practice Week and the three-month confidence evaluation highlights strong progress in practitioner knowledge and engagement, alongside clear opportunities to strengthen multi-agency consistency, deepen trauma-informed practice, and build practitioner confidence. However, the deep dive 3-6 months evaluation undertaken by the training and learning network was abandoned due to a lack of returns. The following partnership-wide priorities are recommended:

1. Strengthen Multi-Agency Participation and System Consistency

To ensure a fully integrated safeguarding response, the partnership should:

- Target underrepresented sectors (Housing, Police, Probation, Adult Social Care, Primary Care, Further Education).
- Support agencies to align local procedures with partnership pathways and expectations.

2. Embed Learning into Everyday Practice

Practitioners need support to translate training into real-world practice. The partnership should:

- Promote consistent use of professional curiosity, especially where concerns exist without disclosure.
- Encourage agencies to review how the child's voice and lived experience are captured in assessments and plans.

3. Strengthen Child-Centred and Trauma-Informed Practice

Consider:

- Providing further learning on trauma-informed practice, disguised compliance, contextual safeguarding and cumulative risk.
- Developing skills-based workshops on communicating with children (including adolescents and children with additional needs), managing disclosures and asking difficult questions.
- Reinforcing approaches that prioritise children's voice, participation and trusted relationships.

4. Develop Advanced and Follow-On Learning Opportunities

To understand whether training is improving practice and outcomes:

- Conduct follow-up evaluations (e.g. at 3-6 months) to assess changes in confidence and practice
- Use multi-agency audits, case reviews and Independent Scrutineer oversight to test whether learning is embedded
- Monitor pathway usage, referral quality and decision-making trends, reporting progress to strategic boards

5. Improve Multi-Agency Information Sharing and Risk Assessment

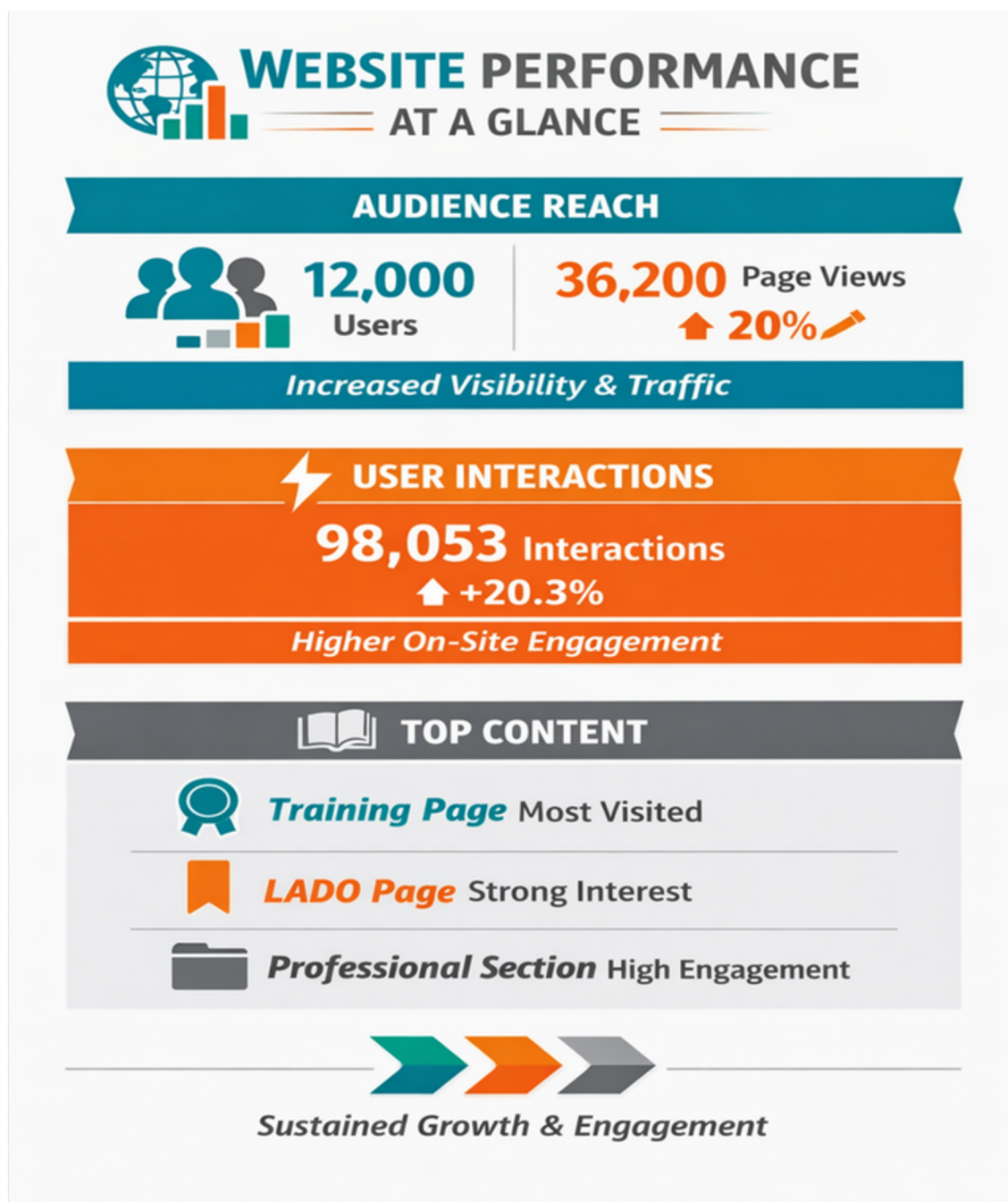
To support early identification of hidden harm:

- Reinforce expectations around timely, proportionate information sharing.
- Promote multi-agency approaches to risk assessment and decision-making.
- Use learning from audits and reviews to highlight effective practice and identify gaps.

Online impact

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



Key Activity Updates

White Ribbon: Two Weeks of Action

As part of an action arising from an Oldham Domestic Homicide Review, work has taken place with a group of adults with lived experience of domestic abuse and coercive control, alongside the voluntary sector service Reel. The group has developed a leaflet for family members and friends of people experiencing domestic abuse and coercive control.

The leaflet provides practical guidance on offering support in a non-victim-blaming way, while also encouraging supporters to look after their own wellbeing. Next steps include developing a bite-sized online learning offer with members of the lived experience group and the training consultant. Further partnership work will also enable people with lived experience to contribute their views to the domestic abuse section of the website.

Blue Coat School Students

Students from Blue Coat School developed and facilitated their own online training session, based on lesson plans they created for their peers on gender-based abuse. Their contribution was formally recognised with an award from the Mayor of Oldham in recognition of their outstanding work.

Oldham Youth Council Engagement

The training consultant as White Ribbon Champion has worked closely with Oldham Youth Council and acted as a group facilitator at its conference for young men, which explored masculinity and misogyny.

Training and Learning Network Induction Resource

The Training and Learning Network will be working with colleagues from adult services to create a brief induction page explaining the role of the partnership and its key functions. The page will be displayed on the partnership website and can also be used by partners as part of their own induction arrangements, where appropriate.

Embedding the Forgetting Curve in Training

The forgetting curve, sometimes referred to as the forgetting line, is a concept developed by German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus in 1885. It illustrates how quickly the brain can lose newly acquired information when it is not actively reviewed or reinforced.

This theory will be introduced into training courses linked to partnership priorities. Each relevant training offer will include a supporting information pack, provided in different formats, to help reinforce learning and improve retention over time.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Child Protection: Stronger responses to child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and the safety of babies and children in care arrangements.

A comprehensive domestic abuse training offer is currently in place. Further consideration is being given to how our general training offer may be expanded to provide a more specific focus on the needs of babies and children in care. Our second practice week focuses on serious youth violence and adolescent vulnerability from week commencing 29th June 2026.

Culturally Informed Practice: A much stronger emphasis on anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice.

Engagement with the Northwest Region Fairness and Belonging workstream will support the identification of opportunities to produce internal learning and reflection offers and commission relevant training to strengthen cultural humility and understanding across the workforce.

Partnership Training and Collaboration

Collaboration with the Family First Partnership Training Consultant when in post will support a coordinated partnership-wide approach to training and service reform to reduce the risk of duplication.

Assurance and Impact

Evaluation and Impact: GCP2

Background

Oldham will discontinue its use of GCP2 in April 2027. In preparation, the training consultant is facilitating a task and finish group of multi-agency partners to develop a new neglect assessment tool for Oldham.

The terms of reference have been agreed and include timescales for a test-and-learn phase and the creation of an accompanying training package. Progress will be reported through the strategic neglect subgroup. In the interim, the expectation is that GCP2 will continue to be used.

Evaluation of case examples from Early Help services has identified a continued need for a standardised tool to support consistent assessment, decision-making and intervention planning.

Key Findings

The evaluation identified that a standardised tool supports professionals in determining thresholds for intervention across the continuum of need. It provides a clear rationale for identifying risks and strengths and supports transparent conversations with families and partner agencies.

The tool was also viewed as effective at the early intervention stage, helping workers to identify key areas of need and focus support before concerns escalated.

Practice Examples

Example 1, the worker found the toolkit very useful in supporting a step-by-step approach. The process was completed at the mother's own pace, which enabled her to understand and reflect on the information. A collaborative action plan was developed and owned jointly by the worker and parent. The parent met all requirements, progress was sustained over time, outcomes for the children improved, and the family was discharged from Early Help with support from universal services.

Example 2, Another example showed that the toolkit enabled the worker and family to focus clearly on identified needs. The prompts supported the worker to work effectively with the family, recognise strengths and agree areas for improvement. A base line for parents to see where they could make changes to make positive impact on their whole family enabled the changes to be more tangible

Example 3, A further case example highlighted that the toolkit helped make visits more focused, with clear outcomes and next steps. The prompts increased the worker's confidence in approaching sensitive topics associated with neglect. This supported open and honest conversations with the parent, reduced fear and defensiveness, and contributed to significant improvements for the child. The case remained within Early Help and did not require escalation.

Considerations

A key consideration identified through practice was that some parents found the word "neglect" unacceptable when used in relation to their parenting. This created barriers to open discussion. This issue should be considered by the task and finish group responsible for developing a bespoke tool for Oldham.

Conclusion

Although GCP2 is being discontinued, the evaluation indicates that practitioners continue to value a structured and standardised approach. Case examples demonstrate that a toolkit can strengthen assessment, improve professional confidence, support collaborative planning with families, and help prevent escalation where early support is effective.

Recommendations

- Ensure the develop a bespoke Oldham tool that provides a clear framework for identifying risks, strengths and areas for intervention.
- Ensure the language used within the tool supports engagement with parents and avoids creating unnecessary barriers.
- Ensure the ethos of cultural humility is embedded in the tool
- Include prompts that support practitioners to hold sensitive conversations confidently and consistently.
- Embed the tool within Early Help practice supporting timely intervention and prevent escalation where appropriate.
- Use learning from case examples to inform the task and finish group's development work.

Risks and Issues

The key area requiring ongoing oversight is the planned discontinuation of GCP2 in April 2027 and the development of a replacement neglect assessment tool. Continued governance through the task and finish group and strategic neglect subgroup will be important to manage transition risks, ensure partner engagement and support implementation of the new approach.

Implications

Area	Implication
Safeguarding	The activity supports improved awareness, prevention and response to domestic abuse, coercive control, child sexual abuse and neglect.
Equality and inclusion	The work promotes the FAB workstream.
Training and workforce development	New and refreshed learning resources will support improved knowledge retention, confidence and consistent practice across partner agencies.
Governance	The development of the new neglect assessment tool will require continued reporting and oversight through relevant subgroup arrangements.