



# Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership

## SINGLE AGENCY SUMMARY REPORTS

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025



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# NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care

## Agency overview

NHS GM as with all NHS Organisations, has a requirement to safely discharge its statutory duties in relation to the safeguarding of both children, young people and adults as outlined in national guidance. NHS GM has continued to discharge our statutory safeguarding duties throughout 2024-25. The responsibility for Safeguarding within the ICB is delegated to the Chief Nursing Officer supported by the Deputy Chief Nurse and Associate Director of Safeguarding supporting governance and assurance structures. Statutory safeguarding delivery is overseen via Associate Directors of Quality and Safety in each of the GM localities and undertaken by the locality Designated Teams.

## Brief overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

NHS GM has maintained their statutory duties across the GM Safeguarding Children Partnerships as one of the equal and joint statutory partners (Local Authority, ICBs and Greater Manchester Police) and as a statutory partner for the GM Adult Safeguarding Boards. NHS GM has supported the implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding arrangements (MASA) across our ten Safeguarding Children Partnerships as outlined within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Our Chief Officer is the Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP) and our Chief Nurse is the Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP) supported via our Associate Directors of Quality and Safety who deputise for the DSP in the locality.

The locality area Safeguarding Children Partnerships annual reports 2024-25 and MASA arrangements set out how NHS GM will work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in GM.

The safeguarding team continues to promote effective joint working across the Integrated Care System. NHS GM has representation on other statutory partnerships including Child Death Overview Panels, Corporate Parenting Boards, Channel Panels, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements Boards, Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards and Community Safety Partnerships.

## Progress against statutory guidance:

### Activities achieved:

The NHSE Safeguarding and Accountability and Assurance Framework (SAAF 2024) provides the strategic framework for ensuring strategic system oversight of our safeguarding priorities. Assurance and oversight of these duties is maintained via the NHS GM governance structures. The ICB Quality Committee receives regular safeguarding reports to ensure that it is fully sighted on safeguarding assurance, activity, risks, and the plans to mitigate as required.

The ICB has submitted quarterly Safeguarding Assurance Self-Assessments to provide assurance of its arrangements to NHSE, this includes our oversight of the NHSE self-assessment audits from our GM commissioned providers. In addition, NHS GM submits statutory self-assessments to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership's and Adult Safeguarding Boards. An overview of our detailed activity will be provided via the Annual Safeguarding Report 2024-25 which will be published in quarter 2 of the financial year 2025-26.

Going forward, NHS GM will continue to address any newly acquired statutory responsibilities and reforms including those identified in subsequent iterations of Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2023) and development of our activity to continue to address the ICB duty to co-operate in line with the Serious Violence Duty (2022), the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and the implementation of the Sexual Safety Charter in line with the Worker Protection Act 2023 (amendment of the Equality act 2010). Engagement with and listening to children and young people and families remains an NHS GM priority and this year our child's voice strategy has included:

Our Children & Young People (CYP) System Group has set out a firm commitment to actively involve children and young people in its decision making. Building on the existing practice within localities and services, the CYP System Group will support young people to develop a young person's shadow panel. The shadow panel will work with the CYP System Group to embed the Lundy Model of participation and

will amplify young people's voices within mental, physical and public health as part of our Joint Forward Delivery Plan for Children and Young People.

Building on the successes of Bee Heard and Bee Counted, NHS GM has commissioned Youth Focus Northwest to design and launch a new youth shadow board to the ICB Children & Young People (CYP) System Group. Seven young people were recruited to a co-design group, working to create the structure of the new youth shadow board. The proposal was presented to the CYP System Group for approval in February 2025, before the proposed launch of the youth shadow board in April 2025.

NHS GM continues their work with our Safeguarding Partnership's, Adult Boards and Corporate Parenting Boards to; support Looked after Children and Care Leavers to develop their offer to support health, wellbeing and opportunities for their future and to understand the improvements required to strengthen our safeguarding offer across our communities.

NHS GM works with wider Integrated Care System partner representatives to ensure there are representatives across the NHS GM committees and boards including, NHS providers, Healthwatch and VCSE. Our partner representatives are key to ensuring effective community and citizen participation in the work of the wider Integrated Care System to safeguarding our residents across Greater Manchester.

## **Progress and challenges against OSCP priority areas:**

### **Domestic Abuse**

The locality Designated Team attend and contribute to the Domestic Abuse Partnership to support the delivery of the domestic abuse strategy.

### **Complex and Contextual Safeguarding**

NHS GM provide a Specialist Safeguarding Practitioner co-located with the Complex Safeguarding Hub who works across the health economy to ensure that the health needs of children and young people are met, through working in collaboration with the wider multi-agency team and Partnership workforce. The locality Designated Team attend and contribute to the Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup of the Partnership to support the delivery of the complex safeguarding strategy.

### **Neglect**

The locality Designated Team attend and contribute to the Neglect subgroup of the Partnership to support the delivery of the neglect strategy.

### **Mental Health and the impact of trauma**

GMICB locality team chair an established Children and Young People's Partnership Group. The purpose of the Partnership Group is to:

- Develop an Emotional Wellbeing Mental Health Strategy for Oldham as part of the Greater Manchester ICB (GM) commissioning strategy and Oldham Local Authority commissioning strategy.
- To set priorities and agree action plans which will be delivered by members of the Partnership Group.
- To oversee the CYP MH actions in the SEND improvement plan.
- Development of whole system approach linked to adult all age mental health services, including transitional arrangements to adult services.
- Improve access to "Getting Advice", "Getting Help", "Getting More Help" and "Getting Risk Support" as part of a graduated needs-based approach.
- Ensure the voice of local families and lived experience are at the heart of everything we do.
- Regularly report on progress to the 'all age locality mental health board' and SEND Lip Exec Board.
- Enable equity of participation and promote collaboration between local contributors to improving Oldham child mental health outcomes.

### **Transitions**

The locality Designated Team support transitions across the partnership through attendance and engagement in the Transitions – Childrens to Adults subgroup of the Strategic Transitions Group to support the delivery of the Transitions Plan on a Page.

### **Serious Youth Violence**

The locality Designated Team have been a panel member for the Serious Youth Violence Thematic Review commissioned by OSCP and continue to support this priority through the Complex and

Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup of the Partnership where the recommendations are now being incorporated into the strategy going forwards.

### **Your agency involvement and learning from serious incidents. Including involvement in any reviews and learning from national reviews and LSCPR's**

NHS GM safeguarding team has established infrastructures to support learning from Adult Safeguarding Reviews, Children Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Domestic Homicide reviews, this supports embedding system learning when significant incidents occur. System assurance demonstrating the impact from learning remains a key area of focus for the team in 2025/26.

Extra familiar harm and criminal and sexual exploitation of children remains a key priority area of focus both nationally and within GM. During 2024-25 (22.7%) of our GM Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) had a theme of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation and 9.1% had a theme of child criminal exploitation. Multiagency system learning events and reviews are in place during 25-26 to support practice development supported by the final report from the Greater Manchester Mayoral review around child criminal and sexual exploitation.

### **Challenges**

Due to the NHS reforms which are taking place, there is a current freeze on recruitment which mean there is a vacancy within Oldham for the Specialist Nurse for Complex Safeguarding. This vacancy is leaving a 'health' gap within the complex safeguarding hub.

### **Next steps/future focus**

The ambition is to implement the next phase of the Child Protection Information Sharing (CP-IS) by the Government set target of Dec 2025, the Designated Childrens Nurse will continue to lead on this piece of work and collaborate across the partnership.

Within Oldham we will continue to engage with the Family First Partnership work which has a clear planning directive with associated timescales. Workshops have taken place for some of this work with good engagement across all partners.

Oldham has witnessed a number of incidents of knife crime which has resulted in young people coming to harm, work will continue with the Community Safety Partnership to educate and raise awareness within young people of the dangers and repercussions of carrying knives. Stop the Bleed Campaign to be presented to the Strategic Complex & Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup 2025/26 to gain approval, funding, and engagement to buy the Stop the Bleed training kits and to deliver this training to children and young people who may not be accessing mainstream education where this is normally delivered.

Strategic partners are keen to understand how the NHS reforms will impact upon the locality safeguarding partnership, and how meaningful engagement will continue with Health.





# Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust

## Agency overview

The Northern Care Alliance (NCA) NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing over 20,000 staff. The NCA brings together four hospitals, 2,000 beds, specialist and acute services, a range of associated community healthcare and social care services.

The Trust's highly skilled workforce is made up of four Care Organisations, diagnostics and pharmacy services, and many other corporate support teams, all dedicated to saving lives and improving lives. Oldham Care Organisation is one of the four organisations that make up NCA which comprise of a large district general hospital Royal Oldham Hospital which included maternity care and a wide range of community health services for adults and children.

## Brief overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

Northern Care Alliance (Oldham Care Organisation) continues to work with multi-agency partners in Oldham to fulfil its duty under the Children Act (1989/2004) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

NCA has engaged fully with initiatives to explore and advance the recommendations of Working Together with particular focus on the Family First Partnership model currently being implemented in Oldham.

Attendance at strategy meetings and engagement with child safeguarding and child protection processes has been a priority for NCA – Changes to the 0 to 19 service structure were planned and developed in 2024/25 with implementation of those plans underway from April 2025. The new model will see the development of a targeted team of skill mixed professionals led by health visitors and school nurses to deliver high quality health, safeguarding and child protection interventions to the most vulnerable families in our community. Families with lower threshold of need will also receive health and safeguarding interventions from skill mixed teams led by health visitors and school nurses with their focus on universal services and Early Help level of care.

NCA have participated in the development of the Neglect Strategy and the delivery of Grade Care Profile Training to health staff. This work will continue into 2025/26.

## Outline any challenges working with statutory partners and relevant agencies.

The Family First Partnership model will see a shift from social workers leading at CIN to other professionals such as HVs or SNs, this may present a challenge due to capacity issues and also due to the loss of social work in-put with the families was CIN level. This concern has been raised within NCA and also to the wider partnership with no clear resolution as yet. The additional government funding has not been allocated as yet but it does not look likely to be used to support this challenge within health and possibly other organisations within the partnership.

## Summary of audits carried out.

- Record audits with action plans to ensure safeguarding consideration for all children accessing NCA services.
- ICON audits to ensure parents and professionals are familiar with the ICON principles to reduce the risk of traumatic brain injury in under 1s.
- CPIS audit to ensure children already known to social care at CP or CLA level are flagged and given safeguarding consideration by NCA professionals delivering care to them.

## Progress and challenges against OSCP priority areas:

### Domestic Abuse

Routine question audits are carried out by NCA safeguarding teams and reported through the internal governance structure.

### Complex and Contextual Safeguarding

Training is delivered as part of the mandatory training offer and also a more detailed package is delivered to specific staff. The CSE nurse post is held by the ICB and is currently vacant so NCA cannot comment on the impact of that post. NCA have participated in peer review audits but this has been led by GM ICB in Oldham due to the CSE nurse post being held by them.

### Neglect

GCP2 training is being delivered by NCA staff.

## **Mental health and the impact of trauma**

Training is delivered on the impact of trauma on children and young people's lives and on their mental health. There are no specific audits of this currently but this is an area being developed within NCA in terms of delivery of more enhanced training and also review of patient experience through audit.

## **Transitions**

NCA participate and contribute to transition planning for young people in Oldham but there are no specific audits for this at the present time with the exception of audits of Health Passport for young people leaving care.

## **Serious Youth Violence**

NCA staff have participated in the thematic review of serious youth violence. There are currently no audits specific to this topic within NCA however the commencement of the Navigator Programme in Royal Oldham ED 2025/26 will generate a review of attendances and outcomes for young people which will be reported to the organisation by the Navigator Programme. The aim of the Navigator Programme is to identify young people involved in or at risk of engaging in serious youth violence and offer them support to re-direct their energy and attention.

## **The voice of children and young people**

All children and young people accessing NCA service are given the opportunity to share their views on the care they received via text messages and QR codes. In addition to this documentation require professionals to record the Voice of the Child in their notes with most community records now being written in the first person.

## **Your agency involvement and learning from serious incidents. Including involvement in any reviews and learning from national reviews and LSCPR's**

Learning from National and LSCPRs etc is disseminated to the wider NCA organisation by the safeguarding team via mandatory training, steering groups, board level meetings and through the implementation of action plans which can be NCA wide or Oldham Care Organisation specific if a local review.

Incidents within the organisation are reported internal via incident systems with investigations, outcomes and actions identified and shared with relevant departments/divisions. These actions are then reviewed at divisional level and signed off once complete. Safeguarding incidents have oversight and are often led by a senior member of the safeguarding team. For example, processes have been improved regarding follow up for children not brought for repeat skeletal surveys following an incident that subsequently resulted in harm to a child and the commissioning of a LSCPR.

## **Challenges**

NCA as with all NHS providers have faced recruitment challenges due to financial constraints during 2024/25. It is anticipated that these challenges will carry over into 2025/26 and for the foreseeable future. The safeguarding team specifically are fully staffed with provision of community safeguarding nurses, acute safeguarding nurses, midwives, a MASH nurse and Children Looked After nurses led by a Named Nurse for Children's Safeguarding, a Named Midwife for Safeguarding and a Named Nurse for Children Looked After.

## **Workforce training and development**

The 0 to 19 team have fully engaged in the rolling out of Graded Care profile 2 training with NCA staff trained to deliver and frontline practitioners attending the training with sessions on-going into 2025/26. Practitioners are increasing in confidence using the GCP2 to evidence their concerns regarding neglect and improving response to children's unmet needs.

Training in recognition and response to CSE/CCE has been delivered within NCA with the focus on improving professional's understanding of recognition of children as victims of this type of abuse for example use of non-victim blaming language in court reports.

Training has been delivered in the completion of court reports to ensure that all aspects of a child's lived experience are captured in legal documents coming from NCA. Training has also included sessions for manager responsible for quality assuring court reports.

The 0 to 19 team commenced working to a new target team model in April 2025. This change has

been at the planning stage for the whole of 2024/25 and part of the year before that. The new model will be the development of a team with a specific focus on children at CIN or child protection thresholds and also Children Looked After.

### **Next steps/future focus**

#### **Planned actions.**

Continue to deliver the GCP2 training.

#### **Priorities**

Develop the new 0 to 19 delivery model.

#### **Focus areas.**

##### **Serious Youth Violence**

Response to serious youth violence/knife crime including the commencement of the Navigator Project in the Emergency Department of Royal Oldham Hospital to identify and work with young people involved in or at risk of involvement with serious crime and/or knife crime.

#### **How challenges and learning from last year will shape future efforts.**

- Neglect remains a high priority based on learning from CSPRs and Rapid Reviews from 2024/25
- Learning from the thematic review into serious youth violence

#### **Planned developments.**

Navigator Project Royal Oldham Hospital Emergency Department

0 to 19 targeted team to focus on vulnerable children and families supported by wider universal service teams aiming to provide support and interventions early to avoid a higher level of need/risk developing.

#### **Request from other partners**

- For continued support managing care delivery to children and families at all levels of need from universal to children cared for.
- For continued open channels of communication and timely information sharing recognising that communication issues between agencies emerge frequently as learning from CSPRs, RRs etc.

### **Conclusion**

The development and delivery of training to the 0 to 19 team on neglect and the use of the GCP2 tool has been a huge achievement and will continue into 2025/26. This represents excellent both single-agency and multi-agency working.

The Emergency Department team have worked hard with the Navigator Project to establish this service there, this will commence early 2025/25 which is a great success and provides an exciting opportunity for improved multi-agency working and better opportunities to meet the needs of vulnerable young people affected by this concerning issue. In addition to this NCA are currently developing a CSE/CCE flag being added to unscheduled care settings to alert staff to the additional risk that may be present for children and young people known to the CSE/CCE team. The complex nurse post currently held by the IC is currently vacant, it is hoped that the ICB will continue to fund this post so that this valuable role can continue to support both community and acute health professionals in providing safe and effective care for this cohort of young people.

Attendance at strategy meeting by health staff has increased this year meaning the health aspects of children's lives are included in risk assessing and safety planning for children and young people.

#### **What difference have we made to children and young people?**

- Staff are more able to document detailed concerns relating to neglect using the GCP2 which is improving the lived experience of children suffering neglect or at risk of it.
- Serious youth violence is now on the radar for health professionals with staff more able to recognise and respond to concerns as they arise.
- Communication between agencies continues to improve with effective use of the escalation process where there are professional differences to ensure the interests of children remain at the centre of the decision making.



**Northern Care Alliance**  
NHS Group



# Positive Steps

## Agency overview

Positive Steps is a dynamic charitable trust, offering a wide range of tailored services for children, adults and families. We take pride in recognising and embracing the diversity of the individuals and communities we support, ensuring our services are as unique as the people we serve. We empower children, young people, adults and families in Greater Manchester to achieve their potential by building trusted relationships to develop skills, knowledge and confidence.

## Overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

Safeguarding is at the heart of all of our work at Positive Steps. By the very nature of the integrated offer available, we emphasize that successful outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency partnerships, both internally and externally. Alongside the positive relationships we have in place, we are an integral part of the Oldham Children's Safeguarding Partnership, represented on the Board by the Chief Executive Officer, Paul Axon, and at OSCP subgroups by members of the Leadership Team. We take an active role in local and national reviews, ensuring that any actions points are implemented and learning is taken on board.

We have renewed our focus on how we provide help, safeguarding and protection for families.

- In August 2024, Positive Steps appointed a new Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Clare Griffiths. Alongside this, Clare is the Head of Service for Youth Justice and Missing from Home, having been at Positive Steps for 12 years.
- Positive Steps reviewed their Safeguarding Policy, working with consultant, Glynis Williams. All staff receive a Safeguarding Induction within their first week of commencing employment by a qualified Social Worker or the DSL.
- Minimum standards for safeguarding training were reviewed across all staff levels to ensure that these were relevant and proportionate to roles.
- We have developed a Safeguarding Dashboard to provide an improved understanding of activity within Positive Steps.
- We have reviewed our internal safeguarding group, now the Positive Steps Safeguarding

- Assurance Group, which oversees and scrutinises all aspects of safeguarding across the organization and feed this into the Leadership Group and the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

The OSCP S. 11 Audit was completed in October 2024 with assurances on further activity sent to the partnership in June 2025.

In line with a focus on early help, it is our ambition to ensure all families are provided with the right support at the right time which services within Positive Steps are aware of. This is evidenced not only by our contract to deliver the local authority Early Intervention and Prevention to children and families, but through our Prevention and Turnaround offer in youth justice.

Collaboration is one of the values of Positive Steps, reflected in [the new strategic plan 25-28](#). We work alongside people, respecting their experience and expertise, which includes staff and service users. "People" is one of our four strategic pillars which serve as the guiding framework to deliver on our vision.

## Progress against statutory guidance:

### Activities achieved:

- Continuation of Turnaround funding in youth justice to prevent children becoming involved in the formal criminal justice system.
- Continuation of funding to deliver the TOG Mind/ YJS Partnership and provide emotional wellbeing support from children at risk of becoming involved in, or for those involved in, the criminal justice system.
- YJS now have a seconded CAMHS Practitioner based within the service.
- YJS have seconded two staff to the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce. They work alongside a multi- agency team, including a Careers Advisor from Positive Steps, to reduce school exclusions and increase re- integration into mainstream education.
- Significant progress has been made in embedding parent voice into Early Help

- Throughout the year Early Help has worked closely with Oldham Parenting Partnership to expand the delivery of evidence-based parenting support

### **Impact of activities:**

- In 24/25, 116 children and families were offered early intervention through Turnaround.
- In 24/25, only two children who worked with the TOG Mind Emotional Wellbeing Coach went on to commit a further offence.
- 1500 children were offered support through Early Intervention and Prevention

### **Evidence of impact:**

- Oldham YJS continue to have a re-offending rate well below all comparative family groups.
- Oldham YJS continue to have custody rates well below all comparative family groups.
- Oldham YJS currently sit in Quadrant 1 of the Youth Justice Board Oversight Framework (top)
- 84% of interviews conducted by Oldham Missing from Home Return Home Interview Service took place within 72 hours.
- There is a downward trend of re-referrals to Social Care or Early Help following Early Help support.
- 60% of positive closures working with Early Help were stepped down to universal services.

### **Future plans**

- Continue with preparation for the YJS inspection.
- YJS will work with partners on the priority areas within their annual plan. These being health; victims, first-time entrants; serious youth violence; disproportionality; improving data and evidencing impact.
- Improving data on safeguarding activity across Positive Steps and the impact of this.
- Early Help will remain influential in the development of Family First Partnerships.
- Maintaining high performance
- Reviewing approaches to feedback

### **Any challenges working with statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies:**

- Placement sufficiency
- Waiting lists for services such as CAMHS

### **Agency inspections, including outcomes and actions:**

Positive Steps were involved in the Oldham Ofsted Inspection in 2024. Agency actions were in relation to the Missing from Home Interview Service. These have been completed and fed back to the partnership.

Oldham Youth Justice Services were last inspected by HMIP in 2019 and were rated “good” with outstanding features.

All actions from inspections etc. are held and tracked within the Safeguarding Assurance Group.

### **Summary of audits carried out- relevant to safeguarding partnership.**

Oldham Youth Justice Service, Missing from Home Return Interview Service and Early Intervention and Prevention have their own audit and quality assurance frameworks in place.

A summary of the EIP Children and Families Framework can be found below:

- Bi-monthly “Close the Loop” meetings chaired by Oldham Principle Social Worker and QA Lead.
- Practice Reviews completed by each Operational Manager every 8 weeks.
- 4 weekly cycle from Senior Practitioners which includes, direct observations and dip sampling on work in specific areas.

### **Progress and challenges against OSCP priority areas:**

#### **Domestic Abuse**

Staff are alert to and the impact of domestic abuse, including witnessing this, and the impact that this can have on individuals and families. Staff work with agencies to assess this and create safety plans to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place. Early Intervention and Prevention have staff who lead on this area of practice. Staff know how to work with children and families who are experiencing, or who have experienced this, and the services such as IDVA, to refer to. YJS are represented at MARAC when children known to the service are discussed.

#### **Complex and Contextual Safeguarding**

Positive Steps are represented on this subgroup by the Head of Service/ Operational Manager in YJS. We were involved in the redevelopment of the associated plan and are responsible for actions

within this. We provide input into the annual Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Report for OSCP and are working with the Complex Safeguarding Hub to write an annual Missing from Home Report. A YJS Operational Manager is part of the partnership training pool for this topic and staff feel confident in managing safeguarding concerns of this nature. There is a recently developed Joint Working Protocol between YJS and the Complex Safeguarding Hub which sets out clearly the responsibilities and expectations for both agencies when working with a child. A member of the Complex Safeguarding Hub attends the Oldham Prevention Panel, chaired by YJS, to ensure children who are referred through to the service are picked up by their team where there are concerns relating to exploitation to ensure safeguarding is in place.

We continue to see a high number of children assessed as having concerns relating to child exploitation.

### **Neglect**

Positive Steps are represented on this subgroup by an Operational Manager for Early Intervention and Prevention. All staff in Early Intervention and Prevention and YJS are trained to use the Graded Care Profile 2 to identify cases where neglect is a concern. An Operational Manager from Early Intervention and Prevention and YJS are part of the partnership training pool for this topic. We are currently completing an audit of cases in YJS where neglect has been assessed to look further into the implementation of the tool across the service and improve the completion of this to support intervention and agency involvement.

### **Mental health and the impact of trauma**

We see a high number of individuals experiencing poor mental health at varying degrees across services. Staff have received training on trauma and the impact of this and not only do we ensure that staff have a good understanding of this, but we are proud of being able to apply this to practice and demonstrate that we are trauma informed. This can be evidenced through our trauma informed weapons programme in youth justice. Staff work with services internally and externally on a case-by-case basis, such as the YJS CAMHS Practitioner,

TOG Mind or mental health services to make sure that individuals are supported with their mental health to then build on other areas of positive change.

### **Transitions**

Positive Steps are represented on this subgroup by the Head of Service for YJS. We currently have a seconded Probation Officer within YJS who supports the transition for children from YJS to adult justice services. In August 2025, this arrangement will end due to capacity within NPS. Finances will be provided to Positive Steps to employ a lead on transitions which will be reviewed annually.

We sometimes observe delays in the referral/involvement of adult social care.

### **Serious Youth Violence**

As stated above, Positive Steps are represented on the Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup with the serious youth violence priority sitting within this.

Oldham YJS have a higher-than-average rate of SYV and we have submitted five Serious Incidents Notifications to the Youth Justice Board since the start of 2025. These now trigger a Brief Learning Review chaired by the Safeguarding Partnership to ensure learning is taken from there. However, multi-agency contributions to this have been low and we are continuing to embed this process. Serious Youth Violence is a priority on our Youth Justice Partnership Plan. We work with the Community Safety Partnership in addition to this.

### **Agency involvement and learning from serious incidents.**

Positive Steps have been involved in the following multi-agency thematic reviews.

- Serious Youth Violence
- "Alpha"
- "Lisa"

We have also worked with OSCP to develop a learning process following the submission of Serious Incident Notification to the Youth Justice Board (YJB). When a child is charged with; murder; manslaughter; wounding with/ without intent; rape; or dies while working with Oldham



Youth Justice Service, we must notify the YJB and the local safeguarding partnership. We continue to embed this process.

### **Challenge including recruitment, retention and work force capacity.**

Funding has been agreed to second a School Nurse into the Youth Justice Service. However, the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board have been made aware of difficulties recruiting into wider school nurse roles and the impact this may have on the position.

### **Workforce training and development**

Positive Steps use a training platform, IHASCO, in which mandatory courses are set throughout the year. Policies are also uploaded onto here so that staff sign when they have read and understood new policies or changes made.

In 24/25, minimum standards for safeguarding training were agreed across Positive Steps so that these are relevant and proportionate to roles.

All staff can access the training on offer through the OSCP Training Calendar as agreed by their manager.

Staff have an annual appraisal which details training required for them to develop in their role. This can be sourced on an individual basis or written into the Positive Steps Annual Training Plan.

### **Conclusion**

The greatest achievement within youth justice is that despite the challenging demographic in which we deliver the service, we consistently have a significantly low re-offending rate. This sits below all comparative family groups. This is no small part due to the dedicated and stable staff team who deliver trauma informed, child first practice alongside a strong multi-agency partnership, allowing children to develop a pro-social identity and achieve positive change.

### **Additional information**

- Partnership feedback for our Parent Voice worker and Engagement workers; *Kym has been very present within the community on a regular basis over the last 14 months of working in my role, building positive relationships with the*

*general public and offering parents the opportunity to have their voices heard respectfully. She has been as welcoming and inclusive as possible, thought about how to facilitate these sessions she has offered in sensitive and considerate ways, and has been making herself known to various services to encourage the input from parents in order to shape the family hub experiences. I believe the skills which Kym has developed during her time are excellent and, without her integrity and passion for community support, would have been difficult to make the role successful. I think the parents who Kym has been approaching and speaking with have benefitted from having shared their experiences and felt heard and appreciated.*

- Senior Practitioner feedback for an Engagement worker who was completing her first GCP2 with a parent whom had been difficult to engage in the first instance; *just wanted to take this opportunity to say that it was a pleasure this morning to attend the visit with Tehsin around reviewing the GCP2 with the family. Tehsin managed the session well and addressed the concerns in a way where mum felt really comfortable and understood the ask. Tehsin acknowledged the improvements that mum has made with home conditions since the first visit and worked with her to make positive changes and a further action plan.*
- Feedback from families as part of closing to Early Help; *'Emma was very helpful, any problem I had she came up with really good ideas and activities to try. It has definitely improved mine and my son's relationship and how we communicate with each other.'*
- Feedback from a parent of a child appearing in Court to his Case Manager and colleague:  
*Hi Joe, Just wanted to follow up on the back of your email and to reiterate our appreciation for all your help and support, both yourself and your colleague were fantastic, please pass this on to her she was excellent.*
- Feedback from the Manager at Oldham Foodbank where a child was completing their Giving Back:  
*Hi, Just wanted to pass on a message from our volunteers -, but the child and support worker who came today did a brilliant job! Our team*



*was really impressed and grateful for the help! Thanks,*

Tom Lewis Hood (he/him)

- Feedback from Julie Daniels, Strategic Director Children's Services, relating to a piece of Restorative Justice work that was shared with the Youth Justice Partnership Management Board:

*Hi Clare/Paul*

*On reading the papers for board tomorrow just wanted to message on the case study for Josh and the memory bears/bear mending – I thought it was a brilliant piece of direct work and clearly helped J and his family with some healing. Exceptional work – well done to the worker on such a creative idea – I'm sure many of our young people across the department would love to do this – tell her to get her sewing kit to the ready! Oldham's very own Build a Bear enterprise!*

*See you tomorrow,*

*Julie*



# Greater Manchester Police

Greater Manchester Police provides the first line and investigative policing response to the residents of Oldham and the wider force area.

## Overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

Maintaining regular meetings between leads within the partnership, active engagement at subgroups to ensure effective information sharing and to support the multi-agency approach to safeguarding of children on the district.

Improved management of internal CAPs (child action plans) to ensure more timely forwarding of contacts to CSC.

GMP Oldham actively participates in reviews (both SARs and BLRs)

We continue to provide training and guidance for officers and staff to ensure best practice is adopted, building this with input from the partnership where relevant.

Oldham Police continue to adhere to WT23 through effective investigation of crimes against children, working collaboratively with partners and leading the response to child exploitation and missing from home. Police actively share intelligence in numerous formats including SOC partnership meetings, case conferences and Strats as well as using their powers to protect children such as PPP.

## Progress against statutory guidance

### Activities achieved.

We continue to actively promote use of the Voice of the Child across the district with

### Agency overview

Greater Manchester Police provides the first line and investigative policing response to the residents of Oldham and the wider force area.

posters and regular reminders. This features also in crime and information recording with supervisors including this in investigative plans. We have upskilled further officers to

undertake specialist video interviews with vulnerable children who are victims of crime.

Operation ENCOMPASS is fully embedded on the district with recent local amendments to processes ensuring 100% compliance.

Effective information sharing and joint action to safeguard children remains a priority.

Oldham have gone 'over profile' by employing 2 CCAT Sergeants. Their role being prompt review and guidance to front line officers to ensure we effectively and expediently address calls for service and crimes reported to the police pertaining to child protection.

We have secured SCADP courses (specialist training in effectively managing CP) for all of our secondary investigation team Supervisors and are expanding this to Response Supervisors.

Our prevention hub continues to work closely with CSP and CSC in regard to regular missing children and ensure we have trigger plans and engagement with those responsible for their care.

Our Complex safeguarding team continue to co-locate and work closely with CSC and Health. Op Armada is a recent example of a historic multi victim CSE offence which has led to significant charges of rape and sexual assault.

Police continue to engage in schools with dedicated Schools officers and have started a 'Mini Police' programme. All helps identify early signs and educate children on risks.

We also continue to learn from Serious case reviews. One recent example is assault between children involving knives which has not been investigated as expediently as we would expect. As a consequence, we have arranged an input to our cohort of DI's from Youth Justice around the value of expedient investigations.

## Impacts of activities

We continue to make prompt referrals to CSC to support consideration of the Early Help offer.

## Evidence of impact

Through effective governance we have seen a reduction in the carried volume of CP crime held

within our CPIU by approximately 40% which enables the OIC to have a more manageable workload and enable swifter and more effective investigations.

### **Future plans**

We plan to continue upskilling of officers regarding thresholding to ensure quality contacts are sent to CSC, reducing the overall volume.

We will continue to promote the voice of the child and look to how we further improve our capture and use of this within the policing and partnership context.

We continue to develop our investigations teams and maintain full staffing levels to meet our statutory obligation.

### **Any challenges working with statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies.**

Challenges in this space are mostly internal. We recognise that we are over referring contacts to the CSC front door and are working to improve the quality and reduce the volume of these.

We have some resourcing challenges in the police MASH/DST mainly due to long term absence. There is an operational need to retain a police MASH footprint at Oldham Police Station to support wider District operational activities. This (along with the shift cycle) is having a further impact on resourcing at the Spindles. We have a plan in place to mitigate this, but it will take some weeks to implement fully.

We are aware that some Police MASH officers do not yet have access to MOSAIC, but that this is due to them not having undertaken the training. This is being addressed internally.

We are having some difficulty with the management of some of our most serious and persistent high risk missing from home children and believe there needs to be more involvement from other agencies. This has been raised at a strategic level and plans are in place to address.

Pol-Ed has been launched in GMP but uptake by Oldham education establishments has been limited which will reduce its impact on protecting our

children. This has been raised at the OCSP and requests made at a strategic level to encourage education sign up.

### **Agency inspections, including outcomes and actions.**

#### **HMICFRS National Child Protection Inspection – Dec 2024**

##### **Key recommendations:**

The force should make sure its officers and staff in high-risk roles understand the well-being support available to them and encourage them to use it.

At GMP Oldham, line managers will refer officers for specialist support where risk to their wellbeing is identified. Some of the force offer is available to wider workforce and officers and staff can self-refer.

The force needs to make sure its officers and staff recognise all risks to children and act quickly to protect them.

GMP generally recognises when children are at risk and act accordingly, and local daily processes implemented at Oldham intend to capture those cases where risk may have been missed.

The force should make sure it accurately records children's demographic information, and links individuals on its intelligence system, to better assess risks to children.

GMP is addressing this and is working towards a new record management system which will improve recording and linking of information.

Officers at GMP Oldham are encouraged to enter demographic information where known including asking for self-defined ethnicity.

The force should make sure it has enough trained officers and staff available to carry out video interviews with children. GMP Oldham is addressing this and has already trained further detective officers to undertake such specialist interviews.

The force should make sure all officers and staff investigating online child exploitation, and their supervisors, have appropriate knowledge and skills.

GMP is addressing this and has issued further guidance to officers who respond to such reports. GMP specialist investigators have increased their offer to support district officers with such investigations and provide local clinics for investigators.

### **HMICFRS Crime investigations: An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime – April 2025**

This was a wide-ranging inspection into police investigative effectiveness. The recommendations are strategic in nature and are directed to Chief Constables. GMP was one of the forces inspected. The report recognises the inexperience of the national policing workforce with many investigators having less than five years' service. The impact on investigations, victim contact, supervisory action and file preparation for court is described in the report.

Due to the wide scope, and the lack of focus on child protection, I will not describe it further here but do recognise the issues it raises for investigations in the child protection space.

At GMP Oldham, we have renewed, robust management of investigations being conducted within the dedicated child protection space, and support structures in place to provide guidance and support to non-specialist investigators in an effort to improve the quality of investigations and the safeguarding support offer to children who are victims of crime.

### **Progress and challenges against OSCP priority areas**

#### **Domestic Abuse**

Establishment of dedicated Domestic Abuse Team to investigate high risk DA cases on the borough. Already proving effective at securing positive outcomes for victims of abuse, improving the consistency of the safeguarding offer and pursuing protective orders in support of and as an alternative to prosecution where appropriate.

Introduction of the Multi Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating role with early appointment of an officer. However, due to sickness absence, this is now presented as a challenge to re-resource.

Improved compliance with Op ENCOMPASS building on the feedback received from education partners to enhance our local processes at Oldham.

### **Complex and Contextual Safeguarding**

The District Complex Safeguarding Team continues to conduct positive work across the district and is carrying a number of priority investigative operations. This is producing positive outcomes, for example Op ARMADA which secured several charges against an offender who abused two children.

In addition, we have significant scrutiny and challenges in this area emanating from a national interest in Oldham's historic cases. The response to this can be seen in Op Sherwood, led by our CSE MIT team and continues to see proactive arrests for which there have been several this year.

#### **Neglect**

During the year we have raised awareness of neglect with our officers and staff and local processes ensure that "hidden" neglect crimes (such as parental assaults on children) are correctly reclassified.

The CCAT sergeants at Oldham are intervening at the early stages of officer attendance and crime investigation to provide relevant investigative advice to non-specialist officers.

#### **Mental health and the impact of trauma**

Police officers are not mental health professionals and as such do not always recognise more subtle signs and symptoms of mental ill health and trauma impact. However, protocols are in place to ensure partner support is available to provide professional assessments where required (such as mental capacity act).

#### **Transitions**

From a policing perspective, the transition into adulthood presents some challenges in respect of looked after children. In particular risk assessments vary at 18, and automatic application of a high-risk flag ceases. This can be difficult in the context of missing persons and Right Care, Right Person where the default policing response from the call handler may be to require the care provider to undertake initial checks and enquiries, rather than automatically recording the missing from home and allocating a police officer to attend.

This is less challenging within the Complex Safeguarding Team where the difficulties are



recognised, and some young people will remain open to the team as they transition into adulthood.

## Serious Youth Violence

Violent crime reduction remains a priority for GMP, and that involving youths more so. GMP Oldham's prevention hub is developing work around habitual knife carriers which will be carried forward into 2025/26.

Operation Venture, GMP's violent crime reduction unit have deployed into the Oldham area on several occasions throughout the year, particularly in response to reported incidents between young people associated with identified USGs.

## Agency involvement and learning from serious incidents.

GMP actively participate in the SCR process and self-refer as required. This is managed at force level by the Serious Case Review Team as a unique offer amongst neighbouring forces. This ensures consistency of reporting and identifies learning to be shared across all GMP Districts.

At a District level, we participate in BLRs and contribute openly and transparently in an effort to ensure learning is identified, shared, and implemented.

Our PPU have conducted a CP sprint looking at the definition of CP crime, staffing levels and structure of our CPIUs. This is likely to result in a refreshed more accurate definition of what we class as CP crime, a new shift structure to include evening and weekend working and a potential rebalance of staff across the force taking into account demand. Oldham would likely remain static or receive an increase from this.

The district are also subject to periodic CSE MIT reviews of our multi-victim multi-suspect CSE investigations. This ensures they are both correctly managed and dealt with as expediently as possible – offering that expert, fresh and objective advice and guidance.

A review from the centre has seen a realignment of portfolios see Complex Safeguarding teams coming under the detective Superintendent for CSE MIT. It is anticipated from this that we will see high

risk current investigations of CSE being investigated by CSE MIT.

## Challenges

Policing nationally faces some recruitment and retention challenges. This is not unique to GMP. However, recruitment continues, with specific advertisements for detective officers transferring from other forces.

GMP has also re-started the direct entry programme for aspirant Detective Officers, to address recruitment and capacity issues in this area (including specialist CP investigators).

At a local level, we are experience some capacity issues within the District Safeguarding Team (Police MASH) and the Complex Safeguarding Team due to long term sickness. This is being managed and there is a local plan in place to mitigate against these staffing issues and a partial resolution will be in place within the next few weeks for the DST.

A force wide resource review may see a reduction in police staff across the organisation in 2025. This may have some impact on specialist district safeguarding teams, with that predominantly administrative workload having to be adopted by police officers on the teams.

## Workforce training and development

The local push to improve understanding of and compliance with Op Encompass has improved referral rates by frontline officers, however it has been noted that there are still some gaps and a plan for 2025/26 will see a trial of DST conducting referrals with the aim of achieving 100% compliance.

Recent introduction between Inspectors and Heads of Service is an early step to improving the front-line relationship and sharing understanding. This will continue into 2025/26.

Effective use of MS Teams and the Electronic Briefing Systems has ensured the sharing of training tools such as 7-minute briefings reaches all officers and staff on the district.

Developing from this, there are plans for further CP specific CPD and formal training for delivery to

frontline officers and supervisors throughout 2025/26.

## Next steps/future focus

### Planned actions.

Improved training delivery for frontline supervisors with module one of the Specialist Child Abuse Investigators course being mandated. This will improve the understanding of child protection policing, partnership working and the management of associated crimes.

We plan to reintroduce the daily triage/screening meeting at Oldham to reduce the number of unnecessary contacts to CSC and improve the quality of the throughout.

### Priorities

- Rebalance resourcing in the DST to ensure a consistent police footprint at the Spindles
- Re-invigorate the working partnership within the MASH
- Aim to reduce the volume of unnecessary contacts to CSC
- Increase our CP detections to meet the force target of 13.3%

### Focus areas

- Improvement in quality of referrals
- Enhanced resourcing to support MASH
- Improvements inappropriate officer attendance at strategy meetings

## How challenges and learning from last year will shape future efforts

The DST at Oldham has undergone some significant challenges through the year, with resourcing and capacity issues impacting on the ability to triage and progress referrals/contacts. This manifested in measurable delays to referrals.

Bringing DST staff back into the police station allowed for improved team cohesion and a significant improvement in performance. However, it is recognised that this came at a cost to some partnership relationships.

Work has been ongoing to remedy this, and this will continue into 2025/26 as a priority.

### Planned developments

We intend to work with the partnership towards a multi agency child protection model to further evolve the policing approach to CP to incorporate

Families First thinking. Returning to an integrated MASH/MACPT model should bring about working efficiencies which ensure effective information sharing leads to good joint decision making. This in turn should, bring about prompt effective outcomes.

In the background, the specialist Child Protection Investigation Unit continues to undergo review at a force level with some changes to the operating model anticipated. These should ensure consistency across GMP with regards to shift patterns and resourcing, increased allocation of crime to specialist investigators based on risk rather than simply crime type and further improvements in support to non-specialist investigators.

## Request from other partners

At this time, the main ask is for continued support from colleagues within CSC to upskill front line officers through informal CPD and engagement.

We require more support with our regular high risk missing from home children

We require the education sector to sign up and invest in the use of the Pol-Ed system to help with primary problem solving and help to keep our children safe and crime free through education.

## Conclusion

Aside from some significant prosecutions, the resolution of internal DST processes and procedures has ensured effective management of internal referrals. This has ensured prompt, rather than delayed onward referral to the CSC front door allowing for effective assessment of risk to children and young people to be conducted in a timely manner. Having resolved this internal issue, the team can now look forward to further improvements in the working partnership.

The improvement within the police team in the MASH in the last 12 months has been outstanding. From a position where they were struggling to retain staff and could not meet the demand, this is now a place where people want to work and demand is turned round within 24hrs.



## Agency Overview

Oldham College is a large further education provider serving over 6,600 learners, starting from age 16 into adulthood. The college offers a wide range of Academic, vocational, and Apprenticeship programmes, including provision for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), Care-Experienced young people, and adults with care and support needs. The college is committed to safeguarding all learners and promoting a culture of safety, inclusion, and empowerment.

### Brief overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

- Safeguarding policies reflect Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Care Act 2014.
- DSL and Deputy DSL's and Safeguarding & Welfare Officers trained in both Child and Adult Safeguarding.
- Clear procedures for raising concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect.
- Regular engagement with Oldham's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Adult Social Care.

### Progress against statutory guidance:

#### Activities achieved:

- Introduced online reporting systems for learners, staff and members of the community to share concerns.
- Implemented Low-Level Concern policy in relation to staff conduct and behaviour towards learners.
- Continuous development of the tutorial offer, in terms of education focused on Safeguarding, ensuring all staff and learners have had the opportunity to explore key topics affecting our learners day-to-day.

#### Impact of activities:

- Increase in referrals to the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team via the reporting system.
- Ability to build a bigger picture regarding staff conduct and safer recruitment procedures.
- All learners have had access to the tutorial scheme and have covered four key topics in the academic year- Prevent, Healthy
- 

## Evidence of impact:

Increase in 368 referrals to the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Team (excluding walk-in cases)

In recent SPOC 97% of learners report feeling safe at Oldham College

## Future plans

- Expansion of educational offer to learners to cover different learning styles. Wellbeing weeks focused on topics of tutorials, inviting external agencies into Oldham College to meet with learners and create positive multi-agency working.
- Working with the VRU- we have acquired funding for £5000, we are waiting for feedback from our link as to where to spend this.
- Expansion of the Wellbeing Offer- to offer ongoing goal-oriented sessions to learners, with the aim of empowering learners with a self-created 'Toolkit' to reduce pressures on specialist agencies such as CAMHS via early intervention.

## Outline any challenges working with statutory safeguarding partners.

Challenges regarding information sharing with Greater Manchester Police, many of our learners are either placed on bail conditions or have an ongoing police investigation. We are not always made privy to this information, especially when bail conditions stipulate things such as not attending Oldham Town Centre. As such, we as a college indirectly encourage the breach of these conditions, where we want to support learners to meet these conditions.

## Agency inspections

OFSTED inspection- Safeguarding is effective.

## Summary of audits carried out – relevant to safeguarding partnership.

Safeguarding Audit- recommendations from this to apply for Leaders in Safeguarding, this was an award. Further Safeguarding audit pending for Jan 2026.

## Progress and challenges against OSCP priority areas

Please be aware that all staff at Oldham College have to undertake mandatory training, which focuses



on all of the following areas: raising awareness of lived experiences.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Safeguarding & Welfare Officers IDVA trained, with awareness of the signs of domestic abuse and the effects these can have. Learners feel seen and supported for who they are, not who other people want or are trying to make them become.

### **Complex and Contextual Safeguarding**

Staff are all aware and trained on Complex and Contextual Safeguarding. We have close working relationships with the complex team and always ensure that learners at risk of this can access support and learning, as well as referrals to PD and the Youth Work Team in Oldham College to encourage positive ties to agencies within the college that are beyond academic.

### **Neglect**

Safeguarding and Welfare staff are fully trained on the signs of neglect, especially in relation to our Vulnerable Adults or Care-Experienced learners. We attempt to overcome self-neglect through avenues such as free breakfast, free sanitary products, access to career appointments, etc.

### **Mental health and the impact of trauma**

This is an ongoing piece of work focusing on and adapting to the needs of our learners. The adaptation of the wellbeing offer aims to acknowledge this. We are also in the process of working towards a trauma-aware institution. However, several members of the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team are trauma-informed practitioners with Level 5 diplomas in the topic. We also have several Mental Health First Aiders on site.

### **Transitions**

Person-centred transition- SEND learners having access to one-to-one transitions. Learners have access and are able to be referred into any of the Student Support Teams- have a full breakdown of support offer at the time of offer of place, and then referrals are put in place at the time of enrolment to the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team. The team also reach out to schools linking into Oldham College to share information and encourage multi agency working.

### **Serious Youth Violence**

We are currently working with Violence Reduction Unit to put in place resources for our learners to ensure that not only can we continue a feeling of safety on campus, but an increased sense of safety from a contextual purpose where possible.

### **Oldham College involvement and learning from serious incidents.**

- Participated in one Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review (LSCPR) and one Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR).
- Learning shared through CPD and updated safeguarding protocols.
- Contributed to national consultation on safeguarding in FE and adult education.

### **Challenges**

Retention of staff and high staff turnover are linked to increased need for learners; however, we have had a recruitment drive to challenge this.

### **Workforce training and development**

- Continuous training on all staff for Safeguarding concerns and how to report these, both online and in person training.
- Staff feedback from training is that they have found this useful for an understanding of our learners lived experiences, it is nice to have a face and a link to a member of the team as this breaks down anxiety in accessing the team, and they are happy to approach the team as whole and discuss concerns. As well as attending the tutorial session to be upskilled on more specific topics. Staff are looking forward to taking part in Trauma Informed Practice training as they have seen the need for a better understanding of our learners.

### **Next steps/future focus:**

#### **Planned actions –**

- Launching the expansion of both Education and Wellbeing offers for the learners.
- Continue work with the Violence Reduction Unit.
- Take part in whole staff training to become a Trauma-Aware College.
- Continue working towards College of Sanctuary status to support our Asylum Seeker learners and ensure they are recognised for their experience and journey of seeking asylum.



- Further Safeguarding Audit to ensure best practices are in place.

## Priorities

The above are all priorities in terms of the needs of our learners. However, in terms of best practice, Safeguarding Audit would be our top priority to ensure that while we are planning and recognising the need for change for our learners, we are also doing so within best practice and in line with statutory guidance.

## Focus areas.

Focus areas being So Called Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage, Trauma Informed Practice, Sexual Assaults- behaviours and reporting.

## How challenges and learning from last year will shape future efforts.

We have seen an increase in learners been accused or accusing other learners of sexual assault, as such we are looking at doing further work around healthy relationships, consent and safe boundary settings as well as supporting both emotionally and reporting sexual assaults. We want to amplify the voices of victims but upskill potential perpetrators with the knowledge of what a sexual assault is and how to avoid this.

## Planned developments.

- Expansion of the team to ensure free time for Safeguarding & Welfare officers to be able to carry out 7-9 sessions of goal focused wellbeing sessions. Also, recruitment of an Education Officer within the team, highlighting the importance of educating and upskilling staff and learners on Safeguarding concerns, to ensure that all learning needs are met, as such everyone is able to access this upskill.
- Trauma Informed Practice training- recognising the importance of staff being aware of the affects of trauma on a learners achievement, attendance, attainment and overall behaviour.

## Request from other partners

We would request the ongoing positive relationships and working together to ensure positive and ongoing multi-agency communication to avoid learners slipping through the net, and as such being missed by key agencies.

## Conclusion

### Greatest Achievement (Single Agency)

Embedding a safeguarding-first culture that supports both young people and vulnerable adults and recognising the need for growth and expansion in line with our learners' needs and ability to access upskilling and safeguarding education.

### Greatest Achievement (Multi-Agency)

Continuous work and development of multi-agency working, to ensure that we are able to safeguard our learners from a contextual perspective.

## Difference made.

Learners of all ages and abilities feel safer, more empowered, and better supported to achieve their goals.



# Housing Options

## Overview of agency

Housing Options delivers the Council's statutory homelessness, temporary accommodation and housing register functions.

## Overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

The service undertakes robust and transparent assessment of the family's housing situation. The service works closely with partner agencies developing and implementing joint protocols and processes to fulfil their statutory duties and ensure that children are protected and that appropriate safeguarding strategies are followed.

## Progress against statutory guidance:

Housing Options works closely with Oldham's Children's Social Care (CSC) reporting promptly any safeguarding issues.

Housing Options have a joint protocol with CSC for young people (16/17rs) at risk of homeless.

Housing Options support the Council's Corporate Parenting Policy which includes not finding Oldham Care leavers intentionally homeless between the ages of 18 & 24 yrs.

## Activities achieved:

Implementation of the 16/17 yr Joint Protocol

Care Leavers are able to access support from Housing Options without a negative impact on their reason for homelessness.

Worked closely with health partners developing and implementing a process to share information with GPs and Schools when homeless families are placed into temporary accommodation.

## Impact of activities:

The number 16/17yrs requiring support via the Housing Options has reduced.

Oldham's Care Leavers continue to be supported until they are 24yrs old.

GPs and schools are now aware when children are placed into temporary accommodation and have contact details for the Housing Options Team

## Future plans:

Continue to work closely together.

## Outline any challenges working with statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies.

Difficulties can arise when families/young people are being supported by other local authorities and partnership working is not as robust. Other local authorities do not recognise Oldham's Joint protocols.

## Challenges

During the last 12 months the service has felt the Council's recruitment freeze leaving a significant number of posts vacant. Following a service redesign, the freeze has been lifted and recruitment is progressing at pace.

## Workforce training and development

The Housing Options Team have attended trauma informed training.

## Next steps/future focus:

- Planned actions.
- Priorities
- Focus areas.
- How challenges and learning from last year will shape future efforts.
- Planned developments.
- Request from other partners

## Additional information:

- The joint protocol massively supports Oldham's Young People and is recognised as good practice. Oldham's young people have support until they are 24 which helps breaks many cycles.
- The partnership approach with health and schools has enabled awareness and created footprint trails for homeless families.

## Overview of agency

The youth service is an informal education service, working with young people (aged 11 – 25 yrs), to enable young people to develop holistically, working in partnership with young people to support and facilitate their personal, social, political and educational development, the service provides opportunities for young people to develop their voice, influence and place with society and supports them to make positive choices and reach their full potential as individuals, members of their community and members of Society.

The service provides a comprehensive range of youth work programmes, projects and opportunities and is made up of 3 distinct teams, the detached youth work team, the district youth work team and the Boroughwide (participation) team.

## Overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

### Multi-Agency Collaboration

Youth services work closely with statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, health, and police) and other relevant agencies. We ensure we share information appropriately and participate in multi-agency assessments, planning, and interventions. Examples of this are attendance and participation in Review meetings, Prevention and diversion Panel, MACE meetings, Complex safeguarding Daily governance meetings among many others. The service is well represented in the LSCP meetings and groups. Their insights can be crucial, especially where they have built strong relationships with young people.

Youth service staff understand and follow information sharing protocols.

### Child-Centred and Whole-Family Approach

Youth workers build positive, trusting relationships with young people and their families where applicable. The service provided is designed and delivered around the identified needs of the young people we work with, and the voice of young people underpins all we do.

The Youth service is responsible for the delivery of the youth voice work within Oldham through the youth.

voice family – this includes Oldham Youth Council, Barrier Breakers (forum for young people with SEND) and the Children in Care Council. We ensure that these forums are accessible and representative of the young people of Oldham. There is also a clear link into the LSCP with the youth voice family and support given to delivery of youth voice work around a range of safeguarding priorities.

The service also ensures the voice of young people is embedded on all our work including universal youth work, targeted youth work interventions and our work with schools and partners.

### Early Help and Prevention

The youth service delivery is centred in early intervention and prevention work, we work closely with early help colleagues in supporting young people.

Youth workers are able to identify emerging issues and provide support before problems escalate. They know how to signpost, refer and secure additional support where it is outside of youth workers knowledge and expertise.

### Safeguarding responsibilities

Section 11 Audits completed, and we ensure our functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes having clear safeguarding policies, staff training, and procedures for responding to concerns.

Youth service practice aligns with the national multi-agency child protection standards, to ensure consistent and effective practice.

Youth services often work with groups such as care leavers, young carers, and those at risk of exploitation or offending. We offer a range of Interventions, programmes and support to vulnerable groups of young people, collectively and individually.

## Progress against statutory guidance:

### Activities achieved:

- Comprehensive safeguarding policies and processes are in place.
- Youth work staff have undertaken safeguarding training relevant to their role and responsibilities and the context of delivery.

Training undertaken also includes recognising current trends that young people face including, language, culture and context. Safeguarding training needs are regularly reviewed with staff through regular line management supervision.

- Youth Services work with local children's safeguarding partnership and adult safeguarding teams to promote the youth sector's role in safeguarding and relationships are built at all levels with relevant agencies to protect young people. We work proactively with the local community to be safeguarding vigilant.
- We have developed a shared children and young people participation framework for use of all agencies working with young people in Oldham that is underpinned by the Lundy Model of youth participation to ensure there is consistency and a culture of youth voice across the Oldham system. Young people have been directly involved in working with organisations and partners to create relatable safeguarding content.
- There is strong partnership working across the Youth Service, in particular to support working with vulnerable young people this includes working with wider youth sector organisations, complex safeguarding, SEND Teams, Schools, GMP, Early Break, Public health among many others.

### **Impact of activities:**

Youth services staff are clear on what is required of them in relation to the welfare and protection of children, young people and adults and are able to create a safer, thriving, and positive environment, evidencing that the organisation is taking its duty of care seriously.

Our joint working approach enables all services involved to share relevant information to ensure that patterns are noticed, concerns are shared, and responses are coordinated meaning we are better able to meet the needs of young people. It has also meant that we have been able to support early intervention and prevention work for young people with a bespoke youth work offer.

Partnership working in particular having youth workers in key meetings and groups has enabled youth workers to share risks and concerns from a young person's perspective and support actions and procedure to keep them safe.

In supporting youth voice work and programmes, we have been able to support safeguarding work that is 'done with, rather than 'done to' approach.

### **Future plans:**

- To work with the OSCP to develop a young people Safeguarding conference to ensure the voice of young people is central to the development of the Priorities and plans of the OSCP.
- To Further develop Partnership working to enable a cooperative and connected approach to safeguarding children and young people
- Do continue to support Youth voice contributions the work of the OSCP.

### **Outline any challenges working with statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies.**

Information sharing and ensuring information is shared in a timely manner with the relevant people including youth services. Sometimes after a safeguarding referral, or concern, is made there is a lack of update or information on progress.

Lack of shared systems means no way for youth workers to show who is involved with our services or input into case notes to update professionals.

At times we have experienced a lack of understanding and recognition of the role of youth work and others as trusted professionals working with young people. This can be a challenge as often youth workers may not be including in some meetings due to lack of understanding of what we do.

Capacity – High demand for youth work involvement in addressing Youth Violence, supporting mental health and well being and supporting the voice of young people in programmes and projects – service has limited capacity to respond to all demands for youth work interventions.

### **Progress and challenges against OSCP priority areas:**

#### **Domestic Abuse**

Youth service and youth voice family have worked with the council and white ribbon charity. Oldham Youth Council and the Youth Service's MAN project are looking at being involved with the white ribbon young ambassadors programme. MAN, project will also raise awareness of DA and DV at an event in



October. Challenges brought up by the youth council included a lack of services available for young victims of domestic abuse (either directly or indirectly) that are easy to find and access.

### **Complex and Contextual Safeguarding**

Youth service work closely with the Complex safeguarding team and are represented on the Project groups. There is strong relationship with youth workers and Complex social workers in addressing young people needs and identifying and delivering youth work support. This was identified in 3 youth workers attending the VR decisions training that means the youth service can deliver sessions on being drawn into gangs and youth violence.

The youth service delivered a piece of work around the voice of young people with lived experience of contextual safeguarding, ensuring the resource was available to be used by professionals and those working with young people to influence services, policy and training.

All youth work is delivered with contextual safeguarding underpinning the work. The Detached youth work team in particular are able to identify potential concerns from a contextual perspective when out working in the streets and communities they are also able to deliver responsive interventions as issues arose providing early interventions to prevent escalation of issues.

### **Neglect**

Youth services have developed a youth voice session plan for young people to explore the theme of neglect and to enable their voices to help shape Oldham's neglect strategy. The session can be delivered by a range of professionals working with young people.

### **Mental health and the impact of trauma**

The Service delivers a range of support for young people's mental health including group work interventions as well as individual one to one support. This can include:

Group work sessions in schools supporting young people to build confidence, resilience, self-esteem and in developing trust relationships with young people to support them to engage in activities and access services that support their mental wellbeing.

Joint work with Early break delivering outreach sessions to raise awareness of Key issues – Substance misuse, Relationships, Mental health support.

The Youth Council have also raised mental health referral waiting times at full council and will be involved in a scrutiny of this in 2025. They hope that the scrutiny will then lead to an awareness campaign around the iThrive directory and where to receive help before at a level that requires high level support.

### **Transitions**

The youth service support Barrier Breakers to work collaboratively with DfE and the post 16 educational skills team on a project called Flip It. This project designed resources to enable businesses to better understand young people needs around disability and allow them to provide supported internships. In it's 4th year the project will produce an event to work with businesses and young people to practically overcome the barriers those with SEND face in the workplace.

Youth Voice family members sit on the GM Youth Combined Authority (GMYCA) working with Andy Burnham looking at the Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc). The MBacc is an alternative to the EBacc, looking at pathways to careers that do not require degree level qualifications.

The service also supports transitions work for Year 6s in targeted schools (currently Waterhead) to support identified young people in Making smoother transition into Secondary school that support their positive engagement in education.

### **Serious Youth Violence**

The youth Service deliver a range of youth work interventions addressing serious youth violence. We have Additional funding that supports district-based youth work teams to provide early intervention and prevention youth work activity. This includes open access youth provision as well as targeted work with groups and individuals that need additional youth work support. The youth service also supports the prevention and diversion panel offering where appropriate youth work support for individuals identified as in need.

In partnership with Oldham colleges, GMP and community Safety we delivered a really successful

piece of work around youth violence where there were escalating issues at the King Street Tram stop. The intervention included youth work support at the location over a number of weeks as well as a bespoke project with Oldham theatre workshop to deliver creative sessions to ALL students at the college around preventing youth violence and understanding the consequences, how to report and how to be an active bystander.

Youth service also supports young people to attend GMP's Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and the Youth Scrutiny Panel (GMYSP). These meetings allows young people have a voice in how officers work with their peers in their communities. They also allow them to scrutinise body worn footage which allows to break down barriers between the Police and young people.

Youth work support for the Safer summer – Town centre initiate – working in Partnership to offer youth work support to young people accessing the town centre – to ensure they are safe, supported and to divert young people into positive activities.

The Youth service also support the Safe4Summer – water safety work over the summer months – attended key water-based sites to engage with young people about water safety and respond to any issues identified where there is potential risks to young people.

### **Voice of children and young people**

"Attending meetings with the Police is brilliant. We get to tell decision-makers what young people in Oldham truly need, and they actually listen." – Tom

"I've really enjoyed telling businesses what they need to do to help young people with disabilities get jobs. So far they have listened and I feel really proud of what we've done." – Kyra

"Ella has helped me to make friends today. I think I'll be able to do when I go to school in September" – Jacob

### **Agency involvement and learning from serious incidents, including involvement in any reviews and learning from national reviews and LSCRP's**

All reviews, including national reviews, are shared with youth services once they are produced.

### **Challenges including recruitment, retention and work force capacity.**

The demand for youth work interventions from our service is above our current staffing capacity. The service currently has 3 vacant posts (15% of service hours) which we are looking to recruit in 2025.

### **Workforce training and development – benefits and how this has made a difference to children and young people.**

- Virtual Decisions Training – creative way to introduce knife crime, gangs and CCE to young people. Staff really enjoy the session and looking forward to using the VR headsets during our residential, sessions and events. We also had a young person attend the first half of the training who said 'it's a brilliant way to get this across. I had no idea how easy it was to get involved in carrying knives, you think it's just about being part of a gang but sometimes it's so you don't get into bother with your "friends".' – Ellie
- Stressed Out Brain training – Staff really enjoyed the delivery and content of this training. Understanding young people's substance use helps the staff to challenge and have been able to show those we work with the ramifications.
- THC awareness session – Really helped staff to understand how young people are using THC and they were better informed to challenge behaviour in sessions. The real benefit came from understanding using THC in vapes and being to explain that what young people thought was THC was probably more likely to be spice.

### **Next steps/future focus**

#### **Planned actions.**

Delivery of the Neglect workshops - This has been paused to allow for staff to complete the summer programme but will take place early September.

Beyond the Armour: Boys Won't Be Boys, Boys Will be Men – This event, aimed at young men, will invite schools to bring cohorts or pupils to the QE Hall. The event will challenge male stereotypes, raise awareness of DA/DV, challenge male ideologies (such as those portrayed by Andrew Tait) and look at mental health (including male suicide).

## Priorities & focus areas

- Mental health scrutiny - looking at waiting times and awareness raising.
- DA/DV - White Ribbon young ambassadors.
- Serious Youth Violence – Funding from the Violence reduction Unit (VRU) continues up till March 26, and we hope that it will continue beyond that date.

## How challenges and learning from last year will shape futures.

The youth service is clearly committed to a young person-centred approach and youth voice. The feedback from young people like Tom, Kyra, Jacob, and Ellie shows how empowering the opportunities are.

Going forward, the youth service would build on the work with the OSCP to collaborate around the young person's conference and mental health priorities. This will ensure that the OSCP's priorities and plans are directly informed by the experiences and perspectives of young people.

The Youth Service will look to proactively work with partners to establish clearer protocols for timely information sharing, especially following a safeguarding referral. The lack of shared systems is a significant barrier, but the youth service will continue to advocate for solutions that allow youth workers to input into safeguarding and complex caseloads.

Youth will continue to integrate innovative training into everyday practice and also explore how to share these approaches and resources with other partners to create a more consistent and effective approach across the board.



# Children Social Care/Early Help

## Overview of agency

Our practice is driven by our vision:

“Children, young people, and their families are at the centre of everything we do to develop their strength and resilience, ensuring all children and young people have a stable life and reach their potential”

We want to ensure that children and young people in Oldham can live in safe, loving and stable homes and have a brighter future. We know that for children and families who require or look for Children's Social Care support, the relationship they have with workers, and the skills and resources of that worker(s) is of great significance.

Oldham CSC and EH support is guided by our Practice Standards and Management Practice Standards. In addition, within Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership there are multi-agency practice standards. These are applicable to all teams and service areas across Children's Social Care and Early Help.

## Overview of what your agency has done to adhere to statutory guidance (WT23)

Children's social care adheres to the statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, support, and protect children.

Oldham's Key responsibilities include:

- Working in collaboration
- Having a child-centred approach
- Offer or seek the right support for families.
- Identify and tackle harm effectively
- Uphold multi-agency practice standards to ensure consistent and effective responses to safeguarding and child protection needs.
- Been a strategic partner in the OSCP governance arrangements.

## Progress against statutory guidance:

### Activities achieved:

#### Early Help.

New practice standards were introduced in January 2023, which tightened practice around the timeliness of visits, Team Around the Family meetings and allocation of families to workers. As part of the Getting to Good programme there has been work with teams

to embed these, and this is reflected in the data on service improvement.

From the start of 2024/25 the Early Help service has expanded to include the teams within the Council's seven family hubs which were established during 2024/25. These include Family Hub Managers, Early Years SEND & Inclusion Practitioners, Parenting team, Child & Family Practitioners and Business Support / reception staff. They deliver services to families with children aged 0-19 (0-25 years with Special educational needs and Disabilities) and are part of the Integrated Children & Families Service, alongside health visitors and school nurses employed by the Northern Care Alliance. This re-organisation provides an opportunity to strengthen our early intervention offer to children and families during 2025/26,

A new targeted early help team was introduced in the MASH early in 2024/25 comprising a manager and 4 targeted early help officers. Social work managers screen contacts to identify those which need triage by qualified social workers. Others for which an early help response is likely to be required are passed to the MASH Early Help team to triage. They have a good understanding of the full range of the early help offer in Oldham and will identify the most appropriate support for children and families in discussion with referring organisations (most frequently schools).

#### Children's Social Care

In May 2024, Ofsted conducted an Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in Oldham. The inspection resulted in the council's children's services being rated as 'Good' across all areas, marking a significant improvement from the previous 'Requires Improvement' rating in 2019.

Ofsted commended the "relentless focus on improvement" driven by strong and stable leadership. Significant financial investment, amounting to £14.7 million, was directed towards strengthening services and enhancing workforce stability. This included the establishment of an Oldham-based academy to train new and returning social workers, aiming to improve staff retention and build long-term relationships with families.



Inspectors noted that children in Oldham now benefit from good-quality help and support, even amid increased demand for services. The quality of assessments, children's plans, and the work of the children with disabilities team were highlighted as areas of significant progress. The complex safeguarding team and early help services were also praised for their effectiveness.

The Systemic Reflective Hub encouraged group reflective supervision is further embedding the Systemic Practice Model. This has been successful in supporting the service to learn from group supervision activity. The next steps in 2025-2026 is to expand this hub to become multi-agency reflective space which has been identified as an action linked to learning from reviews.

### **Impact of activities:**

#### **Early help**

Targeted early help supports large numbers of children. At the start of 2024/25 there were almost 1,300 children open to targeted early help, which was a very high level of demand which created significant demand pressures. The number of children open to the teams fell during the remainder of 2024, and has since stabilised at around 950 children (in around 425 families)

The reduction in numbers of cases open to targeted early help has supported reduced caseloads, which in turn has supported improvements in the timeliness and intensity of work which are discussed below. At the start of April 2025, caseloads were typically around 8-9 families / 18-22 children per FTE in the Council teams, and 14-15 families / 26-35 children per FTE in the Positive Steps teams. This reflects that Positive Steps work with families with a lower level of need than the Council's Family Connect teams, through delivery of a less intensive support offer.

There have been some significant shifts in the relative frequency of issues identified between 2023/24 and 2024/25, with families in 2024/25 being significantly more likely to receive support from targeted early help in relation to education issues, mental health, family relationships, and to a somewhat lesser extent domestic abuse. This will reflect both changes in the prevalence of issues in Oldham's population, and a shift in the focus of

targeted early help resulting from the changes in the triage process which have resulted in families being directed to a range of alternative sources of early intervention where these are the option which best meets their needs

Another development which has supported improved quality of practice is the introduction of the Home Conditions checklist, which is a tool introduced in January 2023 for undertaking an initial assessment of home conditions. If concerns are identified, this would result in further action potentially including completion of the full Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) toolkit for assessing and addressing neglect, and escalation to children's social care if required. The service first started completing GCP2s in early 2024, and completed 16 during 2024/25. This is increasingly embedded with a further 16 completed within the first quarter of 2025/26, reflecting a focus in the service on identifying and addressing concerns of neglect.

#### **Social Work Academy**

A Drift protocol has been adopted in order to provide an escalation process where there are concerns that work is not progressing swiftly enough, for example where parents repeatedly cancel visits or are reluctant to engage with support.

Following the ILACS inspection, we have continued a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and families through the launch of the Achieving Excellence in Children's Social Care and Early Help strategy and action plan.

Our approach prioritises consistently embedding high-quality, child-centred practice and strengthening multi-agency partnerships to ensure that children, young people and families receive the right support at the right time.

Practice briefings have taken place, and in addition, service development days, our Practitioner Forum, and March Practice Week have focused on National Reforms and keeping Practitioners updated and warm to the changes afoot. With next steps for 2025-2026 being co-design and co-production panels, leading the changes we will embed following the Families First Programme (FFP) guide publication in March 2025

## Outline any challenges working with statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies:

- Placement sufficiency
- Waiting lists for services such as CAMHS
- Cross borough working

## Agency inspections, including outcomes and actions:

Oldham Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted (ILACS) in May 2024 and were graded 'Good' in all areas.

The service has developed an 'Achieving Excellence Strategy' which outlines the action being taken to deliver excellent services for our children and young people.

## Summary of audits carried out – relevant to safeguarding partnership (single and or multi agency)

Oldham Children's Services deliver a comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework which triangulates audit outcome with other assurance activity to support us to understand the quality of the services we deliver well.

Our focus this year has been on revising the Quality Assurance Framework to a Quality Assurance and Learning Framework, and strengthening 'close the loop' processes. The revised framework emphasises completing Practice Review Audits *alongside* children and families, ensuring their voices are central. The updated framework was relaunched in July 2024 and further refined in January 2025.

We have maintained a strong focus on enhancing the quality of practice review audits—audits that are informed by the voices of children and families, partner feedback, and observed practice. Our approach to quality assurance has matured to centre on outcomes and impact.

We have seen a notable shift in the percentage of good and outstanding practice review audits following the launch of our Quality Assurance and Learning Framework in September 2024. The revised framework takes account of child and family involvement and the child's voice within all quality assurance activity. It also provides a more sophisticated alignment to learning and development. Furthermore, the framework also supports a move

from a compliance focussed quality assurance system, to a system that focuses on outcomes and impact. Alongside the new framework, a new audit tool was launched across Children's Social Care and Early Help. This audit tool was introduced to shift the focus of a practice review audit from compliance against the 7 fundamentals (developed as part of our Getting to Good Programme in the previous two reporting years), to focus on the impact and outcomes for the child(ren) and family.

Practice reviews are supplemented by regular dip sampling of cases based on themes, such as: voice of the child; cases where families disengaged prematurely from support; cases with concerns about neglect; team around the family (TAF) meetings; outcomes at case closure. Issues addressed in dip sampling are addressed both for individual cases, and through wider learning which is incorporated into changes in practice within the service. As an example, recent dip sampling of case closures led to work with teams to embed practice around ensuring that TAF meetings will be continued by universal services when targeted early help involvement closes. This is supplemented by the Head of Service undertaking practice observation and "mystery shopper" calls to obtain the views of families.

As a result of quality assurance work, managers have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development of team members, which informs the support they provide to team members.

## Progress and challenges against OSCP priority areas:

### Domestic Abuse

Our response to Domestic Abuse is a priority within Children's Services Achieving Excellence Strategy. Strengthen Oldham's partnership approach to domestic abuse to reduce high risk incidents:

- Strengthen referral pathways between partner agencies.
- Practice week dedicated to domestic abuse.
- Social worker training to undertake risk assessments of serious domestic abuse to inform robust safety planning.
- Sustain the perpetrator offer and expand the offer for high risk perpetrators.
- Reduce the waiting time to MARAC through revised multi-agency arrangements.

- More partnership support for victims at medium risk such as courses and advice drop ins.
- Refresh the needs assessment for support in safe accommodation.

Staff are alert to and the impact of domestic abuse, including witnessing this, and the impact that this can have on individuals and families. The first of our practice weeks in this reporting year was held between 16th -20th September 2024 with a focus and drive on Domestic Abuse. Themes included, recognising domestic abuse and safety planning with adults and children, developing trauma informed practice and the cycle of abuse and non-victim blaming language. The week was successful; we trained 243 members of staff across the sessions delivered.

## Complex and Contextual Safeguarding

The Complex Safeguarding Hub are supporting the Operation Sherwood investigation, an investigation into historic child sexual exploitation in the borough. There have been 17 arrests made in relation to this investigation. This investigation is gaining momentum, and progress continues to be made in gathering evidence to identify potential survivors and perpetrators.

More recently the team have delivered inputs to over 90 young people in relation to decision making, this has been done utilising the virtual reality headsets. The feedback from these young people has been positive with further inputs planning in primary schools, secondary schools and residential settings.

The Complex Safeguarding Hub continue to deliver training in education provisions to staff members, alongside delivering sessions to young people. These sessions are delivered jointly with agencies such as Early Break, Youth Justice and Keeping Our Girls Safe.

## Neglect

Our response to Neglect is a priority within Childrens Services Achieving Excellence Strategy. Improve the response to neglect cases through the consistent use of the graded care profile:

- Revise the OSCP neglect strategy and action plan.
- Continue use of the early help neglect safety checklist.

- Increase the number of staff across social care, early help and partners trained in the Graded Care Profile 2.
- Develop peer support to increase staff and partner confidence in completing the Graded Care Profile 2 assessment.

We have delivered single agency training to staff across CSC & EH. The use of GCP2 in our Early Help service is subject to rigorous quality assurance which is supporting our understanding of the impact that this intervention has for families. Our MASH service is also screening for completion of GCP2 and family help tool at the point of contact to ensure that interventions are being offered by partners at the earliest opportunity providing families with the right support at the right time.

## Mental health and the impact of trauma

All staff undertake mandatory mental health awareness training and our 7x7x7 practice model describes our approach to working with children, young people and families.

## Transitions

Our response to Transitions is a priority within Childrens Services Achieving Excellence Strategy. Effective support for children transitioning to care leavers by their 18th birthday and to adult social care services from 18:

- All 16–25-year-old children in care and care leavers to have access to Oldham Leisure Centres.
- All care leavers to have effective transition from their social worker to personal advisor prior to age 18.
- Young people transitioning from CSC to ASC - strong partnership working, effective working model and earlier identification and assessment, from age 14.
- Implement joint planning arrangements between children's and adults commissioning teams.

Our Transitions Strategic Board maintains oversight of progress in this area and is jointly chaired by Childrens DCS and Adults DASS demonstrating our commitment to improve young people's experience of



transition through services together. Our Transitions Hub facilitates multi agency discussions at an early stage where a young person may require adult services and this approach supports joined up working and planning.

### Serious Youth Violence

Our response to Harms Outside the Home is a priority within Childrens Services Achieving Excellence Strategy. Strengthen the quality of return home interviews for children that go missing from home or care. Continue to raise awareness of prevention, protection and prosecution across communities, partners and with young people:

- Establish regular multi-agency reviews of RHI findings to identify patterns, inform preventative work, and share learning.
- Track and analyse data from RHIs to improve service delivery and target support to vulnerable children and young people with a high number of repeat missing episodes.
- Embed the quality assurance (QA) process for RHIs, ensuring identified actions are completed.
- Annual complex safeguarding weeks of action, regular reporting to cross political party group.

Additionally, we are engaged with Durham University to develop our approach to Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Pathway which will introduce context weighting to S47 processes where there are contextual safeguarding concerns.

Agency involvement and learning from serious incidents, including involvement in any reviews and learning from national reviews and LSCRP's

Learning from Practice Reviews has informed process and practice changes:

- Improve children and parents' participation in the co-development of plans in line with our Practice Model.
- Getting better at the right intervention at an earlier juncture
- Supervision and management oversight could be strengthened for some through use of reflection and analysis recognising the impact on the child.
- Early permanence needs to be a whole service priority.
- Develop and improve links with CAFCASS and the Family Court.

- Frequency and reflectiveness of supervision to be strengthened.

### Your agency involvement and learning from serious incidents. Including involvement in any reviews and learning from national reviews and LSCRP's

Learning from Practice Reviews has informed process and practice changes:

- Improve children and parents' participation in the co-development of plans in line with our Practice Model.
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- Supervision and management oversight could be strengthened for some through use of reflection and analysis recognising the impact on the child.
- Early permanence needs to be a whole service priority.
- Develop and improve links with CAFCASS and the Family Court.
- Frequency and reflectiveness of supervision to be strengthened.

Each quarter our CSC & EH practitioner facilitates learning across the service, we have delivered input aligned to learning from the National Panel 'It's Silent' report and 'I wanted them all to notice'.

The service utilises learning circles to facilitate a learning culture where we learn together.

### Challenges including recruitment, retention and work force capacity

We have made significant improvements in making Oldham an employer of choice, through a variety of social media campaigns including BBC North West, BBC politics and BBC The One Show.

Our Childrens Services Achieving Excellence Strategy identifies the actions we are taking to stabilise our CSC & EH workforce.

To enhance workforce stability by increasing retention, reducing use of agency staff, and developing a skilled, motivated, and well-supported workforce:

- Implement strategies to recruit and retain staff and convert agency roles.



- Drive professional development and career progression for social work and residential workforce.
- Provide comprehensive training and support for practitioners.
- Support senior leader insight into reasons for social workers leaving through overview and scrutiny of exit interviews.
- Provide regular, effective supervision and support to our staff.
- Implement staff survey wellbeing action plan.
- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion by embedding inclusive practices.

### Workforce training and development – benefits and how this has made a difference to children and young people (include front line staff and practitioner voice)

- Our continued success of our 'Grow your Own' model, and the impact this has had on our workforce stability and reduction in reliance on Agency. It continues to be recognised regionally for the ASYE programme and is the only Local Authority in Greater Manchester to offer a 2-year programme, supporting retention and wellbeing of staff.
- Delivery of two successful Practice Weeks, and four practitioner forums in the reporting year, including a high level of quality assurance activity, and successful engagement of the workforce.
- Practice Development activity led by the Children's Social Work Academy is driven by the outcomes and learning from Quality Assurance Activity.
- Our practice approach is grounded in our commitment to delivering high-quality, child-centred social work that meets the diverse needs of children, young people, and their families. Our systemic practice model focuses on understanding relationships and patterns within families and their wider systems.

### Next Steps



