

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD Agenda

Date Wednesday 2nd October 2024

Time 6.00 pm

Venue Lees Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1NL

Notes 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST- If a Member requires advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Alex Bougatef or Peter Thompson at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

2. CONTACT OFFICER for this agenda is Peter Thompson (e-mail peter.thompson@oldham.gov.uk)

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - Any Member of the public wishing to ask a question at the above meeting can do so only if a written copy of the question is submitted to the contact officer by 12.00 noon on Friday, 27th September 2024.

4. FILMING - The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Constitutional Services Officer who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.

Please note that anyone using recording equipment both audio and visual will not be permitted to leave the equipment in the room where a private meeting is held.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD

Councillors Adams, Z Ali, Ball, Bishop, Hobin (Chair), Hughes, S. Hussain, Iqbal, McLaren, Moores (Vice-Chair) and Shuttleworth

Item No

- 1 Apologies For Absence
- 2 Urgent Business
Urgent business, if any, introduced by the Chair
- 3 Declarations of Interest

To Receive Declarations of Interest in any Contract or matter to be discussed at the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

To receive Questions from the Public, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

5 Minutes of Previous Children and Young People Scrutiny Board Meeting (Pages 5 - 8)

The Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board meeting held on 23rd July 2024 are attached.

6 Corporate Performance Report (Pages 9 - 28)

A report that details performance against key indicators during the first quarter 2024/25 (1st April - 30th June 2024)

7 Participation of Young People aged 16 - 18 in Education, Employment or Training (Pages 29 - 44)

A report detailing participation of Young People aged 16 – 18 in Education, Employment and Training.

8 Additional School Places and Admissions - Annual Update report (Pages 45 - 54)

A report that provides a briefing and update on the delivery of school places and on school place preference rates within the Local Authority.

9 Childrens Services - Improvement Plan and Finance Update Report (Pages 55 - 62)

A report providing an update on Financial Performance and Improvement Plan' on progress regarding Children's Social Care improvement plans and financial performance.

10 Work Programme (Pages 63 - 70)

To consider and note the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board's Work Programme 2024/25.

11 Key Decision Document (Pages 71 - 82)

Details of key decisions to be considered by the Cabinet at future meetings.

12 Rule 13 and 14

To consider any rule 13 or 14 decisions taken since the previous meeting.



Present: Councillor Hobin (Chair)
Councillors Adams, Z Ali, Ball, Hughes, Iqbal, McLaren, Moores
and Shuttleworth

Also in Attendance:

Rhys Attwell	Constitutional Services
Paul Axon	Positive Steps
Louise Paterson	Postive Steps

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were Apologies received from Cllr Mushtaq.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public Questions.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th June
2024 be approved as a correct record.

6 **OLDHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE PLAN 2024-2025**

The Youth Justice Service Plan Report was presented by Louise
Paterson (Head of Service) and Paul Axon from Positive Steps.

Paul Axon provided Committee Members with background
information on what services are offered by Positive Steps,
Members were informed that Positive Steps had been a
commissioned service for the last 14 years, providing support
and safeguarding to children who have entered the Youth
Justice System

Committee Members noted that many children who enter the
Youth Justice System are themselves victims of crime, with
Positive Steps working with a majority of children they come
across who have complex set of needs.

The Head of Service, presented to the committee the Oldham
Youth Justice Service Plan 2024-25, and opened the floor to
questioning on this plan to Committee Members.

In response to questions by Members on how a child's voice
would be reflected in the services, the Head of Service stated
that a participation worker gathers thoughts and feelings through
the use of questionnaires answered by the child, as well as
questionnaires and feedback from parents and carers to get a
more balanced view.

Members of the Committee asked questions about re-offending rates being informed that 4.5% was the re-offending rate. The Head of Service noted that there was cross industry work between Positive Steps and Schools that had introduced preventative measures to reduce the risk of reoffending.

In response to questions by Members about Positive Steps catering to the additional needs of the children who they may be supporting, it was confirmed by the Head of Service that there had been a Speech and Language specialist due to start secondment in August 2024. In addition, it was confirmed that there was an individual plan put in place for all the children who enter the service, to address any needs there may be.

Members asked questions concerning Mental Health Support, being informed by the Head of Service that, whilst there will never be enough support for Mental Health Services, Positive Steps had undertaken considerable work in this area including the hiring of a CAHMS practitioner, who will be a full-time worker, advising and supporting the team. In addition, it was also noted that a wellbeing coach has also been employed within the Service.

Members noted that Positive Steps was a trauma informed Service, which had conducted staff training around the impact of trauma on children, as well as cultural appreciation training around racial trauma.

In response to questions about whether or not the service had a high turnover of staff, it was noted by the Head of Service that Positive Steps had a stable staff force. There was currently a recruitment drive underway, with the service having a positive reputation.

The Head of Service informed Members of the Committee, that normally children enter the service through being charged with a crime by the Crown Prosecution Services. Others enter the service by coming into contact with the police and court referrals.

In response to questions about the financing of the Speech and Language therapist, it was confirmed by the Head of Service that a mixture of different avenues fund the occupational role, which included the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Health Trusts and different community-based projects.

The Head of Service confirmed that there was an engagement worker is tasked with community outreach programmes, as well as multi agency collaborate with the Community Safety Partnership, on how to best support the needs of a community.

The Head of Service informed Members of the Committee about “outcome 22”, explaining that this was another option for the police in tackling crime and disorder. Outcome 22 was defined as an order that is known as out of court disposals. The Police

can decide the severity of the offence and if outcome 22 could be best utilised as a learning opportunity.

The Head of Service confirmed that Positive Steps does work with different faith forums.

The Head of Service confirmed to Committee Members, that Positive Steps does work with children over 18, to orders that may have been placed on them. It was also noted that long term orders which would carry over the age of 18, would be overseen by a specialist probation team.

It was confirmed that Positive Steps was a referral-based process, which was accessible to anybody, including schools and prevention services.

In response to questions concerning the restorative justice as outlined in the report, it was confirmed that due to the re-classification of an offence, police terminology could determine if people are no longer deemed a victim.

The Head of Service outlined the Service Plan Report, discussing the need for children to be included in Plans, with assessment notes to be child friendly. In addition, the Youth Justice files are to be easily accessible and age appropriate for children who view them.

The Head of Service outlined the wish to have a trauma informed practitioner in Positive Steps, to ensure that there would be education and support systems in place, so children do not go on to reoffend.

The Chief Executive Officer informed the Committee that there had been an establishment of a child led panel to interview a potential new Director role.

RESOLVED: that the Scrutiny Board noted the Youth Justice Service Plan 2024-2025.

7 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

RESOLVED: that Members noted the Key Decision Document.

8 **RULE 13 AND 14**

There was no Rule 13 and 14.

9 **WORK PROGRAMME**

No work Programme received.

The meeting started at 18:00pm and ended at 19:06pm.

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Report to Children & Young People Scrutiny Board

Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 for Q1 Corporate Performance Report (1st April to 30th June 2024)

Portfolio Holder (CPR):

Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better Oldham

Officer Contact (CPR):

Steve Hughes, Assistant Director Strategy & Performance

Report Author (CPR):

Gail M. Stott, Performance Improvement Lead, Strategy & Performance

CPR collated by: Performance Improvement Team, Strategy & Performance

Contact: StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk

Date: 2nd October 2024

Reason for decision

Scrutiny of corporate performance aims to provide assurance that:

- our corporate priorities are aligned to the needs of our residents (resident focus)
- our services are good, or are on track to good
- any services that are not on track, or have identified risks, are being supported or challenged to rectify this
- any demand indicators or resource pressures are being noted and service provision is being re-assessed accordingly
- the organisation has robust performance management processes in place.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for the 2024/25 Q1 period (April – June).

The current reporting format has been developed with the intent of bringing more mature performance reporting online once the ongoing Business Insight, Performance and Strategy Programme (BIPS) Programme and Digital Services Foundation (DSF) Project have been completed.

Historically, a full CPR has gone to the Governance, Strategy and Resources (GSR) Scrutiny Board; however, now there are four Scrutiny Boards, it is deemed more appropriate that the constituent parts go to the appropriate meeting to enable more in-depth analysis and discussion of the CPR alongside other associated reports.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Board members are asked to:

- note the progress in implementing the business plan objectives
- celebrate areas of consistent good performance
- note the comments on progress
- consider areas for review (good or poor) that could produce learning for the organisation
- note the interconnection of these actions with ongoing activities within the Directorate or Portfolio and corporate key projects such as our [Cost of Living Response](#) and [Don't Trash Oldham](#)
- consider benchmarking reports from open data sources
- review performance in the context of our borough and the demands on our services.

Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 Quarter Q1

1. Background

Business Planning

1.1 The [Corporate Plan](#) 2022/27 was approved by Cabinet in September 2022; service and business plans are closely aligned to the priorities set out in this Plan.

1.2 Revised guidance for the development of directorate or service level business plans was issued for 2024/25 in January 2024.

1.3 Directorate or service level business plans include a range of performance metrics, both 'business as usual' and transformational, aimed at achieving the aspirations of the Corporate Plan and putting our Residents First.

1.4 It is noted that business plans can be influenced by both internal and external factors, including increased demand, available funding or resources, changes in legislation or policies, and so are kept under review.

1.5 It is important that performance is viewed in the context of our borough; our published [district profiles](#) and the [Oldham JSNA](#) provide more detail on our borough alongside open data sources, such as the [the Health Foundation Local Authority Dashboard](#). These statistics and projections need to be considered when reviewing current and projected service levels and demands.

Performance Reporting Systems

1.6 The fundamental foundation of a Performance Management Framework is a performance management system that generates data that is utilised at all levels for decision-making; together with a transparent and efficient performance reporting cycle supported by good governance processes.

1.7 As part of the Council's ongoing management processes, each service has regular opportunities, via forums such as their Directorate Management Team (DMT), Performance Area Meeting (PAM) or Portfolio meeting, to review their performance at a service and directorate level. It is in these forums that services can:

- raise issues or concerns
- consider performance more holistically in the wider context of the service
- reflect on changes in demands or resources
- agree actions to improve or maintain performance levels.

1.8 Data scrutinised in these forums will be more detailed and focused on the particular service or function. It is from these discussions that the comments made in the CPR by Heads of Service and Portfolio Holders are derived.

1.9 The intent of the CPR is to enable key (high-level) data to be presented to provide reassurance, whilst also allowing space for discussion. Historically, a full CPR – covering all service areas - has gone to the Governance, Strategy and Resources (GSR) Scrutiny Board. From 2024/25 it has been agreed that it is more appropriate for the constituent parts go to the appropriate scrutiny meeting:

-
- **People CPR** – split between Children & Young People Scrutiny Board **and** Adult Social Care & Health Scrutiny Board
 - **Place CPR** – Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board
 - **Resources CPR** – Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

1.10 This will support more in-depth analysis and discussion of the CPR alongside other relevant reports, supported by relevant senior officers from each area. The Performance Improvement Team will continue to offer support and capture feedback where required.

1.11 The Corporate Performance Reports (CPR) are currently presented in PowerPoint for clarity and in keeping with previous feedback; they include:

- a summary for each service
- service successes
- key metrics
- areas for development
- capacity for Head of Service / Director's comments
- opportunity for Portfolio holder comments
- a glossary / list of acronyms and colour key (if required).

1.12 The current reporting format (agreed 5th October 2023 GSR Scrutiny Board) was developed as a solution to the decommissioning of CorVu but, with a view to bringing more mature performance reporting online once the Business Insight, Performance and Strategy Programme (BIPS) Programme and Digital Services Foundation (DSF) Project are fully completed. These projects remain ongoing into 2024/25.

Benchmarking

1.13 In addition to reviewing in-house reporting, Scrutiny Boards may wish to consider performance reports from open data sources. This will enable them to benchmark Oldham against other authorities. Much of this data is historical and on its own does not present a complete picture of the Council's performance however, these reports can be used to generate questions or key lines of enquiry.

1.14 LG Inform provides a number of ready built reports that use published data; they provide useful trend or comparator information.

1.15 The Office for Local Government (Oflog) Local Authority Data Explorer was launched with the primary purpose of '*providing a transparent and authoritative source of information about the performance of local government*' - current reporting is in relation to:

- Adults Social Care
- Corporate & finance
- Planning
- Roads
- Waste management

1.16 Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) produces business intelligence to inform all Greater Manchester priorities. This includes the Greater Manchester Strategy Performance Dashboards - six-monthly dashboards that assesses performance against the ten priority targets of the Greater Manchester Strategy.

Please contact StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk if you require any assistance in accessing these reports.

Performance Reporting – ongoing development

1.17 As part of the 2024/25 business planning cycle, data owners (Heads of Service) are reviewing their metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with support from the Performance Improvement Team. The aim is to ensure services have the right measures that demonstrate the right outcome or impact. They also need to ensure they correlate to Oflog measures and any other statutory returns where possible.

1.18 Our ongoing review has determined that a standardised ‘one size fits all’ approach to performance monitoring is not feasible as the performance data that services produce differs. Some services produce data that is quantitative and readily assessed against milestones. However, in order for these to have the maximum relevance they need to be set in an appropriate timeframe – for example education services data needs to be reported termly as opposed to in financial year quarters. Similarly, some strategic programmes, such as public health initiatives, will only show meaningful results over a number of years.

- Any variance in timeframe or other aspects of the KPI will be highlighted in reporting.

1.19 Many core services provide a supporting role to others, so performance within their functions cannot be measured quantitatively and success is identified by ‘outcomes’ or the performance of the services they support. These services are developing business plans outlining their overarching strategies but with performance measures that are outcome, milestone or project based. To avoid repetitive or inaccurate reporting for these services, performance reporting may only occur at the beginning and the close of the year when major milestones can be effectively and accurately reflected on.

1.20 Member and officers are recommended to avail themselves of the resources provided by the Local Government Association; these include:

- **performance management guide for councillors** - an overview of what performance management is and the role of councillors in the performance management of the council
- **performance management e-learning module for councillors** - key points from the guide are available in a convenient and free to access module which should take around 30 minutes to complete
- **performance management guide for local authority officers** – provides a helpful overview of performance management in local government for officers.

Appendix:

1. People CPR - Children & Families; Education & Early Years

Report to Children & Young People Scrutiny Board

Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 for Quarter 1: 1st April to 30th June 2024

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Portfolio Holder (CPR): Cllr Arooj Shah, Cabinet Member for Building a Better
Oldham

Contact Officer (CPR): Steve Hughes, Assistant Director Strategy & Performance

Report date: 2nd October 2024

CPR collated by: Performance Improvement Team StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk

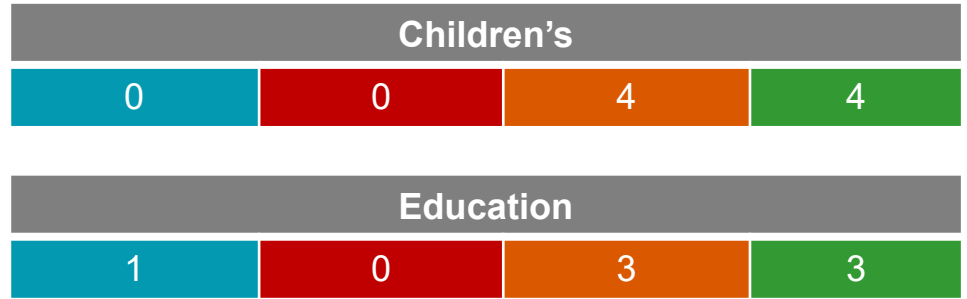


People - CYP

Key Performance Indicators

Page 13

RED	KPIs underperforming by more than 5%
AMBER	KPIs underperforming by less than 5%
GREEN	KPIs meeting or outperforming target
TEAL	KPIs with no targets set



Children's Social Care & Early Help

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Shaid Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

Officer Contact: Julie Daniels, Director Children's Social Care and Early Help

Service Summary:

In Oldham we want all children and young people to have a safe, happy, and healthy life and access to a great education giving them the best possible start in life. As a service we commit to:

- Putting children and young people first
- Helping families and supporting vulnerable children and young people
- Working as one team close to our community
- Providing great public value and confidence

Our ambition is to be the best borough for children and young people and for the staff and services that work with them.

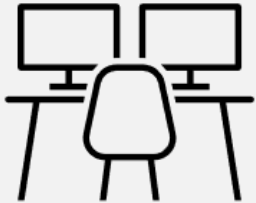
Children's Social Care & Early Help

Key Metrics

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Percentage of Care Leavers aged 16-18 (post year 11) in Education, Employment or Training

68

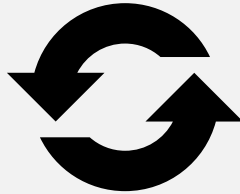


Previous Quarter: 62.6

Target = 70

Percentage of referrals which are repeat referrals to Children's Social Care (in month)

25



Previous Quarter: 27

Target = 23

Time between entering care and placed with family for adopted children

471



Previous Quarter: 514.6

Target = 426

Time between placement order and deciding on a match

84



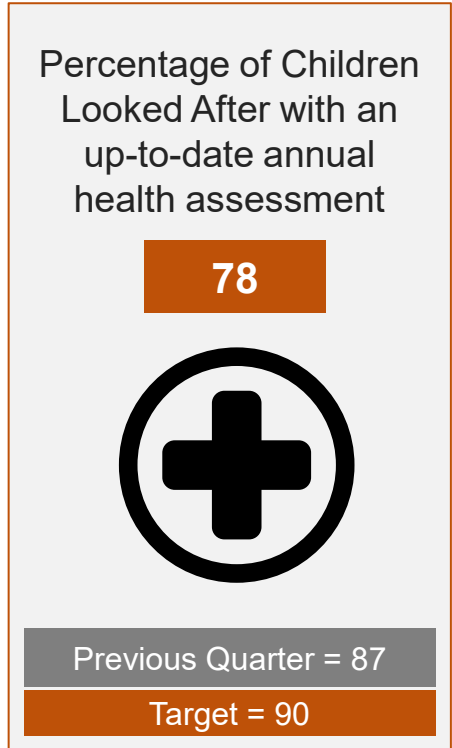
Previous Quarter: 136.6

Target = 121

Children's Social Care & Early Help

Key Metrics

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Children's Social Care & Early Help

Areas for Development

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Percentage of Care Leavers aged 19+ in Education, Employment or Training

The number of over 19 care leavers we have in EET has gone down over the quarter. We know this cohort of young people were most affected by Covid and contain some of the hardest to reach young people, i.e. a disproportionate amount of young people signed off due to sickness / disability in this cohort.

A working group of leaders and practitioners has built an operational tracker to link with opportunities being brought forward. This is being developed into a wider strategic plan which is being presented to the next Corporate Parenting Panel in September.

The impact is starting to be observed in the younger age groups.



Percentage of Children Looked After placed within In-house Provision

The figure stated is the average number of children we have living in internal foster care. Given the significant increase in the overall number of children in care, it is positive that performance is being predominantly maintained. Other 'in-house' placements utilised are children placed at home with parents, children placed for adoption and children in other settings.

There are 194 children in externally commissioned provision (assessment unit, Independent Fostering Agency, residential, semi-independent); this is 31% of the full cohort of children looked after. Expanding sufficiency is a key part of the service transformation programme including expanding commissioning arrangements, having a competitive offer to foster carers and expanding our internal residential estate.

Children's Social Care & Early Help

Areas for Development

Average caseload per social worker



The average caseload has slightly increased this quarter which is partially a result of agency staff being replaced by newly qualified social workers (ASYE's) who have protected caseloads in their first year. Our "Grow Our Own" strategy is providing a strong pipeline of qualified workers as well as our recruitment campaign "Choose Oldham". We continue to address demand into statutory services and work is underway to further enhance our targeted early help offer alongside the Family Hubs which are now all operational across the five districts.

We monitor caseloads on a weekly basis and whilst slightly higher than the agreed target we are confident they will remain competitive against our neighbouring LAs.

% Children Looked After with an up-to-date annual health assessment



It was anticipated that performance would dip in this area as there has been a change in the process for ensuring information is sent to health partners in order for them to schedule the appointment. This process has now transferred from health to the council. This has led to a slight delay in referrals getting to the relevant partners as the new process is embedded. It is anticipated that performance will improve.

Children's Social Care & Early Help

Director Comment

Q1: Julie Daniels, Director Children's Social Care and Early Help

It is positive to see successes in the KPIs for re-referrals, adoption, and 16–18-year-old EET, all of which have improved performance in Q1 compared to the previous quarter.

For the performance indicators outlined in areas for development (red measures), there are plans in place through the achieving excellence programme and transformation and sustainability programme to improve performance further, in particular the creation of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers, a partnership workshop in September relating to children looked after health assessments and the creation of more internal placements through fostering recruitment and increased residential provision.

25/07/24

Signed
Off

Children's Social Care & Early Help

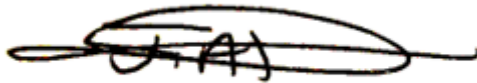
Portfolio Holder Comment

Q1: Cllr Shaid Mushtaq Cabinet Member for Children & Young People:

I am pleased to observe the continued progress in a significant number of performance indicators this quarter, particularly in adoption timescales which ensures children are moving into their forever home in a timely way with adopters that are well supported by the Council adoption team and the Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption Now.

I am assured through my regular briefings and portfolio updates on the targeted work in relation to placement sufficiency and workforce being delivered through the transformation and sustainability programme and look forward to the young people careers event in September to raise awareness of the opportunities available in Oldham.

Signed
Off



25/07/24

Education & Early Years

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

Officer Contact: Matt Bulmer, Director of Education, Early Years and Skills

Service Summary:

In Oldham we want all children and young people to have a safe, happy, and healthy life and access to a great education giving them the best possible start in life. As a service we commit to:

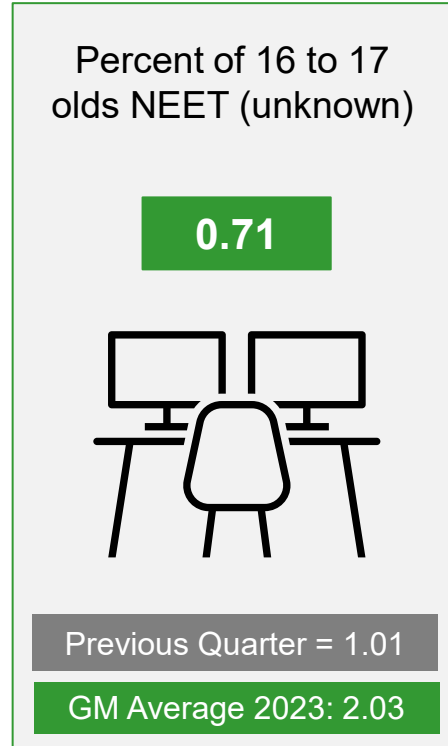
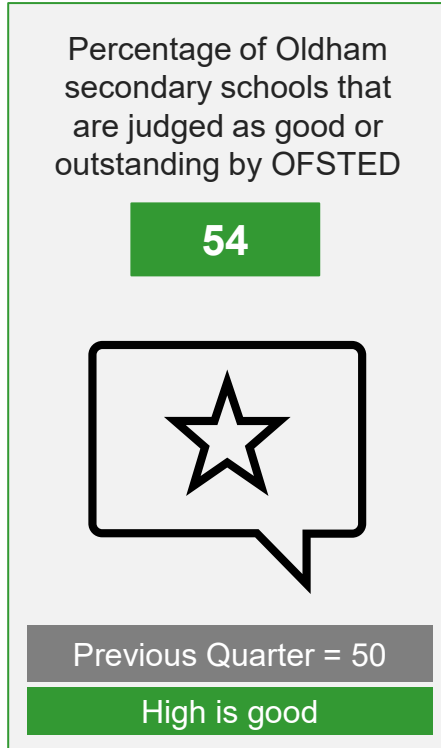
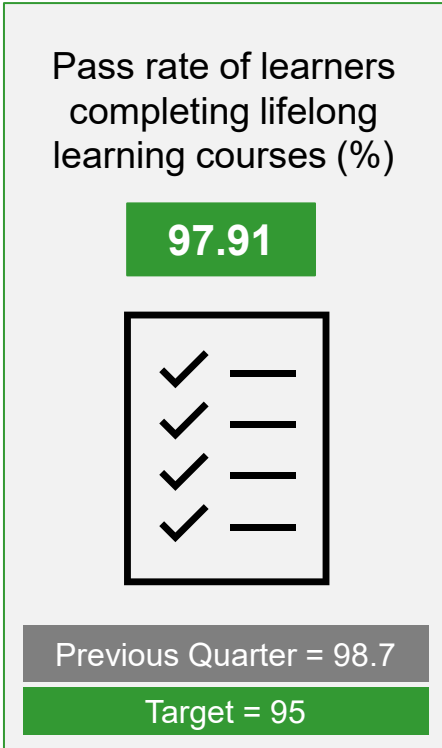
- Putting children and young people first
- Helping families and supporting vulnerable children and young people
- Working as one team close to our community
- Providing great public value and confidence

Our ambition is to be the best borough for children and young people and for the staff and services that work with them.

Education & Early Years

Key Metrics

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Education & Early Years

Key Metrics

Page 23

Attendance Rates (%)

Primary: **94.1**
Secondary: **91.6**



Previous Quarter
Primary: 94.3
Secondary: 91.7

Timeliness of quality EHC plans: percentage completed within 20 weeks over 12 months

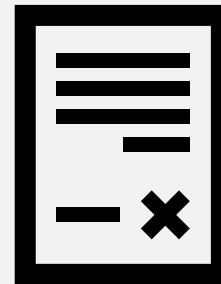
78.9



Previous Quarter = 84.6
Target = 85

Annual EHCP (SEND) statutory reviews completed within legal time frame

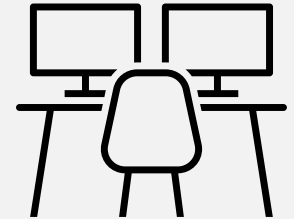
82



Previous Quarter = 94
Target: 85

Percent of 16- to 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

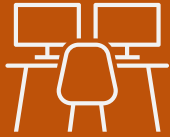
4.81



Previous Quarter = 4.63
GM Average 2023: 3.71
Oldham Target: 3.5

Education & Early Years

Areas for Development



Percent of 16- to 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Work continues to support young people to participate, through "Empower Oldham" bespoke support programme which is now extended to September 2025. We are creating a new offsite provision via Oldham College from September 2024, a secured space for YMCA at "The Hive" for study programmes and developed an intensive programme of support for students at Oldham College to decrease the dropout rate. These measures will provide choice for young people and support meeting our sufficiency duty in the future.



Timeliness of quality EHC plans: percentage completed within 20 weeks over 12 months

This area of development is solely around demand versus capacity. There are 200 plus EHC needs assessments ongoing at any one time (this was 75 pre-covid). This has an impact on all services that give advice. Advice timeliness at 16 weeks in the process is circa 50% for health, education and social care. This then impacts on the ability to issue an EHCP at week 20. Forecasts predicted demand would rise 10% year on year and staff were recruited for this prediction. However, the increase is actually 15% year on year. There is not enough capacity in the system to be able to keep timeliness at the previous rates. The DBV Project, ELSEC and enhanced offer from the preventative services should enable schools to support more children at SEN Support and demand for EHCPs reduce.



Annual EHCP (SEND) statutory reviews completed within legal time frame

This is a capacity issue. Oldham now have more than 3,500 EHCPs, a 15% increase from the previous year and no sign of demand going down. Schools and settings are doing more annual reviews and we rely on them sending information back so we can send completions out within statutory timescales. There is ongoing development of annual reviews with Islington LA and through our SENCO development days.

Education & Early Years

Director Comment

Q1: Matt Bulmer, Director of Education, Early Years and Skills

We continue to see significant increases in the number of children and young people who need education and health care plans (EHCP). This has led to a steady rise in the caseloads of my SEND assessment officers. This has impacted on the timeliness of (1) plans being issued and (2) annual reviews. Our performance when compared nationally is still very strong and I expect that to continue with additional capacity within the wider SEND team becoming available at the start of next term.

With regards to the number of young people not in education, employment or training, we continue to work hard with our commissioned partner (Positive Steps) to work with those young people that need our support. Additionally, we have worked in partnership with a number of providers to bring additional training capacity into Oldham in recent months.

Signed Off: 25/07/24

Education & Early Years

Portfolio Holder Comment

Q1: Cllr Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills:

The Director has stated the actions we are taking to maintain our excellent timeliness performance with regards to education and health care plans. I would also like to point to the work we are doing across the system to ensure that children with additional needs can receive an excellent education in mainstream settings. From next year, for example, we will be delivering the Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) programme in a number of primary schools across Oldham.

I am also delighted to say that on 24 September the Council, along with our partners, will be holding a young people's careers event in the Queen Elizabeth hall. This will be an excellent opportunity for young people to see the wide range of excellent career opportunities available locally.

Signed Off: 25/07/24



Report to CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY BOARD

Participation of Young People aged 16 – 18 in Education, Employment or Training

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Officer Contact: Matthew Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years

Report Author: Amanda Youlden, Post 16 Lead for Education and Skills

Ext. 07970 600128

2 October 2024

Reason for Decision

The Annual Report is for information and an opportunity for members to scrutinise and challenge activities in the preceding academic year.

Executive Summary

The Annual Report is for information and an opportunity for members to scrutinise and challenge activities in the preceding academic year. This report will update the Board on current participation and NEET rates together with a summary on activity during the past academic year and planned in the future to ensure that we are shaping and influencing opportunities where possible for our 16–18-year-olds.

Recommendations

The Board to note the current landscape and experiences of 16–18-year old's which is impacting on their participation in education, employment, or training.

The Board is asked to note the range of interventions currently in place to support young people into EET and prevent the incidence of NEET increasing, given the highlighted issue in relation to sufficiency. To comment and discuss accordingly.

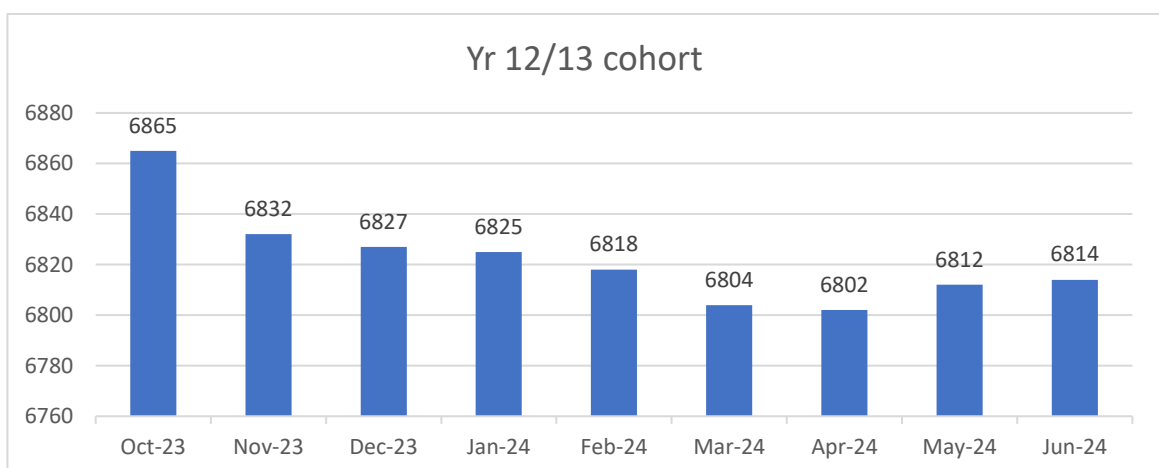
Participation of Young People aged 16 – 18 in Education, Employment and Training

1 Background

- 1.1 The LA continues to fulfil its duties around encouraging, enabling, and assisting young people to participate in education or training and tracking those aged 16 and 17 through the commission of the targeted support offer delivered by Positive Steps. This includes a small resource for our SEND (EHC plans) and Children Looked After (CLA) cohort. Due to the contract term coming to an end, the Local Authority (LA) is currently undergoing a procurement exercise, with the new contract being in place on 1 April 2025.
- 1.2 Our approach across partners in Oldham is to ensure that young people are empowered to access the advice and support they require; that we have opportunities available and to engage with our young people to hear their voices and respond as best we can. We do this using a partnership approach engaging organisations who work with our 16 – 18-year-olds and support them to participate.
- 1.3 This report will update the Board on Participation, NEET (not in education, employment or training) and unknown rates across the academic year that began in September 2023 and culminated in July 2024, together with a summary on activity planned in the future to ensure that we are shaping and influencing where possible for our 16–18-year-olds.
- 1.4 The report previously had covered a chronological calendar year. We feel discussion is more pertinent to be based on an academic year and therefore the year now covers the months of October – June when activity is recorded on the national database (NCCIS). Quarter 2 months are not recorded due to the inaccuracy of the data they provide. For example, in August NEET would be nearly 100% due to the summer holidays.
- 1.5 The work links to the Corporate Plan and Priorities, namely:
 - Resident First
 - Preventative Approach
 - Income
 - Safeguarding

2 Current Position

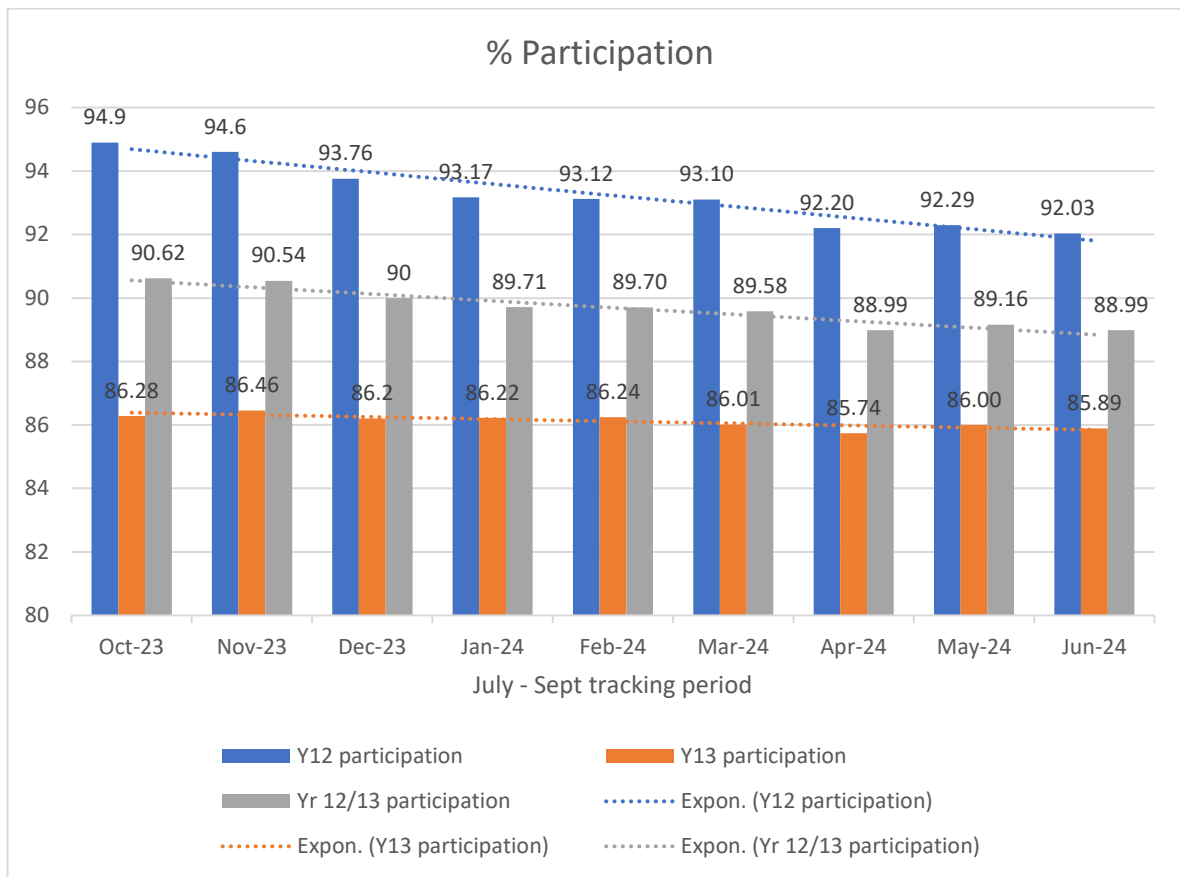
2.1 Cohort numbers



2.1.1 We have seen a notable increase in our cohort numbers for the academic year 23/24. The actual cohort numbers fluctuate month by month, and the trend appears to be downward, but the average cohort number across the academic year 23/24 for Y12/13 combined is 6822. The previous academic year's (22/23) average is 6619. This is an increase of 203 young people. This increase puts pressure on all service areas, including the LA in meeting its statutory duties, it increases competition for education placements, education providers need to offer more and differentiated places and increases caseloads for staff working to secure placements for young people.

2.1.2 Y12/13 cohort numbers are projected to continue to rise until the academic year 28/29. More on the population growth and its impact on our sufficiency duty can be found at section 2.7.11 and 3.2.

2.2 Y12/13 Participation Rates



2.2.1 Latest reported data (June 2024) indicates that 92.03% of our year 12s are participating in some form of EET (education, employment or training) activity. This % rate of participation has been reducing slightly over the academic year, indicating that our year 12's were in the most part settled in their destination following transition from school. However, we do need to acknowledge the downward trend across the year and ensure we are supporting young people who may have been less settled in their Y12 activity and support them to find activity more suited to their aspirations. Y12 average participation across the academic year 23/24 was 93.24%, which is an increase on 2023 which was 93.06%.

2.2.2 However, following a similar trajectory to the last two years, participation in our year 13 cohort is much lower. Y13 average participation during the 23/24 academic year was just 86.12%. Although an improvement on calendar year 2023 (84.21%), it highlights the continuing difficulties our Y13's have with sustaining participation. This cohort was in Year 9 when

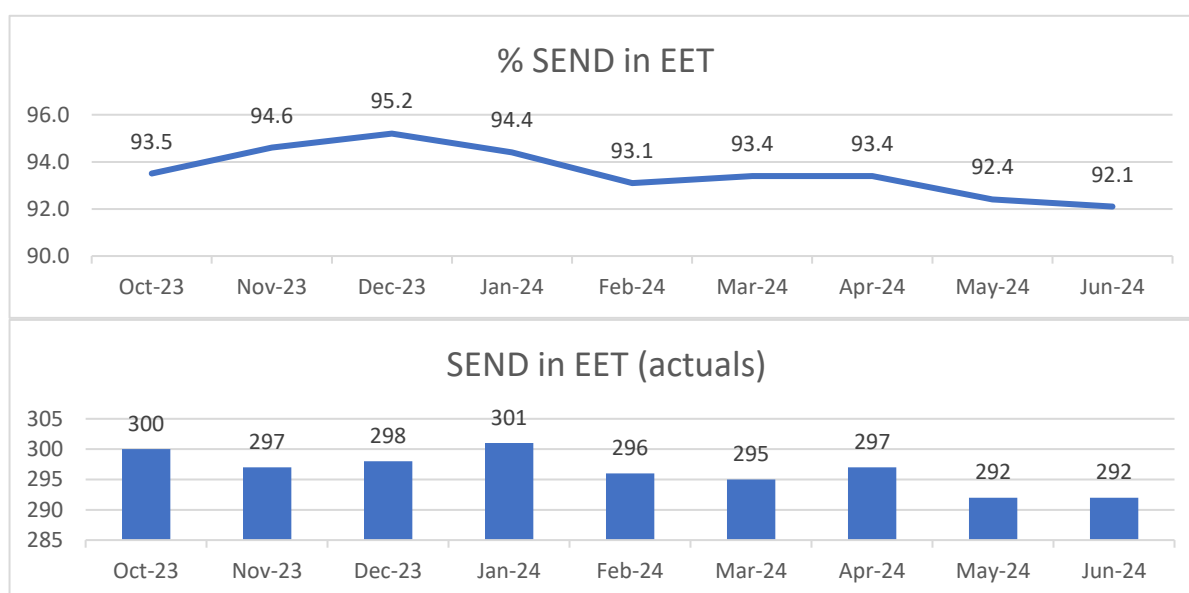
school closures were introduced during the pandemic, and this highlights the impact on young people's resilience and ability to sustain educational opportunities is still being felt.

2.2.3 Historically, there have always been young people that struggle with the transition from Y12 to Y13. To address this, we provide additional support at re-enrollment for those who needed to seek an alternative course for Y13. Information from Colleges on who would not be offered a Y13 place is requested so that young people could be contacted and offered support.

2.2.4 The careers advisors supporting the NEET cohort continue to work closely with young people across both Y12 and Y13 to introduce them to a range of providers able to re-engage them in EET or any appropriate local engagement programs that support young people back on their journey to EET, dependent on the stage of the young person journey, their aspirations and ability to engage.

2.2.5 The Empower Oldham program funded by UKSPF Skills funding via GMCA has provided an additional layer of support offer for these young people. Teams can refer young people to work with a careers coach or mentor. We have case studies of some excellent outcomes, providing us with evidence that if capacity is available to undertake the work and a young person is willing to engage and take on the practical and emotional support that a mentor can offer, they are able to re-engage in positive activity.

2.3 SEND Participation Rates

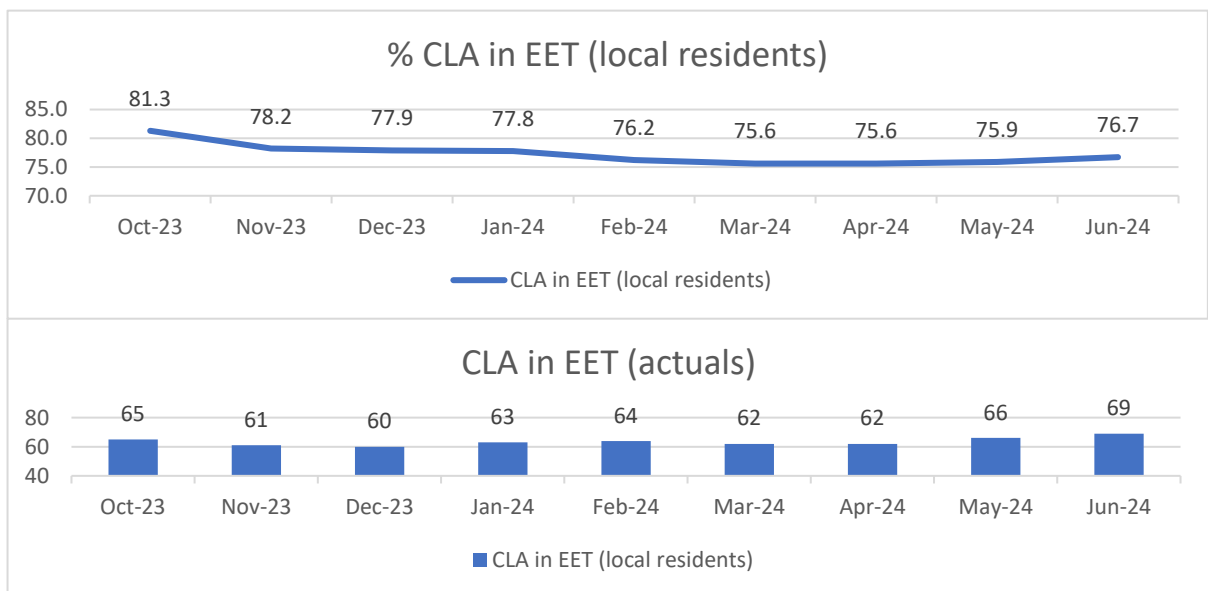


2.3.1 The actual cohort numbers fluctuate month by month across the year, but the average annual cohort number for Y12/13 SEND is 296, and the % participation is steady across the academic year, mirroring the wider participation trend of a slightly reduced % of participation at the end of the academic year.

2.3.2 The SEND Team co-ordinates education provision for young people aged 16 – 25 with an EHC plan to ensure they are accessing an education provision that meets the educational outcomes in their EHC plan and supports them to achieve their aspirations.

2.3.4 The Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Steering Group works in partnership with a wide variety of partners (and feeds into the SEND Programme Board) to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, including employment.

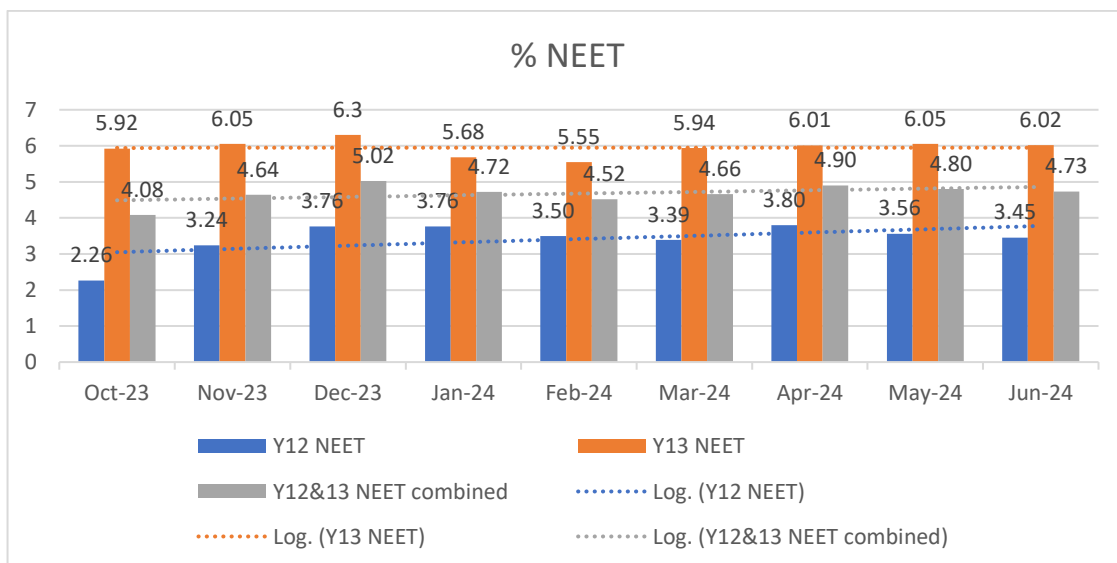
- 2.3.5 Oldham was successful in securing additional funding from the DfE to work on a Supported Internship program. The aims of the project are to increase the number and quality of Supported Internships available to young people in Oldham and we are currently in year 3 of the 3-year project. Oldham Council works closely with the two local delivery providers, DfE, Oldham Youth Service and Oldham Theatre Workshop to achieve project aims.
- 2.3.6 The Children’s with Disabilities Team have been working to develop a Transition’s booklet to support young people to be prepared for adult life. The team consulted with young people back in February 2024, to ensure we were collating the information young people want to know and understand.
- 2.3.7 The SEND Service has recently employed Family Liaison Leads within the team who are looking to re-engage young people with EHC plans not currently accessing education. They will work with the young people and their families to ensure that the next phase of their career is meeting the young person’s aspirations and career choice, providing support and signposting advice if required. If the decision is that the young person does not wish to return to education, the EHC plan can be ceased.
- 2.4 CLA Participation (local residents)



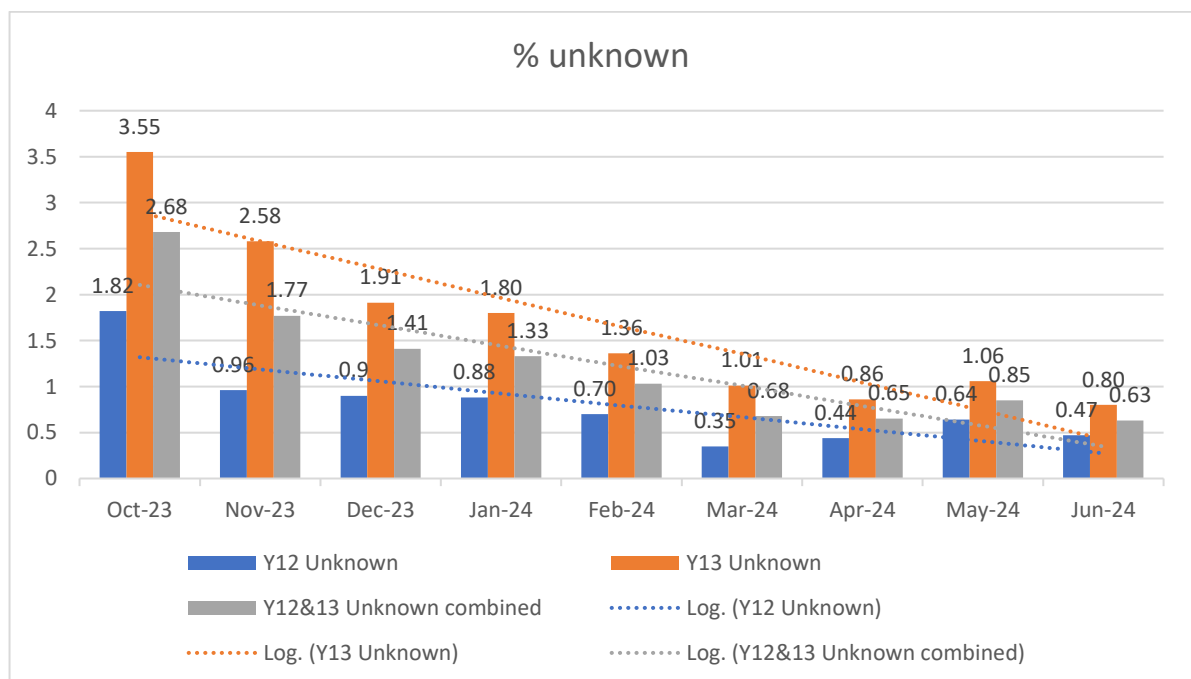
- 2.4.1 The average annual cohort number for CLA (16 – 18) in 23/24 academic year is 82. This is a significant rise in 2023’s figure of 45, again mirroring the general population growth and the impact this has on services. The smaller cohort impacts the data, but the participation trend follows the same trajectory as the universal cohort.
- 2.4.2 Given the additional barriers care experienced young people face we acknowledge the requirement for a higher level of support and our dedicated Careers Advisor support working with the Virtual School and our social care teams is essential to ensuring these young people are encouraged and supported to engage. We continue to provide the additional resource dedicated to this cohort.
- 2.4.3 Our Virtual School (VS) coordinates further support for the young people in our care to assist them to transition successfully into Post 16 provision. This is provided through a dedicated Post 16 Education Officer. The VS deliver a range of targeted activities and programmes to raise aspirations and participation, utilising information/data in Personal Education Plans (PEPs) on careers advice and guidance. Ongoing liaison with the Virtual School and Positive

Steps ensures that there is oversight of Oldham care experienced young people and the careers advice and guidance they have received or require.

- 2.4.5 Whilst the program is outside of the Y12/13 age range, we have recently received funding to deliver a Care Leaver Multiply (numeracy program) to support care leavers aged 19+ to gain additional maths skills. Although the courses can only be delivered to 19+, the fund can be used to engage CLA young people who may benefit from this type of support in the months leading up to their 19th birthday. These young people will be identified at the Care Leaver NEET monthly meeting and support put in place. The programme continues, and whilst number of young people accessing are smaller than we had hoped, we are encouraged by the positive impact the programme has had on those who have attended.
 - 2.4.6 Our recent ILAC inspection covered our Care Leaver NEET delivery programme, with a meeting specifically set to discuss our approach for our Care Leaver cohort. Whilst the inspectors were impressed with our outcomes and the ability to show our support for our young people, they did feel that an area that required a focus our support to increase the number of Care Leavers on apprenticeships within the Council. As a Corporate Parent, we recognise the need to rectify this and are committed to working on a programme with After Care, Get Oldham Working, Post 16 and Workforce Development to ensure we deliver a programme that supports and encourages our Care Leavers into Apprenticeships within the Council.
 - 2.4.7 In July 2024, three of our care experienced Y10 students were given the opportunity to attend the Eton “Skills for Success” Summer School. Each year a number of places are available for students from Oldham to attend. The weeklong summer school is free of charge and pupils have the opportunity to stay in the Eton boarding houses (Eton pupils have already broken up for the summer) and experience engaging and exciting opportunities to build their skills, grow in confidence and make new friends from within their own cohort from Oldham, and the other new Eton Star Academy areas, Middlesborough and Dudley.
 - 2.4.8 Eight young care experienced young people were provided the opportunity to attend a residential at Manchester University in July. They were accommodated in halls for two nights, to experience this before making the choice to attend university. Over the two days, the young people participated in in activities aimed designed to increase confidence, build teamworking skills, transition to HE readiness and feel a sense of belonging on an University campus.
- 2.5 Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)



- 2.5.1 The latest reported (June 2024) Y12/13 combined NEET rate currently sits at 4.73%, with the average NEET rate across the academic year being 4.67%. We continue to receive monthly starter leaver information from providers to ensure that an advisor can contact young people who become NEET mid-year to re-engage, reducing the amount of time potentially spent NEET. In June 2024, there were 322 young people recorded as NEET. Of this figure, only 258 There are currently 343 young people recorded as NEET with only 258 “available to the labour market”.
- 2.5.2 Of the 258 young people “available to the labour market”, the majority are actively seeking opportunities to engage. There are however, 58 young people identified as “not yet ready for work and learning”. These young people are provided with the offer of additional support to help them to re-engage.
- 2.5.3 The 64 young people (June 2024 data) “not available to the labour market” again are in this position for several reasons, majority illness (mental health a significant contributor), with teenage parents and pregnancy being second highest reason young people are not available and young carers. Our Careers Advisors continue to offer support to these young people, but the intensity is reduced as the priority for these young people currently is engaging with EET activity.
- 2.5.4 In line with the participation data, the NEET data highlights the difficulties our Y13 cohort is experiencing with successfully accessing EET, with Y13’s levels 2.54% higher than our Y12 cohort (on average across 23/24 academic year).
- 2.6 Unknown (or “not known”)



- 2.6.1 Work to identify the unknown cohort has been a continued priority across 23/24 academic year, building on the success of work done in the previous year. This targeted focus has seen a significant drop in the numbers of unknown young people. As the graph demonstrates, we have reduced the Y12/13 combined % rate from 1.82% in October 2023 down to 0.63% in June 2024. The number of young people “not known” in June 2024 was 43.

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- 2.6.2 This reduction in “not known” means most of this cohort are now known to us, we know they are safe, and we can offer services if young people choose to engage with us and the wider offer.
- 2.6.3 It is difficult to ascertain the reasons for young people becoming unknown, and we will continue to use lived experience, research, peer to peer shared good practice to explore the reasons and work with partners to ensure young people become “known” and enable us to offer support.
- 2.6.4 Positive Steps try several and varied attempts at continued contact, but in some cases we have been required to make the young person unknown as we cannot ascertain a positive EET destination. Follow-up of these young people continues, but some cases cannot easily be resolved. For example, due to the guidance set out by the DfE, although we may have evidence that a young person no longer lives in Oldham, as we are unable to obtain a positive EET destination, we are required to continue to a) keep this young person on Oldham’s database and b) mark them as unknown in our data returns.

2.7 Key activity to support participation

- 2.7.1 Whilst our commissioned service continues to meet our statutory duties in relation to participation, it is acknowledged at both national and regional level that this cohort requires additional support to enable them to participate successfully.
- 2.7.2 GMCA are keen to continue to support this cohort and have provided funding direct to Local Authorities to deliver a programme. Funding is currently allocated until September 2025. Locally known as “Empower Oldham”, the offer will be for 15 – 19-year-olds (up to 25 with SEN and 21 if care experienced) who are at risk of or NEET, and will provide bespoke enhanced support, either individually or in groups to move them into a positive EET destination. As at June 2024, we had engaged 193 young people onto the programme and provided them with additional support to re-engage them in EET activity.
- 2.7.3 In line with GMCA’s commitment to supporting the NEET cohort across GM, each LA was provided with an additional fund to support EET activity, which required spending before March 2025. In Oldham, this fund has been distributed across three projects, one at Oldham College, which will support students from “dropping out of provision”, we have provided some capacity funding to a training provider (YMCA) to deliver from The Hive facilities for the academic year 24/25. We are also supporting a GM wide project via GMLPN to increase quality assurance in providers delivering training across GM.
- 2.7.4 GMCA’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding across GM has funded eleven community organisations in Oldham to deliver, small community-based projects that will support residents into either AEB activity or employment activity. Whilst most organisations deliver a 19+ service, we do have organisations who are able to provide support to young people aged 16+. The organisations are:
- Mahdlo: “Moving On with Mahdlo” innovative personal development project, underpinned by Choice Theory and Youth Work practice: Works at the young person’s pace, holistically integrates wellbeing, essential life skills development, social action, employability (including regular Careers Guidance), Includes one-to-ones, group work, individual challenges, residential, Connects and enhances other provision in Oldham.
 - Volunteer It: The proposal covers the delivery of refurbishment projects with local rugby league clubs all involving young people (aged 16+ and NEET or at risk of NEET) volunteering.

- WiFi North West: To deliver cooking courses aimed primarily at priority groups listed below. The course covers practical food preparation and cooking techniques, safe use of kitchen equipment, accredited food hygiene and first aid training, placement opportunities and training to enter a working environment.
- Outdoor Collaborative: The Outdoor Collaborative aims to empower young people through outdoor digital photography and video sessions. By combining creative exploration with valuable digital skills, the sessions focus on environmental awareness and personal development as well as practical tools for success in higher education and the job market.
- Upturn: the project aims to provide marginalised Oldham residents, who are difficult to reach and not engaging, with the skills, confidence, self-esteem, and capability to move into or towards employment, training, or education, or to move into better paid employment. It will also support the integration of new arrivals. We do this in a person-centered, non-judgmental way that tackles what are often complex long-term barriers to progression.
- Oak Community Development: The My Skillset for work project is designed as an engaging and empowering initiative to engage with individuals from the BAME community who are furthest from the job market and equip them with skills for work and enterprise through a programme of coaching/mentoring support, training and volunteering opportunities.

- 2.7.5 Engagement programs are essential for young people and provide an indispensable part of the pathway from NEET to EET. We currently have several organisations offering provision in Oldham or GM that young people can access that will support young people to engage and obtain skills for education, employment or training. Due to the number of funded projects available for young people in Oldham, we use our padlet; [Positive Steps \(padlet.com\)](https://www.padlet.com) which provides a visual of what's currently available to young people to support them to become EET continues to be used widely. The padlet is continually updated and is available for young people, parents and professionals to use.
- 2.7.6 Oldham's Post 16 Team, Get Oldham Working, Job Centre Plus and Positive Steps continue to work together to deliver Oldham's Youth Hub, finding ways to work collaboratively to expand the offer in place. The initiative works in a supportive, young person focused and positive outcome-based way that supports young people aged 16 – 25 years old to access support to enable them to participate in activity that will lead to an employment opportunity. The Youth Hub offer consists of support for Care Leavers, dedicated DWP Youth Coaches and access to a Careers Advisor from Positive Steps. The Youth Hub hosts our Youth Hub Collaborative, which is a network of agencies sharing information and service offerings to support young people to achieve.
- 2.7.6 The Employment and Skills Partnership Board is established, and the strategy and action plan developed. Work with our Comms Team on production of the strategy document with a view to a public launch in September 2024. Our strategy has 4 priorities, with young people's employment being priority one.
- 2.7.7 Following the success of the Young Person's Careers Event in September 2023, Leaders have agreed it will run again. We aim to be more ambitious with the scope of the event for 2024, with a wider representation of employers across the GM region being requested to attend.
- 2.7.8 Following the Inspection of Children's Services (ILAC) in June 2024, it was recognised that as part of our Corporate Parenting responsibilities we need to ensure Care Leavers can access appropriate apprenticeships with the Council. We are creating a programme with our colleagues from After Care, Get Oldham Working and Workforce Development to create an

inclusive programme that will create five opportunities per year for Care Leavers to access an apprenticeship within the Council.

- 2.7.9 Oldham via our Lifelong Learning Service continues to deliver the GM Care Leaver Multiply (bespoke maths course) Scheme. Whilst numbers of young people accessing are lower than we hoped, the young people accessing are benefiting from the course, far beyond just gaining maths skills. We are hoping to grow these numbers over the next academic year via positive engagement.
- 2.7.10 Our pilot transition programme was undertaken in the Summer Term of 23/24 academic year. This pilot is aimed at Year 10 students who would particularly benefit from accessing some vocational provision early and therefore keep them engaged in education. Unfortunately, only one of the three secondary schools identified were able to participate and the pilot commenced with four students on programme. The students had a positive experience, and we intend to present our findings to Secondary Heads in the Autumn Term 24/25, to raise awareness and widen the scope of the scheme. Due to the smaller reach, we did not get opportunity to refine information sharing processes between schools and Colleges to improve the support put in place by both school and College to enable students to successfully transition to post 16 placements. This will be revisiting with both Oldham College and the Sixth Form College in the new academic year.
- 2.7.11 Within the statutory guidance on duties relating to the participation of young people in EET, local authorities have broad duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training.

One of these duties is to:

- Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and care plan is maintained. This is a duty under the Education Action 1996. To fulfil this, local authorities need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and resolve gaps in provision.

Oldham is still experiencing a gap in its offer for 16 –18-year-olds, namely Entry Level/Level 1 study programmes. We have worked with local providers and have managed to secure two new provision bases in Oldham Town Centre, so we have managed to reduce the urgency of provision. YMCA will now have a base within The Hive for the next academic year, enabling them to deliver provision to young people. In addition, Oldham College have developed a study programme they will be delivering from the Positive Steps base to appeal to young people who may not wish to access the larger College site yet.

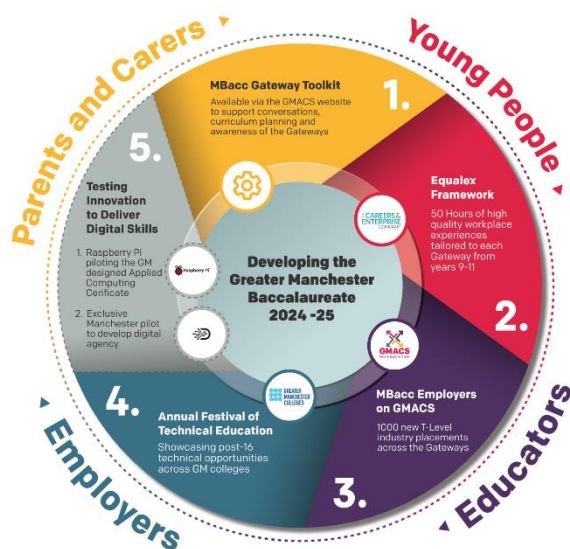
- 2.7.12 Although the proposed Eton/Star Free School will deliver 240 post 16 placements from September 2026, the provision is very different to the offer training providers deliver and services a completely different cohort of young people. Therefore, Eton/Star doesn't replace our training provision and enable us to provide the appropriate provision this cohort of young people need.
- 2.7.13 However, as item 2.1 suggests, we are currently also experiencing a growth in population numbers for 16 – 18-year-olds, therefore additional provision wider than the new YMCA/Oldham College provision is required. We intend to undertake a technical gap calculation during 24/25 to assess our status.
- 2.7.14 In addition to the reputational risk our gap in provision identifies, it also highlights a potential risk to families. The lack of placements, particularly for activity that has multiple start dates during the academic year, may impact family household budgets via the ceasing of child benefit if a young person is NEET.

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- 2.7.15 If a young person is NEET but engaged with services, the family can apply for a child benefit extension of 20 weeks, providing evidence the young person is working with a TIAG provider to the DWP. If an appropriate placement is not identified, there is no mechanism we are aware of for extending this benefit. This could impact household budgets as it would trigger the loss of child benefit and potentially associated tax credits.
- 2.7.16 The offer available from post 16 settings is not dissimilar to last year, although the landscape is beginning to change to meet the requirements of the Skills and Post 16 Act. The pause and review of cancellation of B-Tec (and other) courses is welcomed, whilst the continued roll out of wider T-Level courses is embedded within the educational landscape.

3 Priorities over the next 12 months and plans

- 3.1 Whilst item 2.7 highlights our key activity for the next 12 months, some of the issues we are currently facing require prioritisation due to the risk factors they present to young people's participation. We believe the following five items are the priorities we need to focus on for the next 12 months.
- 3.2 Sufficiency
- 3.2.1 Oldham's current sufficiency gap is our highest priority for us to continue to address over the next 12 months. If sufficiency is not addressed, we will not have appropriate provision to move young people into when they are ready, which will increase our NEET rate.
- 3.2.2 Whilst work has been undertaken with some successful projects developing, namely YMCA delivering study programmes from The Hive and Oldham College delivering offsite provision at Positive Steps. The addition of Eton Sixth Form in September 2026 will support our sufficiency in the future; however, we need to understand our sufficiency gap in more detail.
- 3.2.3 During 24/25 academic year, we intend to undertake a technical calculation of our sufficiency (courses available vs. population growth) to assess the gap and what further work is required to ensure young people have the variety and numbers of educational provision on offer in Oldham to enable them to participate.
- 3.3 Employment and Skills Strategy and Partnership Board
- 3.3.1 The public launch of the strategy and communication of the Board, its members and the programme of work to be undertaken by the Board will be a priority for the next 12 months.
- 3.3.2 The partnership board has an action plan of work across the four priority areas (young people, economic inactivity, securing skills for the future economy and employers' role in the curriculum). Ensuring the work across the four areas of the action plan is delivered will be a key focus for our team over the next 12 months, as all the priority areas will have a link/dependent to NEET provision.
- 3.4 GM Integrated Technical City Region and the Manchester Baccalaureate
- 3.4.1 The Greater Manchester Mayor and GMCA committed to developing an education, skills and work system that not only supports productivity and inclusive economic growth but prepares young people for the future and builds hope and aspirations.
- 3.4.2 As part of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal, Greater Manchester will have further oversight of post-16 technical skills, allowing local leaders to better shape how the city-region supports the one in three young people who do not want to go to university and match them into the skilled jobs being created in the local economy.

- 3.4.3 GMCA has outlined new ambitious plans to create two equal pathways for young people when they make their GCSE choices – one academic and one focussed on technical careers.
- 3.4.4 Currently, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) provides an academic route that is valued, widely understood, and provides a pathway via A-Levels to University degree qualifications.
- 3.4.5 The Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc) intends to offer a clearer route via technical education into high quality skilled jobs with qualifications (T-Levels, Apprenticeships, and other technical qualifications) respected by GM Employers, as a high value alternative to the EBacc.
- 3.4.6 Almost two-thirds of 14-year-olds in Greater Manchester do not pursue or achieve an EBacc. MBacc is designed to offer most young people in GM a clear route into quality, skilled jobs, or higher education via an equally respected pathway, linked to the GM Economy.
- 3.4.7 The development of MBacc currently has five elements highlighting ways stakeholders can get involved and contribute. Following the event held in July 2024, this is now the next phase of implementation.



- 3.4.8 From September 2024, various parts of our technical education system will be trying out new approaches and using new tools to see how they can make MBacc work.
- 3.4.9 In co-ordination with GM Chamber of Commerce, GMCA have formed an Employer Integration Board representing businesses committed to sharing sector insight and changing the local skills system, ensuring continued growth and be representative of the 7 sectors agreed to be the most significant to the GM Economy:
1. **Factory International and WPP** - Creative, Culture & Sport
 2. **Booking.com and Cloud Imperium Games** - Digital & Technology
 3. **J Murphy & Sons and Siemens Energy Ltd** - Construction & Green Economy
 4. **EY and BNY Mellon** - Financial & Professional
 5. **NHS GM and Persona Care Support** - Health & Social Care
 6. **Nexperia and Miliken & Co** - Manufacturing & Engineering
 7. **Manchester Metropolitan University** - Education & Early Years
- 3.4.10 The Labour Manifesto sets out three interlinked key policy changes which will support the development of MBacc. Namely:

- Curriculum and Assessment Review, with the aim to allow vocational subjects to be studied from Year 9.
- Transform FE Colleges into Technical Excellence Colleges (with anticipated specific specialisms)
- Post 16 Education Strategy, intended to increase opportunities for young people, student mobility and engage in skills development.

It is expected that the MBacc will be approved as a pilot for a national scheme that will set out the roadmap to creating the equal pathway for technical education for the future and remove barriers to developing a post 16 education landscape that meets the needs of young people, parents and carers, educators and employers.

3.4.11 Oldham's priority will be to continue to engage with GMCA and the proposals for the Integrated Technical City Region to enable us to take part and shape the implementation to support our young people and ensure that the opportunities created by MBacc can be realised for young people from Oldham.

3.5 TIIAG Commission and budget saving

3.5.1 Due to the contract ending in March 2025, we are currently out to tender for a new commission to deliver our TIIAG service from 1 April 2025.

3.5.2 This contract includes the delivery of our statutory duties in relation to participation, tracking, reporting and support for our NEET cohort.

3.5.3 All services are required to improve efficiencies, modernise, and make significant savings and therefore the new specification for our TIIAG service has been written with a focus on a digital offer at its forefront, reducing the face-to-face level of support that was expected from previous contracts.

3.5.4 Our priority is to work with the Commissioning and Procurement Teams to ensure a smooth implementation of a new contract, with minimal disruption to young people.

3.6 Empower Oldham Funding

3.6.1 Our Empower Oldham project, which is essential to ensure we have capacity to support young people to participate is currently due to end in September 2025.

3.5.2 GMCA and the 10 local authorities across Greater Manchester are working together to ensure a good business case is put forward to secure funding beyond September 2025.

3.5.3 Our priority is to continue to create the business case for GMCA or seek alternative funding to continue to deliver this programme of work.

4 Options/Alternatives

4.1 The report is to advise members on the current landscape and experiences of 16–18-year old's which is impacting on their participation in education, employment, or training. No options or alternatives are to be considered.

5 Preferred Option

5.1 N/A

6 Consultation

6.1 The report is to advise members on the current landscape and experiences of 16–18-year old’s which is impacting on their participation in education, employment, or training. No consultation has been undertaken.

7 **Financial Implications**

7.1 None

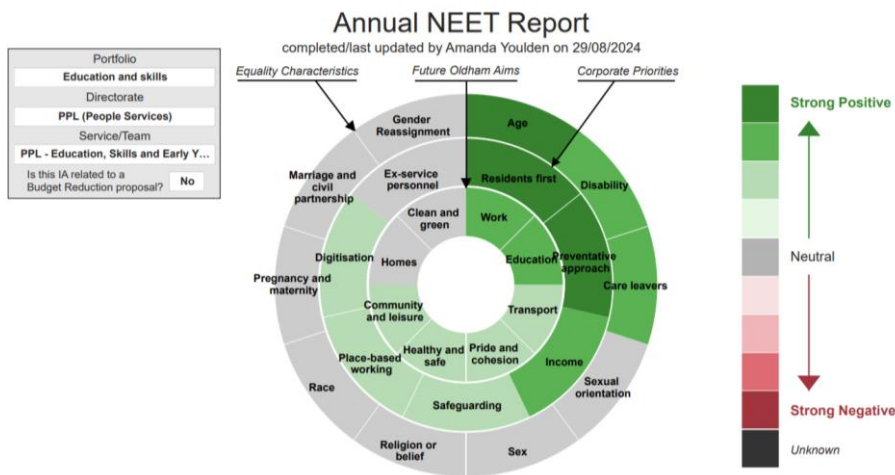
8 **Legal Implications**

8.1 None

9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

9.1 Yes

9.2



Portfolio	
Education and skills	
Directorate	
PPL (People Services)	
Service/Team	
PPL - Education, Skills and Early Y...	
Is this IA related to a Budget Reduction proposal?	No

10 **Key Decision**

10.1 No

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 N/A

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 N/A

13 **Appendices**

13.1 N/A

Signed _____ Cabinet Member (specify whom)	Dated _____
Signed _____ Executive Director/Deputy Chief Executive	Dated _____

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Report to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board

Delivery of Additional School Places and Admissions

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mohon Ali (Member for Education and Skills)

Officer Contact: Matt Bulmer (Director of Education, Skills, and Early Years)

Report Author: Andy Collinge (Head of School Support Services)

2nd October 2024

Purpose of the Report

To provide a briefing and update to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board on (1) delivery of school places and (2) school place preference rates within the Local Authority (LA.)

To provide an update on the delivery of additional school places and the work of the Council's Education Support Services including:

- Allocation of school places by ward
- The percentage of residents who are offered a school place of choice (1st or top 3 preferences)
- Overview of the current demand for school places

Recommendations

It is recommended that the board note the contents of the report and feedback any comments and suggestions to the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years and the Head of School Support Services.

Additional School Places and Admissions

1 Background

1.1 School Places and Pupil Numbers Overview

Current predictions show a decreasing demand for places in the primary sector. Predictions for 24/25 are 23,657 dropping to 20,674 by 2030. Demand for secondary places is predicted to remain consistent at around just over 19,000 until demand drops in around 2030.

In the secondary phase most schools are full; however, we do have places available in the following schools: Royton and Crompton, the Oldham Academy North, Radclyffe and Waterhead Academy. There are no current pressures on secondary places.

The usual trend exists of some extremely popular secondary schools and others that are less popular. The new provision in The Brian Clarke Academy has given the LA much needed places and further choice for residents who may otherwise struggle to obtain places at other schools.

1.2 Secondary School Allocation Data

Appendix 1 shows the detail for 1st and top 3 preferences in Oldham for secondary places by ward. In 2023, 80.4% of residents were offered their first choice of secondary school; this decreased to 75.7% in 2024. In 2023, 91.2% of pupils gained a place at one of their top 3 preferences of secondary school; in 2024 this had increased to 94.1%. In the majority of wards over 90% of residents are offered a place at one of their top 3 preferences. National rates for secondary for first preferences are 82.9% and top 3 preferences are 94.6%.

1.3 Primary School Allocation Data

Appendix 2 shows first preferences rates for primary places in Oldham by ward. In 2023 92.9% of pupils gained a place at their first preference school; there has been an increase this year to 94.1%. In 2023, 96.6% of pupils gained a place at one of their 3 top preferences for primary schools; this has increased to 98.1 % in 2024. National rates for primary places are first preferences 93.2% and top 3 preferences 98.6 %.

2 Current Position (Secondary and Primary School Places)

2.1 The Brian Clarke Academy is now open at its permanent location on Bloom Street; the school has given a significant boost to the number of pupils gaining places in their school of choice.

Due to the opening of the Brian Clarke Academy and previous secondary expansions, it is not anticipated that secondary expansion will need to be considered for several years.

There has been and will continue to be a significant downturn in demand for primary school places with significant surplus places in the borough; this is particularly the case in the East Oldham, West Oldham, Royton, and Saddleworth planning areas. We are currently working with schools to manage this issue and a number of schools have either reduced their PAN (Planned Admission Number) or are in the process of doing so.

3 Key Issues for the Scrutiny Board to Discuss

3.1 Sufficiency in the mainstream sector has now reached a stage there are surplus primary places in most planning areas of the borough; officers are working closely with schools, Trusts and Manchester and Salford Dioceses to manage this. There remain several secondary schools in the borough that 'require improvement' and these are in the process of joining strong Multi Academy Trusts.

4 **Key Questions for the Scrutiny Board to Consider**

4.1 There is an increased demand for SEND Resource Bases in the borough. To date we have funded the development of resource bases in 5 schools which has resulted in the creation of 64 additional places for children who can attend mainstream schools but may need additional support. Further developments in this area are planned over the coming academic year.

5. **Links to Corporate Outcomes**

5.1 A key link is the ambition to develop a co-operative service with the LA Admissions taking ownership to drive change and continue to work with a resident focus.

6 **Additional Supporting Information**

6.1 N/a

7 **Consultation**

7.1 N/a

8 **Appendices**

8.2 Appendix 1: Secondary Preference Data by Ward

8.3 Appendix 2: Primary Preference Data by Ward

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Offers not including lates

Ward offers 2021	% offered 1st Pref	% offered 2nd Pref	% offered 3rd Pref	Total offered a top 3 pref
Alexandra	63.4	17.3	4.5	85.1
Chadderton Central	85.6	9.4	1.4	96.4
Chadderton North	89.2	7.0	1.6	97.8
Chadderton South	74.8	11.9	3.5	90.2
Coldhurst	63.7	16.3	6.8	86.9
Crompton	85.9	5.5	4.7	96.1
Failsworth East	88.7	7.8	1.7	98.3
Failsworth West	81.5	8.9	3.2	93.5
Hollinwood	82.8	8.9	1.6	93.2
Medlock Vale	69.3	14.1	6.6	90.0
Royton North	86.8	4.4	4.4	95.6
Royton South	82.3	6.9	3.1	92.3
Saddleworth North	88.6	8.6	1.0	98.1
Saddleworth South	88.4	7.1	3.6	99.1
Saddleworth West and Lees	86.9	7.5	1.9	96.3
Shaw	71.9	8.6	7.0	87.5
St James'	77.4	12.6	5.0	95.0
St Mary's	63.4	20.6	6.5	90.5
Waterhead	76.0	12.8	5.1	93.9
Werneth	68.0	11.5	3.2	82.7

Ward offers 2022	% offered 1st Pref	% offered 2nd Pref	% offered 3rd Pref	Total offered a top 3 pref
Alexandra	69.89	17.05	1.70	88.64
Chadderton Central	83.14	9.30	2.91	95.35
Chadderton North	93.96	4.95	0.55	99.45
Chadderton South	58.46	13.85	6.92	79.23
Coldhurst	58.80	21.76	5.09	85.65
Crompton	68.97	14.66	6.03	89.66
Failsworth East	91.67	4.63	0.00	96.30
Failsworth West	93.04	4.35	1.74	99.13
Hollinwood	73.66	9.68	4.84	88.17
Medlock Vale	69.36	11.49	5.11	85.96
Royton North	86.32	12.82	0.85	100.00
Royton South	80.58	12.62	1.94	95.15
Saddleworth North	96.30	3.70	0.00	100.00
Saddleworth South	94.12	5.88	0.00	100.00
Saddleworth West and Lees	85.45	5.45	2.73	93.64
Shaw	73.96	16.67	2.08	92.71
St James'	78.41	16.48	2.27	97.16
St Mary's	62.11	21.05	4.21	87.37
Waterhead	75.50	14.50	3.00	93.00
Werneth	65.68	11.86	3.81	81.36

Ward offers 2023	% offered 1st Pref	% offered 2nd Pref	% offered 3rd Pref	Total offered a top 3 pref
Alexandra	77.10	14.49	2.80	94.39
Chadderton Central	85.81	7.74	0.65	94.19
Chadderton North	92.45	6.29	0.00	98.74
Chadderton South	87.60	8.53	0.00	96.12
Coldhurst	67.95	18.80	8.55	95.30
Crompton	75.47	12.26	1.89	89.62
Failsworth East	92.16	3.92	0.98	97.06
Failsworth West	90.00	5.83	0.83	96.67
Hollinwood	79.90	9.80	3.92	93.63
Medlock Vale	76.65	11.89	4.41	92.95
Royton North	87.16	10.09	0.92	98.17
Royton South	80.80	12.00	3.20	96.00
Saddleworth North	98.88	0.00	0.00	98.88
Saddleworth South	93.94	3.03	1.01	97.98
Saddleworth West and Lees	90.00	6.67	0.00	96.67
Shaw	75.20	8.00	4.00	87.20
St James'	76.67	10.00	3.89	90.56
St Mary's	69.57	15.94	6.52	92.03
Waterhead	77.50	13.50	4.00	95.00
Werneth	72.50	12.08	5.83	90.42

Ward offers 2024	% offered 1st Pref	% offered 2nd Pref	% offered 3rd Pref	Total offered a top 3 pref
Alexandra	68.37	14.29	7.65	90.31
Chadderton Central	77.50	15.00	5.63	98.13
Chadderton North	91.62	4.47	2.23	98.32
Chadderton South	78.36	12.69	5.97	97.01
Coldhurst	55.19	22.17	11.32	88.68
Crompton	81.42	14.16	2.65	98.23
Failsworth East	90.67	9.33	0.00	100.00
Failsworth West	91.45	2.56	2.56	96.58
Hollinwood	78.50	9.00	7.50	95.00
Medlock Vale	70.80	15.04	5.75	91.59
Royton North	95.28	4.72	0.00	100.00
Royton South	78.76	15.93	2.65	97.35
Saddleworth North	95.60	3.30	1.10	100.00
Saddleworth South	97.87	2.13	0.00	100.00
Saddleworth West and Lees	93.81	4.12	1.03	98.97
Shaw	72.09	22.09	1.16	95.35
St James'	69.89	15.34	7.95	93.18
St Mary's	57.25	17.39	11.23	85.87
Waterhead	78.64	12.14	4.85	95.63
Werneth	61.35	18.36	10.63	90.34

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Saddleworth West and Lees	90.00	6.67	0.00	96.67
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St Mary's	69.57	15.94	6.52	92.03
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St James'	69.89	15.34	7.95	93.18
St Mary's	57.25	17.39	11.23	85.87
Waterhead	78.64	12.14	4.85	95.63
Werneth	61.35	18.36	10.63	90.34

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2022 primary Offers

% of offers made	1st Pref	2nd Pref	3rd Pref	Top 3
Alexandra	89.0	7.0	1.5	97.5
Chadderton Central	95.0	2.9	0.7	98.6
Chadderton North	91.2	6.8	0.7	98.6
Chadderton South	90.1	6.0	0.7	96.7
Coldhurst	94.2	2.9	1.9	99.0
Crompton	87.8	8.9	2.2	98.9
Failsworth East	88.8	8.2	1.0	98.0
Failsworth West	79.6	9.9	0.7	90.1
Hollinwood	89.1	5.9	0.5	95.5
Medlock Vale	90.9	3.7	0.5	95.2
Royton North	97.8	2.2	0.0	100.0
Royton South	90.8	6.1	2.0	99.0
Saddleworth North	94.7	3.2	0.0	97.9
Saddleworth South	94.3	3.4	2.3	100.0
Saddleworth West and Lees	88.7	7.5	2.8	99.1
Shaw	91.1	7.9	0.0	99.0
St James'	96.9	2.6	0.5	100.0
St Mary's	92.6	2.3	1.2	96.1
Waterhead	91.3	4.6	0.9	96.8
Werneth	91.1	6.8	0.4	98.3

2023 primary offers

% of offers made	1st Pref	2nd Pref	3rd Pref	Top 3
Alexandra	82.4	9.7	0.4	92.4
Chadderton Central	93.8	2.3	0.8	96.9
Chadderton North	97.6	2.4	0.0	100.0
Chadderton South	88.7	11.3	0.0	100.0
Coldhurst	92.2	3.6	1.6	97.4
Crompton	98.6	0.0	1.4	100.0
Failsworth East	86.9	11.2	0.9	99.1
Failsworth West	85.9	11.9	0.0	97.8
Hollinwood	87.3	6.9	2.1	96.3
Medlock Vale	84.7	6.4	3.0	94.0
Royton North	93.5	4.3	1.1	98.9
Royton South	97.3	0.9	1.8	100.0
Saddleworth North	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Saddleworth South	96.1	1.3	1.3	98.7
Saddleworth West and Lees	94.8	3.1	1.0	99.0
Shaw	95.8	3.2	1.1	100.0
St James'	92.4	3.2	2.2	97.8
St Mary's	86.2	9.2	0.7	96.1
Waterhead	88.0	4.7	2.6	95.3
Werneth	93.7	4.2	0.0	97.9

2024 primary offers

% of offers made	1st Pref	2nd Pref	3rd Pref	Top 3
Alexandra	88.4	6.4	1.7	96.5
Chadderton Central	97.0	2.0	1.0	100.0
Chadderton North	97.2	2.8	0.0	100.0
Chadderton South	98.2	1.8	0.0	100.0
Coldhurst	98.9	0.6	0.6	100.0
Crompton	94.0	6.0	0.0	100.0
Failsworth East	91.8	5.1	2.0	99.0
Failsworth West	92.6	5.8	0.0	98.3
Hollinwood	94.0	2.7	2.0	98.7
Medlock Vale	95.4	1.1	0.6	97.1
Royton North	97.7	1.1	0.0	98.9
Royton South	96.1	3.9	0.0	100.0
Saddleworth North	93.7	3.8	1.3	98.7
Saddleworth South	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Saddleworth West and Lees	95.9	3.3	0.8	100.0
Shaw	92.5	7.5	0.0	100.0
St James'	96.6	2.9	0.0	99.4
St Mary's	90.9	5.2	0.4	96.5
Waterhead	94.6	4.7	0.7	100.0
Werneth	95.9	3.6	0.5	100.0

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Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Board

Children's Services - update on Financial Performance, Improvement Plan and Transformation and Sustainability Programme

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Shaid Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Officer Contact: Julie Daniels, Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help

Report Authors: Sheila Garara, Assistant Director Children's Services Integration / Nicola Harrop, Finance Manager

20 March 2024

Purpose of the Report

This is an update to a previous report presented to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board on 20 March 2024 titled 'Children's Services - update on Financial Performance and Improvement Plan' on progress in relation to Children's Social Care improvement plans and financial performance.

Executive Summary

Financial position

The month 4 financial position of Children's Social Care is a forecasted pressure of £12.261m after the planned use of £0.315m of reserves.

Children's Social Care Demand

Children's Social Care continues to experience sustained high volumes and complexity of demand demonstrating the impact of contextual factors facing families in Oldham. Services continue to effectively manage demand and maintain manageable caseloads in a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Achieving Excellence Strategy and Improvement Programme

The successful Getting to Good strategy and improvement programme is being re-launched as 'Achieving Excellence' following the positive outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection. Service leaders across Children's Social Care and Early Help, working with our partners, continue to drive improvement in the quality of our work with vulnerable children, young people, and their families.

Children's Transformation and Sustainability Programme

The programme continues to deliver ambitious plans across three strategic areas: earlier support for families, workforce stability and placement sufficiency. The programme is making progress to deliver targets and has direct oversight from the lead member for children and young people.

Children's Services in Oldham are keeping children and young people safe, improving outcomes and are in a strong position to further improve the delivery of timely and effective services to support vulnerable children, young people, and their families.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board notes the report and progress to date.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Board

2 October 2024

1 The current financial position of Children's Social Care

- 1.1 The service continues to experience significant financial pressures in 2024/25. The previous report, to the board in March 2024 reported the financial position at month 9 which at the time was highlighting a pressure of £13.348m. The final 2024/25 position for Children's Social Care was a pressure of £12.123m, with the largest contributor of the pressure being the social care placements, including high-cost external residential packages (£11.612m).

2024/25 Financial Position

- 1.2 The forecasted pressure for Children's Social Care at 30 July 2024 (month 4) is £12.261m and incorporates the use of reserves totaling £0.315m. The table below presents the financial position, by Directorate for Children's Social Care at month 4.

Children's Social Care	Revised Budget £k	Forecast £k	Use of Reserves £k	Variance M04 £k
Children in Care	41,300	53,387	0	12,087
Fieldwork & Family Support	11,615	12,288	0	673
Children's Safeguarding	2,902	2,757	0	-145
Children's Services- Integration	3,425	3,386	-315	-354
Total Children's Social Care	59,242	71,818	-315	12,261

- 1.3 The most significant pressure is within **Children in Care**; £12.087 at month 4, in the main it is the result of continued pressure in externally commissioned placements, the table below shows the main contributors to the pressure:

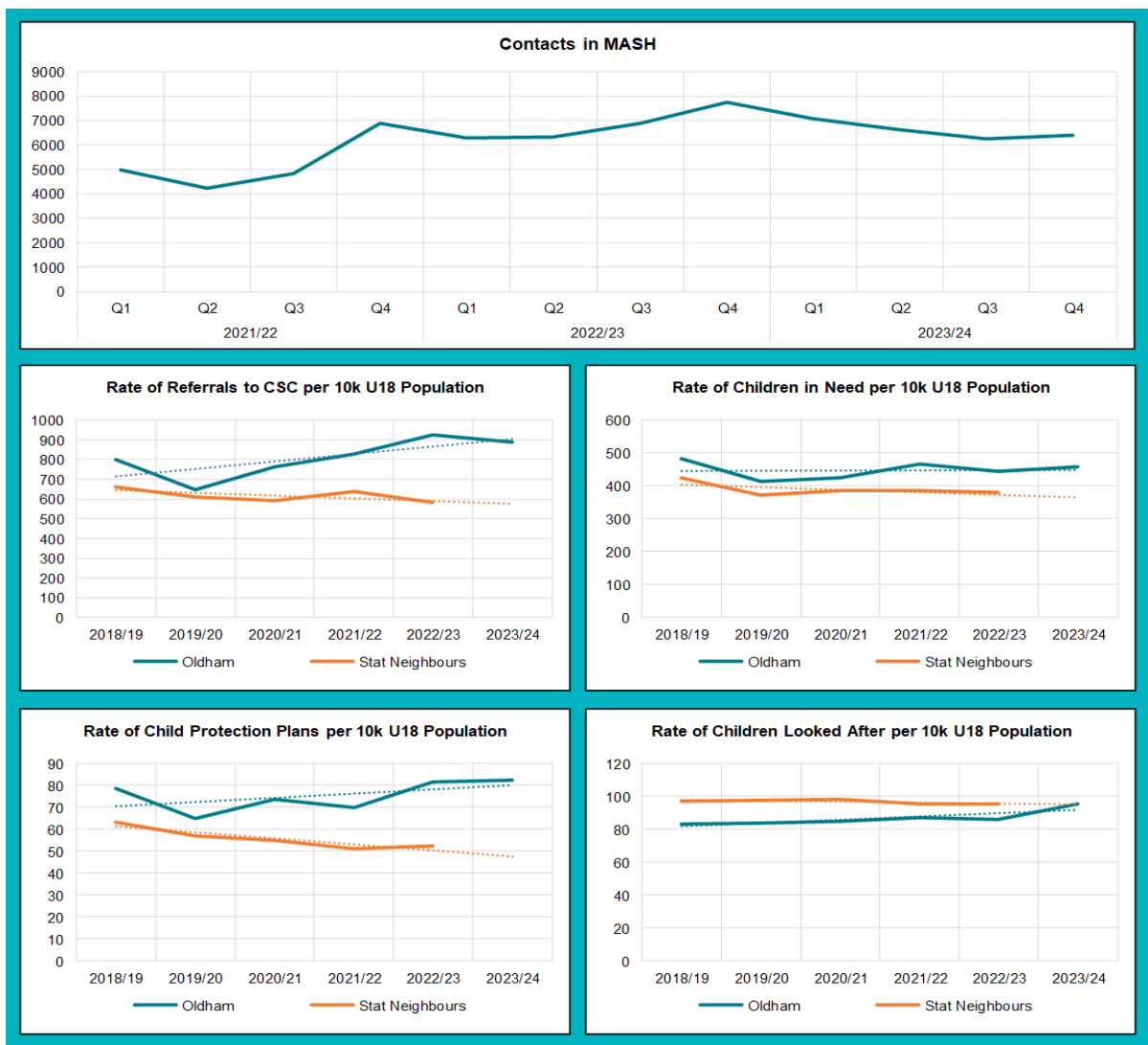
Placement Pressures	M4 variance £k
Out of Borough	6,081
Semi Independence	3,544
Secure- Welfare	1,467
Independent Fostering Agency	665
Fostering placed with Relatives/ Friends	510
Total	12,267

In addressing the pressure in the placements budget, senior management are reviewing high-cost external residential packages to mitigate the pressure. At month 4, additional demand on the placements budget for new placements and changes to existing placements equated to £1.442m however, the review mitigated the additional demand by £1.458m resulting in a net reduction of £0.019m.

- 1.4 Fieldwork and Family Support is reporting a pressure of £0.673m, this is staffing related, in the main as a result of the continued use of agency staff.
- 1.5 Children’s Safeguarding is reporting an underspend of £0.145m, this in the main relates to vacant posts.
- 1.6 Children’s Services Integration is reporting an underspend of £0.354m, this in the main relates to vacant posts.

2 Children’s Social Care and Early Help Demand

- 2.1 In line with high levels of demand nationally and in the Northwest, contextual factors such as poverty, deprivation, the pandemic, and cost of living crisis continue to have a significant impact on children and young people in Oldham enjoying a happy, healthy, and safe childhood in their families.
- 2.2 There has been a sustained high level of professionals contacting Children’s Social Care and Early Help for advice and support, since the last report to the board in March 2024, with an associated level in referrals for statutory social work services. This has led to sustained numbers of children and young people across all our cohorts (children in need, children subject to child protection plans, children looked after and care leavers) with 50% additional demand compared to pre-pandemic levels, as demonstrated in the charts below comparing Oldham to our statistical neighbours.



-
- 2..3 This high volume and complexity of demand has continued in 2024/25, particularly Children Looked After, which demonstrates the impact of contextual factors facing families in Oldham. In July 2024, there were 2,202 contacts into the MASH with 428 (19%) of these converting to referrals for statutory services. Children's Social Care and Early Help were providing support to 4,017 children and young people including 1,134 open to early help, 1,538 children in need, 490 subject to child protection plans, 603 children looked after and 252 care leavers.

3 Achieving Excellence Strategy and Improvement Programme Update

- 3.1 Children's Services was inspected by Ofsted in May 2024, a significant number of children's cases were scrutinised, and the service has been judged to be 'good' overall and 'good' across all four areas, help and protection, children in care, care leavers and impact of leaders. This puts Oldham in the top 30% nationally and one of three councils in Greater Manchester, demonstrating the strength of the 'Getting to Good' strategy and improvement programme in driving continuous improvement across Children's Social Care and Early Help services since our last inspection.

3.2 Key strengths and progress

We're managing demand, keeping children and young people safe and improving outcomes.

Help and Protection

- Targeted and timely early help support
- Timely and thorough screening of contacts and referrals in the MASH and appropriate out of hours response from the Emergency Duty Team (EDT)
- Prompt multi-agency response to children at risk of significant harm and those who go missing or are at risk of exploitation or homelessness
- Assessments are thorough, plans child-centred and children are visited regularly
- Effective edge of care support provided by the Adolescent Support Unit (ASU)
- Children with SEND benefit from passionate and skilled social workers and family support workers, who are strong advocates for them
- The local authority designated officer (LADO) provides a thorough response to allegations made against adults working with children

Children in Care

- Appropriate decisions to bring children into care
- Children's plans are child-centred and regularly reviewed with children and families
- Children are placed in settled and stable living arrangements
- Children in care benefit from a strong Virtual School
- Strong partnership working with the family courts and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) to achieve positive outcomes for children.
- Foster carers are well supported and receive specialist training
- Strong and effective links between the local authority and the Regional Adoption Agency Adoption Now
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who arrive in Oldham are well supported by experienced and tenacious social workers

Care Leavers

- Care leavers benefit from stable, trusting relationships with their personal advisor (PAs), who are strong advocates for them.
- Effective and co-produced pathway plans that accurately reflect needs
- Effective response from PAs when care leavers are at risk of exploitation

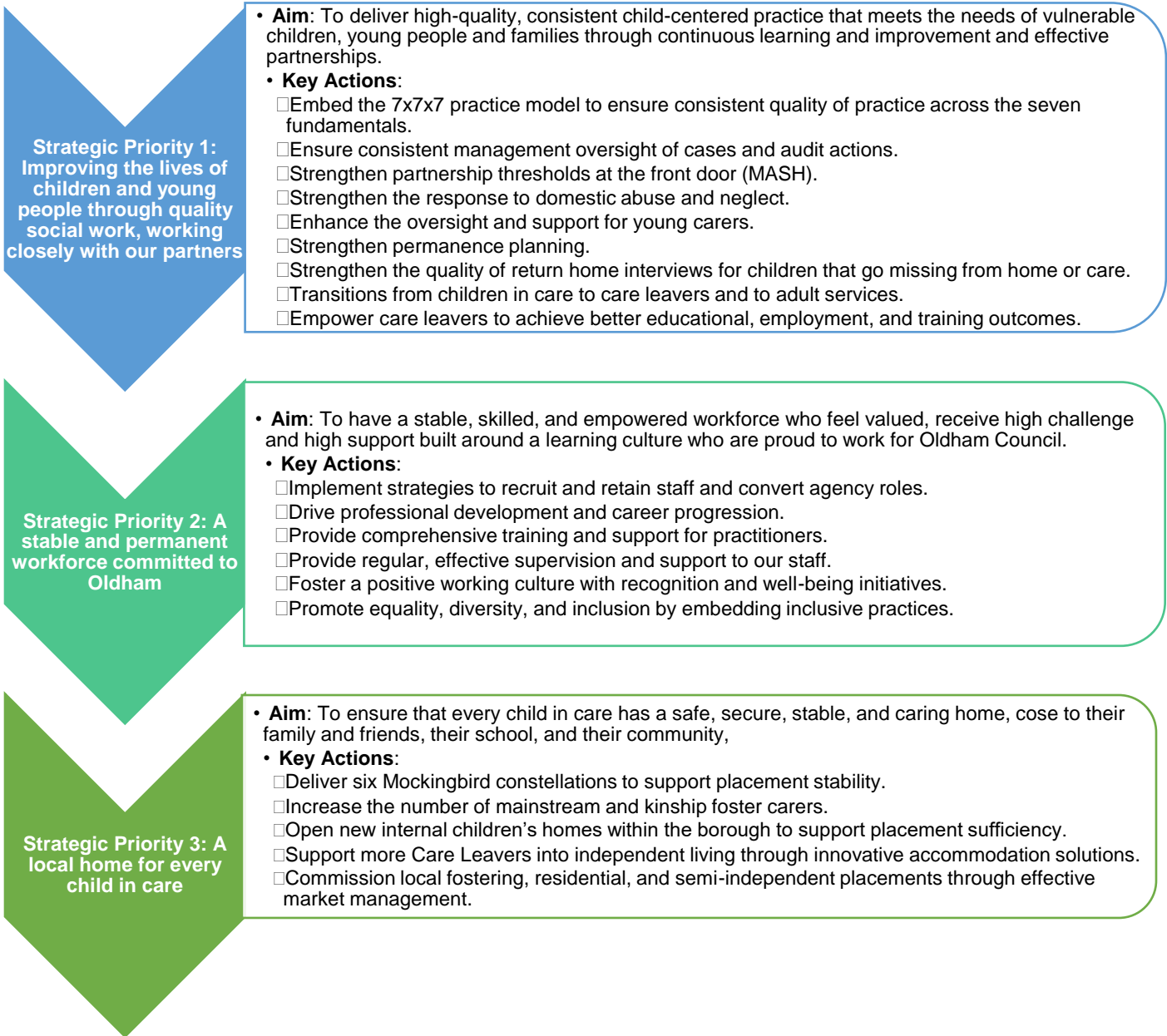
-
- Positive emphasis on employment, education and training. PAs support care leavers to achieve their academic or personal aspirations

Impact of leaders

- Family-focused, child-centred practice
- Political and corporate commitment – investment to strengthen the service, provide increased workforce stability and strong corporate parenting duties
- Strong and stable leadership team with a relentless focus on improvement
- Getting to Good programme has created a framework for targeted practice improvement supported by effective performance management tools
- Wide range of support and training and development opportunities for staff

3.3 **Improvement priorities in 2024/25** - following the positive outcome of the inspection, the children's social care and early help strategy and improvement programme are being refreshed and will be re-launched in October 2024 to 'Achieving Excellence' in our ambition to drive continuous improvement, performance monitoring and quality assurance to continue to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families in Oldham.

3.4 The post-inspection improvement plan is underway to enable the service to drive further improvements over the next 12 months across the three strategic priorities. The agile programme approach is continuing, focusing on targeted improvement interventions, through systemic, relational, and strengths-based approaches across key themes, to meet the complex needs of children, young people, and their families, which are outlined below:



3.5 The Achieving Excellence improvement plan will be reviewed quarterly, enabling leaders to assess and evidence progress and make informed adjustments that will drive further improvements to deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and families in Oldham.

4 Children's Transformation and Sustainability Programme update

4.1 The children's investment plan, sets the mandate for delivering ambitious plans through the **transformation and sustainability programme** across three strategic areas:

- **Earlier support for families:** delivering more support for families, at an earlier stage, without needing intensive support from statutory services through an integrated model of family help
- **Workforce stability:** making Oldham a great place to work with children and young people by recruiting and retaining great social workers and managers through a 'grow our own' workforce model.
- **Placement sufficiency:** providing a stable home for every child in our care by increasing the number of council foster carers, residential provision, local externally commissioned placements and securing suitable accommodation for over 18s.

4.3 Workstream progress and impact are outlined below:

Strand 1: Earlier Support for Families

- All family hubs are open with increased services being delivered as part of the integrated family help model, which include speech and language therapy (SaLT) clinics and parent and baby groups for care leavers. We are further extending our outreach offer by commissioning services through the VCFSE sector. These services are working with families in their homes and a range of family friendly community venues including hubs, hospitals, clinics, schools and libraries.
- To raise the profile of Family Hubs with communities and families a bus and billboard advertising campaign has been implemented which has covered 22 bus rears and 70 bus interiors.
- There has been a recent reduction in the re-referral rate into children's services based on families that have received targeted early help support. This has been associated with fewer children escalating into children's social care in the 6 months following targeted early help involvement.

Strand 2: Workforce Stability

- The service continues to make progress in securing a stable and permanent workforce and reducing the use of agency workers through the successful 'grow our own' social work model and 'Choose Oldham' recruitment campaign. Social worker agency numbers have continued to reduce from 36% in April 2024 to 32% in July 2024. This will reduce further in September and October as a new group of newly qualified social workers are supported into their first year of employment, which will release a number of agency social workers.
- As part of the delivery of new residential children's homes, the service is developing a recruitment and retention strategy to staff the homes with suitable and experienced residential childcare workers and managers to ensure high quality provision for our young people.

Strand 3: Placement Sufficiency

Foster Care

- There are 310 children placed in internal fostering which is an increase of 13 internal placements since May 2024, and an indication of how the service is stretching our foster carers to ensure children are placed in a stable and caring family home.
- The first specialist foster care 'Mockingbird' hub that opened in March 2024 has been successful in supporting 16 children and young people to remain in placements with

their foster carers providing stability and contributing to managing the significant placement costs which, if the placements had broken down, the children would most likely be placed in high cost placements. We are on track to open the second hub in October 2024.

Residential Placements, supported accommodation and independent living

- Plans are progressing well to open three new internal children's homes. Royton Children's Home is at the stage of refurbishment tender to procure a construction provider and remains on track for April 2025 opening. One property in St James has been identified and an offer has been accepted by the seller which is progressing through legal services and remains on track for April 2025 opening. A third property has been identified in Royton going through due diligence prior to an offer being submitted, this is forecasted to open in quarter 1 2025.
- 17 new semi-independent beds for Oldham young people aged 16 plus through collaborative working with private providers.
- We continue to develop our offer for young people aged over 18 who are appealing Home Office decisions to remain and are without recourse to public funds during the process. We have established a partnership with a local private provider under the Placement Northwest Framework with one property open in Werneth and further properties in development.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Service leaders continue to effectively manage high demand for children's services in Oldham, maintaining manageable caseloads to an average of 19, through the recruitment and retention of social workers and managers, to be able to provide timely and intensive support and intervention work with children, young people, and families. There is a stable senior leadership team driving ambitious and innovative transformation within a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- 5.2 Council-wide strategies such as place-based integration in local communities and an increased focus on early intervention and prevention seeks to address the high levels of demand for statutory services. Additionally, through the delivery of the Achieving Excellence programme, and Children's Transformation and Sustainability Programme, Children's Services in Oldham are keeping children and young people safe, improving outcomes and are in a strong position to further improve the delivery of timely and effective services to vulnerable children, young people and their families.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY BOARD

WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

Agenda item	Purpose	Portfolio lead & officer lead	Method of scrutiny	Additional information
Tuesday 18th June 2024				
Family Hubs Programme	To receive an annual update on the Family Hubs Programme	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People Matt Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years		
Tuesday 23rd July 2024				
Youth Justice Plan 2024/25	To scrutinise the Youth Justice Plan for 2024/25	Portfolio - Children and Young People. Attendees: - Managing Director Children and Young People. - Paul Axon, Chief Executive Positive Steps. - Louise Paterson, Head of Youth Justice, Positive Steps		
Wednesday, 2nd October 2024				

Additional School Places and Admissions	Annual update Report	Portfolio – Education and Skills Attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gerard Jones Managing Director Children and Young People - Matt Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years - Andy Collinge, Head of School Support Services 		
Children’s Services - update on financial performance and Improvement Plan and Childrens Transformation and Sustainability Programme update report	To receive a periodic 6 month update and to scrutinise the performance in respect of financial performance in Children’s Services and delivery of the Getting to Good Improvement Plan and Transformation and Sustainability programme.	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People - Julie Daniels, Director of Children’s Social Care - Sheila Garara, Assistant Director, Children’s 		

		<p>Services Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andy Cooper, Senior Finance Manager 		
Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	To receive an update on participation and NEET rates and on activities looking to ensure appropriate opportunities for 16-18 year olds. Part of the Employment, Work and Training – 'themed'/significant issue consideration.	<p>Portfolio – Education and Skills.</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matt Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years - Jon Bloor, Assistant Director Economic Growth or <p>Amanda Youlden, Post-16 Lead.</p>		
Wednesday 20th November 2024				
LADO annual report	To receive and consider the annual report	<p>Portfolio – Children and Young People.</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People - Julie Daniels, Director of Children's Social Care 		

		- Colette Morris, LADO		
Primary and Secondary School Outcomes	To receive and consider the annual report	Portfolio – Education and Skills Attendees: - Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People - Matt Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years - Tony Shepherd, Assistant Director Education and Early Years		
Operation Sherwood	Update on behalf of the Mayor of Greater Manchester.	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - GMP/GMCA representatives		
CSE steering group annual report	To receive and consider the annual report	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - Gerard Jones, Managing Director, Children and Young People		

		- Julie Daniels, Director of Children's Social Care		
Thursday 23rd January 2025				
Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report	To receive and consider the Board's Annual Report	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - Julie Daniels, Director of Children's Social Care - Dr Henri Giller, Chair of the Board. - Rick Bolton, OSCP Business Manager		
SEND update	To receive and consider the SEND priority action plan and improvement programme update	Portfolio – Education and Skills. Attendees: - Gerard Jones, Managing Director, Children and Young People - Matt Bulmer, Director of Education, Skills and Early Years - Amber Burton, Assistant		

		Director SEND and Inclusion		
Repeat Referrals in Children's Social Care	Periodic annual performance update report to ensure close management of this key performance indicator.	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - Julie Daniels, Director of Children's Social Care - Leanne Cooper, Assistant Director Social Work Services.		
Thursday, 20th March 2025				
Children's Services - update on financial performance and Improvement Plan and Childrens Transformation and Sustainability Programme update report	To receive a periodic 6 month update and to scrutinise the performance in respect of financial performance in Children's Services and delivery of the Getting to Good Improvement Plan and Transformation and Sustainability programme.	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: Gerard Jones, Managing Director Children and Young People Julie Daniels, Director of Children's Social Care Sheila Garara, Assistant Director, Children's Services Integration Andy Cooper, Senior Finance Manager		
Youth Council annual report	Annual Report on events and activities commissioned by the Youth Council	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: Neil Consterdine, Assistant Director Youth, Leisure and Communities		

Task and finish group deep dives:

Deep dive area:	Expanded proposal:
Propose SEND PAP	
Propose Corporate parenting responsibilities	

BUSINESS TO BE PROGRAMMED

1. Update on Operation Sherwood (is this an annual submission?)
2. Oral health services for children
3. Report from the Children in Care Council – presented at corporate parenting panel, may schedule an informal session
4. Strategic Framework for Oldham’s Children and Young People (potential study group topic)

Items that are scrutinised at corporate parenting panel are not required to come to Children’s Scrutiny Board

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KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
FCR-12-24	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26	Director of Finance	14 th October 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: To determine the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26 Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Proposed Report Title: Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26</p> <p>Background Documents: Appendices – Various</p> <p>Report to be considered in Public</p>				
FCR-13-24	Treasury Management 2024/25 – Quarter 1 Report	Director of Finance	14 th October 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: The Quarter 1 review of Treasury Management activity during the first Quarter of 2024/25. Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Proposed Report Title: Treasury Management Review 2024/25 – Quarter 1 Report</p> <p>Background Documents: Appendices</p> <p>Report to be considered in Public</p>				
ESR-18-24	Approval of draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy for consultation	Director of Economy	14 th October 2024	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
Description: Approval of the draft Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy for consultation Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Report to be considered in public				
New! ESR-10-24	Approval of draft South Pennines Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document for consultation	Director of Economy	14 TH October 2024	Cabinet
Description: Approval of draft South Pennines Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document for consultation Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Report to be considered in public				
New! ESR-11-24	Approval of draft Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document	Director of Economy	14 TH October 2024	Cabinet
Description: To approve the draft Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Appendix 1) and supporting documents (Appendices 2, 3 and 4) for a six-week public consultation commencing not earlier than 1 November 2024. This will enable stakeholders to have the opportunity to provide comments on the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations SPD before it is formally adopted. Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Report to be considered in public				
New! HL-04-24	Local Authority Housing Fund	Director of Economy	14 TH October 2024	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: Acceptance of grant and allocation of council resources to aid project viability.</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
<p>New! HL-05-24</p>	<p>Selection of Preferred Developer for Southlink</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>14TH October 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>
<p>Description: Document(s) to be considered in public or private:</p>				
<p>New! ESR-20-24</p>	<p>Eton Star - A New School in Oldham Town Centre</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>14TH October 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>
<p>Description: Proposals for a new education facility in Oldham</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
<p>New! EE-03-24</p>	<p>Oldham MBC Charging Policy</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive -</p>	<p>14TH October 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: a report proposing a new charging policy for the Borough</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
<p>New! ECR-17-24</p>	<p>Oldham Community Leisure (OCLL) Buildings Capital Requirements</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Communities</p>	<p>14TH October 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>
<p>Description: Proposals for the development of OCLL infrastructure.</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
<p>New! FCR-17-24</p>	<p>Utilities Procurement 2024 - 2028</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive -</p>	<p>14TH October 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>
<p>Description: a report detailing a plans for procuring utilities over a four year period starting in 2024/25</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
<p>New! CHS-06-24</p>	<p>Additional UKSPF Skills Funding Allocations</p>	<p>Director of Education, Skills & Early Years</p>	<p>14TH October 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: a report detailing options for additional sources of UKSPF Skills Funding</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
NEI-04-24	Street Lighting Attachments Policy	Director of Environment	14 TH October 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: To ask Cabinet to formulate and agree a Streetlighting attachments policy.</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
New! EDS-06-24	Greater Manchester Work Well Partnership – Oldham’s Local Delivery	Director of Education, Skills & Early Years	14 TH October 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: a report detailing Oldham’s contribution to the Greater Manchester wide ‘Work Well’ Scheme.</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
New! EDS-07-24	Music Hub Partnership Agreement	Director of Education, Skills & Early Years	14 TH October 2024	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: a report detailing a Music Hub Partnership.</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Private - NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it is not in the public interest to disclose the information because it relates to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party</p>				
FCR-18-24	Financial Update and working capital requirements for 2024/25 – Oldham Total Care	Director of Adults Social Care (DASS)	18 TH November 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: a report providing a Financial Update Report to be considered in Public</p>				
NEI-12-24	Parking Service Review and Contract	Director of Environment	18 TH November 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: Review of Parking in the Borough</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: public</p>				
New! FCR-19-24	Treasury Management Strategy Mid -Year Review 2024/25	Director of Finance	18 TH November 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: Review of the performance for the first half of the financial year in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24. Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Proposed Report Title: Treasury Management Strategy Mid -Year Review 2024/25</p> <p>Background Documents: Appendices</p> <p>Report to be considered in Public</p>				

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
New! FCR-20-24	Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2024/25 Quarter 2	Director of Finance	18 TH November 2024	Cabinet
<p>Description: The report provides an update on the Council’s 2024/25 forecast revenue budget position and the financial position of the capital programme as at the period ending 30 September 2024 (Quarter 2) Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Proposed Report Title: Revenue Monitor and Capital Investment Programme 2024/25 Quarter 2 Background Documents: Appendices – Various Report to be considered in Public</p>				

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Key:

New! - indicates an item that has been added this month.

Notes:

1. The procedure for requesting details of documents listed to be submitted to decision takers for consideration is to contact the Contact Officer contained within the Key Decision Sheet for that item. The contact address for documents is Oldham Council, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UH. Other documents relevant to those matters may be submitted to the decision maker.

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
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2. Where on a Key Decision Sheet the Decision Taker is Cabinet, the list of its members are detailed on the Council's website
3. Full Key Decision details (including documents to be submitted to the decision maker for consideration, specific contact officer details and notification on if a report is likely to be considered in private) can be found via the online published plan at:
<http://committees.oldham.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=144&RD=0>

Notice of Private Reports

(In accordance with Part 2 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012)

Oldham Borough Council intends to hold a private meeting (or part thereof) of the Cabinet on Monday, 14th October 2024

Decision to be taken (Agenda Item) Decisions proposed to be taken in private at Cabinet on 14th October 2024:

a. Local Authority Housing Fund

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

a. Wireless Infrastructure Upgrade

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

b. Selection of Preferred Developer for Southlink

Reason:

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
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The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

c. Eton Star - A New School in Oldham Town Centre

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

d. Oldham MBC Charging Policy

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

e. Oldham Community Leisure (OCLL) Buildings Capital Requirements

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

f. Utilities Procurement 2024 - 2028

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
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g. Additional UKSPF Skills Funding Allocations

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

h. Street Lighting Attachments Policy

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

i. Greater Manchester Work Well Partnership – Oldham’s Local Delivery

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

j. Music Hub Partnership Agreement

Reason:

The meeting (or part thereof) will be held in exempt session on the grounds that the reports and background papers will contain the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and a third party.

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 14 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
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Representations:

If you wish to make representations against the intention to hold a private meeting, please send these to Constitutional Services, Level 3, Civic Centre, Oldham, OL1 1UL or email: constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk

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