

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD Agenda

Date Tuesday 17 June 2025

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 Bougatet or Constitutional Services at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
2. CONTACT OFFICER for this agenda is Constitutional Services or email constitutional.services@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 noon on Friday, 13 June 2025.
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Please also note the Public attendance Protocol on the Council's Website

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/homepage/1449/attending_council_meetings

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD

Councillors Z Ali, Ball, Bishop, Byrne, Hobin (Chair), Hughes, Iqbal, Malik, McLaren, Rustidge 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 3 - 6)

To consider the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board held on 20th March 2025.
- 6 Youth Council Motion from Council 9th April 2025 (Pages 7 - 12)

Report detailing a motion from the Youth Council as agreed at Council on 9th April 2025.
- 7 Corporate Performance Report : Quarter 4 - 2024/25 (Pages 13 - 52)

Report detailing the corporate performance indicators for the fourth quarter of 2024/25.
- 8 Family Hubs Programme Update

Report updating on the Family Hubs Programme.

Report to follow.
- 9 Work Programme (Pages 53 - 58)

To consider a draft work programme for the Scrutiny Board for 2025/26.
- 10 Key Decision Document (Pages 59 - 70)
- 11 Rule 13 and 14

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

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 5

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD

20/03/2025 at 7.00 pm



Present: Councillor Hobin (Chair)
Councillors Adams, Z Ali, Ball, Bishop, McLaren (Vice-Chair),
Moores and Shuttleworth

Also in Attendance:
Matthew Bulmer (Director of Education, Early Years and Skills)
Anthony Decrop (Assistant Director of Safeguarding)
Tony Shepherd (Assistant Director, Education & Early Years)
Jodie Barber (Head of Youth Services)
Durga Paul (Constitutional Services)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Hussain, Iqbal, Hughes, M Ali and 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 for this meeting to consider.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2025 be approved as a correct record with the below amendment.

Cllr Shuttleworth was not present at the meeting and sent his apologies.

6 REPEAT REFERRALS IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Members received a positive update on the rate of repeat referrals in Children's Social Care. The rate has been 15% which is below the national benchmark of 22.4%. The next phase of work is to sustain this progress to ensure the rate remains at or below this benchmark

Members queried whether the financial situation of the Council has been impacted by the reduced number of repeat referrals. Officers explained that there have been savings made by work done to secure more permanent social workers and managers, so savings have been made on agency fees. However, the key benefit of a reduction in repeat referrals is an improved quality of practice due to the reduced caseload rather than financial savings.

In response to member queries, Officers explained some of the circumstances around which repeat referrals are made. Some referrals are prematurely stepped down, but work has now been done to strengthen the step-down plans once a case is no longer at Social Worker threshold. In other instances, there has been a decreased quality of assessment due to workforce issues. This has been addressed with an improved and more stable workforce with consistent good and outstanding practice being delivered.

Officers confirmed that the reduction in repeat referrals is not due to an increase in the threshold for referrals being made. The referral process has not changed, but the practice has improved due to a more stable and effective workforce.

RESOLVED that, the Children and Young People Board notes the report and the good progress to date.

7

SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

The Scrutiny Board received the SACRE report from the Assistant Director of Education & Early Years. The Board received an introduction and overview of the Work of SACRE

Members questioned if Secondary schools had specialist teachers in Religious Education, and whether gaps in these were reflected in exam results. Officers confirmed that there are gaps in the provision and other non-specialist humanities teachers are teaching religious education in schools. This is reflected on a national scale with continues challenges in recruiting teachers with a specialty in the subject. Although Officers did note that schools expressed in a survey that they did not feel that it impacted their exam results.

In response to Member queries about vacancies in the SACRE Membership constituent committees, Officers clarified the recruitment process. Vacancies are often advertised through word of mouth, within schools and interfaith forums. Attendance has increased this year, but not across all committees. In attempts to address this, SACRE are regularly working with new venues and visiting different religious centres to engage with different people.

Members noted that there were no exam entries noted for 2 Oldham Secondary Schools and queried whether Religious Education was offered within these schools. Officers clarified that the figures in the report indicated the number of examined courses participated in, and there was a possibility that Religious Education was being offered as a non-examined course in those schools. It is also possibility that the course is being delivered through PSHE, assembly or a tutor group and not necessarily a specialist class. In response to Member queries, Officers are to investigate what the Religious Education Offer is at the 2 secondary Schools and feedback to the Board.

RESOLVED that,

1. officers are to determine what the Religious Education offer is within the 2 Schools which have 0 entrants onto the examined course
2. the Children and Young People Board notes the SACRE Annual Report.

8

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Board received the Corporate Performance Report from the Director of Education, Early Years and Skills, Acting Director Children's Social Care and Early Help and Head of Youth Services. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of corporate performance against agreed service business plan measures for the 2024/25.

The Director of Education, Early Years and Skills gave Members an overview of the Performance Measures & Business Plan Report for Education & Early Years. The Board heard a summary of areas where targets were being met or exceeded but focus was on areas where targets were not met. Officers explained that the figure of 51.1% of EHC Plans completed within 20 weeks was just a snapshot of a period in the last quarter, and this figure is currently over 90% which is higher than the national average. Similarly, the figure provided for Annual Reviews is improved from the report and is currently 75%, which is much improved and comparable to the national average.

Members queried whether the Officers had adequate resourcing to effectively address the increased number of EHCP's. The number of EHCP's issues typically increases by approximately 5% each year, last year it increased by 11% which is significantly more than expected. Officers confirmed that a movement to an online Case Management system had increased efficiency. There is also improved quality assurance with the introduction of National AI Software to support processes. These changes have ensured continuation of good service even with the increase in numbers.

In response to member queries, Officers further clarified that the increased number of EHCP's being issued were due to combination of reasons. Some due to people moving into the areas, but figures show that 30% of the 11% increase seen last year were in early years. Work being done to support Early Years settings has led to earlier detection of SEN in children.

Next, the Board heard from the Acting Director Children's Social Care and Early Help on the performance figures within this service. All areas but one saw an improvement since the last quarter. Officers explained that the average workload had reduced and that the number of Agency Social Workers has further reduced from the figures on the report to 25.3% because

of the apprentice/training programme that has been introduced at the Council.

Members raised concerns about the number of children placed within in-house provision. Officers explained that there are initiatives in place and work being done to get closer to the target, for example there are 3 care homes currently being built. Work is also being done to look at the wider family network of children coming into care and the possibility of placing them with extended family or in kinship care.

In response to Member queries, Officers confirmed that there is grant funding in place to create extra rooms/refurbish properties to help to subsidise those who want to foster do not have the space or resources to move to a bigger property.

Finally, the Board heard from Head of Youth Services who reported that all corporate targets are being met or exceeded. The team are carrying 3 vacancies, so they are facing some challenges as Youth Services roles are known nationally are a difficult role to recruit to. In response to Member queries, Officers noted that they were also facing some challenges in finding venues to hold sessions in some districts, particularly in East Oldham, but work is being done to address this. Members commended the good word being done in Youth Services.

RESOLVED that, the Children and Young People Board notes the Corporate Performance Report.

9

WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that, the Work Programme be noted by the Board.

10

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

RESOLVED that, the Key Decision Document be noted by the Board.

11

RULE 13 AND 14

N/A

The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended 8.40pm



Report to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board

Young People's Mental Health

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Shaid Mushtaq Cabinet Member for Children and Young

People

Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Officer Contact: Heather Moore, Assistant Director of Governance/Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Report Author: Peter Thompson, Constitutional Services

17th June 2025

Reason for Decision

At the Council meeting on 7th April 2025, Members approved a Motion presented by Oldham's Youth Council regarding Young People's Mental Health. Council approved the Motion and, in doing so, resolved to:

1. Complete an overview and scrutiny study of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS).
2. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Prime Minister and to the Secretary of State for Health to ask for an increase in children and young people's mental health services spending without any reduction in spending on adult mental health; to again ask the Government to ensure that adequate funding and resources are made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention services; and for an update on their manifesto commitments.

In respect of resolution 1, above, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider how it will determine the conduct of scrutiny study.

Recommendations

That the Scrutiny Board establish a task and finish group, comprising five members of this Scrutiny Board, to investigate the issue of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS) and to compile a report thereon for consideration by a future meeting of this Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet and, if necessary, Council.

1 Background

- 1.1 At Council, on 7th April 2025, the Council approved a Motion submitted by the Youth Council relating to Young People's Mental Health – Minute 7 refers (copy attached).
- 1.2 In line with the resolutions passed by Council regarding this matter, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider its response and to look at the possibility of establishing a scrutiny study group, comprising five members of the Board, to hold a series of meetings (perhaps 3 or 4), to examine the issue of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS), for young people including, where necessary input, from relevant officers and external bodies with knowledge of the subject and to report back, in the first instance to a future meeting of this scrutiny board with any findings.
- 1.2 The report outlined the intention for the funding to be attached to the existing TIIAG (Targeted Independent Information, Advice and Guidance) contract as this would provide the most effective use of the additional resource. This became the "Empower Oldham" project currently being delivered by Positive Steps. This grant agreement, contract and funding was made available until 31 March 2025.

2 Options/Alternatives

- 2.1 Option 1: To establish a scrutiny study group, as outlined at paragraph 1.2, above.
- 2.2 Option 2: To consider any alternative approaches for dealing with the request from Council.

3 Preferred Option

- 3.1 Option 1.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 No consultation is required at this stage.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 None

6 Legal Implications

6.1 None

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

7.1 None at this stage but the nature of the study will directly impact on children and young people.

8 **Key Decision**

8.1 No

9 **Key Decision Reference**

9.1 Not applicable.

10 **Background Papers**

10.1 N/A

11 **Appendices**

11.1 The Minute of the Council meeting held 7th April 2025 (no. 7) is attached at Appendix 1 detailing the Motion submitted by the Youth Council and the Council's determination thereon.

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Minutes:

The Youth Council PROPOSED the following MOTION:

Young People's Mental Health

Since 2012, young people have been telling the youth council that mental health is an issue that they face every day and that they need support now. Since this time we have only seen the need for mental health services increase, especially since the COVID pandemic, and although spending on Mental Health services has increased, it has not dented the need for support seen across Oldham and in the UK.

At the last election, Labour had several manifesto points to improve mental health support for children and young people and we would like to see these implemented as soon as possible.

Council recognises that over the past few years the Oldham Youth Council have made 'Mental Health' a priority issue, with it coming in the top 5 issues for Make Your Mark. The council also recognises that we have undertaken much work in this area to improve the experiences of Oldham's young people. This includes:

- Oldham Youth Council first commissioned Kooth.com, an online mental health counselling service, for Oldham's young people.
- 2013 motion to Council asking for an overview and scrutiny of mental health services.
- 2017 motion asking to ensure that adequate funding is made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention mental health services.
- 2021 motion asking to secure mental health funding for Oldham.
- Our work with Oldham Theatre Workshop, highlighting mental health and how professionals can work with young people called Standard Day.
- Our work with Oldham Theatre Workshop, highlighting self-harm, called Boy in the Black.
- Our campaign called SNAP that promoted Kooth.com and the support they provide for depression, stress/anxiety and eating disorders.
- Our campaign 'I Love Me', raising young people's self-esteem and confidence.

Council notes:

- That mental health issues have risen, with a 12% increase in cases since pre COVID.
- That consultation undertaken by the Youth Council would suggest schools and teachers are still not able to fully support young people's mental health.
- That according to several official sources the average waiting time to get an appointment for Mental Health assessments in Oldham is 16-18 weeks.
- That consultation undertaken by the Youth Council would suggest that while the average wait time is 16-18 weeks some young people could wait for up to 6 months for an initial assessment and that the wait for treatment could be over a year after that appointment.

- In 2022/23, just under £1B was spent on Children and Young People's mental health compared to the £12.8B on all mental health services. This was despite the understanding that 50% of mental health illnesses in adults start showing symptoms by the age of 14, and 75% experience symptoms before they are 24.
- Labour's manifesto said that in the first term they would invest in front line services recruiting 8,500 new staff to reduce waiting times.
- That the manifesto also said that labour's new Young Futures Hubs would have open access to mental health support for children and young people in every community

Therefore, we propose that **Council resolves** to complete an overview and scrutiny study of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS) and ask the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and Secretary of state for Health to request an increase to children and young people's mental health services spending without reduction in spending on adult mental health; to again ask the Government to ensure that adequate funding and resources are made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention services; and for an update on their manifesto commitments.

Councillor Harrison spoke in support of the Motion

Councillor Bishop spoke in support of the Motion

RESOLVED

Council resolves to:

1. Complete an overview and scrutiny study of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS).
2. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Prime Minister and to the Secretary of State for Health to ask for an increase in children and young people's mental health services spending without any reduction in spending on adult mental health; to again ask the Government to ensure that adequate funding and resources are made available to schools and colleges to allow them to invest in the early intervention services; and for an update on their manifesto commitments.



Report to Children & Young People Scrutiny Board

Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 Q4 (1st January to 31st March 2025)

Portfolio Holder (CPR):

Cllr Arooj Shah, Leader & Cabinet Member for Growth

Officer Contact (CPR):

Steve Hughes, Assistant Director Strategy & Transformation

Overview Report Author (CPR):

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

CPR collated by: Performance Improvement Team and Data & intelligence Service, Strategy & Performance

Contact: StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk

Date: 17th June 2025

Reason for decision

Scrutiny of corporate performance aims to provide assurance that:

- services are aligned to corporate priorities and 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 relevant reporting quarter.

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 in other portfolio and Scrutiny Board remits and key projects.

Appendix:

1. CYP Q4 CPR - Children & Families; Education & Early Years; Youth Services

Report to Children & Young People Scrutiny Board

Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 for Quarter 4: 1st January to 31st March 2025

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Portfolio Holder (CPR): Cllr Arooj Shah, Leader & Cabinet Member for Growth

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

Report date: 17th June 2025

CPR collated by: Performance Improvement Team and Data & Intelligence Service
Contact: StrategyandPerformance@oldham.gov.uk



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Children & Young People - Key Performance Indicators

RED	KPIs underperforming by more than 5%
AMBER	KPIs underperforming by less than 5%
GREEN	KPIs meeting or outperforming target

Children's Social Care & Early Help			
4 KPIs (No target)	2 KPIs (Red)	2 KPIs (Amber)	8 KPIs (Green)

Education and Skills			
8 KPIs (No Target)	3 KPIs (Red)	0 KPIs (Amber)	3 KPIs (Green)

Youth			
0 KPIs (No Target)	0 KPIs (Red)	0 KPIs (Amber)	4 KPIs (Green)

Complaints – Metric

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Children's

Complaints responded within timescales

28.9%



Q3: 57%

Target: 75%

Description

We've updated how we report complaint timeliness. Previously, performance included complaints that had been closed. The new approach includes all complaints received and counts any that were already out of timescale at the point of reporting, giving a more accurate and transparent picture of how we're performing.

Comment

The timeliness of complaints is an area of focus for the service with oversight from senior managers. A plan is being developed alongside our colleagues in complaints to further strengthen the oversight and ownership of timely complaint responses from the service.

The methodology as described above has been used to calculate Q4 data, however Q3 performance only includes closed complaints; with the adjusted calculation the Q3 performance would be 8%. Although performance remains significantly below the target this does represent a 20% improvement in timeliness performance.

There has been a 96% increase in CSC complaints from Q4 2023/24 to Q4 2024/25, as a result additional capacity in the complaints service is now in place to support.

Children's Social Care & Early Help

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

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

Officer Contact: Anthony Decrop, Acting Director Children's Social Care and Early Help

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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
- Listening and engaging
- Creating an inclusive and empowering environment

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 (against target where set)

Percentage of Children Looked After with three or more placement moves in the last 12 months

10.2 %



Previous Quarter: 10%

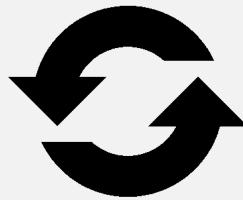
Target = 10%

[Green]

Low is Good

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

23.1%



Previous Quarter: 14%

Target = 23%

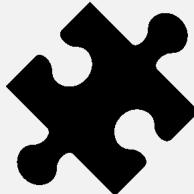
[Green]

Low is Good

Early Help - Percentage of children in families closed with all issues addressed (excludes worklessness)

84.5%

$\frac{164}{194}$



Previous Quarter: 93%

Target = 75%

[Green]

High is Good

Children's Social Care & Early Help - Key Metrics (against target where set)

Page 20

Percentage of child protection plans which were a second or subsequent plan in the past two years

10.4%



Previous Quarter: 11%

Target = 21%

Low is Good

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

63.5%

(Number of care leavers 19+ in NEET)
$$\frac{125}{197}$$
(total number of care leavers 19+)



Previous Quarter = 40%

Target: 60%

High is Good

Percentage of Children Looked After that have a permanence plan recorded at second review

95.8%

$\frac{137}{143}$



Previous Quarter = 97%

Target: 85%

High is Good

[Green]

[Green]

[Green]

Children's Social Care & Early Help – Workforce metrics

Percentage of Agency Social Workers in Children's Social Care

24.7%



Previous Quarter: 29.4%

Target = 25%

Low is Good

Average caseload per social worker

$\frac{2387}{140}$
17.1



Previous Quarter = 16.6

Target: 17

[Colour]

Low is Good

Rate of registered social worker turnover

19.9%



Previous Quarter = 19.7%

No Target Set

Low is Good

[Green]

Children's Social Care & Early Help - Key Metrics (against target where set)

Page 22

Percentage of Children Looked After placed within In-house Provision

56%

$$\frac{330}{589}$$
 (Number of children in care placed within LA provision)
(Number of children in care)



Previous Quarter = 55%

Target: 60%

[Amber]

High is Good

Percentage of Children Looked After with an up to date annual health assessment

85.9%

$$\frac{488}{589}$$
 (Number of children who have had a health check within a year)
(Number of children in care for a year or more)



Previous Quarter = 77%

Target: 90%

[Amber]

High is Good

Children's Social Care & Early Help - Key Metrics (against target where set)

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

60%

$\frac{48}{80}$ (*Number of care leavers 16 – 18 in EET*)
(*Total number of care leavers 16 – 18*)

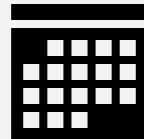


Previous Quarter = 56%

Target: 70%

Time between entering care and placed with family for adopted children

522 days



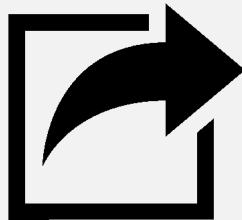
Previous Quarter: 360

Target = 426

Children's Social Care & Early Help - Key Metrics (against target where set)

Rate of referrals into Children's Social Care per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

164



Previous Quarter = 134

No Target Set
Low is good

Rate of CPP per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

69.7



Previous Quarter = 76

No Target Set
Low is good

Rate of children looked after per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

93.5



Previous Quarter = 96

No Target Set
Low is good

Children's Social Care & Early Help - Areas for Development (across all metrics)

Percentage of Care Leavers aged 16-18 (post year 11) in Education, Employment or Training	It is positive to see an improvement in the performance in this area and the target of 70% remains appropriate. The interventions in place with Oldham College, Get Oldham Working and Positive Steps are all progressing, with support from the designated post-16 lead in the Virtual School. There are currently 33 young people open as children in care in the service that were admitted after they were aged 16. The service has a priority action plan for improving the educational outcomes for children in care and care leavers, and the identification of education pathways for young people admitted to care aged 16/17 is a key feature of this plan.
Time between entering care and placed with family for adopted children	The performance in respect of the time between placement order and deciding on a match is in line with statistical neighbours and England averages, however we have seen a decrease in the adoption performance. We know there is a demand for adopters and the current need to look to external providers which adds time. The Adoption team are working closely with Safeguarding & Care Planning especially when external adopters are required. There is less control over the length of care proceedings and there have been observations of increased requests for late parenting assessments / family members and independent social work reports. In turn, this adds time a child is in care.

Children's Social Care & Early Help - Director Comment

Q4: Anthony Decrop, Acting Director Children's Social Care and Early Help

It is positive to see an improvement during the previous quarter with the majority of indicators now being green and a reduction in the number of red from 5 to 2. Of particular note is the further reduction in the number of agency social workers which is now below target and demonstrates the ongoing success of the "Choose Oldham" campaign which has received national attention and was recently featured on the BBC One Show.

We have also seen improvements in the number of children placed in in-house provision and have an updated annual health assessment.

With regards to the 2 indicators at Red, there has been a small improvement in 16–18-year-olds who are EET and we continue to focus on this through the Corporate Parenting Panel. Timeliness in children being placed for adoption has decreased during the last quarter although we remain in line with statistical neighbours, we know this is a national issue with a reduction of the number of available approved adopters being available.

Children's Social Care & Early Help - Portfolio Holder Comment

Q4: Cllr Shaid Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

I'm pleased to see the continued progress in the Children's portfolio, myself and the team are not complacent and will continue to work hard to ensure the current trajectory is maintained. I'm pleased to see an improvement in the number of young people in education, employment and training (EET) we will continue to focus on improving this.

It's pleasing to see the rate of agency social workers continuing to drop, tied to this is the case load per social worker which remains healthy, this is also something we continue to focus on.

Overall, I'm happy with the current direction we will continue to be cognisant of the challenges and work with partners to ensure our children are safe and thriving.

Education & Early Years

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

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

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

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Service Summary:

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- Listening and engaging
- Creating an inclusive and empowering environment

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



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Education & Early Years - Key Metrics (against target where set)

Pass rate of learners completing lifelong learning courses

99.5%

2519 (Number of learners who passed lifelong learning courses)
2532 (Number of learners on lifelong learning courses)



Previous Term = 99.5%

Target: 93%

Percentage of early years providers and registered childminders inspected rated good or outstanding

100%



Previous Quarter = 100%

Target: 97%

Percent of 16 to 17-year-olds destination lapsed/unknown

1.9%

131 (16 to 17 year olds where destination is unknown or lapsed)
7022 Total number of 16 - 17 year olds



Previous Quarter = 1.9%

Target = 2%

Education & Early Years - Key Metrics (against target where set)

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

82.2%

$\frac{37}{45}$ *(Number of EHC plans completed within 20 weeks)*
(Total number of EHC plans)



Previous Intake = 51.1%

Target: 85%

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

74.3%

$\frac{188}{253}$ *(Number of Annual Reviews completed within legal timeframe)*
(Total number of Annual Reviews)

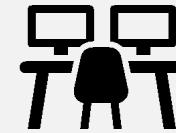


Previous Intake = 62.2%

Target: 85%

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

4%



Previous Term = 4%

Target: 3.5%

[Red]

High is Good

[Red]

High is Good

[Green]

Low is good

Education & Early Years - Key Metrics (against target where set)

Attendance rates in Oldham secondary schools

92.8%

Previous Quarter = 92.8%

No Target Set
High is good

Attendance rates in Oldham primary schools

94.8%

Previous Quarter = 94.8%

No Target Set
High is good

Education & Early Years - Key Metrics (against target where set)

Number of SEND fixed term suspensions in primary schools

157

Previous Quarter = 157

Percentage of SEND fixed term suspensions in primary schools

3.6%

Previous Quarter = 3.6%

Number of SEND fixed term suspensions in secondary schools

1,564

Previous Quarter = 1,564

Percentage of SEND fixed term suspensions in secondary schools

59.6%

Previous Quarter = 59.6%

No Target Set
Low is good

Education & Early Years - Key Metrics (against target where set)

Number of fixed term suspensions in primary schools

98

Previous Quarter = 88

Number of fixed term suspensions in secondary schools

1,244

Previous Quarter = 775

Percentage of fixed term suspensions in primary schools

0.4%

Previous Quarter = 0.3%

Percentage of fixed term suspensions in secondary schools

6.7%

Previous Quarter = 4.2%

No Target Set
Low is good

Education & Early Years - Areas for Development (across all metrics)

Timeliness of quality EHC plans: percentage completed within 20 weeks over 12 months	As SEND demand continues to increase, this in turn impacts on timeliness in issuing plans. For many years, we have been successful in mitigating this, via investment in extra capacity and streamlining of all processes (eg IDOX EHC Hub, Annual Review processes, Quality Assurance system). However, we are now seeing some impacts on timeliness, although this remains significantly above national average performance.
Annual EHCP (SEND) statutory reviews completed within legal time frame	Demand for EHCPs is growing at a rate of 11% per annum, a slight year on year reduction. However, last month saw a significant increase in requests for EHC Needs Assessment (90 requests - the highest monthly figure on record) and this will put huge pressure on the team and SEND Partnership in terms of capacity to issue EHCPs on time and amend EHCPs following Annual Review. This has been flagged with the Director of Education. Timeliness of advice and reports continues to be inconsistent across the partnership.

Education & Early Years - Areas for Development (across all metrics)

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

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Over the last 12 months, we have created more provision for those young people who require or desire an alternative to Further Education college or sixth form, however we are seeing an increase in numbers of young people across the Y12/Y13 age range which is impacting the availability of education placements. In addition, we have a notable rise in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in this age group who require a mid-year programme to enable entry into education.

We have successfully arranged for Oldham College to deliver a programme off site, which supports young people to stay in college or provides a step up to becoming a student.

We continue to work closely with the engagement providers in our area to ensure that those who would benefit, are taking up places on supportive programmes, and Empower Oldham is responding to young person voice by offering Functional Skills English and Maths whilst NEET.

We are working collaboratively with our Colleges, GMCA and the DfE to utilise the forthcoming capital funding to ensure we address the provision challenges we are experiencing in Oldham.

Education & Early Years - Director Comment

Q4: Matthew Bulmer, Director of Education, Early Years and Skills

As in previous months, the main exceptions are around EHCP assessments/reviews and the NEET rate. Officers have made full statements on the remedial actions in place and, in regard to EHCPs, our performance remains comparatively strong.

In relation to NEET rates, the ongoing work with Oldham College and the announcement of DfE capital funding will allow us to further strengthen our offer in Oldham.

Education & Early Years - Portfolio Holder Comment

Q4: Cllr Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

Some good performance within the Quarter and acknowledging timeliness on EHCP assessments and NEET needs to improve further.

Youth Services

Performance Measures & Business Plan Report

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

Officer Contact: Neil Consterdine, Director of Communities

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Service Summary:

Delivery of a range of community services and provision including – Housing Needs, Youth Work, Heritage, Libraries and Arts, Community Development, Placed based and District Working, Community Safety and Stronger Communities. Resident focussed services closer to where people live.



Oldham
Council

Youth Services - Key Metrics (against target where set)

* These figures are measures cumulatively by the service so show Q1 + Q2 + Q3 + Q4 figures – Updated on 02/06/25

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Number of children & young people engaged with the integrated youth service*

2744

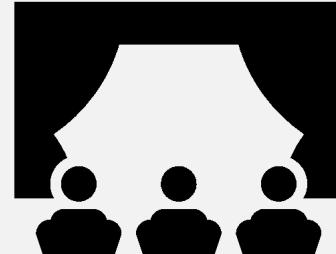


Q3 = 2162

Target = 3000 (annually)

Number of Youth work sessions delivered*

2275

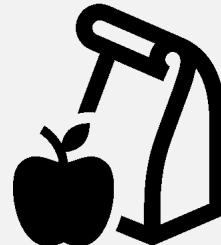


Q2 = 1661

Target = 1800 (annually)

Number of places available per holiday period (HAF)

19254
(Annual)



Q2: 10568

Target = 8500 (annually)

Number of residents engaged with the service (Outdoor and Environmental Service)*

7729



Q4 = 929

Target = 8000 (annually)

[Green]

[Green]

[Green]

Amber

Youth Services - Successes/Areas of Development

Success – Number of youth work sessions delivered – range and quality of offer. HAF	<p>A real positive that we have exceeded the number of sessions delivered across the borough, this is particularly impressive given the vacancies the service has carried within the year. We have seen an increase in the number of universal open access sessions available across the districts with some well embedded youth work programmes now in place. We have been particularly in demand within school-based youth work – with many secondary schools requesting youth work programmes and interventions.</p> <p>Demand for youth work is currently greater than our capacity to deliver.</p> <p>We have continued to deliver a comprehensive holiday activity and food programme with additionality of a universal offer for families in need but not in receipt of FSM due to additional funding from the Household Support fund</p>
Developments Staffing capacity and Number of young people reached. OEES engagement	<p>We have been unable to reach our target of individual young people engaged in the service. This is predominately due to staffing capacity that impacts the number of young people we can accommodate in sessions with a safe staff ratio. This will be addressed with the recruitment of youth workers to the 3 vacant posts we are currently carrying. This will enable us to work with larger numbers of young people within the youth work sessions we deliver.</p> <p>OEES engagement is well below the ambitious target we set. This will need to be revised given the staffing capacity available within the service. This is further impacted by the reduction in facilities we currently have due to the loss of the climbing tower – work in progressing to replace this and this will increase the offer available from the service. The Castleshaw site was also impacted by capital building works in Q3 and 4 as the Roof replacement was undertaken – while this is a success in terms of improving and maintaining the facility it did impact on delivery at the Centre</p>

Youth Services - Summary Comment

Q4 Summary Comment: Jodie Barber, Head of Youth Services

While not all targets were met for the final quarter there is a clear narrative and reasoning for this with a clear plan to address this in the forth coming year. The Youth Services have worked hard to maintain delivery and high-quality services throughout a challenging year. We are seeing consistent demand for the services and the team work hard to meet demand and priorities deploying the resources we have to best meet needs. We have seen an increase in the district youth work offer with more universal youth sessions available across the districts. As well as delivering Targeted youth work interventions addressing key priorities such as Youth Violence Reduction, Mental Health and Wellbeing and Community Cohesion.

There has been a plethora of fantastic projects and programmes delivered throughout the year supporting young people to achieve the best outcomes. We are looking forward to ensuring we have a full staff compliment across the services to ensure we can meet all delivery objectives.

Youth Services - Director Comment

Q4: Neil Consterdine, Director of Communities

It is evident that the Councils Youth Service provides excellent value for money. It has limited resource to cover what is a very demanding environment. Its primary focus is about prevention, but it does have to spend a lot of its staff resource managing ASB. One of its ambitions continues to be how the service can attract additional funding to grow its offer for young people. However, it is evident to see through the number of engagements the service is performing really well.

Youth Services - Portfolio Holder Comment

Q4: Cllr Shaid Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

Really pleased to see the good work our youth service continues do in delivering a wide range of activities for our children and young people in Oldham, the numbers of children and young people accessing HAF activities is especially welcome.

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Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Board

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

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

Officer Contact: Anthony Decrop, Acting Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help

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

17 June 2025

Purpose of the Report

This is an update to a previous report presented to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board on 2 October 2024 titled 'Children's Services - update on Financial Performance, Improvement Plan and Transformation and Sustainability Programme' to outline progress in relation to Children's Social Care and Early Help action plans and financial performance.

Executive Summary

Financial position

The 2024/25 outturn position for Children's Social Care is pressure of £12.333m after the planned use of £0.336m 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 Action Plan

Following the launch of the 'Achieving Excellence' strategy and action plan in October 2024, 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, placement sufficiency and digital innovation. 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, managing and reducing demand for statutory intervention and improving outcomes. We 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

17 June 2025

1 The current financial position of Children's Social Care

- 1.1 As in previous years, the service continued to experience significant financial pressures throughout 2024/25. The previous report, to the board in October 2024, reported the financial position at month 4 (July 2024) which at the time highlighted a potential pressure of £12.261m.
- 1.2 The final 2024/25 position for Children's Social Care was a pressure of £12.333m, slightly higher than the £12.125m reported in the final, month 10 financial monitoring report. The table below presents the financial position, by service area for Children's Social Care at 31 March 2025.

	Budget £000	Actual £000	Use of Reserves £000	Variance £000	Variance M10 £000
Children in Care	42,194	53,959	0	11,765	11,370
Fieldwork & Family Support	11,412	12,954	0	1,542	1,647
Childrens Safeguarding	3,041	2,795	0	(246)	(210)
Children's Services Integration	3,535	3,143	(336)	(728)	(682)
	60,182	72,851	(336)	12,333	12,125

- 1.3 The most significant pressure is within **Children in Care** which is reporting an overspend of £11.765m. The main pressure relates to the social care placements budget £11.602m, as summarised in the table below, a range of pressures including £0.441m from reduced contributions from Health for joint funded packages are offset by a positive variance in relation to income received to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). There were additional pressures in the residential homes and Permanence service due to agency costs which were offset in part by vacancies in other services such as the Adolescent Support Unit and Children with Disabilities team.

Placement Pressures	Outturn Variance £m
Out of Borough	5.869
Semi Independence	3.977
Secure - Welfare	1.126
Independent Fostering Agency	0.795
Fostering including those placed with Relatives/ Friends	1.217
UASC grant	(1.876)
Continuing Health Care funding	0.441
Professional fees	0.052
Total	11.601

The review of the external placements packages in 2024/25 yielded cost reductions of £3.723m however, new placements cost £3.738m; a small increase of £0.015m.

- 1.4 **Fieldwork and Family Support** is reporting a pressure of £1.542m. There continued to be a reliance on agency staff in 2024/25 which cost £5.680m compared with vacant posts of £4.456m. In addition, the service has a pressure of £0.149m in relation to legal and drug testing costs and payments to external care providers.
- 1.5 **Children's Safeguarding** is reporting an underspend of £0.246m. The main underspend is within the Social Work Academy which relates to reduced staffing costs and additional income received (£0.201m).
- 1.6 **Children's Services Integration** is reporting an underspend of £0.728m. The main underspends are in Business Support (£0.418m) and Targeted Youth commissioning due to increased Youth Justice Grant (£0.226m).

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, cost of living, domestic abuse, mental health and neglect 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 October 2024, however referrals for statutory social work services have recently significantly declined, almost to pre-pandemic levels. There are reduced numbers open to early help, sustained numbers of children and young people on children in need plans, reduced numbers on child protection plans and increased numbers of children looked after and care leavers over the past couple of years, as demonstrated in the charts comparing Oldham to our statistical neighbours.



2.3 This high volume and complexity of demand has continued into 2025/26, particularly Children Looked After, which demonstrates the impact of contextual factors facing families in Oldham. In April 2025, there were 1,720 contacts into the MASH with 281 (16%) of these converting to referrals for statutory services. Children's Social Care and Early Help were providing support to 3,426 children and young people including 862 open to early help, 1,287 children in need, 424 subject to child protection plans, 589 children looked after and 264 care leavers.

3 Achieving Excellence Strategy and Action Plan Update

- 3.1 Following the Children's Services inspection in May 2024, we've continued a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and families through the launch of the Achieving Excellence in Children's Social Care and Early Help strategy and action plan in October 2024. Our approach prioritises consistently embedding high-quality, child-centred practice and strengthening multi-agency partnerships to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right support at the right time.
- 3.2 The Achieving Excellence action plan is reviewed quarterly, enabling leaders to assess and evidence progress and make informed adjustments that drive further improvements to deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and families in Oldham.

3.3 Key strengths and progress

We're managing and reducing demand effectively to keep children and young people safe and have continued the momentum of improvement of our services.

Help and Protection

- **Thresholds and Early Help:** The Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) reviewed the threshold criteria (Continuum of Need) and shared with partners through briefing sessions. A strengthened early help team in the MASH has improved partner support. Family Hubs have increased accessibility and range of services to support families earlier within their local communities. Early intervention support has helped to reduce referrals to statutory services by 23.8% over the past 12 months, with 85% of families achieving positive outcomes following targeted early help intervention.
- **Domestic Abuse Safety Planning:** Staff confidence has improved through targeted training and quality assurance work. Consistent, high-quality safety planning remains a development priority.
- **Young Carers:** Improved needs identification and information sharing between children's social care and the commissioned provider; with a focus on enhancing case recording and partnership working to identify, engage and support young carers.
- **Neglect:** There is child-centred intervention and protection in response to neglect, supported by training for professionals in identifying neglect at the earliest opportunity. There is partnership focus to further elevate child and adolescent neglect.
- **Child Protection:** Robust oversight has reduced children on plans over 2 years to 1% with improved shared multi-agency accountability of child protection planning.
- **Complex Safeguarding:** Two weeks of action in 2024 engaged 5,000 students and teachers in sessions on sexual exploitation, online safety, peer abuse, and youth violence, with highly positive feedback. There have been 37 arrests in 2024/25 by the Complex Safeguarding Police Team in relation to exploitation and an arrest and charge made in relation to modern day slavery

Children in Care

- **Permanence Planning:** 96% of children have a permanence plan with active consideration of adoption, special guardianship, kinship care, long term foster care and foster to adopt placements. A new Kinship Local Offer is in place.
- **Health Assessments:** The process has been strengthened and management oversight increased. We continue work with health partners to complete within timescales.
- **Placement Sufficiency:** Internal capacity is increasing with new children's homes and more foster carers. The council commitment to direct match Care Leavers to 50% of all available properties is successfully leading to more care leavers living

independently. There is active engagement with local providers to secure placements and we're actively supporting the delivery of the GM RCC and Project Skyline to deliver better commissioning arrangements and 10 new children's homes across GM.

- **Placement Stability:** 56% of children in our care are placed in our own provision which is positive. Multi-agency disruption meetings and support from therapeutic supervising social workers for foster carers and the adolescent support unit help prevent placement breakdowns.
- **Educational Outcomes:** There is strong support via the Virtual School. School attendance is high in primary (95.3%) but lower in secondary (88.6%) with a targeted action plan in place.
- **Life Story Work:** We've developed co-produced practice guidance, later life letters and virtual life story books. Staff training relating to the use of the tools and quality of the content will follow.

Care Leavers

- **Pathway Planning:** A revised approach has been co-produced with young people to align with their aspirations and needs.
- **Transitions:** All care leavers have a dedicated PA from age 17 to develop relationships and promote smooth transitions to post-18 services. A new transitions team has been developed with more work needed for earlier transition planning from age 14 collaboratively with adult social care.
- **EET Support:** 56% of 17–18 year olds and 47% of 19–21 year olds are in education, employment, or training (EET). Barriers include financial support and post-year 13 destinations. A new pre-apprenticeship programme has launched and two care leavers have apprenticeships in the council.

Workforce Stability

- **Stability:** 84% of team managers are permanent. Use of agency social workers has halved to 24.1%. There is a strong student/apprentice and newly qualified social worker pipeline through the 'Grow our Own' model and a positive retention culture.
- **Caseloads:** Average social worker caseloads are manageable at 16.9. 36% of social workers have <15 cases and a further 27% have 15-19 cases.
- **Workforce Development:** Robust learning offer with a focus on domestic abuse safety planning, purposeful intervention and planning, assessment and analysis.

Practice Quality

- **Quality Assurance:** Practice quality and consistency has improved, especially in child's voice, planning and visits. Consistency in assessments and supervision are the areas of focus.
- **Family Engagement:** 91% of practice audits include family involvement. Areas of focus based on family feedback are changes in social worker and communication.

Data and Insights

- **System Developments and Reporting Tools:** We've developed a bespoke centralised data system and dashboards to provide real-time performance tracking for management oversight and significant case management system developments for better recording of key practice areas including out of hours duty, early help, complex safeguarding, domestic abuse and fostering.

3.4 Priorities in 2025

Continuing to build on the progress across the themes outlined above, our priorities include:

- Further strengthening the consistency and quality of practice.

- Further work to embed the Continuum of Need across the partnership as we continue to receive a high number of contacts due to partners seeking support and advice.
- Continued embedding of learning from quality assurance activities.
- Delivery of our local and GM placement sufficiency commitments.
- Further strengthening workforce stability with more permanent workers.
- Transforming our services through the design and implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme exploring our multi-agency approach to family help, child protection and family networks in line with national reforms, supported by diagnostic work with Newtons.

4 Children's Transformation and Sustainability Programme Update

4.1 The children's transformation and sustainability programme is delivering ambitious plans across three strategic areas linked to the council pillars of change outlined in the Ready for the Future corporate plan:

- **Earlier Support for Families:** delivering more support for families, at an earlier stage, preventing the need for intensive support from statutory services, through the co-design and implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme in line with national reforms.
- **Placement Sufficiency:** providing a stable home for every child in our care and care leavers by increasing the number of council foster carers, residential provision, local externally commissioned placements and securing suitable accommodation for over 18s care leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).
- **Digital Innovation:** Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to improve efficiency in the delivery of services, reducing administrative tasks to enable more time to directly support children, young people and families.

4.2 Workstream progress and impact are outlined below:

4.2.1 Strand 1: Earlier Support for Families

- The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme is a national reform to deliver priorities outlined in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill currently going through parliament. A cabinet report outlining the reforms, governance arrangements and required programme resources has been presented on 16 June.
- The FFP Board will commence in June, and terms of reference have been drafted to co-design Family Help, multi-agency child protection teams and family network models in line with the national guidance.
- Partnership engagement briefings with Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership, secondary schools, cabinet members/Senior Leadership Team.
- We've attended DfE webinars and engaged with pathfinder LAs and other regionals LAs that have started to develop their models of delivery.
- We are taking a phased, no risk approach, particularly in relation to Family Help.
- There continues to be a reduction in referrals and re-referrals into children's services based on families that have received early help and social work support.

4.2.2 Strand 2: Placement Sufficiency

Foster Care

- There are 319 children placed in internal fostering with 123 of these in kinship care, an indication of how the service is stretching our foster carers to ensure children are placed in a stable and caring family home.
- Two specialist foster care 'Mockingbird' hubs are successfully supporting children and young people to remain in placements with their foster carers providing stability and

contributing to managing 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 two more hubs in 2025/26.

- The Fostering Service has a number of recruitment and retention initiatives, including the Step Forward programme, to provide an enhanced allowance to recruit skilled carers to accommodate younger children placed in external residential children's homes.

Residential Placements, Supported Accommodation and Independent Living

- Plans are progressing well to open three new internal children's homes. Blackshaw Lane Children's Home in Crompton (4 placements) is open, following Ofsted registration. Hayle Road in St James (2 placements) has commenced refurbishment work and is on track for September 2025 opening. A third property (2 placements) remains to be identified, with three property options currently being explored, this is forecasted to open in 2026/27.
- Targeted commissioning and market management has created 14 local semi-independent placements (for 16-18 year olds) and 22 local over-18s placements with continued work through fortnightly tracking of externally commissioned placements to reduce placement costs, ensure more children in our care are placed locally and support more Care Leavers into independent living via housing matches and commissioning arrangements.

4.2.3 Strand 3: Digital Innovation

- Children's Services are piloting the use of a bespoke AI tool developed for statutory social work to produce instant minutes of meetings and case supervisions. We're also piloting the use of AI in the production of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) for children with SEND following assessment. Both projects are in the early stages of testing with the opportunities to extend the use of AI models across council services to improve efficiency.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Service leaders continue to effectively manage and reduce demand for children's services in Oldham, maintaining manageable caseloads to an average of 16.9, 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 with an increased focus on early intervention and prevention in local communities seeks to address the high levels of demand for statutory services. Additionally, through the continued delivery of the Achieving Excellence strategy and action plan, 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 2025/26

Agenda item	Purpose	Portfolio lead & officer lead	Method of scrutiny	Additional information
Tuesday 17th June 2025				
Corporate Performance Report – 2024/25 Q4	To receive and consider the quarter 4 performance report	Portfolio – Children and Young People and Education and Skills Attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Julie Daniels- Tony Decrop- Matt Bulmer	Report	
Family Hubs Programme	To receive an annual update report on the Family Hubs Programme	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tony Decrop- Bruce Penhale	Report	
Children's Services - update on financial performance, Action Plan and Childrens Transformation and Sustainability Programme	To receive a periodic 6 month update report and to scrutinise the performance in respect of financial performance in Children's Services and delivery of the Achieving Excellence Action Plan and Transformation and Sustainability programme.	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tony Decrop- Sheila Garara- Andy Cooper	Report	Agreed in 2024/25 to move from March to June reporting to cover previous year outturn position
Study of Mental Health service's waiting times (including CAMHS)	To consider a motion approved by council on the 9 th April 2025.	Portfolio – Children and Young People	Minute from council	/

Tuesday 22nd July 2025				
Performance Management Development Sessions				
Youth Council annual report	Annual Report on events and activities commissioned by the Youth Council	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - Jodie Barber	Report	Moved from March meeting as annual report isn't available until May
Youth Justice Plan 2025/26	To scrutinise the Youth Justice Plan for 2025/26	Portfolio - Children and Young People. Attendees: - Julie Daniels. - Paul Axon, Chief Executive Positive Steps. - Claire Griffiths, Head of Youth Justice, Positive Steps	Plan	
Tuesday 30th September 2025				
Corporate Performance Report – 2025/26 Q1	To receive and consider the quarter 1 performance report	Portfolio – Children and Young People and Education and Skills Attendees: - Julie Daniels - Tony Decrop - Matt Bulmer	Report	
Additional School Places and Admissions	Annual update report	Portfolio – Education and Skills Attendees: - Matt Bulmer - Andy Collinge	Report	

SEND update	To receive and consider the SEND priority action plan and improvement programme update report	Portfolio – Education and Skills. Attendees: - Matt Bulmer - Katie Charlton	Report	
Children's Services - update on financial performance, Improvement Plan and Childrens Transformation and Sustainability Programme				Move to November as previous update received in June
Thursday 27th November 2025				
Corporate Performance Report – 2025/26 Q2	To receive and consider the quarter 2 performance report	Portfolio – Children and Young People and Education and Skills Attendees: - Julie Daniels - Tony Decrop - Matt Bulmer	Report	
LADO Annual Report	To receive and consider the annual report	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - Tony Decrop - Colette Morris, LADO	Report	
CSE Steering Group Annual Report	To receive and consider the annual report	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - Tony Decrop - Michelle Bernasconi - Natassja Gollcher	Report	
Children's Services - update on financial performance, Action Plan	To receive a periodic 6 month update report and to	Portfolio – Children and Young People.	Report	

and Childrens Transformation and Sustainability Programme	scrutinise the performance in respect of financial performance in Children's Services and delivery of the Achieving Excellence Action Plan and Transformation and Sustainability programme.	Attendees: - Tony Decrop - Sheila Garara Andy Cooper		Agreed in 2024/25 to move from March to June reporting to cover previous year outturn position. This will be the 6 month update from then.
Thursday 15th January 2026				
Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report	To receive and consider the Board's Annual Report	Portfolio – Children and Young People. Attendees: - Tony Decrop, - Jayne Haigh, OSCP Business Manager	Report	
Primary and Secondary School Outcomes	To receive and consider the annual update report	Portfolio – Education and Skills Attendees: - Matt Bulmer - Tony Shepherd	Report	
Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	To receive an update report on participation and NEET rates and on activities looking to ensure appropriate opportunities for 16-18 year olds.	Portfolio – Education and Skills. Attendees: - Matt Bulmer - Amanda Youlden	Report	
Thursday 12th March 2026				
Corporate Performance Report – 2025/26 Q3	To receive and consider the quarter 3 performance report	Portfolio – Children and Young People and Education and Skills Attendees:	Report	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Julie Daniels - Tony Decrop - Matt Bulmer 		
Children's Services - update on financial performance and Improvement Plan, Childrens Transformation and Sustainability Programme				Finance information not available at this time of year due to year end, have moved to earlier in the year
Repeat Referrals in Children's Social Care				Agreed with the Chair in 2024/25 to remove from scrutiny programme as this performance measure is covered in the Corporate Performance Report received quarterly
Youth Council Annual Report				Moved to earlier in the year as annual report isn't available until May
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report Oldham 2025/26.	To receive and consider the annual report	<p>Portfolio – Education and Skills</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matt Bulmer - Tony Shepherd 	Report	

Task and finish group deep dives:

Deep dive area:	Expanded proposal:
Issues impacting children and young people	
Corporate parenting responsibilities	

Note: papers to be submitted to constitutional services no later than 8 days before the meeting to be published on the council website.

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KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
NEI/04/25	Planned and Preventative Maintenance Contracts – Direct Award for Interim Solutions and Planned Procurement of Long-Term Solutions	Director of Environment	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: consideration of the Council's Planned and Preventative Maintenance Contracts</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 any particular person, including the Council</p>				
HSC/03/25	Development of the Willow House Supported Living Service	Director of Adult Care/DASS	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: a proposal to seek use of Willow House by and on behalf of the Supported Living Service</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 any particular person, including the Council.:</p>				
EE/02/25	OCL Utilities	Director of Communities	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: contractual issue relating to OCL's facilities management programme</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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
NEI/02/25	Fleet Stores Procurement	Deputy Chief Executive - Place	16 th June 2025	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: To tender for a Fleet Stores provider for Moorhey Street Depot 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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
NEI/11/24	Parking Service Review and Contract	Director of Environment	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: to consider the authority's Parking Service Review and Contract 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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
New! FCR/03/25	Oldham Council (Non-LFFN) Sites	Director of Technology	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: consideration of 'Non-LFFN' Sites for Oldham Council 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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
New! HSC/09/25	Health Improvement and Weight Management Service Contract Extension	Director of Public Health	16 th June 2025	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: to consider extending the Health Improvement and Weight Management Service Contract</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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
New! EDS/05/25	Get Britain Working Health and Wealth Trailblazer	Director of Education	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: to consider the Get Britain Working Health and Wealth Trailblazer scheme</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! HSC/08/25	Healthwatch and NHS ICAS Contract Extension	Director of Public Health	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: to consider the Healthwatch and NHS ICAS Contract Extension</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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
New! EDS/03/25	High Needs Provision in Mainstream Settings	Director of Education	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: to consider the provision of education places in the borough's educational establishments</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! RBO/03/25	Approval of Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Director of Economy	16 th June 2025	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: Approval of Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! RBO/05/25	Local Growth and Place Flexible Grant Acceptance	Deputy Chief Executive - Place	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: Review and accept the Local Growth and Place Flexible Gant. 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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
New! NEI/03/25	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) I– Transport Capital Programme 2025-26	Director of Environment	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: Strategic approach for the 5-year City Region sustainable transport settlement (CRSTS) programme approved in March 2022 (appended to this report), 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 any particular person, including the Council.</p>				
New! RBO/01/25	Oldham Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy and Action Plan	Deputy Chief Executive - Place	16 th June 2025	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description: To adopt and publish the Oldham Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy and Action Plan.</p>				
<p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! HL/01/25	Housing Delivery Test Action Plan	Director of Economy	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) has been introduced by the Government as a monitoring tool to demonstrate whether local areas are building enough homes to meet their housing need. The HDT measures net additional homes provided over the past three years against the homes required over the same period and is in response to the Central Government's HDT Measurement published in December 2024.</p>				
<p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! RBO/08/25	Open Space Interim Planning Position Paper	Director of Economy	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description: The Interim Planning Position Paper updates the council's position in securing open space, sport and recreation provision to reflect the latest evidence available. .</p>				
<p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! RBO/07/25	Delivering Housing in Oldham Interim Planning Position Paper	Director of Economy	16 th June 2025	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description:</p> <p>The Interim Planning Position Paper sets out the council's position on Delivering Housing in Oldham, informed by the findings of the updated Local Housing Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! RBO/02/25	Planning Application Validation Checklist	Director of Economy	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description:</p> <p>To consider approving for public consultation an updated Validation Checklist for planning applications, which sets out the information required to be submitted by applicants when submitting planning applications to Oldham Council.</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! RBO/06/25	Greater Manchester Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document	Deputy Chief Executive - Place	21 st July 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description:</p> <p>Subject to a decision to be made by Council to approve, in principle, the making of a joint development plan document with the other 9 Greater Manchester councils (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan), to cover planning for minerals and waste across Greater Manchester, approval is sought from Cabinet to delegate to AGMA Executive Board the formulating and preparing of the joint development plan document to cover planning for minerals and waste across Greater Manchester insofar as such matters are executive functions (including agreeing a timetable for the preparation of the plan).</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! RBO/04/25	Approval to a) publish the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation; and b) submit the Plan for independent examination	Director of Economy	22 nd September 2025	Cabinet

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
<p>Description:</p> <p>Approval to a) publish the Saddleworth Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation; and b) submit the Plan for independent examination</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! NEI/05/25	Revised Approach to Borough-wide Alleyway Cleansing	Director of Environment	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description:</p> <p>Consideration of the implementation of a revised approach to Borough-wide Alleyway Cleansing</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				
New! EDS/06/25	GMCA Refugee Support Project – Sanctuary in Oldham	Deputy Chief Chief Executive - Place	16 th June 2025	Cabinet
<p>Description:</p> <p>Consideratio of a report that seeks support, via GMCA, for refugees being homed in the Borough of Oldham</p> <p>Document(s) to be considered in public or private: Public</p>				

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
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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.
2. Where on a Key Decision Sheet the Decision Taker is Cabinet, the list of its Members are as follows: Councillors Arooj Shah (Leader), Elaine Taylor, Abdul Jabbar MBE, Shaid Mushtaq, Barbara Brownridge, Mohon Ali, Peter Dean, Fida Hussain and Chris Goodwin.
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?RPlId=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, 16th June 2025

Decision to be taken (Agenda Item) Decisions proposed to be taken in private at Cabinet on 16th June 2025:

1. Planned and Preventative Maintenance Contracts – Direct Award for Interim Solutions and Planned Procurement of Long-Term Solutions

Reason:

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

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.

2. Development of the Willow House Supported Living Service

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.

3. OCL Utilities

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.

4. Fleet Stores Procurement

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.

5. Parking Service Review and Contract

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.

6. Oldham Council (Non-LFFN) Sites

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT – COVERING DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JUNE 2025

Key Decision Reference	Subject Area For Decision	Led By	Decision Date	Decision Taker
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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.

7. Health Improvement and Weight Management Service Contract Extension

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.

8. Healthwatch and NHS ICAS Contract Extension

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.

9. Local Growth and Place Flexible Grant Acceptance

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.

10. City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) I– Transport Capital Programme 2025/26

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 1 JUNE 2025

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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