

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD
22/07/2025 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor Hobin (Chair)
Councillors Bishop, Byrne, Hughes, Iqbal, McLaren (Vice-Chair)
and Shuttleworth

Also in Attendance:

Paul Axon	Positive Steps
Matthew Bulmer	Director Education Early Years and Skills
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services
Clare Griffiths	Positive Steps
Chris Lewis	Youth Council
Shaid Mushtaq	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Umar Nasheen	Deputy Cabinet Member for Skills
Leah	Chair of the Youth Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Z. Ali, Councillor Ball, Councillor Malik (Councillor Cosgrove substituting) and Councillor Rustidge.

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 received.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6 YOUTH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

Leah, the Chair of the Youth Council, presented the item. The Council was thanked for its support for the Youth Council and for making the work possible through funding.

It was noted that there had been 40 new Youth Councillors in the last 12 months. The work of the Youth Council was highlighted, particularly campaigns regarding vapes and the 'Credible Witness' campaign, motions brought to Oldham Council meetings and the Make Your Mark consultation. It was also noted that representatives from the Youth Council attend meetings of other organisations, such as the Oldham Town Centre Board, the GMP Youth Scrutiny panel and the GMP Independent Advisory Group.

The work of the Youth Council regionally, nationally and internationally was highlighted, including work with the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority and the Youth

Parliament, as well as international trips to Poland as part of the Listen to the Earth Program. The findings of the Youth Council's Annual Review were shared with the Board, including positive feedback from members of the Youth Council.

The plans for the Youth Council's work for the rest of 2025 were highlighted including the 'Votes at 16' campaign, Mental Health and the 2025 Make Your Mark campaign. It was noted that the Government had recently announced a change in legislation regarding Votes at 16, and it was highlighted that Oldham Youth Council had been calling for this since 2012.

Members noted the success of the HAF activity and the Youth Council motion to Full Council but highlighted that there is some stigma and barriers around accessing this, particularly in regard to universal access and the number of places. It was noted that the original Youth Council motion did call for this. Members also questioned why some schools didn't take part in the Youth Council, and it was noted that some schools have low numbers of pupils and that there were difficulties encouraging young people to take part in some schools.

Members asked for an update on the Vapes campaign, particularly around why the posters had proven to be an issue, and it was noted that the posters covering physical and mental health had gone against NHS advice by highlighting the risks of vaping, and that the posters were being relooked at to contain the tagline 'Healthier doesn't mean healthy'. It was also raised as to whether there is feedback as to why Youth Councillors may be answering no to questions in the annual report, particularly around clear accountability and relationships with senior decision makers. Members were informed that feedback is taken in those cases and that in some cases this was due to things being asked for that were out of the remit of the Youth Council, i.e. NHS questionnaires being set at a national level. It was also noted that, in regard to clear accountability, that young people were, in some cases, going to the wrong places for help or lacked awareness of what the Youth Council actually did. The Youth Council are working on a campaign for suggestion boxes so that young people can offer suggestions and feedback to the Youth Council.

Members queried what had been done regarding the Youth Council motion that should have been brought to the December 2024 meeting of the Full Council, and it was noted that the motion was brought to the March 2025 meeting instead. It was also noted that the Youth Council's stationary campaign had now ended with the stationary having been distributed.

The Youth Council were encouraged by members to liaise with the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board to suggest items for the Board to consider.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2025/26

Clare Griffiths presented the report. It was noted that the Oldham Youth Justice Service Strategy Plan had already been signed off and submitted to the national Youth Justice Board. It was highlighted that Oldham is one of the only areas in England and Wales where the Youth Justice Service is commissioned by the local authority and delivered by a charitable trust, Positive

Steps. It was noted that this allows the service to provide a holistic and non-stigmatising approach to Youth Justice, as well as enabling access to funding streams that the local authority would not be able to access.

Updates from the previous year were noted, including progress on actions agreed in the 2024-25 Youth Justice Plan. This included another 12 months of funding from the Community Safety Partnership to continue the TOG Mind Partnership, and Serious Youth Violence now being a priority for the Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

It was highlighted that the data was more positive for Oldham than for other measured areas, with figures such as 'First Time Entrants into the criminal justice system' and 're-offending by children subject to statutory Court Orders or Out of Disposals' having fallen. It was noted that there are still risks and issues, particularly around disproportionality and placement sufficiency issues.

Members queried referrals of young people to the Youth Justice Service and whether this is done pre-emptively to ensure early help. It was noted that early help is voluntary for Young People and consent based. It was also noted that early help was part of Operation Vulcan and that contact cards would be rolled out across the entirety of the borough.

Members also noted the thematic review and questioned what insights and takeaways had been gained from it. Members were advised that the main themes to have come from the review were around exclusions from schools, of which there had been a significant reduction, and effective multiagency working.

Members highlighted the start of the summer holidays and questioned whether work continued. It was noted that work continues over school holidays and plans are in place to provide a range of commissioned services to Young People. Members also highlighted the need to minimise disruption to education and it was noted that education is part of the Youth Justice plans and is measured as one of the KPIs.

Members highlighted the impact that parents can have, and it was explained that although the service doesn't assess the parents, they do form part of the review in relation to the needs of the parent, and this includes working with the parents.

Members asked about whether plans to appoint a nurse in Youth Justice were still happening and it was noted that the funding was now available and going through the process, but recruitment had not yet started.

Members queried whether there had been an increase in particular crimes, and it was noted that cohorts were getting younger and that the service was seeing a higher rate of violent crime among young people, hence making that one of the Service priorities.

Members asked what percentage of those accessing the service had EHCPs. It was noted that this information would be provided to members, and that there was a general trend of late diagnoses in the Justice system.

Members also noted the difficulties regarding provision in Saddleworth.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8 **WORK PROGRAMME**

It was noted that there would be a review of work programmes taking place across all overview and scrutiny boards over the recess period.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted by the Board.

9 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

The Scrutiny Board considered the Key Decision Document which records key decisions that the authority is due to take.

RESOLVED: That the Key Decision Document be noted.

10 **RULE 13 AND 14**

There were no Rule 13 and 14 decisions to be considered.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.20 pm