

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD
15/01/2026 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillors Adams, Z Ali, Ball, Bishop, Byrne, Iqbal, Malik,
Rustidge and Shuttleworth

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Mohon Ali	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Sheila Garara	Childrens Services
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services
Councillor Shaïd Mushtaq	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Paul Tinsley	Interim Director of Education
Amanda Youlden	Access Service

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hobin and from Anthony Decrop.

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

Members noted that it had been agreed that some figures in relation to overdue and completed figures would be passed on to members outside of the meeting and that this had not yet happened. It was agreed that this would be followed up on.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6 PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 - 18 IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

Councillor Mohon Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, introduced the report. Participation numbers, cohort growth, progress and challenges were all noted.

The background, including statutory duties, and the current position, including participation rates, were highlighted. It was noted that the vast majority of the cohort were in Education,

Employment and Training, and it was highlighted that the Y12 and Y13 figures differed. Priorities around NEET were also highlighted.



Members queried why there was a drop off after October. It was highlighted that there was a drop in January due to the small amount of midyear provision being offered, although Oldham College was looking at January starts.

Members highlighted armed forces provision and queried whether this would qualify a young person as being in EET. It was highlighted that organisations such as the cadets would not qualify due to a defined criteria but that those at the military college would qualify.

Members asked how we compare to other areas. It was highlighted that when tracked against statistical neighbours, Oldham performed better against the NEET average for the Autumn term but fell below the average in the Spring term.

Members queried the figures for 'unknowns', and asked what the cost of tracing these was. It was noted that the cost was mainly in officer time and wasn't measured. It was noted that the unknowns were those who do not engage with the Council when chased up.

Members queried the table on page 15, particularly those not ready for work or learning, noting that it was quite a high figure. It was noted that these would be those who had left school but were not yet ready for college. These young people would still be receiving help, and getting read to reengage with the EET system. Members also asked if homeschooled young people were included in the figures and it was confirmed that they were.

Members highlighted the fact that unknowns could raise safeguarding issues. Members were also informed that Oldham was above its statistical neighbours for unknowns.

Members queried the destination attrition rate, asking what work had been done on this. It was noted that work was being done on this and the team were aware of the high drop out rates. A data-sharing agreement was highlighted with work with the post-16 leaders group, made up colleges and the sixth forms along with other stakeholders.

It was noted that transition work is key as are foundational works, and it was noted that it was easier to prevent NEET than getting young people to reengage with the system.

Members queried the funding bids and asked what this would do and how many places it would provide. It was noted that it would provide 530 places, mainly focused around construction.

Members asked about EBacc and MBacc, querying what preparations had been done for the MBacc. It was noted that the

MBacc would be rolled out over 10 years and that some preparatory activity in schools had begun.

Members asked about this work in the context of the wider Employment and Skills strategy, and it was highlighted that this was not a huge shift but rather part of a broader set of work. Members also queried when the next careers convention was and it was noted that there had been one in November 2025 which the team was looking to repeat.

Members queried whether the military preparation college was first come, first served, and it was noted that it was and that Oldham didn't get any priority for it.

RESOLVED: That the report and the recommendations be noted.

7

OLDHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Councillor Shaid Mushtaq, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, introduced the item. It was noted that it was important to get the educational insight, and the work with the Family First Partnership was highlighted. It was noted there was a need for intervention, rather than a crisis response and that Oldham operated on a district approach, rather than borough wide. It was highlighted that there was always scope for improvement. Collaborative work, the key priorities and strategic aims were discussed.

Members queried whether the lifting of the two-child benefit cap would improve the situation. It was highlighted that no work had been done on this but it was expected that there would be an improvement.

Members queried how homeschooled children were monitored. It was noted that there were regular visits and oversight. It was noted as a concern but was not in itself a safeguarding risk.

Members queried what further could be done on poverty. It was noted that poverty was everywhere in the borough but highest in the central district, but that work around the family first approach, breakfast clubs and the lifting of the two-child benefit cap would all help tackle this.

Members noted the different types of poverty and deprivation, such as lack of resources within an area.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8

WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

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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.



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RULE 13 AND 14

There were no Rule 13 or 14 decisions to report.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.05 pm