

SEND

Oldham SEND Strategy 2019-22

Our approach to build a better future for
children and young people with
special educational needs
and/or disabilities

Foreword

Our ambition is to create an environment for all our children and young people with SEND to be safe, healthy, happy and supported. Our aim is also to generate opportunities for our children and young people with SEND to achieve their potential and have an active voice in the community.

Putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do and helping them thrive in their lives is of paramount importance. To achieve this ambition, we work together with our partners and providers to co-produce high quality policy and practice that brings alive our aspirations.

The Oldham SEND Partnership has now launched its 2019/22 strategy to continue the successful and committed joint-working approach that's already taken place within the borough. This strategy will take us onto the next stage of our journey to ensure we better support all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

This co-produced strategy has been shaped by the local authority, schools, colleges, health providers – and most importantly, parents, carers, children and young people. This integrated input ensures all voices are listened to and we take the best course of action.

By working together in partnership, we will provide the right support at the right time, for all children and young people with SEND across our community and ensure we deliver the very best outcomes based on their needs.

This SEND strategy 2019-22 sets out how we'll achieve our ambition and we commend it to you.



Councillor Shaid Mushtaq

Cabinet Member for
Education & Skills
and Chair of SEND Oldham
Partnership Board



Dr Carolyn Wilkins OBE

Chief Executive, Oldham Council
and Accountable Officer, NHS Oldham CCG

Our vision

Oldham's vision is to be a place where children and young people thrive. We want all our children and young people within the borough to:

- Be safe and supported
- Be as healthy and happy as they can
- Have opportunities to achieve their potential
- Have a voice and be part of a community
- Feel proud and be ready for life

Our mission

We want all our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to achieve well in their early years, at school and in further education, find employment, lead happy, healthy and fulfilled lives and have choice and control over their support.

We believe that all children and young people should be:

- Able to be educated in the borough where they live
- Able to access opportunities that prepare them to be successful in life, learning and work
- Able to access appropriate high-quality support to build their emotional resilience and improve their health and wellbeing
- Safe and happy when taking part in all experiences
- Listened to and actively involved in decisions that affect their lives and communities

What is the Oldham SEND Partnership?

The Oldham SEND Partnership brings together senior leaders from Oldham Council, NHS Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group, the Parent Carer Forum, all local education settings, and children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

All of these partners share the common ambition to build a better future for children and young people with SEND and are committed to working together to achieve this.

What are Special Educational Needs and Disabilities?

A child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities if they have a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support - we shorten this to SEND.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities can affect a child or young person's ability to learn, potentially making it harder for them to benefit from the same education facilities as most children and young people of the same age.

SEND may affect a child or young person's:

- Ability to communicate and interact with others
- Ability to understand or learn at the same pace as others their age
- Reading and writing
- Concentration levels
- Behaviour or ability to socialise, for example they struggle to make friends
- Sensory or physical needs

Not all children with special education needs are disabled and children and young people with a disability do not necessarily have a special educational need (SEN).

Co-production

We believe that working together delivers better outcomes and we need each other to achieve success.

We believe our parents, carers, children and young people should continue to be valued, respected and treated as equal partners.

We are committed to making sure that our children, young people, parents and carers continue to be a part of the decision-making process, not only for their own care and support, but as part of our partnership as we continue to make significant improvements to all services in Oldham.

Oldham's Coproduction Values

Co-production is sensitive to power imbalances, respectful and valuing of all contributions; it demands successful and sustained engagement from all parties and a shared willingness to listen, understand and work towards common goals.

- Equal Partnership**
 - Treat me as an equal.
 - Engage me in all aspects of support planning and delivery.
 - Involve me fully from the start. Include me in decision making.
 - Empower me by supporting my understanding.
 - Respect my right to participate.
 - Embrace my knowledge.
 - Be flexible... My time is as valuable as yours.
 - Know my boundaries and understand of confidentiality.
 - All partners have a clear understanding of levels of engagement.
 - Everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- Communicate**
 - Give me the time and information I need to prepare.
 - Inform me of what support is available to enable me to contribute.
 - Choose your language carefully and avoid abbreviations and jargon.
 - Involve me in the planning, design and delivery of support and take my views seriously.
 - Implement, maintain and update support.
 - Keep me involved & informed about outcomes and next steps.
- Be Transparent**
 - No surprises and No shocks.
 - Be open and honest.
 - Keep me updated.
 - Prepare me for meetings. An agenda is always useful.
 - No conversations behind closed doors.
 - Be clear about the level of engagement we are working at.
- Be Accountable**
 - Take ownership.
 - Be clear who is responsible & accountable for actions for actions.
 - Be clear about timeframes.
 - Be honest if something cannot be done.
 - Don't give false hopes.
 - Commit to participation and where things arise have a Plan B.
 - Ensure appropriate people relevant to the conversation are represented.
- Value My Contribution**
 - Give me opportunities to share my skills, knowledge and expertise.
 - I can learn a lot from you. You can learn a lot from me.
 - My opinion counts so allow my voice to be heard in the way that meets my needs.
 - Express my own views appropriately.
 - Create an environment which enables me to engage.

Working together delivers better outcomes. We need each other to achieve success.

You can find out more about local parents' views and experiences [by visiting www.oldham.gov.uk/sendcasestudies](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/sendcasestudies).

What is important to children, young people, parents and carers

We wanted to make sure that the views of children and young people are at the heart of this strategy, so we asked children and young people, parents and carers what is important to them.

Children, young people, parents and carers told us they want:

- All children to be part of their community and develop a sense of belonging
- All children and young people to have the chance to develop friendships with one another
- All learning settings to have a positive culture of respect and acceptance with the opportunity to learn about and celebrate individual differences
- All learning settings to have high expectations of all children and develop their individual strengths and gifts
- Support for parents and carers to allow them to take a joint lead in their child's education and experiences, both in learning settings and in their community
- Parents and carers to feel confident that their opinion is valued by all the professionals involved in their child's care and education

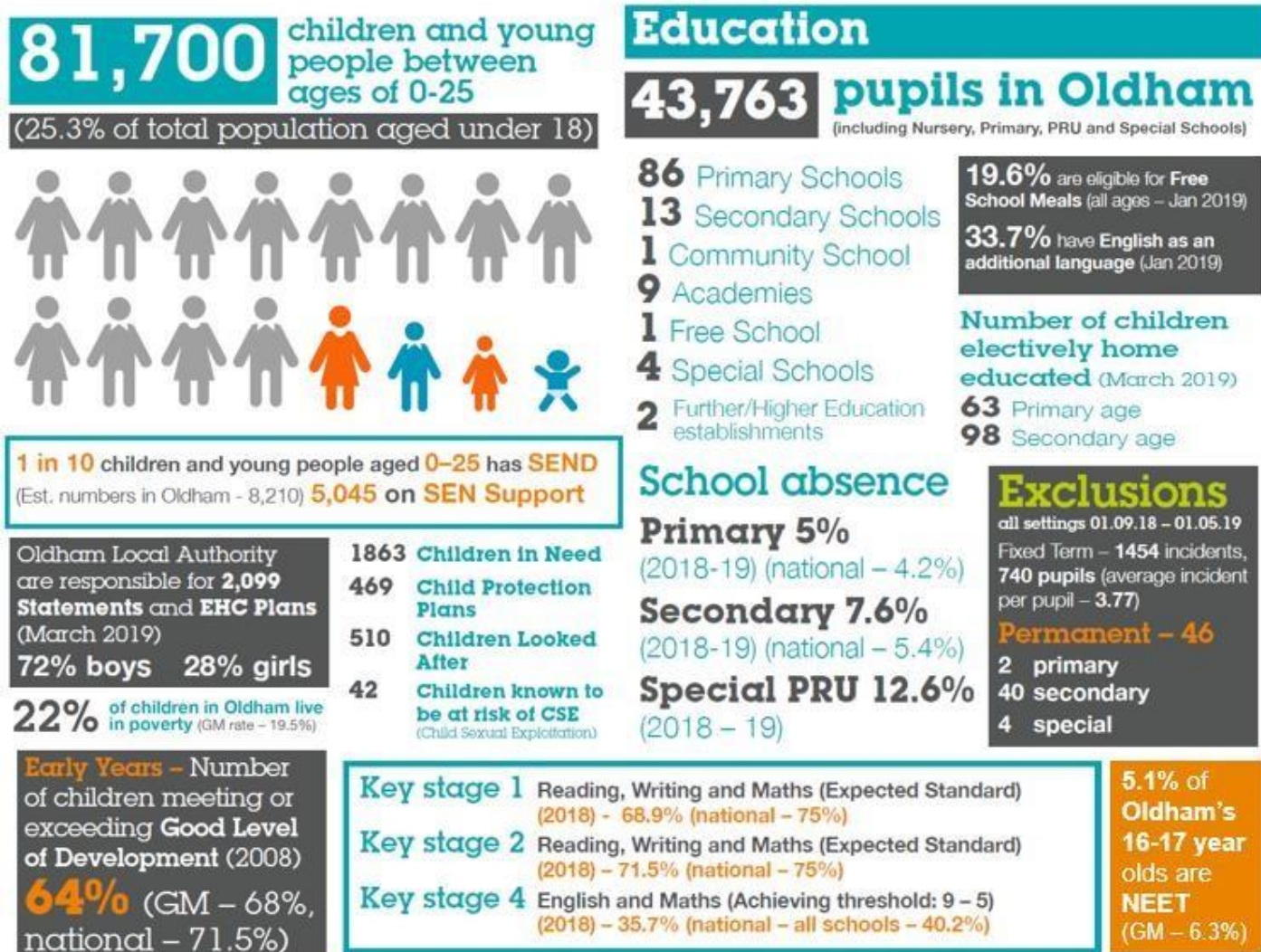
Where we are now

National Policy

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) made changes to the law to give greater protection to vulnerable children and support strong families. The [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#) relates to Part 3 of the Act and is statutory guidance for health and social care, education and local authorities to make sure that children and young people with SEND are properly supported.

Both the legislation and guidance give children, young people and their parents/carers more say over what support and services are offered in their local area.

Some key local facts



Full details of the Children and Young People's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (including SEND) can be found [here](#).

How we work together

The Oldham SEND Partnership includes leaders from the council, health, education, housing, police, fire service, leisure, employment, the voluntary and community sector and elected members who are all committed to working together to make Oldham a better place to live. The Partnership also involves parents, carers, children / young people and families via the Parent Carer Forum, Barrier Breakers and the Youth Council.

In our Oldham Plan we describe how we will all work together to make Oldham the best possible place for the people who live here because we believe this is what they deserve.

The Oldham Model is how we believe we can make a difference:



Thriving Communities – we want local people and communities to be healthy, happy and able to make positive choices as well as offering and accessing support when needed

Inclusive Economy – we want Oldham to be a place where everyone has a fair and real chance to improve their own lives so we're working hard to bring money and investment into the borough.

Co-operative Services - we want to have the best public services in Greater Manchester that work together to improve ways of living for our residents

The local partnership explains that model of working through:

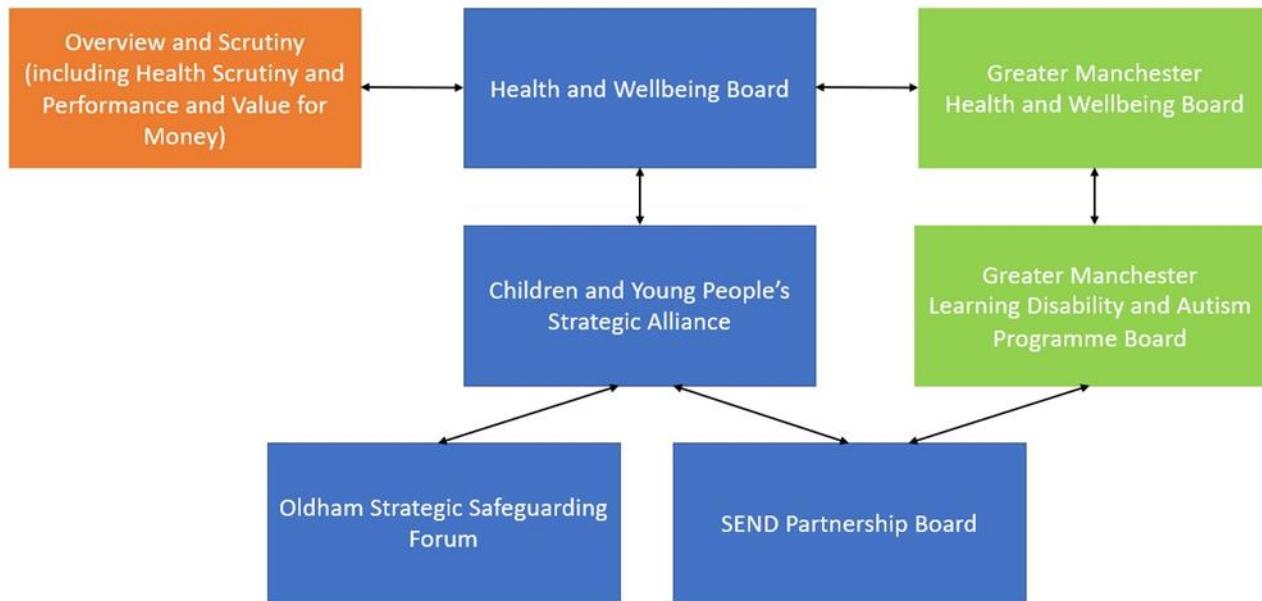
- **#ourbit** - the things we commit to doing in our role as local leaders - not as separate organisations, but working as a team
- **#yourbit** - the things that people living in Oldham do to help deliver the maximum benefit from all our combined actions – because we know that communities who work together are most powerful
- **#result** – what we can achieve when we work together

The aim is to make it easier for everyone to understand how they can play their own part – big or small – in improving things in Oldham.

Our SEND Strategy

- **#ourbit** – to work together to provide a clear vision for our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); hold each other to account for the delivery of our ambition and listen to feedback that is provided by children, young people and their families.
- **#yourbit** – keep informed about what is on offer in Oldham; make the best use of the support and provision available and provide feedback to inform decisions about what is provided for children, young people and families in Oldham.
- **#result** - all our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) achieve well in their early years, at school and in further education; they find employment, lead happy, healthy and fulfilled lives and have choice and control over their support.

Our governance structure



We have various groups which help us to make sure we are doing what is needed to support children and young people with SEND. These are:

- **Health and Wellbeing Board** brings together representatives from health, social services and the local community to decide what the main public health needs of the local population are and agree how we can all work together to meet them. The Board representatives have a statutory duty to encourage joint working between health and social care to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Oldham. Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight of the local health and care system, including all SEND provision, and is responsible for the local Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan.
- **Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance** brings together leaders from the main organisations working with children and young people to make sure we achieve our ambition of making Oldham 'a place where children and young people thrive'. The Alliance has overall responsibility for the Children and Young People's system in Oldham and makes sure we are doing what we should to deliver our Children and Young People's Plan.
- **Oldham Strategic Safeguarding Forum** has been developed by Oldham Council, Greater Manchester Police and the Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that all children, young people and vulnerable adults in the area get the safeguarding and protection they need. The forum provides leadership and accountability for the prevention and protection from harm and provides a coordinated response to cross-cutting safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding is everyone's business, but the Strategic Safeguarding Forum has a lead responsibility for demonstrating what this means for everybody living and working in Oldham.
- **SEND Partnership Board** oversees the work of professionals, volunteers, service providers and the parent carer forum in Oldham who are involved in SEND. This Board will make sure that we deliver what we set out to do in the SEND Development Plan.

This is supported by embedded processes for co-production with children and young people and their families, a communication and engagement plan and a workforce development plan.

We are also part of the North West SEND Regional Network which enables all us to work in co-production and to support colleagues, partners and wider agencies to improve the life chances, aspirations and outcomes for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities across the North West. More information can be found on the NW SEND network [website](#). Additionally, we are members of the GM SEND Board which enables collaboration across the region on key issues of common importance, such as transport.

Local context

In October 2017, Ofsted/CQC carried out its inspection of the SEND Service. Following the inspection, the local partnership received a Written Statement of Action with five identified priority areas for improvement. Since October 2017, there has been a significant amount of work undertaken to address each of the five priority areas and the local partnership has worked collaboratively to deliver changes in practice and improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND.

In September 2019, Ofsted/CQC revisited the borough and recognised Oldham's improvement journey and the positive changes made since 2017 in terms of provision for children and young people with SEND. The significant improvements in governance, leadership and processes/practice around SEND and the joint working with parents/carers and children/young people at every stage to develop and embed changes were commended.

Some of the improvements we made include:

- A stronger and more co-productive partnership, where the voice of the child matters
- Education, health, social care and parent carer forum (POINT) working better together to improve the quality of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans
- Improved processes so that more children now receive high-quality EHC Plans within statutory timeframes
- Children, young people and their families receive better information and guidance through a transformed and co-produced Local Offer
- Better transport offer
- Support to schools to improve attendance and reduce exclusions
- Improved results in school for most young people, including those with SEND.

Our approach

Local Offer

The Local Offer is an online resource which details services, support and guidance available to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25 and their families.

The Local Offer has been co-produced by children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners working together. Families have been engaged throughout the development of the Local Offer and we are committed to parental engagement and co-production.

We have invested to make sure that our Local Offer is the best it can be, and we are committed to making sure we regularly review provision, keep the information up to date and that we are responsive to local needs and aspirations.

The Local Offer is available on the council website: www.oldham.gov.uk/localoffer

Graduated Response

In Oldham, we operate a Graduated Response model. We recognise that an early response to any causes for concern with early identification and intervention are important to helping children to reach their potential.

Where children and young people are identified as having SEND, educational settings put effective special educational provision in place. This special educational need (SEN) support should take the form of a four-part cycle of 'assess, plan, do, review' - which we call a Graduated Response.

More information on the Graduated Response can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

We expect reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure that most children and young people with special educational needs can access and have their needs met within a mainstream provision. This means they can enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and be fully included within their communities.

The Graduated Response is a 'strengths-based' approach, providing different levels of support, dependent on need.

This should ensure there is an understanding of the child or young person's needs; that outcomes are identified to meet these needs and that support is put in place to ensure the children and young people are making good progress towards those outcomes.

As part of the Graduated Response, it may be necessary for learning settings to refer to partners for additional assessment and advice. Learning settings and partners will consider the following and make sure that the support put in place meets the child or young person's individual needs for example:

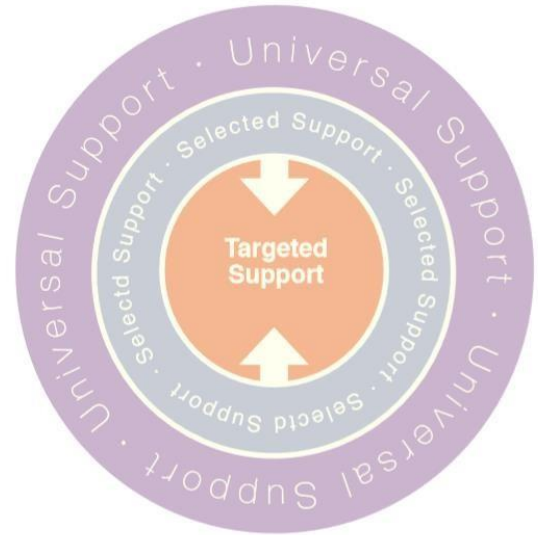
- curriculum and teaching methods;
- behaviour policies and practices;
- interval and lunchtime practices;
- referrals to specialist services for assessment and additional advice, where necessary
- transition at each key stage of their education.

It is important that children and young people and their parents and carers are involved at all stages. To support this, we use a 'person-centred framework'. How a child or young person (or their parent and carer if they are very young) is involved will depend on their personal circumstances, but professionals will listen to what is important **to** them and what is important **for** them and they will work together to agree a personalised care and support plan.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

If a child or young person's needs cannot be met through the Graduated Response and special educational need (SEN) support, an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan may be produced. EHC Plans identify educational, health and social care needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

More information on Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans can be found on the [Local Offer](#).



The Whole School and College Approach to Emotional Health and Mental Wellbeing

The Oldham Whole School and College Approach to Emotional Health and Mental Wellbeing aims to promote positive social, emotional and mental wellbeing for all children and young people.

The framework offers practical guidance to schools and colleges to develop essential knowledge and skills which support mental health and wellbeing interventions and prevent minor problems from escalating into more serious long-term issues. As part of the approach, there is also a specific graduated response to meeting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing needs. This is designed to help staff recognise if a child or young person requires selected or targeted support to meet their emotional health and wellbeing needs in addition to the universal support already delivered by the school.

More information on the Whole School and College Approach can be found on the Oldham Council [website](#).

Oldham in Action

An example of how our Whole School and College Approach to Emotional Health and Mental Wellbeing works is the successful use of the learning programme “Zippy and Apple’s Friends” at an Oldham primary school with the support of local mental wellbeing advisors.

The learning programme improves children’s emotional literacy, the classroom environment and coping and social skills. It allows children to come together to talk about real life experiences and things that are important to them and feedback from the children has been really positive.

You can watch a video, explaining how “Zippy and Apple’s Friends” is making a difference to children in Oldham [here](#).

Health Services

Much of the health care for children and young people will be delivered through universal and specialist services available in Oldham, which include:

- Primary Care (e.g. GPs)
- Health Visiting
- Family Nurse Partnership
- School Nursing
- Children’s Medical Services
- Children’s Community Nurses
- Children’s Therapies including
 - Occupational therapy
 - Physiotherapy
 - Speech and Language Therapy
 - Nutrition and Dieticians
- Children’s Learning Disabilities Team
- Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services

In addition, a continuing care package may be required when a child or young person has complex health and medical needs that cannot be met by existing universal or specialist services alone. The continuing care process typically comprises three phases: the assessment, the decision-making and the development of a package of care. More information in relation to continuing care for children and young people can be accessed [here](#).

The transition of young people from children’s to adult health services, where appropriate, will be managed by health care providers to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

SEND Service

The SEND Service is composed of several teams providing support to children, young people, families and educational settings on all of the above, but who also provide the following:

- **Intelligence and Commissioning for SEND**
A core team of staff who produce service trackers, performance dashboards, SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Special School Sufficiency, service level agreements, contracts, automation of processes, data analysis and commissioning
- **SEND Team**
A core team of EHC and SEND Support Officers who process EHC applications and managed Annual Reviews, changes of placements and costs. The team can be contacted at ehcinfo@oldham.gov.uk
- **Educational Psychology**
A core team of educational psychologists who provide consultation, assessment and interventions to promote best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- **Quality and Effectiveness Support Team (QUEST)**
A team of Advisory Specialist Teachers and Teaching Assistants who work with SENCOs to support children, young people and staff in mainstream educational settings, schools and academies to improve outcomes for pupils SEND.
- **Sensory and Physical Impairment Team**
A specialist support service for children and young people with a sensory or physical impairment. The team can be contacted on sapss@oldham.gov.uk
- **Home to School Transport Team**
Travel assistance is available for pupils who, because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility difficulties, cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest qualifying school. More information about travel options and how to apply for travel assistance can be found [here](#).

Short breaks

Short breaks as a term can relate to many different services that can be accessed by children and young people with disabilities and their families. It can describe services that anyone can access or those where they can only be accessed following an assessment.

Short breaks provide families with a break from their caring responsibilities, giving parents a chance to unwind, rest or spend time with other children. They can also provide children and young people with disabilities an opportunity to spend time away from their parents, relaxing with friends and having fun.

If you are finding that universal activities (open access for all) are not able to meet the needs of a child or young person, you can contact the Early Help team on 0161 770 7777 to find out if there is additional support available.

More information about Short Breaks can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

Early Help

Early Help services work with families using a family-centred approach to support people to help themselves, understand their strengths and enable them to manage their own lives. It also supports people to identify any areas where they may need additional support.

More information about Early Help and how to make a referral can be found [here](#).

Funding arrangements

We are committed to making sure that we have the right provision and resources to meet all children and young people's needs. We want to make the most effective use of our resources as a partnership and move towards a more consistent approach to joint commissioning.

However, [research](#) by the Local Government Association shows that councils are currently facing a SEND funding gap of almost £500 million in 2018/19. In December 2018, the Government announced much welcomed [additional funding](#), although this will only partially address the gap, which is expected to reach £800 million by 2019/20, and a potential £1.6 billion by 2020/21.

As a result of concerns about the funding allocated, The Department for Education has recently undertaken a [call for evidence](#). They have consulted with local authorities, schools and colleges and any other interested organisations and individuals regarding the funding arrangements for young people with SEND and those who need alternative provision.

We look forward to hearing the findings of the call for evidence and will consider them and any further announcements when agreeing funding for SEND in Oldham.

In addition, Oldham commissioned a deep analysis of its high needs funding block for the borough in 2018-19 from Social Finance. The findings of this commission will be developed by the local partnership with the Schools Forum and will include new ideas for targeted early intervention models.

The current arrangements around funding in Oldham are as follows:

Early Years

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

A lump sum is available for eligible children to aid access to early years places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity (either for the child in question or for the benefit of all the children attending the setting).

More details around eligibility and the payment process is available at [Disability Access Fund \(DAF\)](#)

Additional SEND funding

Early Years providers will use a Graduated Approach and provide appropriate activities and support for individual children according to their needs. Some children may have greater difficulties in learning and developing skills and may need SEND support. The provider will use effective strategies and interventions to make a positive impact for most children. However, funding is available for Early Years providers to support those children who need extra funding to make progress.

More information about additional SEND funding, and how to apply, can be found on the [Additional SEND funding webpage on Oldham Council's website](#).

Funding for special educational needs (SEN) in schools

Funding is agreed locally and is given to schools under three main headings:

Element 1: an amount of money for each pupil in the school

Schools get most of their funding based on the total number of pupils in the school. Every pupil in a school attracts an amount of money. The amount varies from one authority to another. There is usually more funding for each pupil in a secondary school than in a primary school.

This is the core budget for each school and it is used to make general provision for all pupils in the school, including pupils with SEN.

Element 2: the school's notional SEN budget

Every school receives an additional amount of money to help make special educational provision to meet children's special educational needs. This is called the 'notional SEN budget'.

The amount in this budget is based on a formula which is agreed between schools and the local authority. The formula usually gives more money to schools that have more children on free school meals and more children who are not doing as well as others in English and maths. This provides a good guide to how many children with SEN a school is likely to have.

A small number of schools may find they have many more children with SEN than expected. This might happen where, for example, a school has a good reputation for teaching children with SEN. Where this does happen, the school can ask the local authority for additional funding.

The government has recommended that schools should use this notional SEN budget to pay for up to £6,000 worth of special educational provision to meet a child's SEN. Most children with SEN need special educational provision that comes to less than £6,000.

Element 3: High needs funding (Top-up funding)

High Needs funding is provided to local authorities through the high needs block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). Local authorities must spend that funding in line with the associated conditions of the grant, and [School and Early Years Finance \(England\) Regulations](#).

The high needs funding system supports provision for children and young people with SEND from their early years to age 25. High needs funding is also intended to support good quality Alternative Provision (AP) for pre-16 pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, cannot receive their education in mainstream or special schools.

The high needs funding block provides local authorities with resources to fund places and to top-up funding for educational setting. It also provides funding for high needs services which are either delivered directly by the authority or under a separate funding agreement with providers.

Element 3 is provided by the local authority for an individual pupil who has a high level of needs and schools are expected to use this funding to make provision for that individual pupil. More information can be found [here](#)

Academies

Academies are funded through the Education Funding Agency, not through the local authority. Academies get the same level of funding for each pupil as local authority schools in the same area; their notional SEND budget is worked out in the same way; they can get top-up funding from the local authority in the same way. Academies do get extra funding, but this is not related to SEND: it is for services that Academies must buy for themselves, services that are provided by the local authority for local authority schools.

Personal Budgets

Children or young people with a special educational need (SEN) or a disability can make a request to receive money from the council in place of services. It's called a 'personal budget'.

A personal budget is used to buy services and support that will help the child or young person live more independently.

A budget is made available if an assessment shows they have:

- social care needs - if they need individual support in their home and outside; or
- health needs - if they have a complex, long-term, or life-limiting condition; or
- educational needs - if they have a greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children at school or college.

More information is available at: [Personal budgets: paying for services \(SEND\)](#)

Tripartite funding

Tripartite funding may be used in the most complex cases and involves funding from care, health and education settings. The element to be funded by each agency will be determined through a funding panel. However, shared funding arrangements will be considered for all children and young people who have an EHC plan, where this is indicated.

There are some good examples of effective tripartite funding arrangements already in cases where children and young people are in residential, out of borough or independent settings and the costs are shared.

If more children can live at home and attend school within the borough then the money that would otherwise have been spent on care or out of borough placements can be spent in different ways to benefit our children and young people.

What we plan to do

We are developing joint commissioning arrangements to ensure resources are used fairly and effectively to provide maximum impact on outcomes.

We will:

- Continue to use an evidence-based approach to commissioning. We will make the best use of data to ensure that we understand the needs of our children and young people and work together as a partnership to commission provision that meets those needs.
- Regularly review the special educational needs and disability (SEND) funding system in Oldham to ensure resources are appropriately aligned with agreed expectations, and to enable cost-effective preventative work to take place
- Explore opportunities for pooled resources and joint commissioning

What we want to achieve - our priorities

We are now working towards a three- year SEND Development Plan (2019-22). The plan sets out what we will do as a partnership to further improve the SEND offer in Oldham. We have worked with practitioners, the Parents Carer Forum and children and young people to produce it.

We have identified four priority areas that we will focus on:

- 1) Every child and young person is a confident communicator
- 2) Every learning setting is inclusive
- 3) Every young person is ready for adulthood
- 4) Every child and young person is a part of their community

1) Every child and young person is a confident communicator

What do we mean by ‘confident communicator’?

A child or a young person who is a confident communicator can understand and be understood. As well as being able to get their message across, listen and remember what they have been told, a confident communicator also has ‘social communication’ skills. These include using and/or understanding body language, gestures and facial expressions and non-verbal clues and cues such as, changing words and information depending on who they are talking to and considering other’s points of views. It also includes being able to use appropriate language in varying contexts with different people for a number of different reasons. A confident communicator makes the best use of appropriate methods of communicating and assistive technology based on the situation in which they find themselves.

We recognise that parents/carers are often the voice or means of communication for their child and consequently understand the importance of empowering the parent/carer to also be a confident communicator.

Why is it a priority?

Speech, language and communication skills are vital for all children and impact on every aspect of their development. Communication is the foundation of relationships and essential for learning, play and social interaction. Without these skills, children will struggle to manage emotions and make friends, learn and enjoy life. Good communication helps children to achieve their potential at school and beyond.

One in 41 children and young people in Oldham have speech, language and communication needs.

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs find it hard to have conversations with others because they have difficulty listening, speaking or understanding. They are more likely to underachieve at school, be excluded, be involved in the youth justice system and have mental health difficulties.

More information on why communication is important can be found [here through The Communication Trust](#).

Oldham in Action

Kyra is a young person with visual impairment who has benefitted from the use of technology to help her to communicate with others. Oldham Visual Impairment Team and Kyra's school worked together to find the best technology that worked for Kyra. The school also spoke to other children in the school to raise awareness of Kyra's visual impairment and the reasons why she uses the technology to support her learning. Kyra can now use technology to join in lessons within her school. She has also learned that she can use technology to help her communicate and interact with her peers outside of school. It has allowed her to access learning and reading materials in her own time, and she is now able to read for pleasure.

You can find out more about Kyra's story [here](#).

Where do we want to be?

- Everyone has a clear understanding of the Oldham offer to support Speech, Language and Communication
- There is a consistent approach to meeting Speech, Language and Communication needs in Oldham

How will we get there?

- We will map the full range of services to identify and remove gaps and barriers to access and we will consider the best way to share this information with professionals and residents
- We will actively campaign across the borough using the Local Offer, social media and other means to make sure everyone understands and promotes the crucial importance of good communication, speech and language development by giving practical advice and support for families in all of Oldham's communities
- We will promote key messages around speech, language and communication development and give practical advice and support for families in all of Oldham's communities
- We will develop a Speech, Language and Communication Strategy which sets out Oldham's approach and the pathways for children and young people
- We will develop an approach to make best use of technological advances and promote innovation in all settings by sharing information across the system.

How will we know we've made a difference?

- Children and young people are confident that they are understood and can get their message across to different people in different circumstances.
- There are clear pathways in place which are understood by professionals and families and facilitate children and young people to access the services they need, when they need them.
- Feedback from parents, carers and families confirms they understand what they can do to support their child's speech, language and communication; when it is appropriate to access services and what support is available.
- There is an increased use of Assistive Technology in all settings and a clear directory of options available to families displayed on the Local Offer
- An improvement in early and preventative support for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication as a primary need
- There is improved feedback from stakeholders in relation to the support and provision for Speech, Language and Communication and the pathways in place

2) Every learning setting is inclusive

What we mean by an 'inclusive learning setting'

"Inclusion is a journey, not a destination" (nasen Advisory Group)

We provide and promote opportunities for children and young people to develop key character traits, so that they are school ready, life ready and work ready

This is our Oldham Pledge. For more information, please visit www.theoldhampledge.co.uk to remove the barriers to learning and participation which can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils.

We make reasonable adjustments and use our best endeavours to allow all children and young people to be included in all aspects of their learning environment.

We consider the impact of our setting's physical environment and how this may affect a child or young person's experiences.

We are appropriately flexible in our application of behaviour and attendance policies for children and young people with SEND.

We take a Quality First Teaching approach for all our children and young people and this continues wherever a child may be on the Graduated Response

Why is it a priority?

Most of the children and young people who live in Oldham attend mainstream educational settings, and around a fifth of them will have additional needs – either throughout their education or at some point during it.

An inclusive learning and teaching approach recognises all children and young people's rights to a learning experience that respects diversity, enables participation, removes barriers and anticipates and considers a variety of learning needs and preference.

We believe that all children and young people should have the opportunity and support to succeed in their education and be able to develop skills, knowledge and attributes to achieve what they want in life.

We also recognise that it is not just a social and ethical responsibility for us to treat all of our children and young people fairly and promote open and respectful environments, but a legal requirement (under the Equality Act 2010) that we take positive steps to promote equality across our partnership.

Oldham in Action

The Hub is a new pathway set up by St Herbert's RC Primary School to better meet the needs of the children with the most acute SEND in school. The Hub is open every morning and accessed by children from Year 1 – Year 6, but children learn in their mainstream class in the afternoons. Provision in the Hub is planned for each child based on their individual needs, social skills and academic ability.

Within the Hub, there is an emphasis on Early Literacy and Maths Skills, Speech and Language, Sensory Needs, Occupational Therapy and Life Skills. The children access weekly cooking lessons, gardening and yoga and have daily sessions in the Sensory Room to help teach and promote self-regulation and a better awareness of their own sensory needs.

Parents, school staff and the children themselves have said that all the children have become more confident and happier in school. This success is not only down to the children being taught in the Hub in mornings, but also because they have been fully integrated and included in their classes in the afternoons. Class Teachers and Hub staff work closely to share targets, expectations, achievements and plans.

Case study:

"In 2016, prior to setting up the hub, school requested advice from an Educational Psychologist (EP) for a child who was then in Year 4, who was working at approximately 22-36 months and was completely disengaged with school and learning. At that point, the EP stated that she had never come across a child who had such a poor opinion of themselves as a learner and until that changed, it would be difficult to engage him in any learning. This child is now in Year 6 and has accessed the hub for the past 16 months. His parents, staff and outside agencies have all commented on his enthusiasm and enjoyment of school. He has said that now he helps other children in the hub, he knows that he is able to learn things. Last week, he requested to sing a solo at the Christmas Carol Concert, in front of an audience of approximately 200 people! This is something that we never thought would happen! We are extremely proud, as are his parents!" (Year 6 boy EHCP)

Where do we want to be?

- There is a whole school and college approach to SEND
- Children and young people enjoy high attainment and achievement
- Children and young people are encouraged to have high school attendance and low levels of exclusion

How will we get there?

- All education settings will develop a flexible curriculum which is strengths based, inclusive and meet the needs of Oldham children and young people.
- The local partnership will work with schools and settings to support staff to better understand SEND aiming to match the degree of knowledge appropriate to the role of the individual.
- All education settings will communicate and publish as appropriate, a provision and support offer for all children and young people, including those with additional needs
- The local partnership will regularly review the special educational needs and disability (SEND) funding system in Oldham to ensure resources are appropriately aligned with agreed expectations, and to enable cost-effective preventative work to take place

- The local partnership will work with Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinators (SENCOs) to further develop networks to share good practice and learning to improve identification and assessment of need and all aspects of inclusive practice
- The local partnership will provide guidance to Governing Bodies (or equivalent) in educational settings to support them to fulfil their 'best endeavours' duty and let them know where to go for support and guidance.
- Schools and settings will implement Quality First Teaching and Learning for all children and young people, with particular attention on children and young people with SEND who require additional support via the graduated response.
- The local partnership will support schools and settings to tackle persistent absence for pupils with SEND through a digital feedback system to share and act upon live data
- The local partnership will support schools and settings to reduce the need for use of fixed term and permanent exclusions for SEND pupils

How will we know we've made a difference?

- All children and young people have positive educational experiences with full access to a curriculum tailored to meet their needs and aspirations
- Children and Young People with SEND have access to the latest assisted technology to support their learning and testing
- More children and young people complete their education in a mainstream setting (at least matching national average)
- More children achieve a Good Level of Development at the Early Years Foundation stage (matching national average)
- Improved rates of academic progress for all children and young people including those with SEND (matching national average)
- Improved school attendance levels for all children and young people and fewer children who are persistently absent from school (at least 1% faster than the national level of improvement year on year)
- Fewer fixed term and permanent exclusions (at least 1% faster than the national level of improvement year on year)
- Growing achievement and progression rates for post 16 students with SEND matching or exceeding mainstream equivalents
- Increased knowledge of SEND and confidence amongst the education workforce about how best to support our children and young people
- Governing Bodies are fully informed about how to meet their 'best endeavour' duty and reduced demand on SEND services.
- More schools and Colleges achieving or maintaining Good or Outstanding Ofsted judgements (matching national average)

3) Every young person is ready for adulthood

What we mean by 'ready for adulthood'

'Ready for adulthood' means being prepared for higher education or paid employment, independent living, having friends and relationships, being part of your community and enjoying good health.

We want all our children and young people to be fully equipped to successfully graduate to adulthood and lead fulfilling lives. Therefore, we believe that preparation for adulthood is everyone's responsibility and should start as early as possible in the life of a young person.

Why is it a priority?

All children and young people want to make friends, have fun, learn, work and have the opportunity to be part of their community. Children and young people with SEND have the same hopes and aspirations as their peers. Their particular needs may result in experiencing barriers to learning skills for life, learning and work.

The SEND Code of Practice records that support for children and young people with SEND should have a focus on preparing them for adulthood. This support should start early and revolve around the child or young person's own aspirations, interests and needs.

We want all children and young people with SEND to experience a seamless transitions process, which builds on high expectations and aspirations.

Oldham in Action

In Oldham, we support our young people to achieve their ambitions. Amin has a goal to set up his own painting and decorating company. He also has severe hearing loss and uses both BSL (British Sign Language) and speech as his means of communication. He embarked on an Entry to Employment Programme, focussing on painting and decorating, at Oldham College. Amin achieved Level 1 and 2 diplomas and won first place in the Greater Manchester College's Construction Trades Skills award in 2017. He has since undertaken a supported internship and is now employed as an apprentice with the Oldham College maintenance team. He is well on his way to achieving his goal.

You can find out more about Amin's story [here](#).

Where do we want to be?

- Our families have high aspirations from an early age
- Our children and young people are prepared for life, learning and work
- Our parents are empowered to promote and support independence

How will we get there?

- We will support all parents to aspire for their children and young people, and themselves
- We will ensure that preparation for adulthood is actively planned for and included in statutory children's individual plans from early years and throughout each stage of transition
- We will work towards a personalised approach to preparing for adulthood and transition
- We will ensure integrated working between children's services and adult services

- We will listen to the aspirations of our children and their families and use this information to commission services and provision which helps them to achieve their goals
- We will ensure all children and young people with additional needs receive good quality, impartial and aspirational careers information, education and advice
- We will provide an Employment Strategy for school leavers with SEND and provide increased opportunities for work tasters, work experience, supported internships and apprenticeships for children & young people with SEND
- We will support local employers to become employers of young people with SEND
- We will ensure that children and young people have the information, knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- We will pay attention to children and young people's emotional well-being and confidence, and actively support them to develop the resilience and life skills needed for successful adulthood
- We will engage with parents and carers to identify what they would find helpful to support their child's preparation for adulthood and independence and will develop and provide practical strategies for parents and carers to use at home

How will we know we've made a difference?

- Children, young people and families have aspirations and clear plans for how to achieve their goals.
- Children and young people have access to services and provision that helps them to achieve their goals.
- Children and young people can see that their views and input have been recognised and used to plan and develop services.
- Children and young people who feel well supported and make informed decisions relating to their education, career and future aspirations
- Children and young people are making well informed decisions to keep themselves happy, safe and healthy
- More children and young people with additional needs moving successfully into employment (at least matching national average)
- More children and young people living independently (at least matching national average)
- Parents and carers who feel confident to support their child's preparation for adulthood and can see the benefit of promoting independence

4) Every child and young person is a part of their community

Our vision for Thriving Communities in Oldham is that people and communities have the power to be healthy, happy and able to make positive choices. We want people and communities to offer and access insightful and responsive support when required. We believe all children and young people should have the opportunity to be part of, contribute to, and benefit from a Thriving Community.

Why is it a priority?

We want children and young people to enjoy growing up in Oldham and to be confident and hopeful about their future.

We want all our children and young people, including those with additional needs, to be proud to belong to Oldham, to feel safe and happy, and to be able to build successful lives here.

The principle of co-production is fundamental to Thriving Communities with our residents enabled, encouraged and engaged to inform, design and support services for the public. This ties with our ambition to ensure that all children and young people have choice and control over their support and our commitment to listen to, and act upon, what our children and young people tell us.

Oldham in Action

Kaleem had a dream to become a football coach. Kaleem attends a unique secondary resource for hearing-impaired students in Oldham. Through his educational communicator, Gemma, Kaleem learned about Little Kickers, sessions that gives children a positive introduction to football in a friendly, pressure-free environment. After Volunteering his services for week and impressing the coaching staff with his determination, skills and overcoming adversity, he was able to secure a job as a football coach.

Find out more about Kaleem's story [here](#).

Where do we want to be?

- There is an exciting, diverse and inclusive offer for children, young people and families in Oldham
- Everybody knows what is available in the community and how they can take part or contribute
- There is improved community awareness of SEND
- There are opportunities for every children and young person to participate and contribute to their community

How will we get there?

- We will create opportunities for learning, play, culture, leisure, sport and work that are inclusive, accessible and fun for all children and young people, including those with SEND
- We will ensure that any offer to children and young people and their families is attractive and inclusive
- We will regularly review pathways and provision to ensure there is a diverse range of options available and that this is advertised widely
- We will explore opportunities to develop an inclusion audit toolkit to be used when considering planning and development proposals that affect the borough's built and green environment
- We will teach and model the core values of equity, inclusion, respect and dignity for all to all children and young people from an early age.

- We will promote and champion the aspirations of children and young people with SEND across Oldham – we will celebrate success and challenge stereotypes.
- We will ensure that children and young people with SEND feel safe from harm and can move confidently around the local area
- We will provide a range of opportunities for children and young people to contribute to their community through participation, volunteering and employment

How will we know we've made a difference?

- There is a wide choice of activities available for children, young people and families, including children and young people with SEND.
- Children and young people report that they feel respected and that they belong to a community, educational setting and enjoy the full range of services across the local partnership.
- There is a positive culture and ethos across Oldham which provides an opportunity to engage, learn about and accept individual differences
- All children and young people are afforded opportunities to develop friendships with one another.
- Children and young people with additional needs reporting that they feel safe, happy and confident to travel
- More children and young people participating and contributing to activities within their local community
- Oldham's built and green environment can be accessed, used and enjoyed by everyone together.

Key Enablers

In order to help us achieve all of the above, we have a number of other key things that will make it possible.

An effective **Graduated Response** is critical to all priorities to ensure that our children and young people's needs are being met in all educational settings. We appreciate that there needs to be consistency in the offer across the borough and all pupils should receive the right support to meet their needs. It is crucial that we identify needs early to enable children to thrive within the community and therefore **early identification and intervention** will also underpin all four priority areas.

We will continue to operate effective **partnership working** across the system to enable seamless processes that are coherent and fluid. The right provision and resources will be in place to meet the needs of our children and young people and we will have increased examples of **integrated commissioning** in order to make **effective use of resources**.

We will have a knowledgeable, flexible and integrated **workforce** who support children and families in a timely manner and to the highest quality.

All the actions for our priorities and the enablers are included in the SEND development plan which is available ([link to Development Plan on Local Offer](#))

Our principles and values

These are the ways we will work together to ensure that we deliver our ambitions for Oldham's children and young people and their families:

- **Child-friendly** – support and learning provision for all our children and young people is appropriate to meet their individual strengths and needs and provision reflects the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- **Inclusive** – all our children and young people are supported to have access to the same high- quality services, activities and opportunities
- **Co-produced** – all our children, young people, families and the local community are involved in key decisions that affect their lives, and we work together to meet challenges and agree solutions.
- **Evidence based** – we use information known to us to plan our services and make the best use of the resources available to meet the needs of our children and young people.
- **Flexible** - we are innovative and creative in how we commission and provide support to meet the needs of each individual child or young person.
- **Working together** – all our services work together in a collaborative environment effectively to 'do their bit'. This means our children, young people and families receive the support they require at the point of need and only have to tell their story once
- **Place-based** – children, young people and families feel a part of their local community and, wherever possible and appropriate, access support where they live.

How will we know if we are successful?

Measuring success

We will know we have made a difference if we have made a positive impact on the lives of our children and young people.

We will use the following information to let us know how we are performing, what is working well and where we need to continue to make improvements.

- Feedback from children, young people and their families experiencing change
- Feedback from stakeholders experiencing or observing change
- Feedback from regulatory and public bodies, such as Ofsted, CQC and Department for Education.
- Performance measures – SEND Dashboard
- Qualitative measures – Multi-agency audits

Reviewing our progress

We will follow a Plan-Lead-Deliver-Evaluate cycle and all of the above information will be used to track and review our progress.

Progress against the strategy and SEND development plan will be monitored on a termly basis via the SEND Partnership Board. Regular updates will be provided to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board which will feed back to Health and Wellbeing Board. An annual report will be published outlining the progress that has been made.

The priorities will be reviewed and the strategy will be refreshed in three years' time as we move to the next stage of our improvement journey around SEND in Oldham.