



**OLDHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP
STRATEGIC PLAN
2021 - 2024**

This Strategic plan is a public document.

It can be accessed on the website of Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership:

<https://www.olscb.org/about/publications/>

Approved by OSCP on 18 March 2021

Independent Chair: Dr Henri Giller

Report compiled and written by: Lisa Morris (OSCP Business Manager)

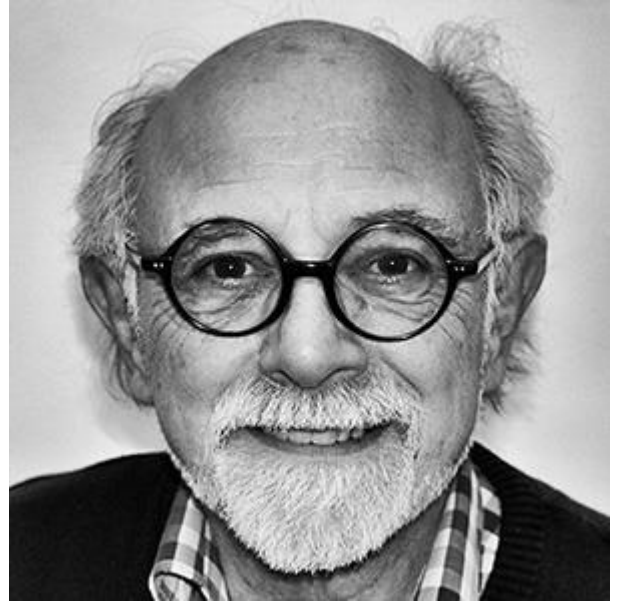
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Availability and accessibility: if you would like to receive this report in any other format please contact Lisa Morris - address above.

Foreword

The Oldham Safeguarding Children Strategic Plan for 2021-24 has been developed against a backdrop of considerable change in the Borough over the recent past. The safeguarding partners of the borough have had their governance structure reconfigured as required by recent legislation. That reconfiguration was then implemented in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant that traditional methods of working were seriously challenged. This new Strategic Plan, therefore, will commence implementation as lockdown from the pandemic begins to ease and the safeguarding partners seek to establish a “new normal” in practice relationships.



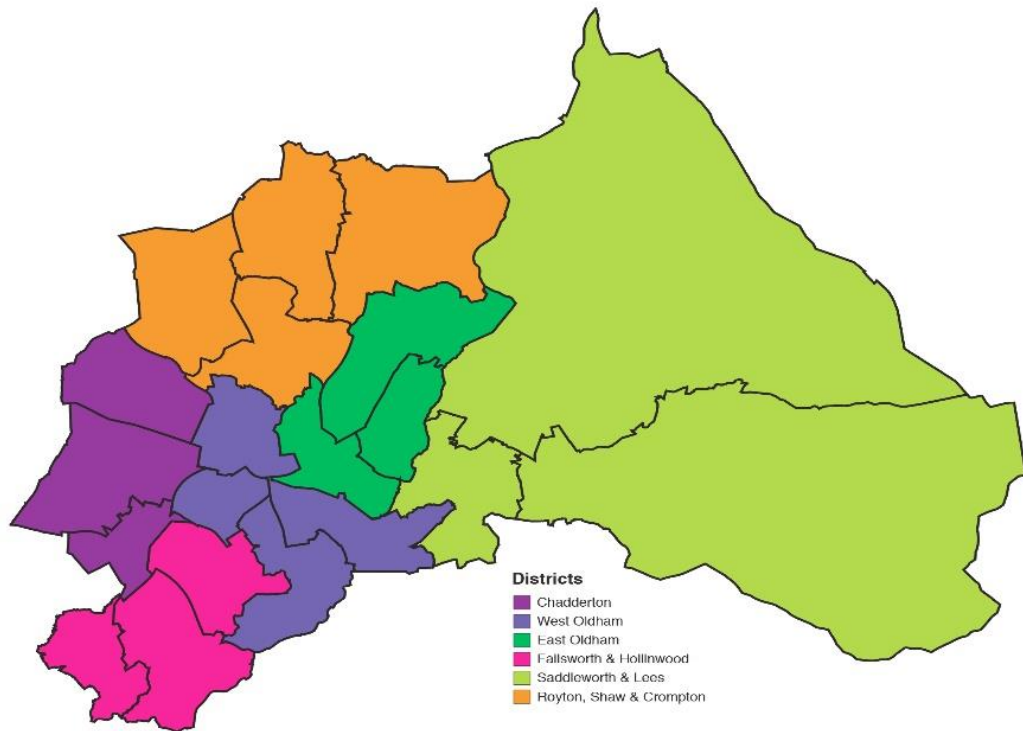
Current safeguarding priorities in the borough include injuries to children under two years of age, high-risk domestic abuse incidents, concerns over children’s mental health and ensuring effective access and delivery of education services. The safeguarding partners are committed to adopting approaches and practices that ensure that we develop a culture of continuing learning and improvement and give the public confidence that children in the borough are effectively protected. The safeguarding partnership will regularly report on its performance in delivering the objectives of this Strategic Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Giller'.

Dr Henri Giller

Independent Chair, Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Oldham's Context



Oldham has a population of 233,759 people making it the 7th largest borough in Greater Manchester.

There is a high proportion of Oldham residents under the age of 16 years (22.5%) compared with 15.7% over the age of 65 years.

Although levels of deprivation have improved in the borough, we are still ranked 47th highest out of 327 local authority areas. Four areas within Oldham are ranked amongst the top 1.1% of the nation's most deprived areas.

Oldham has a diverse population with 22.5% of residents from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

The rate of children living in poverty has risen by 8.1% in four years. From 31.8% to 39.9%

In 2020/21 there were:

- 4,278 referrals to children's services
- 612 child protection conferences initiated
- 194 children who became looked after

Our Vision

“For everyone to work together to ensure that all children and young people are safe and feel safe within their homes, schools and communities.”

This vision is underpinned by the strategic aims and priorities identified throughout the strategic plan for 2021-2024. It supports the principle that safeguarding is everyone’s business and reinforces the need for us all to work together in order to support children and young people in Oldham to achieve their full potential.

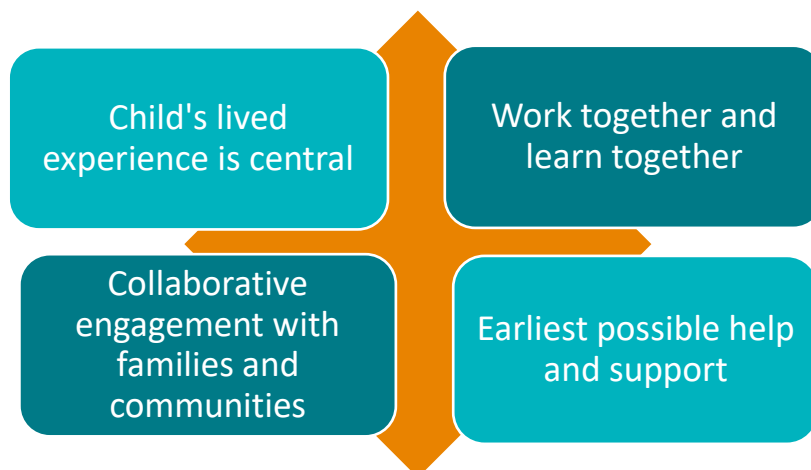
Our Purpose

OSCP brings together the Statutory Safeguarding Partners (the Police, Clinical Commission Group and Local Authority) to work in close collaboration with Relevant Agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people in Oldham. This is achieved through the co-ordination of collaborative partnership activity at a local level to identify and respond to local safeguarding need, ensure local arrangements for the safeguarding of children are fit for purpose and provide scrutiny of, and challenge to, those arrangements where appropriate.

Our Strategic Aims

1. Excellent practice is the norm across all practitioners in Oldham
2. Partner agencies hold one another to account effectively
3. There is early identification of new safeguarding issues
4. Learning is promoted and embedded
5. Information is shared effectively
6. The public feel confident that children are protected

Our Principles



Impact of Covid -19 pandemic

Oldham has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the start of the pandemic we have had 23,243 confirmed cases of COVID in Oldham residents. Since August 2020, Oldham along with other areas in GM, has generally been in the highest-level restrictions in order to control the spread of the virus. Structural inequalities driving enduring transmission mean that the risks for Oldham are greater than most other areas which do not share the same demographic or socio-economic characteristics. We have worked really hard alongside our community leaders to address COVID. The work by our voluntary sector, faith leaders, schools, businesses, and the people of Oldham, to stop the spread of the virus has been incredible. So far, over 150,000 vaccine doses have been administered for our population with 56% of the population now having received their first dose. As our rates of COVID have dropped in 2021, we are seeing reduced pressure on our hospital services, and less people needing to isolate either as cases, or as contacts.

A strong, partnership response was implemented immediately for safeguarding children which saw the introduction of the children's partnership bronze meetings and regular covid assurance meetings with the statutory safeguarding partners. The focus of these daily, weekly and fortnightly meetings focuses on the ensuring support for the most vulnerable children, developing a shared and consistent response across the Partnership and identifying and responding to emerging risks and concerns.

Three key areas of safeguarding risk were identified as priority areas of focus:

1. Injuries to under 2-year olds

During both periods of national lockdown Children's Services saw an increase in the number of children under the age of two years who were experiencing accidental and non-accidental injuries. Whilst the majority of these incidents were as a result of lack of supervision or sibling mishandling the circumstances highlighted the additional stresses and pressures that were being faced by parents of new and young children in the context of isolation and reduced support as a result of the pandemic.

2. Significant increases in the number of high-risk domestic abuse incidents

Oldham saw a significant increase in high risk domestic abuse cases in Oldham during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a 92% rise in serious domestic abuse incidents affecting women and children. In the first week of February 2021 alone the Local Authority recorded 58 serious incidents of domestic abuse, compared to 43 in the whole month of February last year. Many of the families have not previously been known the Children's Services but the severity of the incidents being reported was of significant concern.

3. Increased concerns for children's mental health

Oldham Healthy Young Minds saw a large reduction in referrals in Q1 and Q2 of 2020-21 as the Country entered the first COVID-19 lockdown. Despite the reduction in routine referrals there was a notable increase in crisis referrals. Similar increases have been noted in the incidences of self-harm amongst young people which has risen each quarter since the start of the pandemic. These areas are supported by a Partnership action and communications plans to ensure a co-ordinated response and awareness raising of the need and the available support for professionals and local communities.

As the Partnership moves towards recovery planning, the impact that Covid-19 has had and will continue to have on Oldham's families remains in a key area of focus and consideration.

Our Priorities

Domestic Abuse

The impact of the significant increases seen during the pandemic on the support for high risk victims of domestic abuse has prompted questions about the offer in its entirety, including the support offer for medium and standard risk victims and children and young people, work with perpetrators and the preventative offer. The impending Domestic Abuse Bill, which is currently in the later stages of the Parliamentary process, gives further impetus to this being a priority area for the Partnership. The Bill is intended to help transform the response to domestic abuse, helping to prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need.

Complex and Contextual Safeguarding

Huge strides have been made in our Partnership approach to Complex Safeguarding over the past 12-18 months, with introduction of dedicated multi-agency complex safeguarding hub whose aim is to ensure that all children, young people and adults who are highly vulnerable to exploitation, either criminal or sexual, are provided with a clear targeted response which enables and promotes a targeted multi-agency response to need and risk. Whilst the Hub is a real strength for the Partnership the focus now needs to be on the mapping and development of the community level support offer, development of a robust multi-agency response to criminal exploitation and gangs and the embedding of our contextual approach to complex safeguarding.

Transitions

Work has progressed significantly within the Local Authority on this priority area over the past six months, resulting in the first draft of a Transitions strategy for 'Children's to Adults'. The document includes key deliverables, strategy and model, practice pathway and standards, tools and processes and implementation including training. The focus for the Safeguarding Partnership will be on widening the strategy to include key partner agencies who have a role within transitions and to those areas of safeguarding that have been identified as priorities such as complex safeguarding and mental health.

Children's mental health and understanding the impact of trauma

There is rising demand in relation to the mental health needs of children and young people and whilst it is acknowledged that there has been a strong crisis response during the pandemic, it is also recognised that there is a real need for greater connectivity across the wider children's system in order to ensure that we are able to deliver the best outcomes. Accountability and governance for this workstream is a key priority for Partners and once established will support the work needed to develop a robust partnership response to supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our children and young people up to the age of 25 years.

Domestic Abuse

Strategic Objectives

A clear and robust offer of support will be available in the local area for all victims and children who are experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse

A confident and competent workforce who are able to recognise and respond to domestic abuse.

Actions

- Work in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board to review and implement the recommendations of the Safe Lives review.
- Evaluate workforce development against the domestic abuse training framework

Complex and Contextual Safeguarding

Strategic Objectives

Children and young people at risk of or experiencing all forms of exploitation will receive the right support at the right time in order to keep them safe.

A confident and competent workforce who are able to recognise and respond to exploitation at the earliest opportunity.

Actions

- Define and shape our local response to gangs, knife crime and criminal exploitation.
- Map and clearly define the pathways for early possible support and intervention.
- Develop specific multi-agency training in relation to criminal exploitation, gang and knife crime.

Transitions

Strategic Objective

Young people will have clear and robust and timely transition plans across all areas of safeguarding need to ensure appropriate support as they move into adulthood.

Specific pathways for transitions in relation to complex safeguarding and mental health.

Actions

- Implement a multi-agency Transitions strategy across the Partnership.
- Develop specific transitions pathways for complex safeguarding and children's mental health.

Children's Mental Health and the impact of trauma

Strategic Objectives

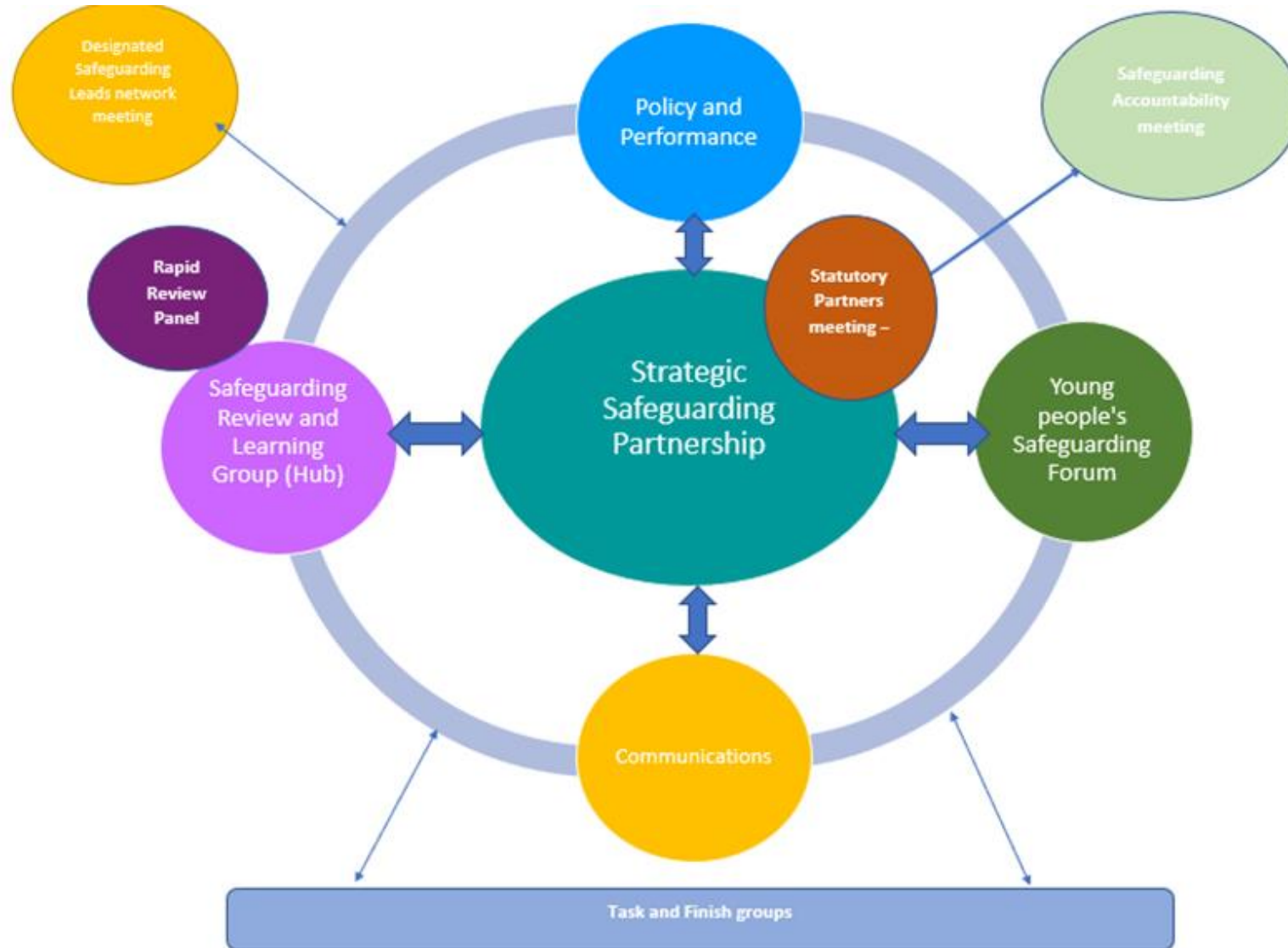
Children and young people living with mental ill health and/or the impact of trauma are able to access the right level of support at the right time.

A confident and competent workforce who are able to work with children and families in a trauma informed way.

Actions

- Hold a multi-agency summit to identify good practice and areas for improvement in relation to the partnership response to children's mental health.
- Develop clear lines of governance and accountability for children's mental health
- Map the trauma training offer across the Partnership.

Our Model



Rapid Review Panel

- This is an agreed subset of the Safeguarding and Learning Review Group which will be pulled together as and when required to respond to rapid review referrals.
- Recommendations from the Panel will be made to the Safeguarding Review and Learning Group to progress.

Policy and Performance Co-ordination:

- Deliver a performance framework and scorecard that is focussed on improving outcomes for children
- Develop and implement appropriate thresholds, policies and procedures that are focussed on improving outcomes for children and families
- Work alongside the Safeguarding and Review Group to provide quality assurance and analysis

Safeguarding Accountability meeting:

Quarterly meeting to provide safeguarding assurance to the Chief Executive of LA, Accountable Officer for CCG and Chief Superintendent for GMP

Safeguarding Review and Learning Group:

- To define “what good looks like”
- To facilitate the effective management of Child Safeguarding Reviews
- To act as a conduit at a local level for the delivery of any national reviews
- To audit and evaluate the impact of learning on partnership practice
- To develop and drive the partnership training plan, influenced by strategic priorities and learning from reviews
- To develop a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the Partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and promote good practice.

Strategic Safeguarding Partnership:

- Setting the strategic aims and priorities of the Oldham safeguarding children partnership,
- Agreeing and monitoring the partnership budget to deliver on those aims and priorities,
- Monitoring the performance scorecard of the partnership,
- Holding partners to account in relation to their safeguarding responsibilities
- Providing scrutiny and challenge to partners

Statutory Partner meeting

- To agree the agenda for the Partnership
- To receive exception reports from subgroup chairs
- To prepare for Safeguarding Accountability meeting
- To identify cross cutting themes with the Adult Safeguarding Board

Young people’s safeguarding forum:

- Themed focus groups led by Oldham Youth Voice Family and promoted to children and young people across Oldham.
- To consult on Safeguarding themes and feedback to the Strategic Safeguarding Partnership
- To support priority setting for the Partnership

Communications:

- Develop communications strategy for Partnership
- Lead on cascading of information to wider professionals and communities
- Engage children and young people in the work of the Partnership
- Support Partnership in relation to media interest relating to Partnership activity

Task and Finish groups

- To lead on time limited, task specific pieces of work as directed by subgroups and/or Strategic Partnership

Designated Safeguarding Leads Network:

- Held termly with DSL’s to ensure communication and discussion with schools/colleges