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Report to COUNCIL 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

## Education and Skills Portfolio Update

### Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

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### Attendance and Inclusion

During 2022/23 attendance of pupils in school continued to be lower than pre-pandemic levels in primary, and slightly below national. Secondary attendance was in line with national. Persistent absence in primary was slightly above national, whilst secondary school persistence absence was in line with national. We've successfully lowered the national gap in secondary school attendance through increased collaborative work between secondary schools across Oldham by sharing incoming year 6 attendance data to strengthen transition planning including through over a 100 home visits in two secondary schools. As a result, year 7 attendance at the start of 2023/24 has increased by 1.6%.

### School Place Planning

There are currently sufficient places in both primary and secondary schools. In 2023, 1-3 parental preference rates for primary (96.6%) are just below national (98.3%) and secondary 1-3 parental preference rates have increased to 94.1%, in-line with national (94.1%). Brian Clarke secondary free school opened at its new town centre venue and additional places were created in other 'good' secondary schools.

### Quality of Education

Strategic system leadership by the Oldham Learning Board is having impact. In response to priorities and requests, sector led programmes in leadership, curriculum and writing have supported better outcomes for our children and young people. Provisional 2023 outcomes show Oldham standards recovering from the pandemic dip in Early Years and primary and making significant improvement in secondary. The Good Level of Development rate increased whilst gaps to national averages narrowed. KS4 results improved in comparison with 2019, both across the borough and in most schools. KS5 outcomes show A' level performance above national at A\*-E. Primary Ofsted inspection outcomes continue to improve and are now above the national average for good or outstanding.

### Music Service

Following a busy academic year involving provision of music tuition to schools, children, and families, plus the wider offer from the service, the late Summer and early Autumn period has been busy, with highlights including:

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- Summer Festival with 45 performances on 7 & 8 July
  - Youth Brass Band - Tenby Tour: 22-24 July
  - 100% pass rate for 58 children taking London Academy and Drama Art exams in July
  - Renewed subscription from all schools and two new additions in September

### **Children Looked After Virtual School**

The Virtual School continues to provide advice, guidance, training and challenge to Designated Teachers, Social Workers, Foster Carers and other partners. Collaborative working with schools and social workers is supporting improvement in the attendance of children with a social worker. Our Raising Aspirations and Participation programme has enabled 309 children to go on university/college visits, develop independence and life skills and obtain qualifications.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

The Mental Health in Education team have built resilience across the workforce through mental health and wellbeing support. We continue to see good engagement from schools in completing self-assessments of their whole school approach to mental health. We have also established a robust method for capturing and monitoring this data which will allow us to monitor impact and target future work.

### **SEND**

A joint Ofsted/care quality commission (CQC) area send inspection of the Oldham partnership took place between Monday 26 June 2023 to Friday 30 June 2023. Since receipt of the report on 25 July 2023, the local area partnership has been working to address the priority actions and development areas.

Change Programme Partnership: Oldham has been selected as part of the SEND and Alternative Provision Change Programme for the North West region. This programme, which includes additional funding from the DfE, will help the partnership improve the quality and timeliness of our Education and Health Care Plans and strengthen alternative provision.

Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme: Oldham's grant bid has been approved and will bring in £1,000,000 in additional funding. This will be targeted at SEN support and early identification. This is timely as the areas identified through the DBV programme, also support the response to the Ofsted/CQC inspection.

### **Post-16/Youth Employment/Apprenticeships**

The Employment and Skills Partnership Board is driving the strategic approach to reducing the rates of unemployment and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). The action plan will focus on 4 priority areas (NEET reduction, skills mapping and gap analysis, supporting those furthest away from employment and increasing employer's role in the skills curriculum).

The local careers event for 15-25 year-olds in September 23 successfully engaged around 400 young people who attended the event. Over 45 exhibitors attended the event and feedback from these establishments has been positive. This event was organised in response to a request from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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Connect to Your Future, a programme supporting 15-19 year-olds to engage in EET activity, worked with 86 young people across the lifetime of the project. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund NEET programme will commence in October 2023 and will again work with 15-19 NEET young people, supporting them to re-engage in positive EET activity. The project will continue until 31 March 2025, and aims to reach 380 15-19 year-olds.

### **Adult Education**

The Lifelong Learning Service has secured a £3m Adult Education Budget to support around 3000 learners and has, additionally, secured £179,000 for Multiply delivery (a numeracy programme) to over 100 learners. The service has seen over 2000 enrolments in the first month of the new academic year as well as successfully gaining Matrix accreditation (the service's annual quality benchmark). Adult learners have been recognised through a National Festival of Learning winner at the prestigious Learning and Work National Award ceremony in London. Additionally, 2 learners were finalists at the Ascentis Annual Awards for 'learner of the year.' Finally, in terms of outcomes with regards to GCSE English and Maths, the service achieved a 96% pass rate which is an excellent result for Oldham's adult learners.

**Recommendations:** Council is requested to note the report.