

Report to Children's Scrutiny Board

Response to the local area inspection on support and provision for children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ali, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

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Reason for report

- 1.1. To provide an update for the Children's Scrutiny Board on support and provision for children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and inclusion in the local area.
- 1.2. This report provides headlines related to SEND and inclusion, focusing on how the local area partnership has responded to the inspection carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in June 2023.

2. Overview

- 2.1. A joint Ofsted/CQC area SEND inspection of the Oldham partnership took place between Monday 26 June 2023 to Friday 30 June 2023. In August 2023 the managing director of children and young people for Oldham council and the chief executive of greater Manchester integrated care board received the inspection report, which determined the following outcome:
 - 2.1.1. *There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently.*
- 2.2. As a result of the inspection, Ofsted required the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (PAP) to address the identified areas for priority action, which consist of:
 - 2.2.1. Leaders at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board should cooperate to urgently improve the shared strategic governance, oversight, support, challenge, and planning to deliver effective strategies to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Oldham.

- 2.2.2. Leaders at Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board, including commissioners and providers, should act urgently to identify and address the delays and gaps in service provision to meet the full range of needs of children and young people with SEND, aged 0 to 25, in Oldham. This includes speech and language provision, neurodevelopmental pathways and community paediatrics.
 - 2.3. In addition to the priority areas of action, the report stated three areas for improvement:
 - 2.3.1. Leaders across the partnership should improve transitions between children's and adult services in health, education and social care, and improve their strategy in relation to preparing children and young people with SEND for adulthood from the earliest years.
 - 2.3.2. Leaders across the partnership should embed and improve processes for the quality assurance of EHC plans and use this to further improve the quality and timeliness of outcomes and provision in new and existing EHC plans.
 - 2.3.3. Leaders across the partnership should improve annual review processes so that the finalised review documentation is completed and returned in a timely manner.
 - 2.4. The local area partnership worked to develop the PAP, which was submitted to Ofsted/CQC for approval in October 2023, gaining approval shortly after. Our parent/carer organisation, POINT, remain integral throughout our partnership response. Actions relating to areas for development have been embedded in our existing SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme, which Ofsted/CQC felt was ambitious.
 - 2.5. A monitoring inspection will be carried out within approximately 18 months of the inspection to assess how the partnership has responded to the issues raised.
3. **Governance and accountability**
 - 3.1. In addition to existing governance structures across statutory partners, a Local Inclusion Partnership Executive Board has been established. Although linked to the PAP, this is also in response to the government's proposal to introduce this, for all local authorities, as a statutory group from 2024, bringing with it a requirement for a Local Area Inclusion Plan.
 - 3.2. Partnership boards will bring together key statutory partners, in our case, Oldham MBC and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board, along with system partners. They will be expected to create evidence based local inclusion plans setting out how the needs of children and young people will be met in line with new National Standards, which Oldham will be testing as part of the Change Partnership Programme.
 - 3.3. The board's role is to provide support and challenge across the partnership, at the strategic level, for Oldham Council (for education and social care) and the Integrated Care Partnership (for health).
 - 3.4. The board will hold to account the local area for identifying, agreeing and driving forward the required improvements required across the local area system. It will also be responsible for implementation of the post Ofsted/CQC priority action plan and the local inclusion plan.
 - 3.5. In doing so, the board will ensure improvement activity is carried out within the required timescales and will hold the council, the integrated care partnership and other partners to account for their respective responsibilities.

- 3.6. The Local Inclusion Partnership Executive Board is at a critical implementation stage where it is essential that an independent chair is appointed to drive progress across Oldham's special education needs and/or disability (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) agenda.
- 3.7. The Local Inclusion Partnership Executive Board has secured a high level and highly experienced independent chair, Dame Christine Lenehan, from January 2024.
- 3.8. The Local Inclusion Partnership Board will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy, 2023-2027, and underpinning SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme, towards delivery of the required outcomes. In doing so, the Local Inclusion Partnership Board will ensure improvement activity is carried out within the required timescales and will hold partners to account for their respective responsibilities.
- 3.9. In short, there is an unrelenting focus on improving the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND and those who are vulnerable.

4. Progress since the inspection

- 4.1. Oldham champions a local area partnership approach to improving provision, services, experience and outcomes for children and young people within the borough, regardless of their starting point or needs. This includes using the resources available to provide the best possible support and provision for those children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable.
- 4.2. Improvements will be secured through the work of the Local Inclusion Partnership working across the local area.

5. Key aspects of progress related to the PAP

- 5.1. The governance structure (appendix I) shows how the governance system is now working to ensure strong oversight at the strategic organisational level, based on key areas that we know require a high-level focus.
- 5.2. Several PAP actions have been completed and evidence is being collected to support the impact of these.
- 5.3. A joint area data dashboard has been developed, featuring key areas related to the PAP. This requires further development and will grow as work progresses.
- 5.4. A speech and language therapy (S<) recovery plan has been developed and this has been discussed at the Local inclusion Partnership Executive Board. Agreements have been sought for partnership investment to support the work to address the long waiting lists. Whilst discussions are ongoing, there is a clear pathway for enhancing the S< team to ensure progress is made.
- 5.5. There is complexity around the governance for mental health provision across the partnership including the Oldham SEND Children & Young Peoples Mental Health Steering Group and the key areas for improvement for service transformation in health including: managing waiting lists and demand.
- 5.6. The 16–18-year-old offer: The Greater Manchester Mental Health Board have completed service mapping and identified 16 -18 as a gap, which is also impacted by growing demand. As a result, this has been commissioned and recruitment is underway. A new pathway is being developed, in addition to the neurodevelopment pathway, and this is featured on the action plan with recommendations for the service and commissioners.

- 5.7. Progress related to the areas for development identified in the inspection report, includes:
- 5.7.1. **Transitions:** Transitions are a key part of the SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme, under the preparation for adulthood (PfA) priority. As transitions cover a wide range of support and provision, discussions have begun re: developing a transitions strategy with parents/carers. This will commence in Jan 2024. POINT/PCF have already commenced work with families.
 - 5.7.2. **Quality assurance of EHCPs:** An EHCP and annual review workstream has been set up and terms of reference agreed. The first meeting took place at the beginning of December. This will ensure tracking of timeliness for statutory processes and quality assurance related to SEND.
 - 5.7.3. As part of the post inspection support packages available to Oldham, external support is being utilised to enhance improvements in quality of EHCPs.
 - 5.7.4. **Annual reviews:** Four additional dedicated officers have been employed specifically to address amendments of annual reviews, prioritising those relating to transitions and pre-transition years in preparation for children and young people moving phases of education. For this academic year, 2023-2024, this totals 1355 updated EHCPs following an annual review (out of a total 3,264 EHCPs).

6. Further information

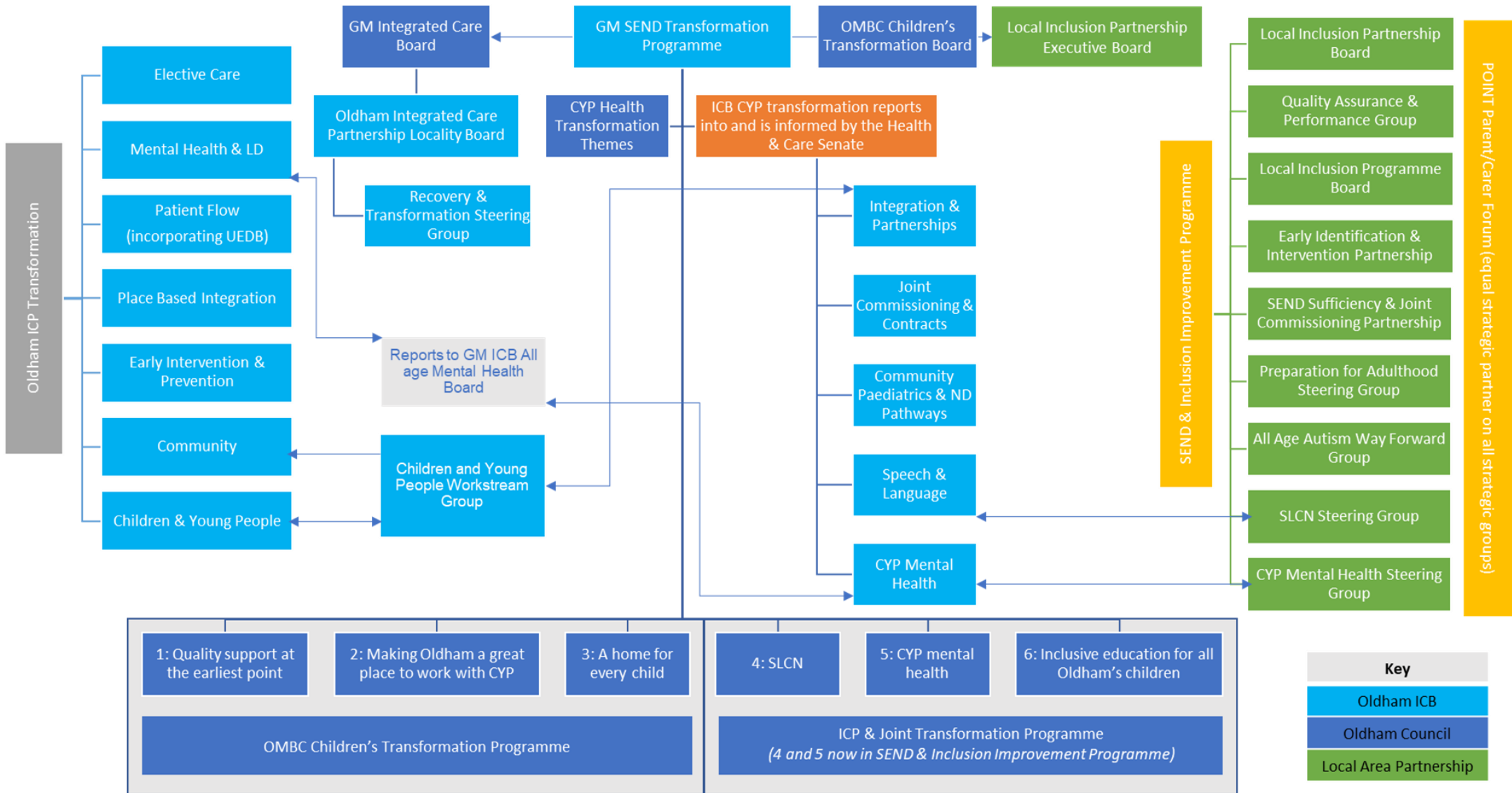
- 6.1. Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC): <https://www.rcslt.org/news/send-and-ap-improvement-plan-our-initial-response/>
- 6.2. Ofsted inspection report: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80535>
- 6.3. Oldham priority action plan: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201071/reports_strategies_values_codes_of_practice_send/3071/local_area_send_inspection_priority_action_plan

7. Appendix

Appendix I: Governance structure

Appendix II: Glossary

Oldham Local Area Governance Structure, September 2023



Glossary

AP	Alternative Provision
AY	Academic Year
C&FA	Children & Families Act, 2014
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
CPP	Change Programme Partnership
CQC	Care Quality Commission
DBV	Delivering Better Value
DfE	Department for Education
EHCNA	Education, health and care needs assessment
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
ELSEC	Early Language Support for Every Child
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
FY	Financial Year
HNPCA	High Needs Provision Capital Allocations
ICP	Integrated Care Partnership
ICB	Integrated Care Board
INMSS	Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools
LA	Local Authority
NHSE	National Health Service England
OMBC	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
OoB	Out of Borough
PA	Persistently Absent
PAP	Priority Action Plan
PfA	Preparation for Adulthood
POSC	Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee
S<	Speech and Language Therapy/Therapist
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities
SEND CoP	SEND Code of Practice, 2015
SLCN	Speech, Language & Communication Needs
YTD	Year-to-Date