



**Oldham**  
Council

## Report to Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board

# Sexual Health Update

### Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member Health and Social Care

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### Purpose of the Report

This report provides an overview of provision delivered by sexual health services in the borough to improve the sexual health and wellbeing of Oldham's residents.

### Executive Summary

Having a high functioning sexual health offer for our residents is an essential component of the range of activity required to achieve better population health and reduce demand on health and social care services. As per Public Health funding conditions and mandated responsibilities, we are required to ensure access to sexual health services for all of our residents.

Oldham, Rochdale and Bury Councils (ORB) collaboratively commission the provision of an Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) to support better population health and meet our mandated responsibilities for open access sexual health services. HCRG Care Group has been commissioned to provide Oldham, Rochdale and Bury Integrated Sexual Health Service (ORBISH) since 1 April 2022, for an initial 5-year contract term, with an option to extend by up to 5 further years. A summary of progress in the last 12 months and future plans will be provided.

HCRG also work in collaboration with Early Break to provide an integrated Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service (Meeting Your Needs Oldham – MYNO) and have been commissioned to deliver this service since 1 April 2021. Cabinet recently approved the option to extend the contract for a period of 2 years, until 31 March 2026. MYNO has been subject to a budget reduction for the periods of 2023/24 and 2024/25: an overview of progress to date will be provided.

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Representatives from HCRG Care Group and Early Break have been invited to attend the committee meeting to present an update on progress made by the services in improving sexual health outcomes and achieving budget reduction targets.

### **Recommendations**

Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board is asked to consider the update on recent delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service and Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service, including relevant performance information and contributions towards improving health outcomes, and note the progress made and next steps towards achieving the budget reduction for the young people's service.

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## Sexual Health - Update

### 1 Context

- 1.1. Good sexual health is important to individuals, but it is also a key public health issue. Sexual ill health and poor sexual wellbeing are strongly linked to deprivation and health inequalities, with our more deprived populations experiencing worse sexual health, and poor sexual health presents significant costs to society, as well as to the individual. Sexual and reproductive health is not just about preventing disease or infection. It also means promoting good sexual health in a wider context, including relationships, sexuality and sexual rights. Most of the adult population of England are sexually active and access to quality sexual health services improves the health and wellbeing of both individuals and populations.
- 1.2. Improving the sexual health of the population remains a public health priority. The consequences of poor sexual health include:
  - unplanned pregnancies and abortions
  - psychological consequences, including from sexual coercion and abuse
  - poor educational, social and economic opportunities for teenage parents and their children
  - HIV transmission
  - cervical and other genital cancers
  - hepatitis, chronic liver disease and liver cancer
  - recurrent genital herpes
  - recurrent genital warts
  - pelvic inflammatory disease, which can cause ectopic pregnancies and infertility
  - poorer maternity outcomes for mother and baby
- 1.3. Local authorities are mandated to commission and fund comprehensive, open-access HIV/STI testing services; STI treatment services (excluding HIV treatment); and contraception services for the benefit of all persons of all ages who present in their area. Integrated Sexual Health Services (ISHS) include contraception and sexual health [CASH, also known as family planning] and genito-urinary services [GUM]. Integrated Sexual Health Services contribute to several key public health outcomes including reducing STIs, reducing unwanted pregnancies, and reducing repeat abortions.
- 1.4. The Greater Manchester (GM) Sexual Health Strategy's vision is to improve sexual health knowledge, provide accessible sexual health services, improve sexual health outcomes and achieve HIV eradication in a generation. A high-quality system (including digital provision) for sexual and reproductive health across Greater Manchester will ensure that all residents are able to exercise personal choice and self-management regarding their sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and able to access the appropriate support when required, across the life course.
- 1.5. Continuing challenges include the rising rates of some sexually transmitted infections (particularly gonorrhoea and syphilis), the transmission of HIV, high rates of terminations, lower than national rates of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) and the post-pandemic reduction in clinic attendance by young people. Oldham has poor outcomes in relation to sexual health and remains consistently worse than GM, NW and England rates for under 18 conceptions, abortion rates, uptake of LARC and STI diagnosis.
- 1.6. Oldham's Sexual Health Strategic Partnership was re-established in 2023 and has a vision to "Improve the sexual health and wellbeing of the people of Oldham, reduce health

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inequalities and improve population health outcomes, building an open culture where everyone can make informed and responsible choices about relationships and sex”. The partnership brings together local organisations to agree and oversee the delivery of a joint approach to improving sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing for residents of Oldham and provides strategic leadership and clear accountability for improving sexual health outcomes by leading the development of a multi-agency strategic and operational response to sexual and reproductive health challenges, driving innovation and sustainable improvement. The partnership is in the process of developing a locality action plan, ensuring that prevention is central to its approach and that our residents are equipped with skills and knowledge to make informed decisions, and will address the key local priorities:

- Control transmission and reduce prevalence of STIs.
- Reduce the proportion of residents diagnosed with HIV at a late stage of infection.
- Reduce the number of unintended conceptions among residents of all ages and reducing the number of abortions and repeat abortions.
- Narrow inequalities in sexual health based on age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. Oldham, Rochdale and Bury Councils have a collaborative vision to improve the sexual health and wellbeing of the people living in our localities. In order to achieve this, we have collaboratively commissioned an integrated sexual health service which can lead the local health care system in responding to the changing sexual health needs of our residents. The service is responsible for improving population health outcomes by building an open culture where everyone is able to make informed and responsible choices about relationships and sex. The service also supports efforts to tackle health inequalities locally by ensuring targeted provision for those individuals who are most at risk of sexual health related harm or poorer sexual health outcomes.
- 2.2. The Oldham, Rochdale and Bury Integrated Sexual Health Service (known as ORBISH), delivered by HCRG Care Group, commenced delivery on 1 April 2022. The contract term is for a period of five years up to the end of 31 March 2027. There is an option to extend the contract for up to a further five years, up to 10 years in total until 31 March 2032. Oldham’s annual contribution towards the contract is £1,339,000.
- 2.3. As part of the Oldham Integrated Sexual Health Service, HCRG Care Group provide the following:
  - Contraception, including Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC – commonly known as coils and implants) and Emergency Contraception (IUD and contraceptive pills)
  - Pregnancy testing
  - Support and referral for termination of pregnancy
  - Distribution of condoms and lube (including free online ordering for postal delivery)
  - Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV
  - Partner notification
  - Express and postal testing
  - HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP/PEPSE)
  - Clinical and non-clinical outreach
  - Psycho-sexual counselling and support, including support with erectile dysfunction (appointment only – referral from GP required)
  - Support and onward referral for sexual assault, rape and abuse

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- 2.4. An overview of the procurement of the Integrated Sexual Health Service, including the delivery model and anticipated outcomes, was presented to Health Scrutiny Committee in January 2022, following completion of the tender exercise and prior to the start of the contract term. Health Scrutiny Committee received an update on the new enhanced Integrated Sexual Health Service offer and progress made during the first year of the new contract in January 2023.
- 2.5. Oldham Council have also separately commissioned an integrated Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service. This service is delivered by Early Break, in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust, under the service name Meeting Your Needs Oldham (MYNO). In December 2023, Cabinet agreed to enact the provision to extend the current contract for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 (with a remaining provision to extend for up to a further 2 years up to a total contract length of 7 years) as permitted in the original terms and conditions for the contract. The original contract value for the delivery of the service was £600,000 per annum, funded by the Public Health core budget. As part of the ongoing corporate budget challenge, it was agreed in February 2023 to reduce the budget for the provision of the service by £150,000 (over two years, to be achieved by end of financial year 2024/25). This has resulted in an annual contract value of £450,000.
- 2.6. The Meeting Your Needs Oldham (MYNO) service offers specialist support for sexual health, contraception, and the prevention and treatment of substance misuse for young people. This enables young people to access high-quality information, advice and treatment for both their sexual health and substance use in a single location and transaction. MYNO is an integrated offer for young people aged under 19 (or aged 19-25 if they are a child looked after by the local authority or care leaver, or SEND), providing a holistic service addressing young people's health and wellbeing, specifically providing advice, information and treatment for both sexual health and substance misuse. For the purposes of this report, in relation to sexual health, the service:
- Provides support to the wider Oldham system (including schools, youth services, and children's social care) to deliver information and advice around sexual health and wellbeing and support to deliver relationship and sex education (RSE).
  - Provides information, advice and guidance for young people attending the service, through outreach activities, and to a wider audience through digital channels, including a website which aims to improve knowledge and understanding of sexual and reproductive health and drugs and alcohol among young people living in Oldham.
  - Supports young people in contact with the service to develop their knowledge and understanding of sex and relationships, skills and confidence to protect or improve their sexual health
  - Provides clinical contraception and sexual health services through clinic-based and outreach (community based) activities.
  - Works with adult services, sexual health services and universal services such as primary care, to ensure a seamless transition for young people who are approaching the age limit for the service.
- 2.7. The Integrated Sexual Health Service and Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service both contributes towards achieving the following outcomes:
1. Reducing the number of unintended conceptions among women of all ages
  2. Reducing the number of under-18 conceptions
  3. Reducing the number of abortions and repeat abortions among women of all ages
  4. Increasing the proportion of abortions performed under 10 weeks
  5. Reducing the prevalence of undiagnosed STIs including HIV
  6. Controlling the transmission of STIs including HIV
  7. Reducing the proportion of residents diagnosed with HIV at a late stage of infection
  8. Increasing the proportion of residents vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
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9. Narrowing of inequalities in sexual health between people of different age groups.
  10. Narrowing of inequalities in sexual health between at-risk groups (e.g. men who have sex with men, trans and non-binary people, people from Black African communities etc.) and the general population.

The services support delivery against indicators relating to sexual health in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, which include the following:

C01: Health Improvement: Total prescribed LARC, excluding injections rates

C02: Health Improvement: Under-18 conceptions rates

D02a: Health Protection: Chlamydia diagnoses (15-24 year olds)

D02b: Health Protection: New STI Diagnoses (excluding chlamydia aged <25)

D07: Health Protection: People presenting with HIV at a late stage of infection.

### 3. Progress to date

- 3.1. HCRG Care Group have continued to make an impact as the provider of Oldham, Rochdale and Bury's Integrated Sexual Health Service (ORBISH). They have provided free and confidential sexual health services in the three localities, including information and advice on all types of contraception and STI testing and treatment. The service is confidential, non-judgmental and for people of all ages, genders and orientations.
- 3.2. During the second year of the contract, HCRG have focused on further developing and enhancing the service offer. This has included work to improve access to Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC), which is the most efficient and cost-effective method of contraception, via the reintroduction of spoke sites, development of a prioritisation framework to reduce waiting times, development of the Primary Care LARC offer (including an enhanced training offer) and progress towards introducing an enhanced LARC offer for post-natal women via Maternity Services. Ongoing work with community pharmacies is taking place to ensure there are effective pathways in place for those accessing Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC) to ensure they can access Sexual Health services for ongoing contraception and any STI screening or treatment, as necessary. Continued development of digital and remote services, including online access to EHC, contraceptive pills, condoms, STI testing kits, HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and advice, information and guidance, is underway with the introduction of a dedicated young people's page and a professional zone on the [Sexual Health Hub](#).
- 3.3. HCRG have been a key strategic partner and system leader in the development of the Oldham Strategic Sexual Health Partnership and are playing a key role in the development and delivery of the locality action plan. HCRG are currently working towards their Pride in Practice accreditation and are reviewing their processes and practice to ensure they are inclusive. They are also further developing their assertive clinical outreach function to address the more complex sexual health needs of the most vulnerable, marginalised and socially disengaged people in our communities. This includes working closely with Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) to ensure there is targeted, specialist support available for women who sex work and live or work in Oldham or Rochdale with a key aim of improving their health, wellbeing and safety. The provider also continues to offer a non-clinical outreach function as part of the service which is flexible in order to respond to local intelligence and changing circumstances. This is targeted at those most at risk of poor sexual health to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities and comprises of proactive robust prevention interventions, such as information provision or education, marketing and advertising, and outreach to support people to develop the knowledge and skills to prevent poor sexual health and, therefore, reduce demand for reproductive and sexual health services.

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- 3.4. Representatives from HCRG Care Group will attend the Health Scrutiny Committee Meeting to provide a brief summary presentation on progress during the past year, including performance data and their contributions towards improving health outcomes for Oldham residents, as well as how they have contributed towards tackling health inequalities locally.
- 3.5. The Young People's Service, MYNO, continues to deliver an effective integrated service delivering both sexual health and substance misuse interventions for young people in the borough. The service engages approximately 250 young people in structured Tier 2 and 3 substance misuse treatment per year, primarily supporting around cannabis and alcohol use but is seeing small but increasing numbers of young people using other substances such as nitrous oxide, LSD and benzodiazepines. The service works closely with schools and education settings and the outreach team works closely with the youth service and detached youth team to provide assertive outreach and brief interventions, advice and support to young people in our communities, based on local intelligence. The service flexes its delivery and approach to meet the needs of the young people they are working with recognising that there are differing needs, stigma and complexities within different groups and communities. Up to 40 families a year access the innovative Holding Families programme provided by the service, which provides whole family support for children and family members affected by parental substance use and the service works with parents and carers at any stage of their recovery from drugs and alcohol use. Around 280 young people per year are accessing clinical (face to face) sexual health appointments with a further 400 accessing STI testing kits and almost 700 packs of condoms and lube being distributed via the condom distribution scheme, plus there is a comprehensive online support offer including online emergency contraception (subject to Fraser Competency to ensure appropriate safeguarding is in place).
- 3.6. The MYNO service has achieved £64,000 budget reduction in 2023/24 without the need for any mitigation to the agreed service delivery model. In order to achieve the savings to date, the service providers have been able to release some natural slippage due to changes in staffing and a reduction in overheads, plus they have reconfigured the service delivery model to make better use of existing capacity. They have also achieved efficiencies around pathology and consumable costs as the provider of the sexual health element of the service (HCRG Care Group) also delivers the all-age Integrated Sexual Health Service and Oldham has benefitted from shared provision around community chlamydia screening and postal/online STI testing that is also available via that service (and that local young people can also access).
- 3.7. Plans are in the process of being finalised to achieve the remaining £86,000 in 2024/25. The revised contract value remains in line with other neighbouring and comparable authorities for the delivery of this type of service and presents good value for money. In applying the budget reductions, the provider has worked to minimise the impact on front line delivery and service deliverables by focusing primarily on creating efficiencies in back office and running costs and from the sexual health element of the service with due regard being made to avoid any reduction in investment in substance misuse service delivery in line with OHID substance misuse grant conditions. The providers have worked with commissioners to prioritise options that have minimal impact on front-line delivery and our residents whilst ensuring that our most vulnerable young people and families are able to access the support and treatment that they need. In order to do this, work has taken place at a national level for both the main providers which has been beneficial to Oldham residents as it has significantly reduced the anticipated impact of the agreed budget savings on front-line delivery. It is anticipated that the proposed changes will have minimal impact of the experience of our young people receiving support from the service and should not affect their ability to access the provision or disrupt service delivery. Moreover, work will take place across the system to improve the strategic response to improving sexual health and addressing substance misuse via improved joint working arrangements
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that are in place as part of the revised alliance/partnership working and local strategic action plans.

- 3.8. Representatives from Early Break and HCRG Care Group will attend the Health Scrutiny Committee Meeting to provide further details on recent activity and how the remaining budget reduction will be achieved.

#### **4. Key Issues for Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board to Discuss**

- 4.1. Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board is asked to consider the Integrated Sexual Health Service and Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service offers and how they aim to reduce health inequalities, improve population health outcomes and build an open culture where everyone is able to make informed and responsible choices about relationships and sex.

#### **5. Key Questions for Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board to Consider**

- 5.1. Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board is asked to consider the update on recent delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service and Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service, including relevant performance information and contributions towards improving health outcomes, and note the progress made and next steps towards achieving the budget reduction for the young people's service.

#### **6. Links to Corporate Outcomes**

- 6.1. The Integrated Sexual Health Service and Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service, as with all Public Health commissioned services, fully support the delivery of Corporate Plan objectives of residents first, place-based working, digitisation and a preventative approach. The commissioning of the services is consistent with the commitment within the Oldham Plan to take a person and community centred approach, that places prevention at the heart of our emerging new model of delivery.

#### **7. Consultation**

- 7.1. Quarterly formal contract and performance monitoring meetings take place between the Providers and Commissioners as part of contract monitoring arrangements plus regular transformation meetings to monitor the delivery of any new elements of service delivery. Reports include consideration of service user engagement and feedback. The Director of Public Health, in her capacity as statutory officer, and the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care have been appropriately briefed regarding progress and performance.

#### **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 None