



POSITIVE STEPS

SUPPORT | CHALLENGE | CHANGE

OLDHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE PLAN

2024-2025

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1. Introduction, Vision and Strategy

Oldham is in a unique position in that it is one of the only areas in England and Wales where the statutory Youth Justice Service (YJS) is commissioned by the local authority and delivered by an independent charitable trust - Positive Steps. Positive Steps delivers a range of services, including career advice and Guidance, Connect to Your Future Mentoring, Positive Futures Alternative Provision, Early Intervention and Prevention (formerly Early Help), Oldham Young Carer's Project, and the Missing from Home Return Interview Service. As such, children and their families can access an integrated, holistic, and non-stigmatising offer, delivered from our newly refurbished base in Oldham town centre, as well as in community hubs across the borough. Furthermore, this arrangement allows for innovation and creativity through the ability to access a range of additional funding streams to provide added value and to lead practice in specific areas of practice.

This plan has been written in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and national guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Following consultation with Oldham Youth Justice Management Board, YJS practitioners, children with lived experience and their parents or carers. This plan seeks to inform the strategic direction of the service and outlines how it will achieve primary its functions of:

- Reducing the number of first-time entrants (FTE) into the criminal justice service
- Reducing re-offending by children subject to statutory Court Orders or Out of Court Disposals
- Reducing the use of custody for children

While additionally:

- Effectively safeguarding the children, we work with
- Effectively protecting the public from harm
- Enhancing the voice and experience of victims of crime committed by children.

The Oldham Youth Justice Plan 2024-2025 is not an isolated initiative, but a part of the broader Oldham Children, Young People and Families Plan. This alignment confirms our commitment to a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of our youth and their families.

"In Oldham we want all children and young people to have a safe, happy, and healthy life and access to a great education giving them the best possible start in life. As a service we commit to:

- *Putting children and young people first*
- *Helping families and supporting vulnerable children and young people*
- *Working as one team close to our community*
- *Providing great public value and confidence*

Our ambition is not just to be the best borough for children and young people but to be the best borough for the staff and services that work with them."

It is also in line with the Oldham Council Corporate Plan which outlines the following way of working:

Residents First The commitment to making every service a good service and every experience a good experience means constantly working with residents to improve our performance.

Place-based Working We aim to deliver more and more locally, across our five districts. Each district has a dedicated team, and over the course of this plan our work will become more integrated with other public bodies like the NHS, schools, housing associations and the police.

Digital Many residents want and expect the convenience of being able to apply for services or solve problems online, so we'll be making that easier, while continuing to provide alternative support for those who need it.

Working with Communities to Reduce Need Taking a community-centred, preventative approach to public services is better for everyone. We will increasingly focus resources on early help, from investments to encourage exercise and healthy eating, to community events and interventions to support people before things go too wrong.

As a partnership in Oldham, we have already taken great strides to improve the experience and outcomes for children living in the borough, and we endeavor to continuously build upon these. We recognise that to achieve the best outcomes for the children we are working with this can only be done in collaboration with others. Partners that we work with include Oldham Council, Greater Manchester Police, Community Safety Partnership, Local Health Authorities, Probation, all local educational establishments, and the local and national voluntary sector. All our partners are represented on our Youth Justice Management Board and are therefore involved in the monitoring and delivery of this plan.

The vision of Oldham Youth Justice Service is "Working Together to Support, Challenge & Change" and aims to provide a service that is:

- **Child First** - Ambitious and inspirational for the children and families it works with. Truly collaborative and led by the voice of the child.
- **Bespoke** – working with children and families in the places that best work for them.
- **Innovative** – using technology effectively to enhance our communications with children, their families and our partners.
- **Collaborative** working collaboratively with all partners to reduce the number of children encountering the youth justice system.

Oldham is one of the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester. It is a complex and challenging place to deliver youth justice, with, according to the 2021 Census Data, a population of 242,100, a figure which represents an overall growth rate of 7.3% within the last 10 years. Of this, 54,800 children live in Oldham and this percentage in recent years has been rising.

While a youthful population undoubtedly has many advantages, the impact on health services, education and employment opportunities cannot be ignored. Adding to this, while the borough has pockets of prosperity, the English Indices of Deprivation shows levels are ranked amongst the highest in the country and Oldham is positioned 19th worst out of 317 Local Authorities. Further analysis evidences several wards are placed within the bottom 1% nationally in terms of income deprivation attending children, which is concerning given that the ongoing cost of living crisis is having the biggest impact on those already experiencing poverty. The ethnic composition of Oldham is changing dramatically, with the proportion of residents of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage increasing to 10.1% and 7.3%, respectively. Further growth can also be observed within Polish and Romanian heritage communities. It is well evidenced that individuals from black and global majority backgrounds are over-represented within the criminal justice system, and in Oldham, this is true of children from Asian, Black or "Other" heritages at most stages. This diversity is a strength to be valued and promoted, although some people experience discrimination and disadvantage, requiring change to champion fairness and equality.

During 2023 – 2024 there were 346 youth arrests in Oldham. This can be attributed to Greater Manchester Police having made significant progress in improving the forces' response to incidents and investigation of crime. In Oldham, incidents of violence remain a concern, and consequently, this affects children physically, psychologically, or emotionally.

2. Child First

Child-first principles permeate all aspects of service delivery in youth justice in Oldham, and this is explicitly set out in our ethos.

1. **See children as children**—all staff actively use the term "child" in assessments, reports, and conversations. Staff have received training on Child First and deliver this across the partnership. Staff have received training and challenged other agencies on appropriate language use. Staff acknowledge maturity and how various life experiences, such as trauma, and racial trauma, can impact this by ensuring plans are bespoke and developmentally tailored.

2. **Developing a pro-social identity** – the service has moved away from consequential interventions, ensuring that instead a focus is given to the child's strengths. There is a real emphasis on education, training, and employment. Alongside this, we provide access to activities which broaden horizons and allow children opportunities to see places outside of Oldham they have previously not experienced. This can be visiting National Trust sites with some children have volunteered as Park Rangers.

3. **Collaborating with children** – all children create their intervention plan alongside their Case Manager and contribute to the activities they carry out. They also can shape service delivery through "Your Opinion Matters" with their parents or carers. This collaboration reaches far wider than Oldham, with children being involved in work with courts and the legal system to ensure that their needs are met in this context.

4. **Promoting diversion** – the importance of diversion is appreciated across the partnership through a well-established Prevention and Diversion Panel. The partnership is well represented and engaged in decision making.

5. **Being culturally aware** – all the team have recently completed cultural awareness training run by Inside Out and the Managers completed the management training. Moving forwards managers will explore this further during supervision when discussing children. These conversations will especially explore intersectionality and how these impact on the child they are working with.

All Case Managers are encouraged to complete the “Child First Effective Practice Certificate”, delivered by Unitas and there are two newer Case Managers currently completing this. Staff also deliver training on Child First as part of the Oldham Children’s Safeguarding Partnership calendar, as well as to various forums upon request such as the Designated Teachers Meeting.

In February, Oldham YJS underwent a standards evaluation visit undertaken by the Youth Justice Board. The final report stated that,

“Thank you to Oldham YJS for their time and co-operation in this very positive validation visit. The staff we spoke to all showed a degree of professional curiosity – asking questions, having discussions and debates and generally thinking about practice. ”

This has been a focus for our ‘Child First’ practice, ensuring professional curiosity and having discussions and debates. This has been further enhanced by the cultural awareness training undertaken in April 2024 by the whole team. This training focused on intersectionality to promote consistent curiosity about the different aspects of children’s lives and identities and how these impact them.

3.Resources and Services

Oldham Youth Justice Service is committed to ensuring value for money via robust budget management and effective service delivery. The service ensures that resources are deployed appropriately to meet the needs of a smaller, convicted cohort, with increased out-of-court disposals and early preventative interventions.

The youth justice budget comprises the main Local Authority funding, the Youth Justice Board Grant, and, as of December 2023, the Turnaround Grant from the Ministry of Justice. The latter primarily supports the core staffing of the service, with some allocation provided for training and a small activity budget to provide positive activities to children.

The staffing structure has been described in the Workforce Development part of this plan, along with the partnership contribution in terms of the secondment arrangements for police, health, speech and language. There is also now an agreement for a seconded CAMHS practitioner for the service, which will shortly be advertised.

The commissioning arrangement with Positive Steps is advantageous as it allows YJS to express an interest in and apply for funding streams that traditional local authority-based services would not be able to. In 23/24 this included continuing a partnership project with Mind to support the emotional wellbeing of children working with YJS. The service was also successful in securing funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to host the Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium, which improves the outcomes for children in custody across the conurbation.

Moving into 24/25, the funding for the Mind partnership and Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium will continue.

During 23/24, Getting Out for Good (working with girls subject to or at risk of exploitation) has been running with good outcomes. The funding for this project moving forward has not yet been confirmed, but we are working proactively with relevant commissioners to progress.

During 23/24, YJS also applied for and was awarded money from Police Proceeds of Crime to broaden the horizons of children working with the service, giving them opportunities to engage in activities they otherwise would not be able to, such as visiting local attractions, sightseeing and trying new sports. This has been successful and there have been some wonderful examples of children leaving the borough for the first time, seeing animals for the first time and gaining an understanding of the wider world. This has encouraged children to become more aspirational and gain an understanding of the other opportunities that are available to them. A further application will be made to the fund and discussions will shortly be taking place with the police about the other opportunities available for using this funding.

We use our grant, partnership contributions, additional funding, and available resources to achieve the primary functions of the Youth Justice Service and demonstrate excellent performance. Our performance will be improved in 2024/2025 by:

- Ensuring an outstanding governance and leadership structure, aligning this to other local authority children's plans, and having shared aims and understanding of the priorities for children in the criminal justice system
- Ensuring children from over-represented groups have a fairer experience of the criminal justice system by ensuring that plans are bespoke and culturally aware.
- Ensuring children working with Oldham YJS have access to relevant and consistent physical and mental health support at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring children working with Oldham YJS are afforded the opportunity to engage in diversionary activities as an alternative to prosecutions.
- Continuing to provide innovative approaches to support desistance through sourcing additional funding streams.
- Holding a 'Preventing Serious Youth Violence' conference in Oldham

4. Board Development

While visiting Oldham in March 2023, the Peer Review Team observed,

“some passionate board members, who championed children’s needs. There was clear evidence that this championing transcended into their own agencies, demonstrating the sphere of influence of the board and some system impact”.

The board is settled with good attendance by decision makers across all agencies.

The board has continued to develop throughout 2023/2024 and there is now greater oversight of the quality assurance process with a ‘deep dive’ or thematic case review being presented to every board accompanied by case studies. This has given board members an understanding of the different areas of work being undertaken and how the service is impacting children and their families. Deep dives undertaken so far have been: Looked After Children, Court Cases, the validation visit as well as restorative justice and victim work. There has also been an in-depth review of the Missing from Home interviews and the TOG Mind Wellbeing Coach Project and its outcomes.

This plan is aligned with that of the local authority, and as outlined earlier, the vision and strategies are aligned.

There was a review of the membership during 2023/2024, and all key agencies are now represented on the board by decision-makers.

The action plan is reviewed at each board meeting so that the board are aware of the progress made.

Board members have contributed suggestions and access to funding and have actively promoted the youth justice service.

Task and Finish groups took place during 2023/2024, focusing on Outcome 22 and developing a toolkit for schools as part of the prevention work from the Turnaround project's legacy.

Profiles for each board member have started to be put together, which will enable people to gain a greater understanding of the board. This information will be shared on the Youth Justice Service website and can be used by board members as part of their promotion of the service moving forward.

Board members will be invited to attend and partake in key events during 2024/2025 such as the prevention conference.

5. Workforce Development

There is a recognition that the most important asset to the service is the staff team and there is significant focus on professional development and internal promotion.

This can be observed through the Head of Service and two Operational Managers having progressed through different positions within the service. Positive Steps is recognised as an 'Investors in People' organisation providing external validation of their commitment to their staff and their development.

Each member of staff undergoes a robust induction process, which was reviewed in early 2023, to not only the youth justice service but also the wider organisation of Positive Steps and the Oldham partnership. This includes the allocation of a "buddy", meetings with key staff and teams both internally and externally, mandatory reading and training, the development of a personalised action plan, increased supervision, shadowing opportunities and joint case work.

Each member of staff has an annual appraisal to analyse performance, identify training needs and promote professional development. From this an annual training plan is developed. All staff, including those seconded, have access to training on offer through the Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (OSCP) with the calendar being visited during supervision, as well as external opportunities created through additional funding streams.

In 2023/24, staff received training on Cultural Awareness, Resettlement, Effective use of language when working with children, and Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEPCC) via Unitas and AIM3 training. There has also been significant 'on the job' training being undertaken with newer case managers and engagement workers.

The workforce is supported through access to the Employee Assistance programme and informal and formal supervision, which can be in terms of both professional and personal issues. Staff say of their managers:

"my manager regularly checks in with me although we have supervision meetings."

"my manager has been very active in supporting me on a professional level, both by providing hands-on guidance discussions in supervision as well as instilling belief in me to act independently, something which I believe has been really beneficial to my learning and confidence in my role."

"my manager is patient and understanding. always ensuring my mental health is a priority so that I can continue progressing my caseload."

Case Managers facilitate monthly Peer Supervision, and Engagement Workers have monthly Group Supervision led by an Operation Manager, giving the opportunity to discuss and reflect on case-specific or thematic issues. These sessions are well attended and received with practitioners outlining how beneficial the learning is that they get from one another.

As part of workforce development, YJS also delivers training to the partnership as part of the OSCP calendar or upon request on several topics to enhance the knowledge of others working in Oldham. This includes Understanding Exploitation (in conjunction with Complex Safeguarding), Prevention and Diversion, Principles of Child First, Missing from Home, Restorative Justice, and the Use of the 10-Point Checklist. During 2024/2025 there will be additional opportunities for a Case Manager and Engagement Worker to be involved in the 'Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce'.

MIND Partnership

6. Evidence- based Practice, Innovation

Oldham Youth Justice Service is currently working with Mind to support children with their emotional wellbeing. We know that many children present with concerns at varying levels in this area but that there are often structural barriers and stigma in place which prevent engagement with services. As such, Oldham YJS benefits from a Mental Health Coach being seconded into the service to provide more accessible mental health support, support improvement in emotional well-being, enable more effective engagement and support children in exploring reasons for offending.

Working with Partners

Oldham Youth Justice Service has staff members from other teams based within the service fostering improved relationships and resulting in more joint and joined up working with Children. These services include Early Break who provide services for children including drug and alcohol misuse and advice around sexual health.

The Younger Adults Probation Team also co-locates at Positive Steps every Tuesday. This has resulted in the relationships being built with the whole probation team which includes the Seconded Probation Officer. This has resulted in transitions that are transferring to the team being more coordinated for children.

This will be further progressed during 2024/25 with a conference being held where there will be further learning for participants (front line professionals and managers from across all services and the voluntary sector in Oldham) around prevention and practical toolkits will be provided for professionals to use. The basis of this will be that the first practitioner to identify worries should be the practitioner who intervenes.

Working with Schools

During 2023/24 presentations have been made to secondary and primary headteachers and designated safeguarding leads about the importance of children being in school and how this reduces them coming into the criminal justice system. These presentations have been well received and have resulted in closer working relationships with the schools.

Bespoke Working with Children

Every child working with the Youth Justice Service has their own plan created from their needs identified through the assessment that has been undertaken. Children do not work in groups, so they are not forming alliances; instead, the focus is on supporting changes within the environment in which they live as well as supporting children to understand the impact of their behaviours on the victims through restorative justice work. Research shows that to reduce involvement in crime, children need other pro-social activities to be involved in, and this is a key focus of the work undertaken.

Consistency of Workers

This runs across the service in both Youth Justice and the Missing from Home interview service. In Youth Justice a Case Manager is allocated and an Engagement Worker is allocated to a child. These workers continue working with the child regardless of the length of their engagement with the service or any changes to why they are or remain involved. If children return to the service, the previous worker is reallocated ensuring that children and families do not have to repeat their information. This also results in trusted relationships being maintained and enhanced.

If a child is reported missing more than once wherever possible the same worker completes the interview. Where a child is frequently missing this enables the trusted relationship to be built and this has shown to result in a reduction in missing incidents and in some cases no further missing reports.

This is further enhanced by the consistency in the workforce. This has meant that for families where there has been previous involvement with an older sibling the same workers have been able to be allocated for younger siblings. As these trusted relationships were already formed with the family this has enhanced the outcomes for the siblings and a recognition of this within the service has resulted in preventative work being undertaken with younger siblings within the family with their permission to prevent them becoming known to the criminal justice system.

Getting Out for Good

Working with girls subject to or at risk of exploitation in Oldham, Tameside and Rochdale, this project has been externally validated to show positive outcomes.

This is a group project with four cohorts running throughout the year. Girls can become peer mentors to support the following cohorts or continue their involvement.

Each benefit from mentoring and obtaining qualifications (AQAs) during the activities. This includes social skills, hair, makeup up and

The project has resulted in fewer or no further incidents of girls being reported missing, has improved their self-esteem and has given them a better understanding of how they are being exploited or are at risk of exploitation.

Resettlement and Education Coordinator

Our Resettlement and Education Coordinator ensures that children in custody have everything they need for release and custody. This includes accommodation, education/training, employment, and support services.

The trusted relationship is built whilst the children are in custody, and this can include supporting transitions to probation, family visits, gathering views and attending multi-agency meetings to support and advocate for the child.

Being the single point of contact for Education, Training, and Employment is vital to this role. It results in children across the service accessing career support, education, training, and employment opportunities.

This specialist role also supports Case Managers and Engagement workers who may rarely be involved in resettlement due to the low number of children going into custody in Oldham.

Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce

Starting in September 2024 the youth justice service will be provided a seconded Case Manager, a seconded Engagement Worker and our Seconded Speech and Language therapist will be seconded to the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce in Oldham.

The Alternative Provision have already joined the Youth Justice Management Board to enhance their understanding of the work we do and to enable them to contribute to the service.

This exciting opportunity will enable more intensive work to be undertaken with the children in alternative provision and enable us to support alternative provision by 'upskilling' staff in trauma informed and child first ways of working.

7. Evaluation

During 2023/24, there were thematic reviews (also known as deep dives), project evaluations, and a validation visit by the Youth Justice Board.

Children Looked After

Reducing the number of children looked after involved in the criminal justice system is a priority for the service. This established that 19% of the children open to the service are looked after. This identified that 54% of the children were looked after when they started to work with the service, 31% became looked after following a court appearance and 15% became looked after following a court order being made. 43% had youth cautions, 28% had conditional cautions, and 29% had ISS bail. This showed that most of our work with children is taken care of on lower-level orders. The children had the following in common: exploitation, ADHD, instability in home/placement life, education difficulties (77% in alternative education and 23% not in education, training or employment), witnessed domestic abuse and multiple offences prior to YJS involvement. Recommendations included more prevention work, continued use of the protocol to prevent looked after children from being known to the criminal justice system, access to mental health support on a consistent basis, and special educational needs to be identified sooner. This will be followed through with a further thematic review of this work in 2024/2025.

Victim and Restorative Justice Work

This identified that 24 victims were contacted during 2023/24, and 13 responded. 32% agreed to a home visit, 16% declined the service, 28% did not respond following contact, and 24% had an 'other' outcome (this is where the victim was no longer deemed to be a victim due to the reclassification of the offence).

Just over a third of the victims who were visited agreed to be involved in a restorative justice process.

Letters of apology, mediation of relationships between children and parents, and a face-to-face meeting between the victim and the child have occurred.

Recommendations include feedback evaluation questionnaires for the service, contacting all victims and increasing the number of 'giving back' opportunities available.

Court Work

All court cases were examined. Of these, 37% were identified as outstanding, 42% were good, and 21% required improvement. Of the cases graded as needing improvement, it was identified that this related to the recording of contact between the child and family not always being clear.

Participation and engagement and the Transfer of Information in custody cases were identified as areas of outstanding practice, with all other areas being identified as good.

Challenges identified were:

- Finding appropriate placements to avoid custody/remands, providing effective bail packages,
- Court does not practice Child First principles, challenging that both operationally and strategically.
- Time – hearings took too long to happen or were too short for full deliberations
- Victim work about impact statements and time,
- Disproportionality, challenging this strategically and systemically.

TOG Mind Wellbeing Coach Project

The TOG Mind, Wellbeing Coach project, involves a coach co-located with the team working with children open to the Youth Justice Service.

81% of the children seen were male, and 19% were female. Ages ranged from 11-18 years. 53% were white, 16% were Asian, 13% were Black, 9% were mixed ethnicity, 3% were other ethnicity and 13% had unknown ethnicity. The children were open to the service, from prevention to court bail. Sessions take place face-to-face once a week for as long as needed in a place where the child feels comfortable – that can be either at Positive Steps or in the community.

Topics discussed have included Anxiety/Stress, Low Mood, Mindfulness, Exploring feelings, Motivation, Grief and Bereavement, Anger Management, Emotional regulation, Grounding techniques, Resilience, Confidence and Self-Esteem, Communication skills, Self-Awareness, emotionally based school avoidance, Sleep, Friendship problems, and Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Goal-based outcomes for children improved by 78.9%, 10.5% maintained their outcomes, and 10.5% declined.

Outstanding feedback was provided by both children and parents about the project, outlining the changes it had made for them.

Outcomes included no reoffending, improved school attendance and children feeling more able to deal with conflict, having a more positive outlook on life and having positive relationships and friendships.

Validation Visit by Youth Justice Board

The validation visit confirmed good practice across the board. The overall outcome was good, with court reports being identified as outstanding.

Areas for Development included identifying the legacy of the turnaround prevention project and exploring whether Case Managers should receive more formal 'court training' as well as the 'on the job' training they currently receive.

8. Priorities for the Coming Year

8.1 Prevention

Turnaround funding from the Ministry of Justice remains in place until March 2025. The prevention and diversion processes and multiagency panel are now well established. The focus of the work for 2024/35 will be on continuing to enhance this offer. The focus will continue to be on partnership working with a conference in the Autumn for all partner agencies focusing on how everyone can help to prevent children coming into contact with the criminal justice system. This will include a toolkit for professionals to use and a focus on the work completed by the professional who first identifies the risk and promotes the message that everyone can help.

8.2 Diversion

Out-of-court disposals currently make up most of the youth justice caseload. The Joint Decision-Making Panel, attended by YJS, social care, and GMP, agrees on the disposal that a child should receive following assessment.

Oldham has received positive feedback for their processes and decision-making from the Greater Manchester Police Out of Court Scrutiny Panel, and as such, the way we have been reporting to the panel has been requested of all areas, so this is not just a police-led meeting but has a focus on Child First principles. Children are now attending some scrutiny panels that look at footage from 'stop and searches' where they provide feedback to the police. This will continue throughout 2024/25, and further opportunities for participation by children will be sought.

8.3 Education

The percentage of children who end their youth justice intervention with education, training, or employment in place is high. YJS employs an education and Resettlement Coordinator to build relationships with schools, colleges, and training providers, break down barriers, and provide expertise to the team on SEND processes. The risk assessment we have developed for education placements has been adopted by other authorities.

Due to the unique position of the Oldham YJS being commissioned into Positive Steps, there is an integrated offer with the careers service, who are co-located and offers the opportunity for more joined-up work to address any educational or employment issues. Positive Steps also runs work experience programmes and training initiatives that children working with YJS can access.

This work will continue during 2024/25, as will the prevention work with education to reduce the number of exclusions and suspensions, children's access to online education, and other ways of keeping children in school.

There will also be the work undertaken by the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce.

8.4 Restorative Approaches and Victims

Oldham Youth Justice Service employs a Restorative Justice Co-Ordinator in line with the importance of enhancing the voice and experience of victims of crime committed by children. They go above and beyond national guidance, where consent is provided, to offer victims of those who receive Community Resolutions and above the chance to engage with the service through the completion of a My View questionnaire, the offer of direct or indirect Giving Back or Restorative Conferencing.

The policy for restorative justice was updated during 2023/24.

As outlined previously, this work was reviewed during 2023/24. Moving forward, we plan to try to contact all victims of crime and expand the work we complete with them. We also plan to increase the 'giving back' opportunities for children.

8.5 Serious Violence and Exploitation

Oldham has taken great strides as a partnership to address serious violence and exploitation. A complex and Contextual Strategy and Action Plan are now in place, which the YJS Head of Service is actively involved in.

Oldham YJS has identified a lead worker for complex safeguarding. This worker is the single point of contact for sharing information and expertise with the Complex Safeguarding Hub and other agencies. Plans are in place to have this worker co-located one day per week to improve integrated working.

Considering the Serious Violence Duty, the Greater Manchester and Oldham violence reduction strategies have been consulted.

Moving forward, the Head of Service will be involved in the Violence Reduction Strategy Group in Oldham and will contribute to the work in Greater Manchester through the Greater Manchester Youth Justice Transformation Plan.

There is also a lead worker for Prevent who contributes to the local panel and shares expertise. Oldham YJS has also taken steps to raise the profile of mixed unstable ideologies and their impact on children.

8.6 Detention in Police Custody

Oldham YJS work closely with GMP and Children's Social Care to prevent the detention of children in police custody. This involves ensuring that the PACE Beds, both safe and secure, are utilised when a child is remanded to court the following day. Numbers in Oldham remain low; however, this is monitored every month through GMP and where a child is not transferred, challenge is provided to the relevant service.

There is an ongoing Greater Manchester Pilot Project looking at children in police custody with a specialist custody suite at Cheadle Hulme. Some of the learning from this project has now been rolled out to all of the custody suites across Greater Manchester, including the use of 'unbreakable' tablets that can be given to children. These tablets offer some educational opportunities, amongst other activities, to keep children occupied and try and reduce the impact of them being in police custody. GM Police have now put in place strategies to minimise the number of children in police custody and, where this is necessary, to reduce to a minimum the amount of time children spend in custody.

8.7 Remands

Three children were remanded to custody in 2023/24. Although children from Oldham appear in Court in both Tameside and Manchester, where there is a Greater Manchester Youth Justice duty system in place, Case Managers from Oldham YJS are always present to support and advocate for children from our area in line with a Child-First approach. Bail packages are always presented in line with risk, safety, and well-being to prevent the use of remand. Training has taken place to augment practice in this area.

The service is aware that a high percentage of children who are remanded to custody do not then go on to receive a custodial sentence. Operational Managers ensure that children receive a review of their remand status, following re-assessment of risk, to allow them to be released on bail with the appropriate levels of support.

Suitable accommodation has, on occasion, been a difficulty, which has resulted in 2 children going into custody and subsequently being made subject to 'Remand into Local Authority Care and returned to the community.

A Greater Manchester Remand Pilot is currently underway and will end in 2024/25. The Oldham Head of Service is part of the steering group for this pilot and will continue to be involved until the project ends. This pilot focuses on reducing the number of children subject to custodial remand, and early indicators show that it is starting to make a positive difference.

8.8 Use of Custody

In line with national trends, Oldham observes a reduction in children in custody. The detrimental impact of being placed in the secure estate is better understood across the partnership than ever due to multi-agency working and challenges in cases where this may be assessed as a risk.

The number of children in custody is reported to the board every quarter.

A Resettlement policy is in place to ensure that work begins at Pre-Sentence Report stage to reduce the likelihood of this type of sentence being given. The planned workaround disproportionality will ensure changes are made to reduce the over-representation of black and minority ethnic children in custody.

8.8.1 Constructive Resettlement

Oldham YJS employs an Education and Resettlement Coordinator who works with children who receive a custodial sentence through their time in the secure estate, on license, and once this supervision finishes. This is in recognition of the unique needs this cohort has. The requirement to ensure resettlement begins at the point of sentence and planning for release and beyond remains a priority.

Oldham is in a strong position to influence resettlement practice across the town and Greater Manchester. It has the strategic lead for resettlement across Greater Manchester youth justice services and is commissioned to deliver and chair the Resettlement Consortium. This regional meeting, held at strategic and operational levels, aims to improve the outcomes of children in custody, implement findings from national reviews, promote best practice, and ensure value for money in terms of existing resources.

The plans for resettlement in 2024/25 include a greater focus on 'trauma-informed' resettlement practices. This will consist of specialist external training for everyone involved in resettlement across Greater Manchester.

Staff have been trained in constructive resettlement, and management oversight monitors its use in practice and plans. To ensure consistent practice across the service, further training will be sought for new staff.

9. Standards for Children in the Justice System

Standards for children in the youth justice system define the minimum expectation for all agencies that provide statutory services to ensure good outcomes for children. Revised Standards for children in the youth justice system were implemented in 2019, and self-assessments against these standards were carried out by all local partnerships and submitted to the Youth Justice Board in 2020. At this time, Oldham Youth Justice Service felt compliant with "good" and "outstanding" outcomes. Following this, annual Operational Plans have been in place to address specific areas for improvement within "Court Work" and "Secure Settings".

A further self-assessment of court work was undertaken during 2023, and the findings were presented to the Youth Justice Management Board in March 2024.

This self-assessment was externally validated through a validation visit, which the Youth Justice Board has undertaken in February 2024. This confirmed the findings of good with outstanding pre-sentence court reports.

Oldham YJS prioritises quality assurance and has recently implemented a Quality Assurance and Management Oversight policy to guide practice. The YJS has a range of mechanisms to uphold the quality of the service, including a revised induction process, annual appraisals, management supervision, peer and group supervision, direct observations, audits and feedback on all assessments and reports, and bi-annual audits on management oversight. There may also be partnership audits such as Brief Learning Reviews, Multi-Agency Case Evaluations, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Police Scrutiny Panels. These evaluations are fed back through Practitioner Forums or Team Meetings to be implemented in service delivery. In addition to this, themed audits, also known as 'deep dives', have been presented to the Youth Justice Management Board every quarter during 2023/24, enabling the board to have a deeper understanding of the work that is taking place and enabling the service to identify areas for development.

10. Service Development Plan

A partnership Service Development Plan has been agreed in recognition that achieving the primary functions of Oldham Youth Justice is a shared responsibility. It contains both strategic and rational actions. This has been influenced by the YJB Strategic Plan 21-24, Oldham Children's Services plans and consultation with practitioners, children and parents/carers.

Oversight will be provided quarterly at the Youth Justice Management Board meetings, either through a presentation or an update on the achievements against the identified outcomes.

This can be found in Appendix 4.

11. National Priority Areas

11.1 Children from Groups which are Over-represented

Children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are over-represented at all stages of the criminal justice system in Oldham, and there continues to be a consistent number of children looked after in the cohort so this remains a priority area.

All children from over-represented groups have additional management oversight on Pre-Sentence Reports to ensure they are balanced and bias-free. Including data in reports to the Court is encouraged to highlight over-representation. A Disproportionality Strategy to guide practice has been developed, and the workforce has now completed cultural awareness training focusing on intersectionality.

In March 2023, the "Oldham Protocol on Reducing the Unnecessary Criminalisation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers" was launched across the partnership. It represents a multi-agency partnership commitment to reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of children looked after and care leavers.

This has been consistently promoted throughout the year and is sent out by commissioners every time they commission a placement for any looked-after child in Oldham. There has also been further training of social workers outlining the protocol, explaining why it is essential, and promoting its use with carers. The community policing team have also promoted the protocol when working with local placements, including those with only children from other areas.

Oldham Youth Justice Service has recognised that girls need a different approach and runs the 'Getting out for Good' project focused on working with girls subject to or at risk of exploitation in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Oldham will also have an Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce which will enhance our work with children who are disproportionately represented especially those who have additional needs.

11.2 Policing

The relationship between the Youth Justice Service and the Oldham police is strong, and there is a commitment to having a seconded police officer within the service. The seconded officer is part of the local community policing team but is based at Positive Steps. This setup provides a strong link between the two organizations and ensures good levels of communication. This is especially important for reducing violence and ensuring child-centred policing. The seconded police officer, along with Youth Justice Staff, has delivered training to frontline officers to help them when working with children. This training has included sessions by our Speech and Language Therapist on using appropriate language, emphasizing its importance for neurodiverse children.

The police provide information about all children who may be involved in a crime in Oldham on a daily basis. This information is used at an operational level to identify children in need of prevention and at a strategic level to identify patterns such as types of crime, ages of children, areas where crime is being committed, and the frequency of a child appearing on the list.

The police also provide statistics on 'stop and search' procedures to examine any disproportional aspects of this process and to understand the trends in numbers, reasons for the search, and whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing. This will continue through 2024/25 and will be reported to the Youth Justice Management Board every quarter.

The Police are represented by the second in command at Oldham on the Youth Justice Board, and they have also demonstrated further commitment to the service by exploring the possibility of having an apprentice support the seconded police officer with administrative tasks.

11.3 Prevention

Oldham is committed to preventing children from entering the criminal justice system, and this can be observed in the partnership commitment to the Prevention and Diversion Panel.

Known as the Oldham Prevention and Diversion Panel, this continues to focus on referrals from agencies concerned about a child's anti-social behaviour or criminality but also includes children screened through a daily police report who have been named on a crime or arrested. In-depth background checks are completed on all these children and presented to the panel for multi-agency decision-making, and the correct service is identified to provide support. This may be from their School, School Engagement Officers, Social Care, Complex Safeguarding, CAMHS, Early Help, Youth Service or Voluntary Organisations, or Youth Justice Turnaround or Prevention.

Turnaround has been established in Oldham YJS since January 2023, with 121 children having been accepted at the panel since the start of the project. The main intervention types have included emotional well-being, family work, mentoring, recreational activities, and restorative justice. Oldham YJS remains on track to meet the targets set by the Ministry of Justice for March 2025, when the project is set to end.

During 2023- 2024, presentations were given to Secondary, Primary, and Designated Safeguarding Leads in Oldham about the Youth Justice Service, emphasising that the service is child-first and trauma-informed. These presentations also discussed the research evidencing the importance of children being in school and how exclusions are linked to children becoming known to the criminal justice system. This has further enhanced the understanding of the local schools.

The service is fortunate to get a small grant from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to undertake prevention work, and this grant is used to complete work with children who do not meet the criteria for the Turnaround project. This grant will continue post-turnaround, enabling the service to continue providing prevention work.

During 2024/2025 we will also explore whether there are opportunities for us to complete prevention work with the younger siblings of the children we are working with as a form of Early Intervention.

11.4 **Diversion**

Diversion remains a priority and increasing Outcome 22 use is a priority for Oldham YJS. We have been working closely with the local police to achieve this. Since April 2023, there have been 26 'Outcome 22' outcomes locally. This number will increase as the outcome is only applied once the work has been completed. There is a commitment by Greater Manchester Police to make Outcome 22 a 'positive outcome' as nationally, the police do not currently recognise that Outcome 22 is positive in the police statistics. This is an essential commitment as it could potentially impact the inspection outcomes from GMP.

Children are discussed at the Prevention and Diversion Panel, where a multi-agency offer is discussed and agreed upon in line with the child's needs. This work is evaluated through feedback from the children, parents/carers, and the auditing process.

11.5 Education

Education is a focus for the service and Oldham is committed to ensuring that all children working with the Youth Justice Service are engaged in Education, Training and Employment. We work closely with the careers service, schools, colleges, alternative education providers, training providers and employers.

Our Resettlement and Education Coordinator post demonstrates our focus on education and our work with all the local schools.

It has been identified that all our looked-after children are not currently attending mainstream education, and work is being undertaken with the virtual school to try to change this situation.

Any children who are being remotely educated or electively home-educated are notified to Oldham Council either via the Virtual School (if they are subject to Child in Need or Child Protection Plans or are Children Looked After) or to the education department for other children (this is mostly with elected home education). Elected Home Education is significantly on the increase in Oldham. This situation continues to be reviewed to assess the impact on children and whether it is making them more likely to be exploited or have contact with the criminal justice system.

11.6 Restorative Approaches and Victims

The service has a dedicated Restorative Justice Coordinator who works with Victims and to ensure that 'giving back' is completed by children. This work is delivered as required under the Victims Code and helps children to develop a 'pro-social' identity.

In Oldham there are lots of different giving back options most of which have a community focus. This includes working with local food banks, community organisations, research organisation or local employers with activities as diverse as wrapping Christmas presents for children in need, to providing information to researchers on their experiences to gardening or painting. During 2024/2025 we will be promoting these activities to the victims we have contact with so they are aware of the restorative justice work being undertaken with children open to the service.

During 2024/2025 we will also be exploring funding to provide additional support to victims to keep them safe and support them. We will also be providing victims with additional information around other services they can contact so that those who choose not to work with us can contact services when they feel the time is right for them.

11.7 Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

Oldham Youth Justice Service is part of the Community Safety Partnership and works with partner organisations to reduce serious violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding concerns for children and young people. A designated lead for contextual safeguarding attends the daily governance meeting held by the contextual safeguarding team with all multi-agency partners to discuss worries about children, hot spots and incidents. An engagement worker also liaises with community groups and can inform the designated lead about the community's worries about what is happening in the local area.

This information is also discussed with the community policing team to ensure everyone knows emerging concerns and that preventative actions can be taken as needed. Referrals are made to the National Referral Mechanism, and children are encouraged to engage in this process and recognise exploitation. The YJ Service and the Contextual safeguarding service work closely together to ensure that the children we work with are getting a joined-up service, and that work is not duplicated. The contextual safeguarding service also works in a trauma-informed way, building trusted relationships with the children they work with. Where needed, rapid reviews and serious case reviews are completed where there has been serious youth violence. All of the workforce complete online Prevent training as part of their induction, and the service has a 'prevent' lead who attends the channel panel meetings and gives feedback relevant information to the team.

Any learning from local or national serious incidents is shared with the team during practitioner forums or team meetings.

11.8 Detention in Police Custody

There continues to be a focus on reducing the number of children who have detention in police custody and where this is necessary to reduce the amount of time that children spend in custody. Greater Manchester Police have recently agreed strategies to be used across the force to reduce the amount of time that children spend in custody where this is necessary and how to prevent children being in police custody as much as possible. This is a key focus of the child centred policing in Greater Manchester and is led by the Child centred police representative at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority who is a seconded Police Superintendent. There is a PACE bed commissioned by Greater Manchester and the Emergency Duty Team know how to access this bed to ensure that Oldham children have this option. However, where possible the police have recognised that if a child can be returned home, to a family member or to their placement that this is the best option for children.

11.9 Remands

Oldham Youth Justice service remains committed to reducing the number of children remanded and where this is necessary ensuring that children are not remanded to custody (youth detention accommodation) unless there is no other option available. This work has included making presentations to children's social care teams to explain 'remanded into the care of the local authority' to increase the understanding of this option and how social workers can support these children. The Oldham Head of Service is part of the steering group for the Greater Manchester Remand Pilot Project which focuses on reducing custodial remands.

11.10 Use of Custody and Constructive Resettlement

When children go into custody, we are mindful of the trauma this will cause them. These are our most complex children and in recognition of this Oldham have a Resettlement and Education Coordinator who is able to focus on their needs. Currently Oldham has 3 children in custody 1 of whom is on remand.

Regular visits are undertaken to see these children by their Case Managers as well as the Resettlement Coordinator. These visits focus on meeting the needs of the children to have contact with their family, have education and to make sure that there is planning in place for their accommodation, education and other needs for when they leave custody. Case Managers liaise with Resettlement Workers in the custodial setting and follow up on any incidents involving violence or restraint.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority pay for a Senior Social Worker in YOI HMP Wetherby who works with Greater Manchester children. They provide a quarterly report which outlines the current situation, any restraints, current statistics and ensures that there is a consistent level of support for Greater Manchester children.

Resettlement is discussed at least every other month at the Greater Manchester Heads of Service meeting and local statistics and experiences are shared and discussed. This ensures a consensus in the views presented to custodial settings. There is a Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium that is lead by Oldham. There is also a quarterly Operational Group which is well attended by all of the GM areas and resettlement workers from the local custody providers.

11.11 Working with Families

Working with Families is fundamental to achieving change for children and is identified within the individual plans for the child. Practitioners build trusted relationships with the family and often work with different members of the family individually as well as together. This work could include exploring ways of keeping children safe by reducing the number of occasions when they go missing and involving them in more family activities. This work may also include re-building relationships where these have become strained. This may be because of a family member being the victim of the offence or the child not regularly attending education.

Working with families is key to breaking the cycle of children having contact with the criminal justice system and trusted relationships enable family members to open up about things that have happened and the impact on them of these incidents.

Parents and Carers are also consulted as part of our coproduction and consultation processes.

12. Voice of the child

The voice of the child continues to be a central part of practice across the partnership in Oldham. In the most recent inspection of Oldham Youth Justice Service in 2019, this was identified as a key strength with the report noting:

“children and young people are at the heart of everything this service does”.

The Peer Review also highlighted several areas of good practice in relation to this, with children of course being involved through focused sessions throughout. Internally, all children and their parents, carers, or significant adults working with Oldham YJS are offered the opportunity to engage with “Your Opinions Matter”.

A resource completed independently from their Case Manager alongside the Engagement Worker with a lead for participation. This covers areas such as feeling included in decision making, meeting cultural needs, feeling safe, and how well we work with other services. A report is produced bi-annually on collated feedback and presented to the Youth Justice Management Board.

Locally, the Strategic Youth Partnership in Oldham has developed the “Children and Young People’s Participation Framework” which is the first cross system participation framework, spanning the period 2023-2030. It sets out our Oldham approach to support, nurture and celebrate a culture of participatory practice in both Oldham Council and Oldham Council funded services. The document is designed to introduce organisations to the approach and ensure there is a shared understanding of participation and best practice.

Alongside this, Manchester Youth Justice Service, in collaboration with Manchester Centre for Youth Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University, have authored the “Participatory Youth Practice Framework”, designed to support enhancing participatory practice with children involved in the criminal justice system. This used children’s lived experiences, supported by academic theory and trauma informed research evidence to suggest a new approach. This framework has been used as part of our development of our participation framework which aims to improve and enhance our participation and coproduction work with the children and families we work with.

During 2024/25 all the Youth Justice Service will have external training delivered by Manchester Youth Justice service on the Framework to ensure that they are using this in their work with children.

We also encourage participation at local and national level. Consequently, we are regularly asked to support researchers by enabling them to talk to children we are working with and there were two examples of this taking place during 2023/24 with a further session already requested for 2024/25.

13. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

As highlighted earlier in this plan, Oldham Youth Justice Service is in a distinctive position in that it is commissioned out to be delivered by an independent charitable trust, Positive Steps, which is governed through a Board of Trustees, comprised of elected members and community representatives.

In its own right, the Youth Justice Service meets statutory requirements, and maintains oversight from the Local Authority through the Youth Justice Management Board, chaired by the Managing Director for Children and Young People (Director of Children’s Services) who reports to the Chief Executive Officer of Oldham Council. Quarterly meetings ensure that the Board is pro-active in taking responsibility for all aspects of youth justice, leading strategically across relevant partners, and ensuring a high-quality service is provided to all children. The full membership of the Youth Justice Management Board can be found in Appendix 1.

Working with the Director of Children’s Services is the Head of Service (HoS) for Youth Justice and Missing from Home who was new in role as of January 2023 following a restructure but has been part of Oldham YJS since 2012. Alongside this responsibility, they take the strategic lead for resettlement across Greater Manchester.

The staffing structure and record of ethnicity, sex and known disability of staff can be found in Appendix 2.

Oldham Youth Justice Service benefits from specialist support from a seconded Police Officer, Nurse, Speech and Language Therapist and Mental Health Coach with all being well embedded into the service. From July 1st, a full time Probation Officer will also be in post. At present, Oldham Youth Justice Service do not have a seconded Child and Adolescent Mental Health Practitioner however the funding for this post has now been agreed by the Integrated Care Board and it is anticipated that the post will be advertised shortly. It continues to be a priority to find a resolution to short term funding agreements for the Speech and Language Therapist so that a longer-term commitment to this post. Oldham YJS employs an Education and Resettlement Co-Ordinator who closely liaises with the relevant persons within the local authority such as the Virtual School, Inclusion and SEND teams, as well as schools, colleges and training providers.

There is a strong tradition of partnership working in Oldham and Greater Manchester, both strategically and operationally, with Oldham YJS engaged in the following:

- Oldham Children’s Assurance Board
- Oldham Reducing Re-Offending Board (Co Chair)
- Oldham Partnership Performance Board
- Oldham Learning Review Hub
- Oldham Complex and Contextual Safeguarding Board
- Oldham Strategic Youth Partnership
- Oldham Corporate Parenting Partnership
- Oldham Missing from Home Working Group
- Child Exploitation Working Group
- Prevention and Diversion Panel (Chair)
- Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Board
- Greater Manchester Serious Violence Duty Steering Group
- Greater Manchester Youth Justice Transformation Board
- Greater Manchester Resettlement Consortium (Chair)
- Greater Manchester Youth Justice Senior Lead Meeting

14 Progress on Previous Plan

The table below sets out performance in relation to the previous plan.

| Action | Progress |
|---|--|
| Continue to develop the effectiveness of the Youth Justice Management Board | This is now a completed action with all agencies being represented by decision makers and attending regularly. |
| Ensure that the Youth Justice Plan is aligned to other relevant plans in children’s services and that there are shared priorities for children which reflect Child First principles | This is now a completed action and this plan is fully aligned with the Children’s Services plan. |

| Action | Progress |
|--|--|
| Improve reporting on specific performance measures and new KPIS | This continues to be a work in progress. The new KPI's continue to present some 'teething' issues with the data however work continues on this, and a dashboard is currently being put together which links in clearly with the 'Achieving Excellence' quality assurance framework. This dashboard should be available from Autumn 2024. |
| Resolve lack of seconded CAMHS Practitioner in YJS | Funding is now agreed and this post should be advertised shortly. |
| Resolve concerns regarding short time funding commitment for seconded health roles | This continues to be a work in progress. Permanent funding has been agreed by the Integrated Care Board however the local health funding still remains subject to a short-term agreement. |
| Develop and embed YJS Disproportionality Strategy | Cultural Awareness training has now been completed and the Disproportionality Strategy and policy should be in place and agreed by the end of July 2024 |
| Review and embed outstanding policies | Work on this has been completed throughout the year and all policies should be agreed and uploaded on the system by August 2024 |
| Develop and embed YJS Participation Strategy | This is nearly finished and should be completed and agreed by end of July 2024 |
| Embed the use of Outcome 22 as an alternative to prosecution | There has been a significant amount of work completed on this and it is starting to show outcomes in the numbers of 'Outcome 22' being used. This will continue to be monitored throughout 2024/25 to ensure that the numbers continue to increase. |
| Complete full National Standards Audit and present findings to YJMB | This has been completed and an external validation visit was also undertaken by the Youth Justice Board. |
| Challenge lack of attendance at YJMB and engagement should this occur | This is no longer an issue as there is now excellent attendance and engagement at the YJMB |

| | |
|---|---|
| Convene Task and Finish Groups in relation to board actions, as and when required, to ensure these are successfully completed and do not drift, in particular following HMIP Thematic Inspections or Serious Case reviews and similar | There has been a task and finish group about Outcome 22 and this has resulted in there being an increase in the use of Outcome 22 in Oldham. There was a paper presented to the board which reviewed the inspections of Youth Justice Services that took place in 2023 and made a serious of recommendations for the service. |
| Seek funding opportunities to develop evidence- based practice and innovation | This remains on the plan and most recently Oldham was part of putting together a Greater Manchester Bid to the Youth Endowment Fund. |

15. Performance

Despite Oldham being a complex and challenging place to deliver youth justice due to a large youth population, levels of deprivation and crime rates, the youth justice service performs above comparative groups in a number of areas. At times, Oldham has reported one of the lowest re-offending rates nationally, which given the demographic is inspiring. It is obvious that the service strives to continue with these high levels of performance and so continuous monitoring and challenge from the board when required will be imperative, along with further work with the management information team to ensure there is a clear understanding of the cohort will be key.

16. National Key Performance Indicators

Oldham Youth Justice Service continues to perform well against the nationally measured targets. Over the past 12 months, the service has continued to report, on a quarterly basis, on the existing key performance indicators (KPIs). Please note that reoffending cannot be 'proven' statistically until 16 months after the offence, hence the time lag in data.

Reoffending Rates

| Reoffending - binary rate | Oldham | North West | Greater Manchester | YJS family | England |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|---------|
| Binary Rate - Apr 22 to Jun 22 | Data Not Available | | | | |
| Binary Rate - Jan 22 to Mar 22 | 21.1% | 35.8% | 31.2% | 34.1% | 34.1% |
| Binary Rate - Oct 21 to Dec 21 | 38.5% | 34.3% | 36.8% | 29.5% | 32.4% |
| Binary Rate - Jul 21 to Sept 21 | 11.8% | 29.5% | 25.5% | 26.8% | 30.4% |

| Reoffending - frequency rate | Oldham | North West | Greater Manchester | YJS family | England |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|---------|
| Binary Rate - Apr 22 to Jun 22 | Data Not Available | | | | |
| Binary Rate - Jan 22 to Mar 22 | 0.95 | 1.47 | 1.55 | 1.48 | 1.39 |
| Binary Rate - Oct 21 to Dec 21 | 1.23 | 1.67 | 1.83 | 1.40 | 1.39 |
| Binary Rate - Jul 21 to Sept 21 | 0.35 | 1.54 | 1.56 | 1.57 | 1.25 |

| Reoffences- frequency rate per reoffender | Oldham | North West | Greater Manchester | YJS family | England |
|---|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|---------|
| Binary Rate - Apr 22 to Jun 22 | Data Not Available | | | | |
| Binary Rate - Jan 22 to Mar 22 | 4.50 | 4.10 | 4.97 | 4.35 | 4.07 |
| Binary Rate - Oct 21 to Dec 21 | 3.20 | 4.86 | 4.96 | 4.76 | 4.28 |
| Binary Rate - Jul 21 to Sept 21 | 3.00 | 5.21 | 6.10 | 5.86 | 4.12 |

Oldham Youth Justice Service performs exceptionally well in terms of re-offending with rates being well below all comparative groups. An increase of up to 38.5% was observed in one quarter, but this was agreed to be an anomaly, taking into consideration that the data was not available in the previous quarter. Given the levels of deprivation in Oldham, this is a figure that we are incredibly proud of and is most definitely attributed to the Child First, trauma-informed approach taken by the motivated and dedicated team and multi-agency partnership.

First Time Entrants

| FTE PNC rate per 100,000 of 10-17 population | Oldham | North West | Greater Manchester | YOT family group | England |
|--|--------|------------|--------------------|------------------|---------|
| Apr 23 - Mar 24 DRAFT DATA** | 174** | 190** | 232** | 191** | 159** |
| Jan 23 - Dec 23 | 177 | 185 | 233 | 190 | 166 |
| Oct 22 - Sep 23 | 177* | 193 | 233 | 206 | 172 |
| Jul 22 - Jun 23 | 157* | 170 | 205 | 200 | 162 |
| *Ammended Data | | | | | |

The number of first-time entrants in Oldham sits at a rate that is below that of the comparative groups, aside from those figures from England. This has remained consistent between October 22 – the most recent data (currently draft data). Whilst this data is slightly above the England averages it is impressive given the levels of deprivation in Oldham and is better than that of our YOT family group. Further prevention work will hopefully show a further reduction in first-time entrants in the future.

Use of Custody

| Custody Rate per 1,000 of 10-17 population | Oldham | North West | YJS family | England |
|--|--------|------------|------------|---------|
| Apr 23 - Mar 24 DRAFT DATA | 0.03* | 0.12* | 0.19* | 0.11* |
| Jan 23 - Dec 23 | 0.03 | 0.14 | 0.18 | 0.11 |
| Oct 22 - Sept 23 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.20 | 0.11 |
| Jul 22 - Jun 23 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.18 | 0.11 |

Oldham's use of custody remains low, with the children included in these figures being sentenced for the most serious offences of Murder and S. 18 Wounding. The reduction in the numbers in the last two quarters is due to sentenced children becoming adults and either being released or transferred to the adult estate. All Pre-Sentence Reports go through a robust management oversight process to check content and language. Oldham YJS also report on locally agreed performance targets agreed by the Youth Justice Management Board.

Accommodation

| Accommodation upon release from custody | Number released from custody | Number with appropriate accommodation arrangements | Number with suitable accommodation arrangements | Percentage in suitable accommodation |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 2022/23 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 100% |
| Qtr 4 2023/24 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| Qtr 3 2023/24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Qtr 2 2023/24 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 100% |
| Qtr 1 2023/24 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100% |

Although the number of children in and leaving custody is small, all are released with appropriate and suitable accommodation in place. All authorities have now signed up to the “Greater Manchester Accommodation Standard” to ensure that an address is agreed at least six weeks in advance, and where this is not, an escalation pathway is in place to find a resolution.

Education, Training and Employment

| Percentage of Young People engaged with the Youth Justice Service who are in suitable education, employment or training. | Number of YP with Interventions ending | Number in ETE | Outcome | Improvement on 77% target in percentage points |
|--|--|---------------|---------|--|
| 2022/23 | 134 | 122 | 91% | 14%age points |
| Jan - Mar 2024 | 22 | 19 | 86% | 9%age points |
| Oct-Dec 2023 | 27 | 26 | 96% | 19%age points |
| July -Sep 2023 | 17 | 15 | 88% | 11%age points |
| Apr - Jun 2023 | 24 | 21 | 88% | 11%age points |

The percentage of children completing their youth justice intervention with education, training, or employment in place in Oldham is high and above the average. The service benefits from an Education and Resettlement Co-Ordinator who works with schools, colleges, and training providers to build relationships and break down barriers to ensure there is a wide variety of resources available. The service has developed a specific risk assessment to ensure that context, likelihood, imminence, and victim type of risk are understood by education providers to promote and sustain engagement.

Children Looked After

| Likelihood of Childen Looked After receiving a substantive outcome compared with non CLA 10-17 population | |
|---|--------|
| Apr 22 to Mar 23 | 19.17% |
| Jul 22 to Jun 23 | 23.88% |
| Oct 22 to Sept 2023 | 20.29% |
| Jan 23 to Dec 2023 | 24.00% |
| Apr 23 - Mar 24 | 22.67% |

The number of children looked after working with Oldham YJS is reducing. It is likely that this is because of the impact of the “Oldham Protocol on Reducing the Unnecessary Criminalisation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers” which was launched across the partnership in March 2023.

This protocol reflects the principles and ambitions set out nationally which describes “what” needs to happen across the country. This has continued to be promoted extensively during 2023/24 and is sent out to all newly commissioned placements by the Oldham commissioning service. Locally, Oldham has complemented this by setting out “how” we will do it and is reflective of service structure, stakeholders, and governance. It represents a multi-agency partnership commitment to reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of children looked after and care leavers. Hopefully, this, combined with the continued commitment of all partners to reduce the number of children looked after known to the criminal justice system in Oldham, will result in this number falling further.

Diversity

| Ethnicity | Post court | | Pre court | | Custody | | Total YJS caseload | | *Oldham 10-17 Population |
|--|------------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| | | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Percentage |
| Young people worked with during Apr 23 to Mar 24 | | | | | | | | | |
| White/White other | 26 | 54% | 17 | 63% | 2 | 100% | 43 | 57% | 58% |
| Asian or Asian British | 12 | 25% | 3 | 11% | 0 | 0% | 15 | 20% | 32% |
| Mixed Parentage | 4 | 8% | 2 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 6 | 8% | 1% |
| Black or Black British | 1 | 2% | 2 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 4% | 6% |
| Chinese or other ethnic group | 3 | 6% | 2 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 7% | 3% |
| No Information | 2 | 4% | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 4% | N/A |
| Total | 48 | | 27 | | 2 | | 75 | | 100% |

Children from black and global majority backgrounds are over-represented at all stages of the criminal justice system. All children from groups which are over-represented have additional management oversight on Pre-Sentence Reports to ensure they are balanced and free from bias. The inclusion of data in reports to the Court is encouraged to highlight over-representation. This continues to be a priority area for the service and cultural awareness training has now been completed with a focus on intersectionality. It is hoped that this will increase understanding and result in an improved picture of the statistics.

17. Challenges, Risks and Issues

Oldham Youth Justice Service is highly regarded across the partnership and the children and families we work with. We want to continue to provide an excellent offer and, as such, must acknowledge the potential challenges we may face over the next 12 months.

Children looked after, and those from black and global majority backgrounds are over-represented in the cohort. We have already taken steps to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children looked after and care leavers. It will remain important that the protocol continues to be used and promoted, especially given the number of residential units being opened in Oldham by private providers.

The disproportionality strategy will be in place by July 2024, and all the workforce will have completed cultural awareness training with a focus on intersectionality. It is hoped that the improved understanding and an increase in reflective discussions both within the team and in supervision will continue to improve these statistics and, more importantly, the experience of black and global majority children open to the service.

Oldham Youth Justice Service is in a strong overall performance position, supported by a strong partnership commitment and is proud of the outcomes it has achieved despite the challenging demographic it serves.

18. Sign Off, Submission and Approval

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| Chair of Oldham Youth Justice Management Board | Gerard Jones, Managing Director of Children’s Services, Oldham Council |
| Signature | <i>Gerard Jones</i> |
| Date | 28/06/24 |
| Council Representative | Paul Axon |
| Signature | <i>P S Axon</i> |
| Date | 28/06/24 |