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**Report to Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee**

# **Oldham Health and Wellbeing Strategy Update**

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

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**10<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

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## **Purpose of Report**

To provide an update to the committee on Oldham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy

## **Executive Summary**

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2023. It was presented to the Scrutiny Committee in July 2023. The strategy contains five priorities for action. This report provides an update on the strategy and progress on the priorities. The Committee are asked to consider the progress below.

## **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to consider the report, and the progress made against the priorities.

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## 1. Background

- 1.1. The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Health and Wellbeing Board aim to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Oldham and reduce inequalities for all ages. The responsibility for developing and delivering the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (and the Joint Strategy Needs Assessment) sits with the Health and Wellbeing Board and rests with all the members of the board. Oldham Health and Wellbeing Board is chaired by Cllr Peter Davis, and has good representation from partners.
- 1.2. This strategy was developed over twelve months through reviewing data on health and wellbeing, engagement with residents, and coproduction with members of the board. Since the approval of the strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Board has had focused meetings on each of the priorities.
- 1.3. Below are updates on all five priorities in the strategy

## 2. Supporting our residents to gain the knowledge and skills to confidently make choices and make decisions about their own health

- 2.1. The Oldham Engagement Framework, is being developed by a cross-sector partnership group. The Oldham Engagement and Insight Leads Group was established two years ago to work together to co-design a Framework for how all partners across Oldham engage with residents and use the insight to influence decision making.
- 2.2. In the last 18 months the group have worked together to design and launch The Engagement and Insight Network, bringing together a wide range of partners in Oldham, to develop a networking space for anybody whose work involves community engagement, engaging with people in Oldham or who is interested in engagement. The Network now meets regularly on a quarterly basis (bringing together a number of VCFSE and public sector partners) and has focused on co-ordinating engagement activity, and co-designing the engagement toolkit element of the Framework.
- 2.3. Alongside this The Big Oldham Convo (Engagement HQ) has been established as the digital engagement and insight capture platform.
  - The network have also been working together to develop an Engagement Toolkit on behalf of the partnership.
- 2.4. In the next 6 months the priorities for the work are:
  - Finalise and publish the Engagement Framework guidance and toolkit online.
  - Work together to establish how best The Big Oldham Convo (Engagement HQ) can be utilised as a partnership tool for engagement.
- 2.5. Over the last 12 months the Community Health Champions Network has been re-established. This brings together VCFSE anchor organisations from communities most impacted by health inequalities. The key areas of activity to date have been:
  - Delivery of small grants programme which offers up to £3k to grow organisations' capacity to undertake activity which supports residents to gain knowledge and skills to confidently make choices about their own health.
  - Providing information and training on priority health topics (e.g. MMR, Cancer, Oral Health) and involving groups in shaping future services (e.g. Adult ADHD, NHS Fit for Future).
  - Establishing a dedicated library of resources and health news feed on The Big Oldham Convo.

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- Networking and sharing good practice, insights and bespoke targeted resources developed by the network (e.g. easy read info on Cancer).

### **3. Giving children the best start in life**

#### **3.1. Measures**

- The infant mortality rate remained relatively static with the latest rate for 2021-23 to 6.7 per 1,000, with the gap slightly narrowing compared to the England average mainly due to the increase in the England rate to 4.1 per 1,000. This latest Oldham rate translates to 62 infant deaths over the most recent three-year period (2021-23).
- The percentage of children achieving a good level of development falls 4.1 percentage points below the England average for the most recent cohort (2023/24). In the latest year, 63.6% of Oldham 5 year olds have achieved a “good level of development”.
- The latest under 18 conception rate is from 2021 and is 20.5 per 1,000, compared to the England rate of 13.1 per 1,000. This translates to 106 conceptions to under 18s for 2021. In 2011, there were 167 conceptions in the same age cohort, and in 2001 there were 276. This demonstrates a significant reduction over a longer period of time but this reduction has stalled in more recent years.
- The most recent data shows a small reduction in the prevalence of dental decay at 5 years of age, which currently stands at 36.3% for 2024/ 2025. This is down from 39.5% in 2021/2022. This rate is higher than the England (22.4%) and North West (28.7%) averages and represents the third highest prevalence in Greater Manchester.

#### **3.2. Implement a targeted action plan to reduce infant mortality**

We continue to offer and improve our universal and targeted services to reduce the risk factors associated with infant mortality, and deliver on the priorities to tackling infant mortality in Oldham. These include:

- Advice to pregnant women on smoking during pregnancy and around the infant
- Immunisations for pregnant women and the infant
- Promotion of breastfeeding
- Targeted genetic counselling for close relation marriages
- Promotion of the healthy start programme
- System wide anti-poverty work with families.

Our ‘Reducing Infant Mortality Action Plan’ has being updated and agreed. Priorities for the group have been based on the national and local evidence base. A key focus of the action plan is reducing the risks of Sudden Unexpected Deaths of Infants and supporting women to be as healthy as possible as they enter pregnancy.

#### **3.3. Improve oral health and reduce dental decay**

Our Integrated Children and Families Service continues to provide evidence-based oral health promotion. In the last 6 months, 4525 oral health packs have been distributed through health visitors and 64 early years work force have received training in oral health. Currently 75% of Early Years settings, including Family Hubs hold our ‘Healthy Eating Award’.

In the next 12 months, Oldham aims to implement the following enhanced oral health provision

- A universal supervised toothbrushing programme for 3-5 year olds in Early Years settings and primary school reception classes in Oldham.
- Re-establish distribution of toothbrushes and toothpastes to reception and year 6 children within the National Child Measurement Programme
- Distribute toothbrushes and toothpastes to all 3- and 4-year-old children in early years settings twice per year.

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- Increase investment into targeted, community-based oral health promotion and establish oral health buddies/ champions in community groups serving families with children at higher risk of dental decay.

These initiatives will be supported by additional public health investment, as well as funding from national government and resource donation from Greater Manchester Dental

Additional aims for 2025/2026 include

- Establishing an oral health steering group
- Developing an oral health communication plan
- Developing on oral health monitoring and evaluation plan

## **4. Improving mental health and mental wellbeing**

### **4.1. Measures**

- Latest (2022/23) levels of people reporting high anxiety are similar to 2020/21 figures. The gap has widened when compared to the latest England average to 1.5 percentage points.
- There has been no further update to the loneliness measure.
- Due to a significant increase in service provision, and targeted work, the number of adults in structured drugs and alcohol treatment has continued to increase From April – June 2023 to the October – December 2024 we saw an increase of more than 80% (1,065 to 1,951 in treatment). This is addressing the unmet need in our communities.

### **4.2. Establish clear routes to accessing support and care for all communities**

Connect 5 Training builds capacity, capability and confidence by enabling people to look after their own and others' mental wellbeing through proactive conversations. Oldham professionals and volunteers continue to receive Connect 5 training. This has further embedded this approach across a number of agencies that serve our residents. The trained cohort included representatives from some of our community groups working with our ethnic minority communities, such as: SAWN (Support and Action Women's Network), and Yuvanis. In addition, training has been provided to groups that work with vulnerable adults such as Salvation Army, those that work with residents around increasing physical activity (the Failsworth Walking Group) as well as governors from some of our schools. [An additional focus on sporting organisations has been progressed throughout 2024/25.](#)

It had been anticipated that 24/25 would be the final year of funding but Public Health has been advised that following the continued success of the programme, a further year (25/26) will be funded by GMCA and so we will continue to build on these previous success.

Youth Connect 5 funding was also secured in 2024/25 and the programme has been set up and delivered through family hubs into schools and youth settings. This focuses on ensuring a whole system approach to supporting young people with their resilience and positive mental health.

## **5. Reduce smoking**

### **5.1. Measures**

- Latest APS data for smoking (2021-23) indicates that 14% of Oldham's population currently smoke (12.4% for England), this compares to 15% for 2020-22 for Oldham (13.2% for England). This shows we are still making good progress in reducing the overall prevalence of smoking in Oldham.
- Smoking at time of delivery has decreased to 8.9% (23/24) from 9.6% (2022/23), meaning Oldham's performance is improving. This is slightly higher than the England average of 7.9%, compared to last year when Oldham was similar to England.

- There have been no data updates following 2022/23 which showed 58.8% of Oldham adults have never smoked, up from 55.5% for 2021/22. Latest data is similar to the England average of 59.3%.
- We know there is considerable variation in smoking prevalence across the borough and that in some wards, particularly those with high levels of deprivation, rates are considerably higher.

## **5.2. Make high quality evidence-based stop smoking support accessible to all smokers**

Oldham Council were awarded £315,789 (a decrease from £321,524 due to our reducing smoking prevalence) per year for up to 5 years covering financial periods 2024/25 to 2028/29, as part of the government's plans to create a smokefree generation. This funding is in addition to our current spend of £339,500 per year for specialist community stop smoking support. As approved by Cabinet in February 2024, the allocated additional funding has been used to supplement ABL Health Ltd (Your Health Oldham), who deliver our current stop smoking service (as part of the Health Improvement Service), to bolster the current stop smoking offer.

The funding has been used to create additional capacity to deliver stop smoking support and will increase the provision available in the borough to improve the number of people stopping smoking and, thus, reduce smoking prevalence and the impact of tobacco related harm. Specifically, the funding has been used to target and support certain priority groups which may have entrenched smokers that are most at risk of tobacco-related harm, thus tackling health inequalities as well as supporting targets for reducing smoking prevalence. Some key pieces of work Your Health Oldham have undertaken to improve the number of people stopping smoking and target priority groups include:

- increasing the availability of face-to-face clinics for the delivery of stop smoking support. There are now 14 additional face-to-face clinics available throughout Oldham for stop smoking support compared to July 2024
- distribution of resources increasing awareness of managing asthma and quitting smoking during Ramadan. These resources were distributed around community organisations and mosques around Oldham, and directed people to the stop smoking support that's available through Your Health Oldham
- delivering a series of workshops in partnership with Women's CHAI Project for predominantly South Asian women. The workshops focused on the impacts/harms of tobacco, alternative forms of tobacco, issues/challenges/barriers the participants see in their communities, smoking in the home, and the support offered by Your Health Oldham
- planning for an event in July 2025, to celebrate successes in Oldham tobacco control to date, partnerships, and reflect on potential challenges ahead in the continued work toward the smokefree 2030 ambition. The event will be attended by a range of stakeholders, partners, health professionals, and community members
- partnering with Gardiner Richardson (a communications agency) to film promotional videos and case studies for the service. These videos were promoted through Your Health Oldham's social media channels to support increase referrals to the service. One of the case studies also featured in an article in both The Oldham Times and the Oldham Evening Chronicle
- increasing referral pathways and signposting opportunities with other community groups and organisations, such as Oldham Greenhill Community Sports & Recreation Club, SPARK Oldham, OPAL Advocacy, First Choice Homes and Early Break.

The funding has also allowed for greater systems engagement through the role of a stakeholder and partnerships coordinator. This role has a specific focus on working to strengthen working relationships and increase referral pathways with PCNs, secondary care providers, and other key partners in the health sector. Through this role, Your Health Oldham have also increased engagement with district coordinators and Place teams across Oldham's districts. This has enabled Your Health Oldham to actively contribute to district priority plans, be an active contributor in district lead meetings, and report more regularly on figures and progress in each district. Another key component of this role is to work closely with the Local Authority, supporting the facilitation of the

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Oldham Tobacco Alliance, and being an action holder of some of the alliance activities (such as supporting the creation and progress of the Oldham Tobacco Control Action Plan).

Since January 2025, Your Health Oldham have seen the highest rates of referrals, quit dates set, and 4-week quit outcomes since the start of their contract. The service continues to see a year-on-year increase in residents engaging with the stop smoking service. In addition, CO monitor verification of 4-week quits has increase substantially due to the increase in face-to-face delivery with the increased availability of face-to-face clinics. Between 1 January 2025 and 31 May 2025, Your Health Oldham have seen:

- 919 referrals of Oldham residents to the stop smoking support service
- 523 quit dates set
- Of those 523 clients who set quit dates, 57% successfully achieved a 4-week quit, equating to 298 clients quitting so far this year. Currently, 110 clients are still awaiting their 4-week follow up. This means that with the 57% quit rate, we are anticipating a further 63 clients to quit in the coming weeks, bringing the total number of clients successfully reaching a 4-week quit to 361.
- 34% of those who set a quit date in 2025 achieved a 4-week quit that was verified through CO monitoring. The current national average is 20%.

Oldham Council were also recently successful in receiving approval for an expression of interest for participation in second round of the national 'Swap to Stop' scheme, for our community stop smoking service to provide vapes directly to clients who are accessing stop smoking support. Vapes will be provided alongside behavioural support by our community stop smoking service, Your Health Oldham, to allow for the best intervention package to support a client with their quit attempt. As well as offering vapes as a quit aid to all people accessing the stop smoking provision, the service will assertively target groups including who are most at risk of tobacco-related harm including routine and manual workers, ethnic minority communities, LGBTIQ+ community, those with long term conditions and those living in the most deprivation. Special clinics have also been set up to address groups that have a higher smoking prevalence such as those with serious mental illnesses, drug and alcohol dependence and people who are homeless. Your Health Oldham staff co-locate in existing clinics with providers working with the above cohorts of clients.

The ability to supply vapes directly to clients accessing stop smoking support means clients who've attended a stop smoking support session can walk away with a vape as a stop smoking aid the same day. This enables the client to start their quit immediately, helping to keep motivation high. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, a third of Your Health Oldham's clients who set a quit date between those dates used a vape under the Swap to Stop scheme to aid their quit attempt. During this time, Your Health Oldham have also worked to dispel common myths about vapes as a quit aid. The community stop smoking service created a 'myth-busting' information sheet to distribute to clients, supporting them with current evidence to understand why vapes can be a successful quit aid, and counter any misinformation they may have encountered. Your Health Oldham are also working with partner agency Gardiner Richardson to produce a series of videos 'busting' common myths about topics relating to smoking, such as vapes, mental health, and nicotine.

### **5.3 Embed tobacco control approach into all relevant public policies**

Oldham Tobacco Alliance has now been in place since September 2021. The strategic partnership oversees the delivery of the locality Tobacco Control Action Plan, which drives forward a whole system approach to making smoking history. The coordinated and comprehensive approach to tobacco control across Oldham (aligned to national and regional policy and evidence base) aims to reduce smoking prevalence and harm from tobacco by making smoking less accessible, acceptable and desirable, empowering successful quitting and stopping young people starting to smoke in the first place.



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Considerable progress has been made by the Alliance since its inception, including successful joint communications and engagement activity, considerable system-wide workforce development, comprehensive policy review and a continued focus on enforcement of tobacco legislation (including underage sales) and a persistent approach to tackling illicit tobacco and unregulated vapes. The Alliance continues to review smoking cessation provision locally in order to ensure there is high quality, evidence-based specialist stop-smoking services available to everyone who smokes (including access to alternative products to support people to quit smoking successfully) whilst ensuring that there is appropriately targeted support for those most at risk of tobacco-related harm and any emerging vulnerable groups (such as the digitally excluded, asylum seekers) and overseeing that there are effective pathways in place and support available for alternative forms of nicotine and tobacco, including shisha, and the use of tobacco with illicit substances.

The success of the Alliance is largely due to the partnerships it enables, ensuring all members are able to have their day about the future of Oldham tobacco control. Membership of the Alliance is made up of representation from the public health team, community stop smoking service, the tobacco addiction service for patients admitted to hospital, the maternity stop smoking service, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Public Protection (including Environmental Health and Trading Standards), Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Services, Greater Manchester Police, Children's Services, Education, and more.

At the beginning of 2025, GM Make Smoking History launched their latest *Making Smoking History in Greater Manchester Strategic Delivery Framework and Action Plan 2024–2030*. Since the release of this Strategic Delivery Framework, the Oldham Tobacco Alliance have been working toward refreshing the Oldham Tobacco Control Action Plan for 2025/26 to be in line with the GM Make Smoking History Framework. This locality Action Plan is due to be established in August 2025, and members of the Alliance will contribute to working groups to progress the actions of the refreshed Action Plan. The locality Action Plan will include specific actions for the Oldham Tobacco Alliance to make progress against the CLear self-assessment – an evidence-based approach that allows localities and alliances to Challenge their existing tobacco control services, review their Leadership for comprehensive action on tobacco control and consider the Results demonstrated by the outcomes achieved, measured against national and local priorities.

The Public Health team is also leading an update of Oldham's smokefree policy. This will apply to all council owned and occupied spaces, including parks. The policy will support staff to access support should they wish to quit. It aims to contribute to creating a healthier workforce and denormalising using cigarettes.

## 6. Increasing physical activity

### 6.1. Measures

- The gap between Oldham and England remains significant. The latest **2023/24 Active Lives Survey** data shows that **58.5% of Oldham adults** are physically active, compared to **67.4% for England**. While this is an improvement from the previous year (57%), Oldham still falls behind national and regional averages.
- For children and young people, **36.1%** in Oldham are considered physically active, which is a significant drop from 2022/23 (47.8%) and has now moved **below the England average (47.8%)**

### 6.2. Supporting Voluntary, Community and Faith Organisations / Place Based Working to increase physical activity.

We continue to strengthen our whole-system approach by supporting VCF organisations through the **One Oldham Fund**, administered by Action Together Oldham. This fund continues to back projects that reduce health inequalities and promote physical activity. Notable initiatives include:

- **Place Partnership (Move More Feel Better in Oldham) formerly The Local Pilot.** We have secured another three years (2025-28) of funding to deepen and expand the work in place. What we have previously & continue to do in Glodwick and Failsworth we plan to do in each of our five districts, to reduce inactivity and inequalities. Discussions continue with Sport England around a community commissioning approach like the Ideas fund so that we can invest in to our communities to enable them to Move More in a way that suits them.
- **Active Through Football,** continues to consider the sustainability of activities and participation. With 18 weekly sessions in a small geographical area of West Oldham, which includes providing training opportunities & support for local leaders who can continue to deliver football-based activities.
- **Oldham Active through their community provision** continues to support the 5 districts and VCF organisations offering health awareness talks, community exercise provision in community spaces and training courses to upskill our community members in physical activity and health. They also work with Get Oldham Working to support individuals to get work ready.

### **6.3. Improving Communication to embed the message that movement matters, for people of all abilities.**

Our communication efforts continue to grow, with increased promotion of physical activity through Council channels both internally and externally. Highlights include:

- Promotion of **active travel**, walking, green spaces and local sports events.
- Coverage of the **Tour of Britain Women's event (9 June 2024)**, which brought world-class cyclists through Oldham and inspired local interest in cycling.
- The newly improved OCL Staff membership for Council staff which saw over 150 sign ups in the first window.

### **6.4. Active Travel / Promoting the use of improved foot & cycle paths, and communicating upcoming developments for Oldham**

Over the past year, Oldham has made significant progress in promoting active travel as part of its wider Health & Wellbeing strategy. This includes:

- Several completed and ongoing schemes in Oldham now connected with the Bee Network
  - Busy Beeways & foot / cycle bridge at King Street & Union Street
  - Chadderton improvements & the Oldham Mumps Metrolink Cycle Hub
  - Upgrades at West Street / Cheapside & Rock Street / Lord Street
- In Oldham 78km of schemes are currently in development, including upgrades to junctions & routes around the town centre. All works completed, in development and under construction can be found [here](#).
- Oldham Council & Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) continue to actively engage in residents. Public feedback is sought to shape designs and communication campaigns which have highlighted the benefits of active travel to health, wellbeing, and the environment.
- We have also recently appointed an 'Activation officer – Active Travel & Moving More' which has been jointly funded via the Place Partnership and Strategic Transport Mayor's Challenge Fund – both externally secured funding.<sup>5</sup>

### **6.5. Celebrating and Championing Moving More**

The **#Oldham #MoveMoreFeelBetter** campaign highlights local stories of increased activity. We've been working with **Diva Creative** to produce engaging videos and storytelling content to broaden the campaign's reach. This work was fully funded through **GM Moving**, and we hope to have the launch of this in 2025 in line with our expansion of the Place Partnership work.

Case studies continued to be collated and created showing the wider benefits of Moving More to our residents and communities.

### **6.6. Widening Access and Participation.**



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We are expanding our **Place Partnership** approach from two districts (Central and South) to all five districts in Oldham now that the Sport England Funding has been secured. This aims to:

- Tackle inactivity and inequalities.
- Align with **Place Based Integration** priorities.
- Use a **proportionate universalism** approach to focus on areas of greatest need.

Project plans are being developed, and we hope to recruit two posts that will support the expansion and deepening of the work across all five districts.

### **6.7. Enhancing Activity Spaces.**

Capital improvements have been completed thanks to external funding:

- **Cricket Non-Turf Pitches (NTPs)** have been installed at Oldham Edge, New Barn, George Street, and Heyside Playing Fields. A final pitch was installed at **Hathershaw College**, all fully funded by the **England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB)**.
- **Tennis court refurbishments** are now complete in Alexandra, Chadderton, Dunwood, Higher Crompton, Lower Memorial, and Werneth parks, with 96% funding from the **Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)**.
- Two additional **outdoor gyms** have been installed at Bullcote Park and Shaw Road End, led by Environmental Services.

In respect to the Cricket NTPs and the Park Tennis courts we are now working on plans to activate them alongside our communities & other stakeholders so that they are used by

## **7. Recommendations**

7.1. The Committee is asked to consider the report, and the progress made against the priorities.

## **8. Appendices**

8.1. A page overview of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is provided below

## PRINCIPLES

We are resident focused

We have a well-managed health and care system

We are champions of equality

We prioritise prevention

## Oldham Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2030: Priorities

**Supporting our residents to gain the knowledge and skills to confidently make choices and make decisions about their own health**

**Giving children the best start in life – focus on reducing infant mortality**

**Improving mental wellbeing and mental health**

**Reduce smoking**

**Increasing physical activity**

### Key Goals

- Develop a common framework for engagement to ensure residents can share services to their needs
- Adopt a resident focused approach to communication and tailor messages
- Support established peer and patient support groups to grow and improve reach
- Build a local approach to communication using the Health Foundation toolkit

- Implement a targeted action plan to reduce infant mortality
- Provide family-focused, coordinated support in our communities
- Improve communications about healthy pregnancy from pre-conception to birth
- Normalise breastfeeding and become a UNICEF Baby Friendly Borough
- Ensure access to early education and increase % children who start school ready to learn

- Support community organisations and networks to grow and support residents
- Promote the use of shared language and reduce stigma across communities
- Establish clear routes to accessing support and care for all communities
- Provide support to education workforce on emotional health and wellbeing
- Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and substance misuse
- Improve the physical health and wellbeing of people with mental ill-health

- Embed tobacco control approach into all relevant public policies
- Promote smokefree homes and community spaces
- Ensure that comms around smoking, vaping and alternative forms are tailored
- Make high quality evidence-based stop smoking support accessible to all smokers
- Reduce uptake of smoking and vaping in young people and enforce legislation

- Support VCFSE to increase physical activity,
- Promote use of foot and cycle paths
- Celebrate and champion physical activity via social media and other campaigns
- Widening access and participation, providing more inclusive options
- Take a strengths-based community approach
- Maintain and create safe green and other activity spaces

### Measures

- Supporting our residents to gain the knowledge and skills to confidently make choices and participate in decisions about their own health will underpin improvement against all the measures included in this strategy.

- Reduce infant mortality rate to England average
- Increase % of children who achieve a good level of develop by age 5 to England average
- Reduce under 18s conception rate to England average

- Reduce % of people reporting high levels of anxiety to less than England average
- Reduce % of people who feel lonely to significantly less than England average
- Increase drug treatment places by 20%

- Reduce the % of population smoking to England average
- Reduce smoking in pregnancy to England average
- Increase the % of adults who have never smoked, to England average

- Oldham will have the same % of adults who are physically active as England as a whole