



# Portfolio Report

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Fida Hussain, Cabinet Member for Enterprise

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This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to the portfolio responsibilities.

## Employment & Employability:

Unemployment has continued to decrease over the last 12 months and is now 6.9% (reduced from 7.72% in July 2024)

## Get Oldham Working:

Get Oldham Working (GOW) continues to drive inclusive economic growth, supporting residents into sustainable jobs, training, and improved wellbeing through our holistic, person-centred approach.

**Restart Programme:** Over **600 residents engaged** so far this year, with employer satisfaction exceeding **90%**.

**National Careers Service:** Delivered **117 learning achievements**, equipping residents with skills for career progression.

**Support to Succeed:** Providing vital support to economically inactive residents to build confidence and job readiness.

**Vanguard: 274 residents started** on the programme this year, with a strong referral pipeline in place.

## New Projects Mobilisation

**Trailblazer Programme:** Mobilisation underway, including setting up back office systems, process design, and multi-agency collaboration to prepare for delivery to residents with complex barriers who are economically inactive to support the Get Britain Working policy.

**Sanctuary Seekers Project:** Mobilisation complete, ready to deliver ESOL, employability, and wellbeing support to refugees and asylum seekers, with community engagement plans in place to ensure accessibility.

## Recent Customer Feedback:

★ “They treated me with respect and didn’t judge me.”

★ “My coach helped me find my confidence again.”

★ “I’m now working in care, which I love.”

✓ 94% felt supported by staff

✓ 90% would recommend GOW services

## Key Achievements

In June, **Matrix reaccreditation** was secured for three years, recognising our person-centred and innovative delivery (shared with Lifelong Learning Service so features in Cllr Ali’s portfolio brief as well).

**Council Leader visit** in June commended GOW’s impact, with **15,800+ jobs filled since 2013**.

Partnerships created **135+ local mental health jobs** and new NHS career pathways.

**Community engagement:** Micro Business sponsorship, Mental Health Awareness Week, and charitable staff activities.

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## **Get Oldham Working Strategic Developments**

**Spindles Hub:** Development underway to create a modern, accessible GOW delivery base from Level 8 Spindles.

**Displacement Support:** Tailored employment and wellbeing services for care sector staff affected by regional changes.

### **Business Networking:**

Lots of networking has taken place since the last Council meeting. In partnership with Action Together, Oldham Athena Labs was launched at Oldham College on 2 June. This business growth programme is for female founders of ethnic minority led business in Oldham. It aims to help challenge and break down some of the main barriers for women leading businesses in this area and helping them to develop their business models in preparation for growth and funding. There are eleven Oldham participants taking part in this fully funded 3-month programme which covers a range of topics such as business planning, access to finance, investment readiness and pitching to investors.

On Friday 27 June Oldham was home to a Green Economy Networking event hosted by the Business Growth Hub. Thirty-five green tech businesses from Oldham and across GM attended this event to network with peers from the green tech community, hear short presentations, inspiring journeys and industry developments and see what fully-funded support is available to this sector. We are keen to host such events with the green tech sector being such an important part of our growth plans via our Green New Deal Strategy.

Preparations for the seventeenth annual Oldham Business Awards are well underway with all the finalists being announced at a special finalist event on Thursday 3 July at Grains Bar Hotel. It was an exciting night with over eighty attendees on the night there to hear the names of the three finalists for each of the eleven categories. Not long now until the big event on the Friday 3 October at the Queen Elizabeth Hall when the winners of each category will be revealed.

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