

## **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:**

The official measure of unemployment states that Oldham borough has seen a 12% reduction in unemployment with 4.9% unemployment rate (March 2025) compared to 5.5% the previous year (March 2024). Universal Credit Claimant remains steady at 7%.

### **Get Oldham Working:**

- Core Offer: Supporting 7,000+ residents each year with jobs, training, apprenticeships, business advice & wellbeing.
- Working Wardrobe: 520 residents supported Year to Date.
- Therapy & counselling: 3 rooms now open, 90–100 sessions/week.
- Access to gym & physical wellbeing support.

**Restart Programme:** Ahead with engagement & outcomes recently (280 residents into work since April). Improved employer links, access to GM-wide vacancies, weekly job-start tracking. Supporting key Council priorities including working the Muse and their supply chain to connect residents to job opportunities.

**National Careers Service:** 1,120 residents supported since April 2025, 90%+ satisfaction. External audit completed with no issues.

**Support to Succeed:** 720 residents supported, 68% moved closer to work.

**Vanguard:** 65 residents have started onto programme in the 6 weeks, Oldham exceeding 100% engagement target – one of few GM providers achieving this, demonstrating strong demand for work and health integration.

### **New Projects Mobilisation:**

**Trailblazer Programme:** 37 referrals ready. Partnership induction training underway with first referrals being inducted in September. Extensive work has been carried out to develop a bespoke Management information system.

**Sanctuary Seekers Project:** Programme starts September, 12 early referrals logged.

### **Performance & Achievements**

- 612 job outcomes (Q1) – 63% sustained.
- 148 apprenticeships & training starts.
- 210 residents supported with in-work progression..
- Expanded therapy provision & two new GM programmes mobilised

### **Community & Business Engagement**

- 240 businesses engaged, creating 310 new opportunities.
- Social media reach: 6,800+ Facebook. LinkedIn followers 4k+
- Businesses supported to meet social value through local recruitment.

### **Recent Resident Feedback**

“Working Wardrobe gave me the confidence to attend my interview.”

“I didn’t just get job help – therapy made the difference.”

**Get Oldham Working Jobs Fair – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September noon- 3pm at the QE Hall**

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**Business Networking:**

The Council and partners continue to support the local business community through a range of networking events and programmes:

**Muse supplier event:**

Muse hosted a supplier event on Thursday 14 August at the Hive with around 60 business in attendance. Businesses heard about future supply chain opportunities as well as what support they could receive from the Business Growth Hub and Get Oldham Working. This is the first of several events.

**Willmott Dixon** – are hosting a 'Future Ready Supply Chain' Event- 24th September, also at the Hive, Oldham.

**Business Growth Hub** continue to host a series of business support drop-in sessions, the last one was held on the 21 August at Station Business Centre, Chadderton. The next event will be held at Ram Mill on 11 September.

**Town Centre Forum:**

Over 70 people attended the Town Centre Forum on 18 June to hear updates on the Muse housing development, learn about support for businesses from the Growth Company and see the first glimpses of the Coliseum winter programme. The town centre shop front grant scheme was launched by the Leader and to date 45 applications have been submitted from businesses keen to invest in improving their shops in the town centre.

The seventeenth annual Oldham Business Awards takes place on Friday 3 October.

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