

# Annual Report Complex Safeguarding Hub July 2024 – June 2025



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## Foreword

### Vision for Children, Young People and Families

- 1.1 The Contextual Approach to Complex Safeguarding Strategy 2024 – 2027 outlines the vision held in Oldham:

*“Our vision is that all children, young people, and adults who are vulnerable to exploitation, either criminal or sexual, are provided with a clear targeted response which enables and promotes a targeted multi-agency response to need and risk.*

*We want all our children, young people, and adults to live in a Borough where they feel safe and protected from the risk of exploitation in all of its forms. To achieve this, we will provide an integrated response to Complex Safeguarding concerns, sharing information efficiently and in a timely manner and within agreed protocols to protect and safeguard our children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The aim is that the three key partners will be joined by a variety of multi-agency partners to ensure a targeted response across need and risk for vulnerable people so they can be supported to live free from exploitation.”*

- 1.2 With our vision in mind, we have an agreed set of values and principles within Oldham:

- Treat Children, Young People and Adults at risk with compassion and understanding, be non-judgmental, and treat people with dignity and respect.
- Actively listen to the voice of the child or adult and their lived experiences.
- Foster a culture where professional challenge is acceptable and encouraged.
- Approach each case with an open mind and make objective and ethical decisions.
- Take a holistic approach to support the child or adult, including giving consideration to wider factors.
- Recognise the diversity across the borough and incorporate this into our approach.

- 1.3 The Complex Safeguarding Hub combines the three key partners, Greater Manchester Police, NHS and Children’s Social Care for safeguarding as an integrated service for response, consultation and intervention in relation to exploitation concerns of children and young people.

- 1.3 The Oldham Complex Safeguarding Hub work with any young person up to the age of 18 years (or up to the age of 25 years for any young adult currently open to the After Care Service for Oldham) who are open for assessment, intervention or planning to Children’s Social Care, where there is an identified high risk of, or current experience of exploitation. The teamwork alongside a number of partner agencies and third sector services to ensure appropriate information sharing and timely signposting to key services inclusive of Probation, Housing, TOG MIND, Early break, Catch 22 and KOGS (Keeping Our Girls Safe).

- 1.4 The Complex Safeguarding Hub recognises the vital importance of the work we do with children, young people, and their families across Oldham. We are honoured to support children during some of the most difficult and vulnerable moments in their lives. As a directorate, we are committed to continuously improving our practice—adapting and evolving our approach to ensure that children and families remain at the centre of everything we do, with a strong focus on nurturing relationships and strengthening connections.



Natassja Gollcher

Head of Complex Safeguarding, Duty and Advice and EDT.

## Purpose

- 2.1** The purpose of the Annual Report is to provide an overview of the Complex Safeguarding Hub and the impact of the work undertaken by the Complex Safeguarding Hub.
- 2.2** The report will outline the different strands of the work the Complex Safeguarding Hub undertakes, and the outcomes achieved over the period of July 2024 – June 2025.
- 2.3** The report will also set the priorities for the upcoming 12 months.

## Context

- 3.1** In Oldham we have taken on the agreed Greater Manchester definition of Complex Safeguarding:

*“Complex Safeguarding is criminal activity (often organised), or behaviour associated with criminality, involving children and young adults (often vulnerable) where there is exploitation and/or a clear or implied safeguarding concern.”*

Complex Safeguarding addresses the direct influences on children and young people outside of the family home, specifically where there is risk of sexual and/or criminal exploitation. Oldham aims to ensure we have a solid understanding and response to different forms of exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- 3.2** The Complex Safeguarding Hub consists of a specialist police team of Detectives and Officers, a children’s social care team, consisting of social workers and a family worker and a specialist exploitation nurse and a psychotherapist. The Challenger Team also works closely with the Complex Safeguarding Hub and continue to respond to Organised Crime.

- 3.3** The current structure in the Complex Safeguarding Hub is:

- 1x Complex Safeguarding Team Manager
- 1x Complex Safeguarding Advanced Practitioner
- 5.5 x Complex Safeguarding Social Workers
- 1 x Operation Sherwood Social Worker
- 1 x APST Social Worker
- 1 x Complex Safeguarding Family Worker
- 1x Missing from Home Co-Ordinator
- 0.5 x Trusted Relationship Psychotherapist
- 1x Specialist Nurse
- 2 x Detective Sergeants
- 6 x Detective Constables/Police Constables
- 1 x Operational Support Officer

- 3.4** The Oldham Complex Safeguarding Hub work with any young person up to the age of 18 years (or up to the age of 25 years for any young adult currently open to the After Care Service for Oldham) who are open for assessment, intervention or planning to Children’s Social Care, where there is an identified high risk of, or current experience of exploitation. The teamwork alongside a number of partner agencies and third sector services to ensure appropriate information sharing and timely signposting to key services inclusive of Probation, Housing, TOG MIND, Early break, Catch 22 and KOGS (Keeping Our Girls Safe).

- 3.5** In addition to Social Workers and Police, the team has the benefit of key professionals who are invaluable in helping to provide the scaffolding of support around young people and their families as well as in bringing the puzzle pieces together.

**3.6** The Specialist Nurse is a vital member of the Complex Safeguarding Hub, bringing extensive knowledge, experience, and clinical expertise to the team. Their role is central to ensuring that the health needs of the young people we support are identified and met effectively. The nurse works closely with GPs, school nurses, and other health services to facilitate access to essential care, including GP appointments, sexual health services, CAMHS, and Early Break. They also deliver direct work with young people on key areas such as relationships, sexual health, emotional wellbeing, and substance use. In addition to direct support, the Specialist Nurse contributes to the team's training offer and acts as a key point of contact for health professionals seeking advice or guidance around exploitation. They also provide advocacy for young people, particularly in relation to emotional wellbeing and mental health, and collaborate with Social Workers to deliver joint sessions where appropriate.

**3.7** The Complex Safeguarding Hub benefits from the expertise of a Clinical Psychotherapist, whose role is to enhance the team's existing knowledge and confidence through trauma-informed case formulation and psychological recovery models. Central to this approach is the young person and their established 'trusted relationship', which serves as the foundation for promoting recovery and emotional healing. This therapeutic support is a key component of the team's ability to engage positively with young people and currently includes:

- **Consultation sessions** (individual or group): These provide space to explore trauma-informed case formulations, understand relational challenges, and develop strategies to support young people with specific issues they may be facing.
- **One-to-one emotional resilience support:** Tailored sessions to help staff manage the emotional demands of their work.
- **Compassion-focused wellbeing and self-support group:** A space to promote self-care and emotional wellbeing among practitioners.
- **Reflective group sessions:** Facilitated opportunities for the team to reflect on practice, share learning, and build collective insight.
- **Workshops and training:** Covering topics such as emotional regulation, crisis support (including self-harm and risk), motivation for mental health engagement, psychological formulation, and resilience-building.
- Here's a refined version of your paragraph with a clear, professional tone that highlights the impact of the support:

This support continues to be highly valued by the team and plays a crucial role in shaping how we work with young people. It enables practitioners to develop a deeper understanding of each young person's psychological needs, enhancing the quality and sensitivity of the interventions offered. The expertise of the Clinical Psychotherapist has proven invaluable—not only in strengthening the skills and confidence of staff, but also in improving engagement and outcomes for the young people we support. Additionally, the training and reflective opportunities provided have significantly bolstered the team's emotional resilience, which is essential when

working in a field that regularly involves exposure to intense emotions and real-life trauma.

- 3.8** Family Support Worker: The Complex Safeguarding Hub currently benefits from the support of a dedicated Family Support Worker, who works alongside Social Workers to provide tailored support to parents and carers. This role is instrumental in strengthening family relationships and improving outcomes for young people.

The support offered includes, but is not limited to:

- Advocacy on behalf of parents
- Education around key topics such as exploitation, grooming, online safety, and adolescent development
- Mediation and crisis intervention
- Safety planning and emotional support
- Helping parents understand processes and procedures.
- Exploring and supporting parents' aspirations for their children

This work plays a vital role in empowering parents, enhancing their understanding, and enabling them to better support their children through complex and often challenging circumstances.

- 3.9 Wider Partnerships** – The Complex Safeguarding Hub's partnership working extends well beyond its core agencies, drawing on a broad network of professionals to enhance support for young people. Key partners include Community Safety, Youth Services, Trading Standards, Sexual Health, the Partnership Enforcement Team, Youth Justice, Early Break, Education, CAMHS, KOGs, and Catch 22. These partners are regularly invited to the monthly MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) meetings, which are consistently well attended. MACE provides a valuable forum for sharing emerging issues, concerns, themes, and trends, and for fostering collaborative responses to complex safeguarding challenges.

- 3.10 Transitional Safeguarding** – **Transitional Safeguarding** *is a term that has been used by Research in Practice to highlight the need to improve the safeguarding response to older teenagers and young adults in a way that recognises their developmental needs. (Firmin et al 2019).* Transitional safeguarding is recognising that vulnerability does not end when a young person reaches 18. The Complex Safeguarding hub offers support to young people up to the age of 25, this is consent led once an individual turns 18 however there are currently a number of post 18 young people open to the team. The hub recognises the need to continue to offer this support to those who are being exploited or have been the victim of exploitation over the age of 18. Transitional Safeguarding is an ongoing priority for Adult and Children Services with a project currently being implemented to embed this in practice.



**3.11 Daily Governance** - The Complex Safeguarding Hub holds a daily governance meeting each morning, attended by key partner agencies. This forum provides a structured space to share and review intelligence, referrals, missing from home episodes, arrests, and crimes linked to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and Modern Slavery.

Through collaborative discussion, actions are agreed, recorded, and reviewed, ensuring a coordinated response across Oldham's safeguarding partners—including CSE, CCE, and Challenger colleagues—under a unified approach. The meeting also considers new referrals to the Complex Safeguarding Hub and any significant incidents involving young people already known to the service.

Team members contribute valuable intelligence on associations, offenders, and locations or properties of concern, helping to shape an informed and timely response. Agreed actions may include:

- Referrals to MASH for early intervention or social work assessment
- Requests for strategy meetings
- Referrals for CSE/CCE assessments
- Initiation of police investigations
- Proactive community responses, such as joint visits with Housing or Trading Standards (Partnership Enforcement Team) to properties or businesses of concern.

**3.12 The Missing and Child Exploitation meeting (MACE) meetings** - are a process whereby partner agencies are able to share information where there are concerns that a child or young person (CYP) is at risk of, is being exploited, or is frequently missing from home or care. Missing episodes are a clear indicator of exploitation risk and a potential indicator of significant harm. The purpose of the MACE meetings is to target multi-agency resource by sharing information on identified children by agreeing/reviewing case actions and sharing local intelligence. The aim is to improve the identification and tracking of actions regarding children which agencies are concerned about and to reduce missing episodes of children and young people.

## Key Achievements

- The Complex Safeguarding Hub continue to provide training and advice in respect of Child Exploitation to schools and colleges across the borough.
- The GM Peer review completed in July and August 2025 highlighted many strengths in relation to the Complex safeguarding Hub, including the strong ethos the team hold to support children to be safe, resilient and to thrive.
- There have been 38 arrests in relation to Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Investigations, with the investigations into these crimes ongoing.
- As part of disruption in relation to Exploitation the Complex Safeguarding Police team have issued 25 Child Abduction Warnings.

Below is also some of the feedback that the team have received:

I just wanted to pass on some positive feedback for one of your workers. She was recently allocated MC who resided at my home until she moved out today. I wanted to comment on Leanne professional approach but also was able to build a relationship with MC in the short time she has known her. Were MC felt comfortable to disclose things to her. We were both on the same page regarding concerns and supported me when we raised these in strategy meetings Leanne has been a great support to the home, if I have struggled to get hold of social worker Leanne has supported me where possible. She has at times gone above and beyond her job role. I feel it has been a positive working relationship and I have felt supported. If you could pass of these positive comments and thank her for her hard work 😊

Residential provider.

Amazing! The children absolutely loved it. We covered 30 children but there are a few more who definitely need it too!

Littlemoor Primary School

She's the best, I can tell her things I can't tell my parents and I know she won't tell me off. She talks through things with me and is always there when I need her. – *Young Person*

Happy working with Stacey, grateful for the CST team, and will you pass on my gratitude to the HOS. Involvement has opened my eyes to the work CST do. Work with CST has upgraded our knowledge and skills. It's intense work and everyone wants to keep Child safe.

Residential provider.

Things seem more settled, and he does not sneak out anymore. My experience of working with the team has been very good. He has done his best, and I am happy with CST Social Worker. CST Social Worker has helped my son to engage and become more open. At the start when CST Social Worker took him out [for direct work/ intervention] he would come home and be very quiet. However, over time he would be more open – and his mood, emotions and confidence have changed for the better.

Parent

No, it's all good, my worker has helped me understand what was happening and has helped me see what I want in my future.

*Young Person*

## Prevention

- 4.1** The Complex Safeguarding Team is resourced to a level where it can provide a prevention offer to children and young people within the borough. It is noted that prevention is key, with the team wanting to prevent exploitation wherever possible. We recognise that this is better than responding to and protecting children after the harm has taken place.
- 4.2** As part of the prevention offer there is a wider campaign of increasing awareness, education and training of young people, families, communities, and professionals in a variety of ways but also through our direct one to one case work. Alongside this the complex safeguarding team utilise the prevention support offered via KOGs (Keeping Our Girls Safe), Catch 22 and Youth Justice.
- 4.3** The work of the Complex Safeguarding Hub and its partners in tackling child exploitation is promoted across various social media platforms, including Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). These communications have highlighted key initiatives such as weeks of action, provided insight into the role of the Complex Safeguarding Hub, and showcased examples of proactive multi-agency activity, including the execution of police warrants. In addition, the Hub proudly shares updates on successful prosecutions and convictions related to child exploitation, reinforcing the message that perpetrators will be held accountable and that safeguarding remains a borough-wide priority.
- 4.4** The Complex Safeguarding Hub also continue to provide training and advice in respect of Child Exploitation to schools and colleges across the borough. In October 2024 and March 2025 there were two weeks of action, within these weeks the Complex Safeguarding Hub delivered focussed sessions to students in high schools and primary schools across Oldham, alongside delivering focussed sessions to residential providers. These sessions focused on sexual exploitation, online safety, carrying weapons, peer-on-peer abuse and youth violence. These sessions were well received by students, with them actively participating in the sessions.

### In Summary:

- Since July 2024 Training inputs have been delivered to some schools within Oldham with over 3000 students and teachers across high schools and primary settings.
- Training inputs were delivered to some of the Care Homes within the Oldham Area.

This training has been well received with the team often being invited back, this training has also enabled the team to develop positive relationships with education settings within the borough.

- 4.5** In July 2025 the complex Safeguarding hub invested in 10 virtual reality headsets, to use as part of the prevention offer, for a period of 12 months. Virtual Decisions: KNIVES explores the reasons why young people carry knives and the consequences of that and Virtual Decisions: GANGS helps participants to recognise the signs, and understand the dangers, of child criminal exploitation, youth violence and coercion. These headsets have been successfully used in other local authorities, and locally within the Trafford area and Bolton have also recently commissioned this service.
- 4.6** The training for these headsets has been rolled out across the partnership, inclusive of GMP, Positive Steps, Youth Service, Kingsland, After Care and Complex Safeguarding. Since July 2025 these headsets have been utilised by 90 young people, alongside planned sessions to deliver this in a number of primary schools in the borough.
- 4.7** The Complex Safeguarding Team have also joined up with the Prevention Hub to enable us to co-deliver sessions within schools across the borough in the upcoming academic year. The sessions that will be co-delivered focusing on complex and contextual safeguarding. The Prevention Hub is a police team who are responsible for overseeing the district-based demand reduction and problem solving, the team is made up of school-based police officers, neighbourhood police officers and the missing from home officer. They are co-located within Duty and Advice to enable partnership working.
- 4.8** The Complex Safeguarding Hub have also been involved in the delivery of the wider exploitation training in partnership with the Oldham Safeguarding Children partnership, this training is available for all partners. Within this year the training has been developed to be an “All Age Exploitation” training, delivered jointly with the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Partnership. This training has been well received by those who have attended and is a regular feature on both partnerships training calendars.
- 4.9** The Complex Safeguarding Hub continue to attend the Quarterly Provider meeting, which has enabled the Hub to develop links and relationships with Care Providers within the Oldham area. It also enables the Complex Safeguarding hub to disseminate any local trends or areas of concern to the local providers. The attendance at these meetings has been received well by the care providers.

## Protection

- 5.1** Since July 2024, the Complex Safeguarding Hub has received 132 referrals, with 67% accepted into the service for direct support. Referrals that did not meet the threshold for the Hub were appropriately signposted to alternative services such as Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGs), Catch 22, Prevention & Diversion, or other relevant agencies. In some cases, advice and guidance were provided to the allocated teams to ensure the young person's needs were still addressed.
- 5.2** Catch 22 continues to provide targeted support around Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines activity within Oldham. Since June 2024, they have worked with 44 young people across the borough. The partnership between Catch 22 and the Complex Safeguarding Hub remains strong, with close collaboration on emerging concerns and coordinated responses to risk.
- 5.3** Keeping our Girls Safe have continued to offer support and interventions in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation across the Oldham Borough. Their work complements that of the Complex Safeguarding Hub, and the partnership continues to be effective and well-integrated. Since June 2024, KOGs has supported 152 individuals, including both children and adults.
- 5.4** Support for children and young people affected by exploitation is grounded in trauma-informed, relational, and strength-based approaches. At the heart of this work is the commitment to building trusted relationships that foster safety, trust, and meaningful engagement.

The Complex Safeguarding team delivers tailored, direct work that includes:

- Education through conversation-based learning, role play, and scenario-based safety planning
- Emotional support and advocacy
- Active safeguarding and disruption
- Support with achieving best evidence.
- Goal setting and working towards young people's aspirations.
- Creative and flexible approaches that respond to individual needs.

A key pillar of this approach is the **trusted relationship model**, which underpins all relational practice. This model is central to the work of the team and is embedded across all partner agencies. By being consistent, responsive, and trustworthy, practitioners create a safe space where young people feel able to share their lived experiences, disclose concerns if they choose to, and engage meaningfully with support.

The team remains focused on what matters most to young people—supporting them with the issues they identify as important and ensuring their voices are heard throughout their journey.

- 5.5** Preventing exploitation involves addressing both the factors that increase vulnerability and those that build resilience and strengthen safeguarding. The Complex Safeguarding Hub adopts a proactive, relational approach that places trusted relationships and trauma-informed, strength-based practice at the centre of all interventions.

Prevention work includes:

- Direct education sessions with young people.
- Practical safety planning using role play and real-life scenarios.
- Conversation-based learning and reflective practice.
- Emotional support and advocacy.
- Active safeguarding and disruption.
- Supporting young people to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- Flexibility and creativity to tailor approaches to individual needs.

Designated professionals across all partner agencies work collaboratively to ensure that relationships underpin every aspect of practice. This consistent, relationship-led approach helps young people feel safe, supported, and empowered to engage meaningfully with services.

- 5.6** A core focus of the Complex Safeguarding Hub is working directly with young people who are vulnerable to, or have experienced, exploitation. The support provided is highly personalised, recognising that each young person is unique and requires a tailored approach. When planning interventions, careful consideration is given to the young person's age, culture, identity, learning needs, background, and the nature and level of concern. This ensures that the support is not only relevant but also respectful and responsive to their individual circumstances. By centring the young person's voice and needs, the team is able to deliver meaningful, trauma-informed support that promotes safety, empowerment, and long-term positive outcomes.
- 5.7** Currently, 55% of the young people supported by the Complex Safeguarding Hub are assessed as being vulnerable to exploitation. A further 27% are suspected to have experienced exploitation, while 18% have been confirmed as victims. Over the past 12 months, the majority of young people engaged with the service have fallen into the categories of either being vulnerable to or suspected of experiencing exploitation. This reflects the team's proactive focus on early intervention—working with young people before harm occurs. The recent increase in staffing within the Hub has further strengthened the team's capacity to engage earlier and more effectively with those at risk.

- 5.8** When a young person is assessed as no longer requiring support from the Complex Safeguarding Hub, ensuring continuity of care is a key priority. The team works to secure ongoing support from appropriate services such as Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGs), Catch 22, Early Break, the Youth Justice Service, or the Youth Service. A handover process is completed with the young person to ensure a smooth transition and to maintain the consistency of support. This approach helps to sustain progress, reduce disruption, and ensure that the young person continues to feel supported and connected to services that meet their needs.
- 5.9** Disrupting Exploitation Without Criminalising Victims - A persistent challenge in tackling Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is the limited availability of tools to disrupt perpetrators without criminalising the young people involved. Intelligence gathering remains a vital safeguarding tool, but it is often hindered by young people's reluctance to share information—commonly due to fear for their safety or being labelled as “grasses.”
- 5.10** To address this, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and the Complex Safeguarding Hub have adapted their approach, placing greater emphasis on trusted relationships, trauma-informed practice, and non-criminalising responses. This aligns with the Home Office's Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit, which promotes multi-agency collaboration and the use of civil disruption measures—such as Child Abduction Warning Notices, Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, and Sexual Risk Orders—to safeguard children and disrupt offenders without prosecuting victims.
- 5.11** Legislative Framework - The Modern Slavery Act 2015 provides a legal foundation for recognising children coerced into criminal activity as victims of modern slavery. Under Section 45, children who commit offences as a direct result of exploitation may be entitled to a statutory defence, reinforcing the principle that they should be protected, not punished.
- 5.12** Further strengthening this approach, the Crime and Policing Bill 2025 introduces a standalone offence for adults who exploit children for criminal purposes. It also proposes Child Criminal Exploitation Prevention Orders, which can be applied even in the absence of a criminal conviction, to restrict exploiters' access to children. These developments reflect a growing national and local commitment to treating exploited children as victims and prioritising their safeguarding.
- 5.13** Advocacy for Young People Exploited Through County Lines - Given the significant risks to young people who disclose experiences of CCE, GMP has focused on identifying alternative disruption strategies that do not rely on victim testimony. The Complex Safeguarding Hub continues to advocate for young people who may be committing offences under threat, coercion, or control, particularly in the context of county lines exploitation.
- 5.14** This includes building partnerships with police forces outside Oldham, where young people are often arrested for drug-related offences. The team has identified a clear



need for advocacy and safeguarding support for these young people, ensuring their exploitation is recognised and that they are treated as victims, not offenders.

- 5.15** Intelligence Sharing and Mapping - The team actively contributes to the mapping of local Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and young people at risk, drawing on the local knowledge of PCSOs, neighbourhood policing teams, and other professionals such as Youth Justice, schools, and family networks. This intelligence is shared appropriately to inform both safeguarding responses and disruption activity.
- 5.16** This approach enables the team to focus on protecting young people while also supporting law enforcement in securing charges and convictions against perpetrators. These practices are equally applied in cases of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), allowing the team to monitor known offenders, identify emerging concerns, and take preventative action where necessary.
- 5.17** Multi-Agency Disruption Through the Challenger Meeting - The Complex Safeguarding Hub plays an active role in the Serious and Organised Crime Challenger Meeting, held monthly by GMP. This multi-agency forum brings together partners to discuss OCGs, identify disruption opportunities, and coordinate preventative action. The meeting has also proven effective in the early identification of young people at risk of exploitation, enabling timely intervention.
- 5.18** Partnership with the Challenger Team -The Hub maintains a strong working relationship with the Challenger Team, which is essential for recognising and responding to both CCE and OCG-related exploitation. This partnership facilitates the timely sharing of intelligence, joint problem-solving, and enhanced safeguarding of victims. It also strengthens efforts to disrupt and prosecute offenders, ensuring a coordinated and effective response to serious and organised exploitation.
- 5.19** The multi-agency composition of the Complex Safeguarding Hub enables a comprehensive and coordinated response from the outset of a young person's involvement. This integrated approach ensures that support is multi-faceted and tailored to the individual's needs. To minimise the trauma of repeated disclosures, joint visits are routinely undertaken by Police and Complex Safeguarding Social Workers. This reduces the number of times a young person must recount their experiences, promoting a more trauma-informed and child-centred process. Effective information sharing is central to the team's model, ensuring that all relevant factors are considered when planning support. This enables the delivery of a personalised service that reflects the young person's unique circumstances. At the heart of this approach is relational practice, which remains a core principle across all partner agencies. By prioritising consistency, trust, and meaningful engagement, the team fosters strong relationships that support both safeguarding and recovery.



## Prosecution

- 6.1** The success of the Complex Safeguarding Police Team continues to be demonstrated through the quality of their investigations, the effective use of technology to gather evidence, and the robust sharing of intelligence within the multi-agency team. Their determination, combined with strong partnership working, has led to several cases progressing to trial.
- 6.2** The Police team is currently managing over 132 open investigations. To date, there have been 38 arrests linked to these investigations, which remain ongoing. As part of their disruption strategy, the police team has issued 28 Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) to adults suspected of involvement in exploitation.
- 6.3** There are currently nine active police operations led by the Complex Safeguarding Police Team. Five relate to Child Sexual Exploitation, including both recent and non-recent cases, familial abuse, and offences involving indecent images. Four are focused on Child Criminal Exploitation.
- 6.4** Multi-agency collaboration is essential in identifying offenders, gathering evidence (including statements from young people and their families), and progressing cases toward prosecution. Each professional within the team plays a vital role. The police team works closely with social workers, health professionals, licensing, and community safety partners to carry out targeted disruption in areas of concern.
- 6.5** In partnership with the Challenger Team, the police continue to take a proactive approach to tackling the criminal exploitation of children. While safeguarding remains a priority, investigations into Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) are continuously reviewed to assess and respond to levels of threat, risk, and harm.
- 6.6** Operation Sherwood – Supporting Survivors of Non-Recent CSE - The Complex Safeguarding Team continues to support Operation Sherwood, an investigation dedicated to survivors of non-recent child sexual exploitation in Oldham. Currently, 10 survivors are actively engaged with the team. The dedicated operation Sherwood social worker works to build trusted relationships, enabling survivors to share their experiences and identify perpetrators.
- 6.7** Tailored Support for Survivors - Support is carefully tailored to each survivor's needs and circumstances. The dedicated social worker, based at Nexus House two days per week, plays a key role in identifying support needs, developing care plans, and coordinating referrals to services such as mental health, housing, or adult social care. They also assist with visits, phone calls, and the preparation of approach documents prior to contact.

- 6.8** Operation Sherwood also involves engaging with individuals who may have witnessed exploitation. Many of these witnesses were childhood peers of survivors and may themselves have been victims. All approaches are trauma-informed and tailored to individual needs. Where disclosures are made, these are fully supported and investigated with the same rigor as survivor accounts.
- 6.9** Perpetrator Identification and Arrests - The perpetrator strand of Operation Sherwood is focused on identifying and arresting individuals named by survivors. To date, 23 arrests have been made. Two individuals have been arrested on separate occasions, and one case has resulted in no further action.
- 6.10** Safeguarding During Arrests - All arrests are carefully planned to minimise distress, particularly where children may be present in the home. The dedicated social worker is present on strike days to provide immediate safeguarding support if required.
- 6.11** Safeguarding Children Linked to Suspects - Where suspects have children or regular contact with children, referrals are made, and strategy meetings are coordinated by the dedicated social worker. They also provide guidance to children's social workers where Section 47 (child protection) or Section 17 (child in need) assessments may be necessary. The team ensures that bail conditions are proportionate and prioritise the safety of any children involved. The dedicated social worker supports this process by conducting bail address checks to confirm that suspects are not being bailed to households with children. The team remains committed to securing justice for all survivors of non-recent child sexual exploitation in Oldham.
- 6.12** The below examples demonstrate the team's ability to work together to respond immediately to safeguard children, disrupt exploitation, and ensure active support to meet a child / young person's overall needs. Whilst each agency fulfils their specific functions; the team uses a flexible working approach, using the skills and knowledge of each individual worker to provide a co-ordinated timely response in the best interests of each young person.



## Case Examples

A 15-year-old female had been in communication with an adult male who befriended her and her family, he had visited her address and invited her to his address asking for help in tidying up after a family bereavement. Over the course of a year, he increased the amount and frequency of his text messages he has used the girlfriend/boyfriend model of exploitation. The grooming moved from online to contact offences. After this was reported to the police he was arrested and his mobile phone was reviewed, the female child handed her mobile to police for a download. This child subsequently opened to Complex Safeguarding upon the team becoming aware of the report to the police. Upon the mobile phone being investigated, hundreds of messages were found on the devices of a sexual nature. The adult male was charged with inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, 2x sexual communication with a child, 2x sexual activity with a child, 2x engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child, 2x causing a child to engage in sexual activity, 2x breach of sexual risk order. The male pleaded guilty at court and received 8 years imprisonment comprising of 4 years imp & 4 years extended licence. Registration under Sex Offender Act 2003 for an indefinite period, Sexual Harm Prevention Order for an indefinite period and a restraining order for 10 years. The young person and their family were supported through the investigation by their allocated complex social worker and the complex police officer who led the investigation.

**Operation Armada** is a complex investigation of non-recent Child Sexual Exploitation offences which occurred between 2000 – 2008. The perpetrator was a shop keeper in Oldham who would entice young boys and girls into his store by offering alcohol and cigarettes. The shop keeper would hold parties at the premises and there are reports that he would get young persons to wear Asian clothing and to dance for him and other adult males. Following a protracted investigation the perpetrator was charged in February 2025 with 15 non-recent sexual offences against three victims. He has since appeared at Manchester Magistrate's Court and Minshull Street Crown Court, where he was given court bail ahead of his trial on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026. Oldham Complex Safeguarding was authorised by the Crown Prosecution Service to serve charges of 2 x Rape, 8 x sexual assaults, 5 x indecency.

Since the case appearing in the press a further victim has come forward in June 2025 to report sexual abuse by the perpetrator and this investigation remains ongoing with a view of submitting this further case to the CPS as a matter of priority.

**Op Maidstone** – During a joint visit, by CSH police and CSH Social Worker, to a 17-year-old male open to the team, disclosures were made in relation to this young person being sent to Wales by exploiters to deal drugs, whilst the child in this case could not provide names for the exploiters, he could provide nicknames for them. With several follow up visits to the child and an investigation into the exploitation, over the next two months in total 5 suspects were identified and a further two children were identified as having been exploited by this group.

The further two children were identified and linked through missing from home enquires. In doing so and attributing the phone number that had been in contact with them during missing episodes it was possible to trace the exploiters to having links to the children and in some case place them in vehicles during the trips to other towns alongside the travel time with the children in the same vehicles. The information being gathered as part of the investigation was shared with Wales Police leading to disruption action taking place and a high-risk missing child being located with support from north Wales County lines police team.

With the children been exploited and transported to both Middlesbrough and North Wales to deal Class A drugs, the suspects in the case were previously unknown we were able to identify those involved as well as carry out successful disruptions. This led to the arrest of 5 suspects in early January 2025, while the case is currently ongoing one of the suspects has subsequently been convicted for further drugs offences and has received a custodial prison sentence and another has been convicted for firearms related offences.

The identification of these suspects was crucial in the further offences being discovered and directly assisted in the arrest and conviction of one of the suspects for further drugs offences as once identified and the intel picture built this was directly shared to police on the ground in the areas of exploitation leading to a stop search whereby the suspect was caught in possession of class A drugs with intent to supply.

All 5 suspects were arrested for being concerned in the supply of class A drugs and human trafficking offences. The children involved were safeguarded from further harm and a previously unknown county line was seized and shut down.

## Missing From Home

- 7.1** Missing from Home (MFH) and Associated Risks, it is well-evidenced that children and young people who go missing from home are at significantly increased risk of harm, including potential exposure to or vulnerability to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). Given that missing episodes can serve as critical indicators of exploitation or other safeguarding concerns, it is essential that every MFH incident is thoroughly reported, recorded, and explored. This ensures that appropriate safeguarding responses are implemented, and that the child or young person receives the support they need.
- 7.2** Between 1st April 2024 and 30th March 2025, a total of 1,209 Missing from Home episodes involving children and young people in Oldham were reported to Greater Manchester Police (GMP).
- 7.3** The effectiveness of our response to missing children and young people has previously been highlighted within the Ofsted Inspection in May 2024:
- “Children who go missing or are at risk of exploitation are recognised and responded to well. For these children, the multidisciplinary child exploitation team is a valuable resource. Creative and persistent work is undertaken by committed staff to engage highly vulnerable children. The missing coordinator completes trigger plans which have been successfully used to locate children missing from home or care.”*
- 7.4** The Missing from Home Co-Ordinator became embedded within the Complex Safeguarding Hub and Duty and Advice in August 2023. The Missing from Home Co-Ordinator works closely with the Greater Manchester Police Missing From Police Officer, who is co-located within the MASH area.
- 7.5** It is recognised that children and young people who are missing from home or care are at increased risk of harm, including child exploitation. In recognition of this, Greater Manchester Police implemented the Prevention Hub within the Oldham district. This resource has been invaluable in targeting repeat missing episodes. Within this team also sits the missing from home police officers who are focused on responding to children who are missing, and problem solving to reduce them going missing. Since August 2023 the Missing from Home Co-Ordinator has been in post, working alongside the prevention hub in relation to children and young people who are missing from home or care. This post has enabled a greater oversight of the missing children and young people within the Oldham Area.

### Missing Episodes

- 7.6** Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, a total of 1,029 Missing from Home (MFH) episodes involving children and young people were reported to Greater Manchester Police (GMP) in Oldham. The data reveals important trends in both the volume and nature of missing episodes, as well as the profiles of the children most frequently affected.

- 7.7** Quarter 3 (Oct–Jan) recorded the highest number of MFH episodes (326), followed by Quarter 4 (Jan–Mar) with 266 episodes. The number of episodes involving Children Looked After (CLA) peaked in Quarter 3, accounting for 185 episodes, highlighting the continued vulnerability of this group.
- 7.8** Across all quarters, CLA consistently represented the majority of the top five most frequently missing children. In Quarters 1–3, this figure was 100%, with a slight drop to 80% in Quarter 4. When analysing the top five children missing for the longest periods, the data shows a more varied profile: CLA accounted for the majority in Quarters 2 and 3, while CIN/EH made up 60% of the longest missing cases in Quarter 4.
- 7.9** The data reinforces the importance of robust safeguarding responses for all children who go missing, particularly those in care. While CLA are more likely to be reported missing due to statutory requirements, the increasing proportion of CIN/EH children missing for extended periods suggests a need for enhanced early intervention and preventative work.
- 7.10** The consistent use of Return Home Interviews (RHIs) and the involvement of Positive Steps as an independent provider remain critical in understanding the reasons behind missing episodes and identifying potential risks, including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- 7.11** Data consistently shows that children and young people who go missing from home are among the most vulnerable in our community. Many have experienced significant adversity, including removal from parental care, disrupted education, and other adverse childhood experiences. These factors often contribute to the **push and pull dynamics** that lead to missing episodes.
- 7.12** To fully understand the context and risks associated with each MFH episode, every child or young person is offered a **Return Home Interview (RHI)** by an independent provider. These interviews explore where the young person has been, who they were with, and the reasons for going missing. In Oldham, **Positive Steps** delivers this service for children and young people living in the borough, as well as for those looked after within a 20-mile radius.
- 7.13** RHIs are a vital opportunity to identify safeguarding concerns and exploitation risks. The information gathered is shared with Children’s Social Care (CSC) and relevant partner agencies to inform ongoing support and intervention planning.
- 7.14** A significant proportion of MFH reports involve Children Looked After (CLA). While this is a concern, it is important to note that carers are required to report CLA missing in accordance with statutory procedures. In contrast, parents and carers in the community may not always report missing episodes, which may contribute to the disparity in data.

- 7.15** Regardless of a child's care status, every missing episode presents a range of safeguarding risks, depending on the child's age and stage of development. All children who go missing must be considered vulnerable, and appropriate risk assessments must be undertaken.
- 7.16** Children who go missing are at heightened risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). When a child is missing, they are outside the protective oversight of parents or carers, increasing their exposure to harm. It is therefore essential that the team around the child responds swiftly with appropriate support, intervention, and safeguarding measures.
- 7.17** 12% of children who are reported missing from home are open to the Complex Safeguarding team and equate for 26% of all missing from home reports in Oldham. Being reported as missing from home is a known indicator of exploitation and children assessed as at risk of exploitation are closely monitored which could explain the increase in this area. Positive Steps work closely with complex safeguarding workers and attend meetings in relation to children who are reported as missing from home, including daily governance, MACE, and strategy meetings to share and gather information to develop multiagency plans as to how to keep children safe and give them alternative options.

## Return Home Interviews

- 7.18** Below is a breakdown per quarter of return home interviews:

*NB: The annual total for individuals is not a cumulative figure as the same children may be counted in multiple quarters.*

	Q1 24/25		Q2 24/25		Q3 24/25		Q4 24/25		Total 2024/25	
MFH Interviews Offered	367		327		281		253		1272	
MFH Interviews Offered (Individuals) Included from Q4 2023/24	255		216		197		167		394	
Initial Contact within 72 hours	364	99%	316	97%	274	98%	253	100%	1235	97%
MFH Interviews Accepted	284	77%	218	67%	203	72%	190	75%	929	73%
Number of Interviews conducted within 72 hours where interview accepted	237	83%	191	88%	156	77%	167	88%	776	84%

From analysing the data for return home interviews, the below has been identified:

- 7.19** Interviews Offered- The number of Return Home Interviews (RHIs) offered—both in terms of individual children and episodes—has steadily declined across the reporting quarters. One potential contributing factor is the implementation of the Right Care, Right Person model at the end of Quarter 2. Further analysis may be required to determine whether this change has also influenced the number of missing episodes.
- 7.20** Interviews Accepted- Acceptance of RHIs was highest in Quarter 1, which also coincided with an increase in the number of children reported missing. While there was a slight dip in Quarter 2, the following two quarters saw a renewed increase in uptake, resulting in an overall acceptance rate of 73%.



- 7.21** It is recognised that children who are more difficult to engage are often those most frequently reported missing. Improving engagement with these young people remains a key priority for the service and is a focus of ongoing quality assurance, participation work, and staff training. To support this, a “leave behind” leaflet has been developed to help young people better understand the support available—this will be explored further in the next section.
- 7.22** Initial Contact- Initial contact within 72 hours of a child’s return has remained consistently high throughout the year, with a 97% success rate. A dedicated worker is available Monday to Saturday to ensure timely follow-up. The small percentage of missed contacts is primarily due to incorrect or missing contact details. In such cases, the team conducts cold calls to the home address and leaves a note requesting a return call.
- 7.23** Interviews Conducted Within 72 Hours- The proportion of RHIs completed within 72 hours has also remained strong, averaging 84% across the year. A dip in Quarter 3 was investigated and attributed to one child who was reported missing on 17 occasions during the quarter—often for extended periods and returning only briefly before going missing again. This made it difficult to complete interviews within the timeframe. Following the child’s request, a placement move was arranged, which led to a reduction in missing episodes.
- 7.24** RHIs are a vital safeguarding tool, offering children and young people a safe space to:
- Share their thoughts and feelings.
  - Explain the reasons for going missing.
  - Identify risks and explore how these can be reduced.
  - Discuss the push and pull factors influencing their behaviour.

However, there are recognised exceptions where an RHI may not be appropriate or possible. These include:

- When a child or young person has been arrested and an interview at that time is not suitable
- When the child is injured, hospitalised, or experiencing acute mental health difficulties.
- When the child is involved in an active police investigation, where an interview could compromise the process.
- When the child is placed more than 20 miles outside of Oldham—Positive Steps, the independent provider, does not conduct RHIs in these cases, and responsibility falls to the allocated social worker or another trusted adult.

## **Quality and Impact of Return Home Interviews**

- 7.25** Positive Steps and the Complex Safeguarding Hub remain committed to delivering a high-quality, child-centred service that meets the needs of children, young people, and their parents/carers. The service is responsive to feedback and continuously seeks to improve practice through regular review and adaptation.
- 7.26** To support this, quarterly audits of Missing from Home Return Interviews (MFHRIs) are conducted, alongside monthly quality assurance meetings undertaken with complex safeguarding. There are also feedback surveys with children, carers, and social workers. These insights have informed the development of bespoke training for practitioners and the co-production of a “leave behind” leaflet to help explain the service to young people.
- 7.27** While the high completion rate of RHIs is encouraging, analysis has highlighted concerns regarding the quality and effectiveness of some RHIs. In many cases:
- The push and pull factors behind the missing episode are not always clearly identified.
  - Young people are not consistently encouraged to reflect on what could prevent future episodes.
  - Emerging themes and patterns are not explored in depth.
  - There is a lack of professional curiosity, which may result in missed safeguarding opportunities or critical information.
  - Capturing the voice of the child and their parents/carers
  - Including observations and analysis of patterns or concerns
  - At times there was limited evidence that Social Workers were utilising the RHI's within case planning or strategy meetings.

Additionally, the timing and setting of RHIs can significantly impact their effectiveness. For example, expecting a child to participate in a formal interview at 9am after returning home in the early hours is unlikely to yield meaningful engagement. In such cases, the process risks becoming a tick-box exercise rather than a valuable intervention.

In response to some of the areas above bespoke training has been delivered to support staff in:

- Understanding the importance of clear, reflective case recording
- Capturing the voice of the child and their parents/carers
- Including observations and analysis of patterns or concerns

This training has led to improvements in the quality of write-ups, with audits highlighting examples of strong relational practice and analytical reflection. RHIs now more frequently demonstrate continuity of care and trusted relationships.

- 7.28** Evidencing Advice and Support - Team discussions revealed that while advice and support were being offered to children and families, the existing RHI form did not allow this to be clearly recorded. The team consulted on necessary changes, which were



submitted to MOSAIC. In the interim, a shared approach was agreed to ensure this support is documented. Later audits identified this as a strength. *Example:* A practitioner supported a young person in accessing a KOGs appointment and completed an AGLEE action plan (informed by Mental Health First Aid training) following concerns around self-harm. This was followed up with the social worker and clearly recorded in the RHI—highlighted as good practice and shared with the wider team.

**7.29** Offering RHIs at the Right Time and in the Right Space - Quality assurance and participation feedback highlighted that engagement often faltered when RHIs were offered at unsuitable times or in inappropriate settings. This was addressed through:

- Peer Supervision discussions to problem-solve on a case-by-case basis.
- Guidance on checking with the child and their carers to determine the most suitable time and space.
- Flexibility to delay RHIs when needed to ensure meaningful engagement.

*Example:* A practitioner delayed an RHI after learning from the child’s mother that the young person was not in the right frame of mind. The interview was conducted the following day, resulting in a positive interaction and the beginning of a trusted relationship.

**7.30** Participation and Feedback - Every six months, Positive Steps gathers feedback from children, parents/carers, and social workers. This includes:

- Perceptions of the value of RHIs
- Experiences of the MFH service
- Suggestions for improvement

**7.31** A recent survey focused on children who are harder to engage. Key findings included:

#### *1. Person, Time, and Space Matter*

RHIs were seen as most beneficial when delivered by the right person, at the right time, in a comfortable setting, and when they felt purposeful. The team has since agreed to delay RHIs when these conditions are not met, which has improved engagement.

#### *2. Building Trusted Relationships*

Children were more likely to engage once a trusted relationship had been established. To support this, practitioners now seek advice from those who know the child best and, where appropriate, attend RHIs alongside social workers or carers.

#### *3. Breaking Down Barriers*

Despite best efforts, some children remain reluctant to engage. To address this, the team co-produced a “leave behind” leaflet with young people and the Youth Justice

Speech and Language Therapist. This one-page, poster-style document explains the purpose of the RHI in accessible, non-judgemental language. It is left with parents/carers when engagement is not possible and is also available for display in placements. Feedback has been positive, with children noting that the language felt “comforting” and “non-judgemental.”

More recently in Quarter 2 of 2025/2026 feedback has been sought from children and young people, parents, and carers. In total Positive Steps spoke to 9 children aged 14-17. This included 3 females and 6 males. 2 children had no service involvement, 3 were receiving support from Early Help, 3 were supported as Children in Need, 4 were Cared Experienced, and 1 was open to the Complex Safeguarding Team.

- 7.32** 6 out of the 9 children understood to purpose of the return home interview. Answers included, **“to check on the wellbeing of the child”** and **“to understand the bigger picture about what is going on in our lives and to keep us safe.”**
- 7.33** All children said they felt comfortable during the RHI. Most felt that they could speak freely during the RHI, except for one who said, **“I am careful what I say.”**
- 7.34** All the children said they felt listened to by the MFH worker and they were interested in what they had to say during the RHI. Each child said that the MFH worker provided them with helpful advice that no improvements to the RHI or the Oldham MFH service are required.
- 7.35** All the parents and carers who were spoken to felt that the MFH worker communicated well with their child during the RHI and helped them to the best of their ability.
- 7.36** Each parent and carers said they felt the MFH worker made their child comfortable and allowed them to speak freely during the RHIs. Most parents and carers felt that all the needed questions were asked during the RHI and that they were helpful, except one parent who felt that their child having a transgender boyfriend needed to be discussed with them.
- 7.37** All the parents and carers said that they feel included in the decision making about what will happen next after their child is reported missing. One parent said that they appreciate how their feelings are considered following their child’s MFH episode and it brought to the child’s attention how it can impact the family.

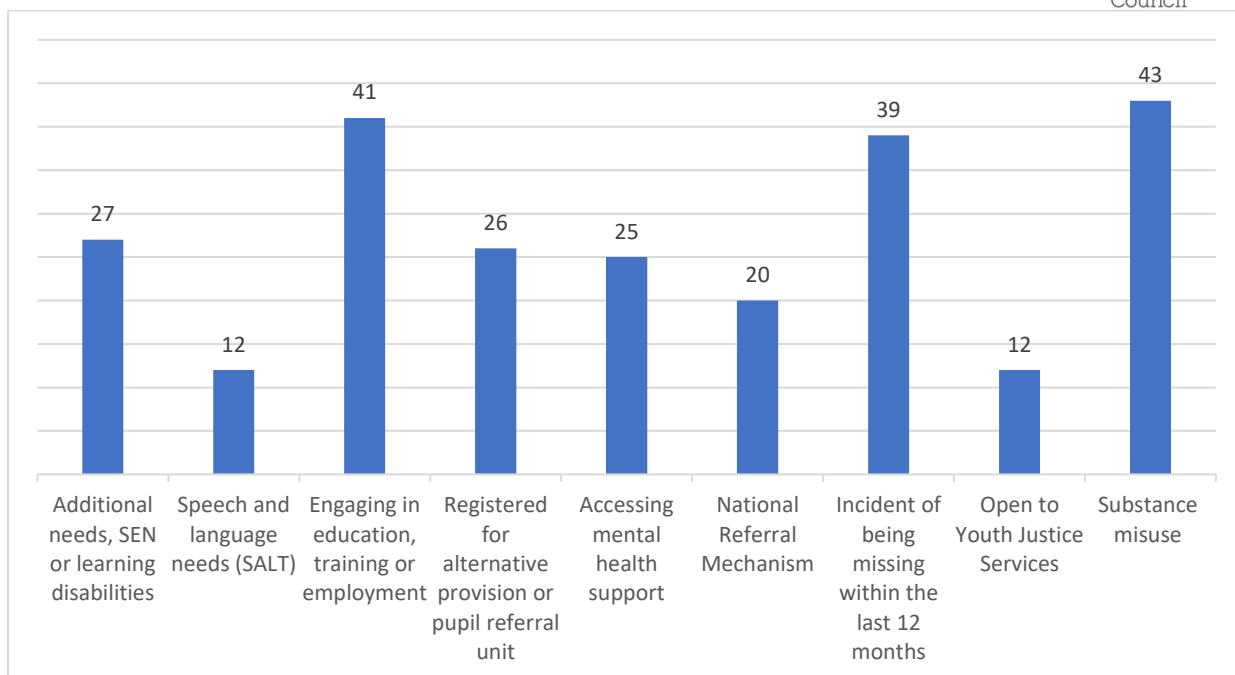
## Building Professional and Public Confidence

- 8.1** Since the publication of the Review of Historic Child Sexual Exploitation in June 2022, the partners within the hub have been working towards improving the public's confidence in relation to the response to Child Sexual Exploitation.
- 8.2** There continues to be wider publication of the successful work into tackling CSE within the Oldham Borough. As mentioned earlier in the report, the Complex Safeguarding Hub are involved in the ongoing police operation into the historic CSE, the social care team are involved in both the victim's operation and the perpetrator strand of the investigation. The team have also offered support, and continue to offer support, to the identified historic CSE survivors.
- 8.3** In July 2025 the Complex Safeguarding hub underwent the first part of the Peer Review undertaken by the GM. The feedback received from this peer review was positive with the below being identified as areas of strength:
- There is a strong ethos in the Complex Safeguarding Team of building trusted relationships which support children to be safe, resilient and to thrive.
  - Multiagency working is a strength, with clear partner engagement, role definition and regular reviews.
  - WISE assessments are honest and transparent.
  - Parental engagement and the role of the family worker in the team is a strength.
  - Strong transitional safeguarding approaches are in place.
  - Disruption activity described as tenacious, creative and child centred.
  - The Trusted Relationship therapists' formulations with children have improved trauma informed understanding and planning.
  - Supervision records are described as reflective and analytical.
  - Feedback received from children and young people was positive, alongside the feedback received from parents and carers.
  - GMP feedback commented that the response by officers to children and young people is child focused.
- 8.4** Areas of reflection identified within the Peer Review were:
- There were aspects of plans which could have benefitted from a more strength-based focus.
  - Case recordings could be reframed to be more trauma informed.
  - The current Complex Safeguarding nurse vacancy was commented on in general, as CST nurses build strong and trusted relationships with children. The impact of this vacancy was noted in respect of one young person.
- 8.5** As evidenced throughout this report there is a strong partnership both within the Complex Safeguarding Team and across services from strategic partners to grass root level practitioners. The team actively contributes to the Greater Manchester Complex

Safeguarding delivery plan on a strategic and operational level – being a regular attendee at steering groups, practitioner forums, and contributing to surveys and areas of research.

## Performance

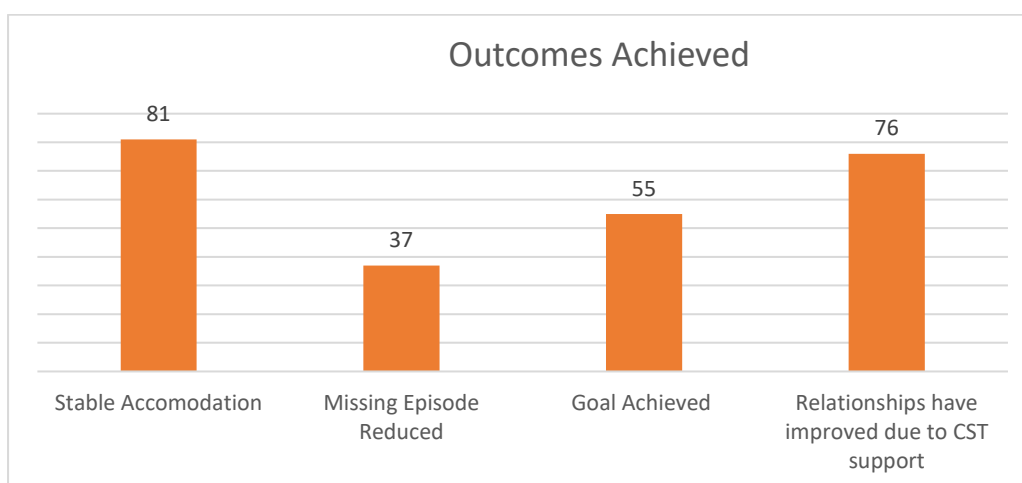
- 9.1** Performance data is provided on a quarterly basis into the GM Complex Safeguarding Hub. This provides analysis of both the local and Greater Manchester trends, this also includes wider demographics, such as victims, offenders, trends, and themes. This data contributes to decision making, by the GM Complex Safeguarding Hub, in relation to the wider strategy and service deliver.
- 9.2** Since July 2024, the Complex Safeguarding Hub has received 132 referrals, with 67% accepted into the service for direct support. Referrals that did not meet the threshold for the Hub were appropriately signposted to alternative services such as Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGs), Catch 22, Prevention & Diversion, or other relevant agencies. In some cases, advice and guidance were provided to the allocated teams to ensure the young person's needs were still addressed.
- 9.3** Of the 132 referrals into the Complex Safeguarding Hub, 55% of these were in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation, 30% were in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and the remaining referrals were in relation to dual exploitation, 15%.
- 9.4** Since April 2024 the caseload held within Complex Safeguarding have remained at a level that is in line with the GM's recommended 12 young people per worker, at this time there are 62 young people open to the team. These figures do not consider the 93 young people closed to the team, between July 2024 and June 2025.
- 9.5** The data that is gathered within the Complex Safeguarding Hub, and subsequently provided to Greater Manchester, enables a greater understanding of issues affecting young people we work with, alongside providing a greater understanding of indicators of risk. The graph below provides a summary of the main issues currently affecting the young people open to the Complex Safeguarding Hub.
- 9.6** As can be seen from the graph, 69% of the young people currently open to the team are affected by substance misuse issues alongside missing from home/care clearly being a significant risk factor, with over 62% of the young people open to the team having had at least one reported incident of being missing from home/care within the last 12 months. What is to be noted is that in comparison to the previous twelve months there has been a significant improvement in education, employment, and training, with 72% of the young people open to the team currently engaging in education, employment or training.



**9.7** There has also been a focus on the outcomes achieved for young people at the end of our involvement, examples of which are indicated below. 93 young people were closed to the team between July 2024 – June 2025.

**9.8** Upon closure 59% of the young people had achieved a positive goal/aspiration that they themselves had set upon opening to the team, this could be securing employment, returning to education, or engaging in a positive activity. 88% of young people, upon closure to Complex Safeguarding, were within stable accommodation, this is a key safety factor in reducing the risks around exploitation.

**9.9** The graph below demonstrates the outcomes achieved which relate to the issues above thereby providing an overview of the impact of the team in supporting young people with these key areas.



## Key Priorities for 2025 - 2026

- 10.1** As a multi-agency team, we recognise that complex and contextual safeguarding is an ever changing, rapidly increasing area of extra familial harm for children and young people. As a team we need to be able to respond and adapt to the harm that young people face outside of their families from those that want to exploit them for their own means. It is envisioned that through the delivery of our key priorities for the coming year, this will enable us to prioritise the safeguarding of our young people by focusing on the context of harm and improving disruption thereof; whilst continuing to bring criminals to justice.
- 10.2** The Key Priorities for 2025 – 2026 are outlined on the below plan on a page, this is supported by the service improvement plan.

# Complex Safeguarding Service Achieving Excellence Plan 2025



Children, young people and their families are at the centre of everything we do to develop their strength and resilience, ensuring all children and young people have a stable life and reach their full potential.

## Service Priorities and Actions

**Service Priority 1: Practice and Partnerships**  
Quality social work, working closely with our partners.

**Aim:** To provide consistently good, targeted interventions that provide a holistic and rapid response to prevent the escalation of risk.

**Key Actions:**

- We will promote and embed a strong partnership led multi-agency team, working collaboratively with key partner agencies to support multi-agency information sharing, decision making and response to risk.
- We will ensure children and young people's needs are identified efficiently and they have access to the most appropriate service to meet their presenting needs.
- We will support and promote a breath of quality assurance activity to assure ourselves that CYPF are receiving consistently good practice.
- We will strengthen our close the loop activity through broader dissemination of key findings and themes to support a learning and reflective environment through regular service briefings.

**Service Priority 2: Place**  
A local home for every child in care and care leaver

**Aim:** To ensure children and young people are able to live in safe and nurturing environments to support them to reach their full potential.

**Key Actions:**

- We will train all practitioners to undertake holistic, analytical assessments that clearly identify risk and mitigating factors to support children and young people to feel safe and to thrive.
- We will strengthen our prevention offer for Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation across the partnership.
- We will implement a contextual safeguarding approach across the partnership.
- We will improve the quality of return home interviews to ensure that push and pull factors are identified.

**Service Priority 3: People**  
A stable and permanent workforce committed to Oldham.

**Aim:** We want all children, young people and families to have receive a consistent service.

**Key Actions:**

- We will develop an effective induction programme for all staff, in partnership with the social work academy.
- We will provide consistently good quality of training programmes for the workforce to support broader development within complex safeguarding.
- We will provide strong training and development for our team managers to ensure they can provide consistently good, reflective supervision.
- We will support our future senior leaders by providing opportunities to access NWADCS management and leadership training opportunities.

### Evidence of Impact – Success Measures

- Quality assurance will demonstrate improved quality of contacts and the right interventions for children and families.
- Case reviews will identify majority of cases to be 'good' or 'outstanding'.
- Improved safety and stability for children and young people supported by Complex Safeguarding.





