

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Barbara Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Wellbeing

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

Public Health: Gambling Harms

'Problem gambling' is estimated to affect over 18,000 adults in Greater Manchester – this is 1.5 times higher than the national average. Gambling harms are wide ranging and include negative impacts on finances, mental health, relationships, and significant impacts of work and education. The Public Health team in partnership with Action Together has undertaken a piece of resident insight work to understand gambling harms specifically in Oldham. Wanting or needing to make money came up as the reason most people in Oldham gamble. It was also felt that gambling promotions and adverts increased the likelihood of someone gambling. There was high stigma and shame reported across all communities with shame towards self and family listed as the biggest barrier to seeking support for gambling harms. Of most concern, many respondents did not know where to get help.

Anyone can be at risk of experiencing gambling harms, but people at the greatest risk of harm from gambling are more likely to be unemployed, living in more deprived areas, have poor health, low life satisfaction and wellbeing, and have an indication of probable psychological health problems. The Greater Manchester gambling harms needs assessment has estimated that around 1,500 adults experiencing 'problem gambling' in Oldham, with a further 9,800 adults considered to be 'at risk'. In addition, 14,400 people are likely to be experiencing gambling related harms.

Led by Public Health, Oldham has delivered a number of activities to address gambling harms such as awareness campaigns, training to frontline health and care professionals and are currently piloting gambling harms screening questions in our substance misuse service to identify residents that require early support.

Oldham has a strong Gambling Harms Alliance to understand gambling harms and the impact on our residents, share intelligence among professionals; and share resources and materials to better raise awareness and support our residents. We work closely with the Greater Manchester Gambling Harms reduction programme.

Adult Social Care:

The 17th November 2025 was Safeguarding Adults week. Throughout the week Oldham Adults Safeguarding service together with wider partners hosted several activities and events. The objective was to promote an improved understanding of safeguarding, equip practitioners, residents and partners with the knowledge to identify and report safeguarding concerns, to support organisations to improve their safeguarding practice and to highlight key safeguarding themes.

A productive week saw Oldham;

- Launch a new Oldham safeguarding Adult Board podcast about risk management,
- Launch a new joint Children's and Adults Cultural Competence in Safeguarding Practice Guidance, which is a vital resource for practitioners.
- Held a training event focusing on legal literacy around the Mental Capacity Act.
- Produce resources to support practitioners who encounter hoarding behaviour by promoting a person-centered solution-based approach.
- Training in the form of awareness raising homelessness for practitioners across the wider system with the launch of an Oldham Safeguarding Adult Board Homelessness Practitioner Guide.

Last week, colleagues from across Adult Social Care joined wider teams and partners, at a successful “Live Well” networking event at Chadderton Town Hall. The event provided an opportunity for colleagues to share the great work taking place in Oldham to support residents to remain independent, healthy, safe and well in the community, with an emphasis on preventive services.

NHS Greater Manchester:

Oldham Council with NHS Greater Manchester continues to play a leading role through our Integrated Care Partnership in the delivery and improvement of health services. Our decision as an Administration to help establish the ICP, originally alongside the Clinical Commissioning Group, is now paying off. It is helping us deliver better outcomes for Oldhamers.

This month we have heard reports in our Committee of the following:

- On the waiting list backlog: For the first time since the pandemic ended, fewer than 1,000 Oldhamers are waiting between 65 and 77 weeks for planned surgery and nobody is waiting longer than 103 weeks.
- On planned surgery: Despite record demand, more than half of those referred are now receiving treatment within 18 weeks, better than some parts of Greater Manchester.
- On GP appointments: We've reached 118,000 appointments per month, up from 110,000 last year, two-thirds are face-to-face, with the rest online or by phone, reflecting how services are modernising to meet people's needs.
- On A&E: 10,000 people are seen every month, and they're waiting for less time than a year ago.
- And on mental health: Oldham is now the sixth best area in the country for access to talking therapies within 18 weeks.

These are achievements to be proud of, and I could not be prouder of our NHS and care teams. They are working tirelessly, often under enormous pressure, and they deserve our full respect and support.

Members will also be aware that following the Secretary of State's announcement in March we are also now working through significant organisational change processes within the ICB. That will involve departures of staff and implementation of a new operating model from April next year.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.