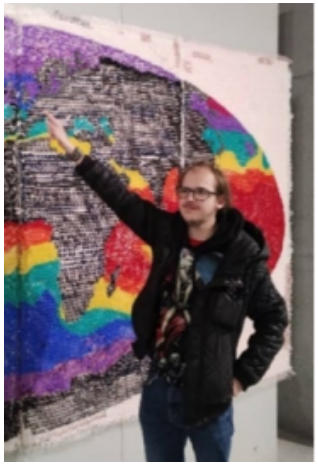
# Adult Skills – Oldham Lifelong Learning Service Update

Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board

Jon Bloor – Assistant Director – Economy and Skills








Oldham Council

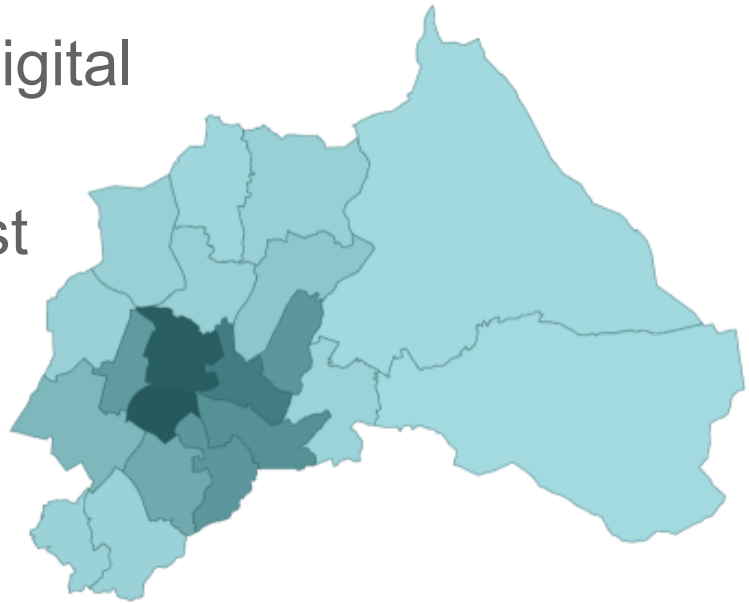
# Oldham Lifelong Learning Service

**Mission:** To deliver high quality, accessible local learning opportunities which enable adults to realise their potential and gain employment by developing their confidence, creativity, knowledge and skills.

- 3 Centres and 25+ community venues
- 2,500 learners each year studying c. 7,500 courses.
- GMCA's devolved Adult Skills Fund – c. £3.3m
- Delivering outcomes in the GM Strategy and Oldham Employment and Skills Strategy.
- Ofsted Good (2021), Matrix accredited

# Who does the service help?

- Unemployed and economically inactive residents
- People on low incomes
- Residents facing barriers to learning
- Parents and families
- People improving English, Maths, digital skills and some vocational courses
- Many learners live in Oldham's most deprived communities



# Strategic Context, Structure and Offer

- Delivery needs to support GM Strategy and Get GM Working
- Targets residents facing greatest disadvantage and economic inactivity
- Two-thirds of learners from the 7 most deprived wards
- Three core curriculum areas:
  - Digital Skills, Employment and Education
  - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
  - English and Maths
- The curriculum areas are supported with a range of support teams (Learner support, Safeguarding team, community outreach team, MIS and accreditation)

# Strategic Context, Structure and Offer

| Curriculum Area | Offer / Course type | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Skills, Education and Employment (DSEE) | **Digital Skills**<br>Qualification & non-qualification courses Entry Level – Level 2 | **Education, Training, Early Years, Youth Work and Employment skills**<br>Qualification & non-qualification courses Entry Level – Level 3 | **DSEE, English and Maths and ESOL Community Engagement and Delivery**<br>Qualification & non-qualification courses Entry Level – Level 2 |
| English and Maths (E&M) | **English**<br>Functional Skills, GCSE, non-qualification courses Entry Level – Level 2 | **Maths**<br>Functional Skills, GCSE, non-qualification courses Entry Level – Level 2 | |
| English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) | **ESOL**<br>Qualifications & non-qualification – Entry Level – Level 1 | **British Values / Community Interpreting**<br>Entry Level / Level 1 | |
| Full Cost Recovery (FCR) – **Not ASF Funded** | **Art / Water Colours**<br>Full cost leisure courses (cost of delivery is recovered) | | |

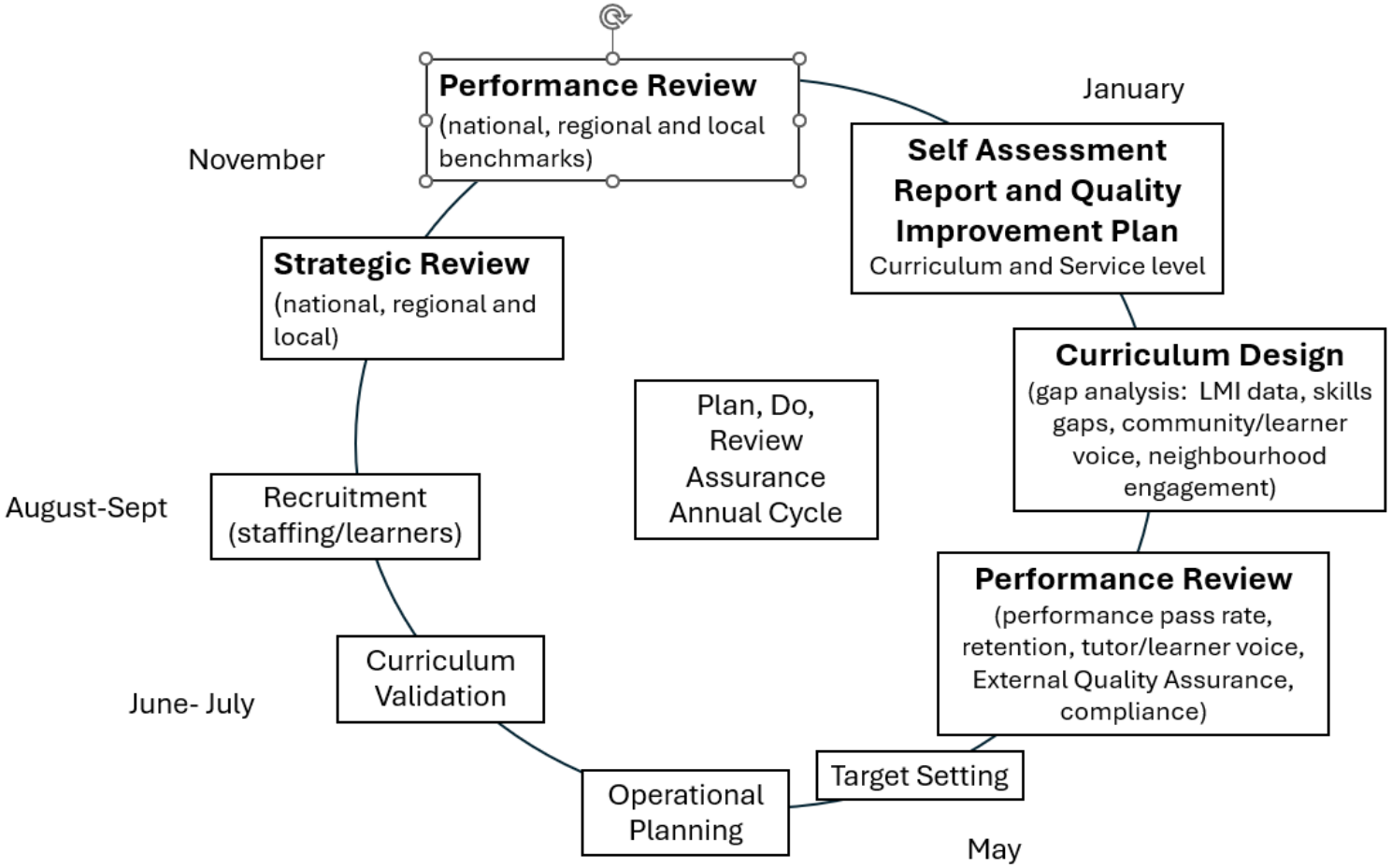
# Service Performance




Benchmark Achievement Rate

| Provider Type | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| OLLS | 90.4 | 90.2 | 89.6 |
| Provider Group | 86.8 | 87.2 | 85.9% |
| National | 85.8 | 87.4 | 87.1% |

# Service Internal Quality Assurance & Planning



# External Validation.

- Four external organisations involved in validation/quality assurance:
  - Ofsted – 2021 Good rating
  - Matrix - Achieved
  - Awarding Body External Quality Assurance – Direct Award Status
  - GMCA – technical and financial audit – Green every year

# Ofsted

**2025 New Ofsted Framework**

- Achieve, belong and thrive

The Inspection team will focus on 6 key areas:

- **Safeguarding** – are learners are kept safe and supported?
- **Inclusion** – how well are the needs of all learners, particularly those facing barriers to learning identified and met.
- **Leadership and Governance** – the effectiveness of strategic leadership, accountability, quality improvement and oversight.
- **Curriculum, Teaching and Training** – the quality, design and delivery of education and training.
- **Achievement** – the progress learners make, qualifications achieved and progression outcomes.
- **Participation and Development** – learner attendance, behaviour, personal development, wellbeing and preparation for future learning and employment

# External validation continued

**Matrix Standard:**

Organisations are assessed against four key areas:

- Leadership and management
- Resources
- Service delivery
- Continuous quality improvement

**Awarding Body External Quality Assurance:**

- Exam Board Direct Claim Status – service has direct claim status with Ascentis, NCFE, NOCN and Pearson achieved via quality assurance visits and compliance checks.

**Funder Assurance - Provider Compliance Assurance Review**

- GMCA carry out at least one audit per year, based on risk. The service has maintained a “green” audit from the very first year of devolved funding. The service also attends a monthly compliance and performance meeting and submit a biannual performance returns and reports.

# Governance

- **Political oversight** usually via regular Portfolio Governance meetings involving the Cabinet Member, Deputy Portfolio Holder and senior officers. In addition, via Overview and Scrutiny. **Purpose:** To monitor strategic priorities, emerging opportunities and risks, and ensure alignment between learning, employment and economic growth objectives. Provide challenge.
- **Executive oversight** through Director Assurance meetings, which review operational activity e.g. service performance, financial management, compliance, risks, outcomes and progress against improvement plans.
- **Independent challenge and quality assurance** through a twice-yearly Validation Board comprising external peers, employers, community representatives, learners, strategic partners and GMCA representatives. **Purpose**: critical friend, reviewing service performance, validating self-assessment and improvement planning, and providing challenge on curriculum development and responsiveness to local skills needs.

# Challenges

- **Adult Skills Fund Review –** GMCA are undertaking a review of Adult Skills Funding which will conclude at the end of the academic year. The risk is a reduction in funding would lead to a reduced offer to residents and costs incurred due to redundancy costs. However, it could allow for greater collaboration and oversight of the full ASF programme.
- The service is 100% externally funded.
- **Attendance –** Over the last 12 months, learner attendance is still above target but has reduced. This is being reviewed but is likely to be a line of enquiry for the Self Assessment Report in January 2027.

# Any Questions?