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Introduction

Purpose of the strategy:

• To take stock of current information and advice provision across care and support
• To recommend required improvements
• To develop an implementation plan that will improve people’s experience of finding out about care and support
• To deliver a more co-ordinated approach across agencies
• To ensure that good information and advice contributes to improvements in people’s health and wellbeing
• To help prevent, reduce or delay the need for care and support
• To contribute to the council’s key preventative strategies

Background

The strategy is aimed at adults in Oldham, not just those people already receiving support or people with immediate care and support needs; carers (in an informal caring role) including young carers, people with disabilities or impairment, people planning future care and their families, regardless of their ability to pay for care. It sets out how we are responding to the information and advice requirements for local authorities as stated within the Care Act 2014: www.gov.uk

Information and advice are core to ensuring people understand the care and support system and enabling them to make genuine choices and exercise control over their lives to remain as independent and well as possible. The provision of good quality information and advice has featured strongly in personalisation policy and is one of the key themes of care and support reform. The Care Act 2014 brings these reforms into law. This strategy will ensure that Oldham residents are aware of what is available and how to access it.

Information and Advice helps people to help themselves, supporting self-care and self-management – so it is an important part of our approach to personalised support, as well as for prevention and early intervention.

Information and advice for people in Oldham is provided in a wide range of ways which includes many different sources and formats.

What do we mean by Information and Advice?

Information and advice can mean different things to different people, this strategy will use the definitions highlighted in the statutory Care Act guidance as follows:

‘Information’ means the communication of knowledge and facts regarding care and support. ‘Advice’ or recommendation regarding a course of action in relation to care and support means helping a person to identify choices and/or providing an opinion.

The information and advice that people may require has a wide scope and will include housing, health, benefits and employment. The requirement will vary from self-help information, assisted information, advice and specialist advice.
The social care system is complex to understand and people need information at different points in life. Often a ‘trigger’ point for example a ‘crisis’ when someone is in hospital, bereavement etc. is a crucial time when people need access to up to date, clear good quality information to make an informed choice.

National context

The Care Act 2014 represents the most significant legislation in adult social care in over 60 years, bringing together previous legislation, regulations and policy. The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to “establish and maintain a service for providing people in its area with information and advice relating to care and support for adults and support for carers”\(^1\)

Care Act – What needs to be provided?

The Care Act requires the availability of information and advice services for all people in its area, regardless of whether or not they have eligible care and support needs, in particular:

• How the local care and support system works
• How people can access care and support services
• What types of care and support services are available and the choice of providers
• A wider scope covering care and support related aspects of health, housing, benefits, and employment
• Financial information and advice about care and support, including how to access independent financial advice
• How to raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of someone who has care and support needs

Our key audiences are those people:

• Wanting to plan their future care and support needs
• Transitioning to adulthood
• Subject to safeguarding concerns
• Who contact the council about care and support
• Who may develop care and support needs in the future
• Who are assessed as being in need of care and support
• In prison with care and support needs
• Who are family members or carers.

\(^1\) Care and Support Statutory guidance June 2014
Local context

Oldham Council is continuing to face significant financial pressures and the amount of savings already made and required in the next few years will require fundamental organisational change.

These challenges will require the organisation to prioritise work by legislation, regulation or policy. We will meet our statutory requirements as a priority and will ensure that the most vulnerable people in our community are protected. As a co-operative council we will strive to empower people to help themselves with us focussing work on prevention and early intervention.

Related strategies

Our Information and Advice strategy will be relevant to the following high-level strategies and plans which will inform and underpin the development of the strategy:

**Oldham Health and Social Care Devolution Locality Plan 2016 - 2021**

The partners in Oldham share an ambition to see the greatest and fastest possible improvement in the health and wellbeing of our residents by 2020.

This improvement will be achieved by:

- Supporting people to be more in control of their lives;
- Having a health and social care system that is geared towards wellbeing and the prevention of ill health;
- Access to health services at home and in the community; and
- Social care that works with health and voluntary services to support people to look after themselves and each other.

**Corporate Plan 2015- 2020**

The council’s ambition is to ‘deliver a co-operative future where everyone does their bit to create a confident and ambitious borough.'
Our second corporate objective is:

**Adult Social Care Services**

Adult Social Care Services is undergoing some significant transformational change. There are plans to integrate services with health to develop a single approach to building resilience in our communities. This is informed by insight into what actually drives demand and shapes behaviour in communities.

Behaviour change is a key enabler; we need to support significant numbers of people towards independence and self-reliance. We will focus on delivering the best outcomes for people in Oldham, protecting the vulnerable and by working with our key partners to ensure people have the necessary information and advice to become self-reliant.

The strategy will also need to take account of the following very important developments that are already under way or planned:

- Think Local Act Personal Action Plan
- Early Help and targeted prevention model
- Residents First programme
- Customer Service Strategy 2015 – 2017
- Oldham’s Autism Strategy 2016 - 2019
- MECC [www.makingeverycontactcount.co.uk](http://www.makingeverycontactcount.co.uk)
How better information and advice will support these strategies

The Care Act requires councils to see information and advice as fundamentally important elements of their prevention strategies. In fact, good information and advice can contribute to a range of existing priorities including:

- **Reducing health inequalities**: targeting people and groups who find it difficult to access and use information and advice
- **Earlier intervention**: giving people early health promotion advice, or resolving simple issues to ensure their problems don’t escalate
- **Promoting independence and resilience**: helping people to fulfil their own potential to stay involved in community life, to manage their own health and care, and to plan ahead
- **Promoting informed choice**: empowering people by letting them know about the range of local providers, what support they offer and what they cost
- **Supporting people at home**: helping people understand what support can be made available at home or in their community, as an alternative to residential care
- **Safeguarding people**: ensuring people know where and how to report concerns they may have
- **Finding better-value solutions**: helping people (including those receiving direct payments) to access informal sources of support, and to make optimum use of assets in communities
- **Building community capacity**: connecting people to each other; recruiting volunteers; ensuring the community is geared up to help and advise people who are vulnerable
- **Reaching self-funders**: helping people to find good solutions and to plan ahead; reducing the number of people who need state support because their funds have reached a lower threshold and helping people to access independent financial advice
Where are we now?

Below gives an overview of Oldham’s profile which we will consider when setting our priorities for our strategy.

### About Oldham

**Total population:**

227,312  
Oldham’s population as of 2013 (mid-year estimates)

**BME population:**

22.5%

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**Age profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 – 15</th>
<th>16 – 64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oldham</strong></td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>England</strong></td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
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</table>

**By 2023 the population is expected to increase to 236,000 including:**

- 20% increase in over 65s
- 40% increase in over 75s
- 50% increase in over 85s

**Poverty**

Oldham is the 37th most deprived area out of 326 local authorities

15,600 children are in low income families

We have around 300 welfare rights referrals every month

In Oldham there is a vast amount of information and advice provided and the table below identifies where people currently access information and advice from. The council and key partners/stakeholders will provide information and advice and signposting to some degree.

A key function of the adult social care teams is to signpost/provide information and advice to people and/or their carers. Information is provided through services/teams such as The Link Centre, Client Support Services, Access Oldham and Oldham Council Libraries to name a few. Partners such as Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Age UK and Healthwatch also deliver information on our behalf.

Information is available on our website, in print, and through face to face contact etc. and will continue to be, with the intention that we have a more coordinated approach across Oldham. We want to meet our statutory requirements by complementing, not duplicating the information that other services provide.
How people currently access information and advice in Oldham

People currently receive information and advice in many different ways and from different sources. Below identifies the diverse range of people, local places and organisations where we know people may choose to go to get information and advice. This can be delivered in a variety of ways; websites, leaflets and face to face etc.

**Agencies able to provide information and signposting**
- Age UK
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Carers Centre
- Action Together
- Health Watch Oldham

**Housing Providers**
- Sheltered housing providers
- First Choice Homes Oldham
- Extra Care Housing
- Other registered Social Landlords

**Media**
- Social Networks
- Oldham Council
- Oldham Chronicle

**Commissioned services providing information and signposting**
- Carers Centre
- Health Watch Oldham
- Age UK
- MiO Care
- Care Provider
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- First Choice Homes Oldham

**Major organisations who have a role to provide information as part of service provision**
- Oldham Council
- Oldham Royal Hospital
- Oldham University
- Oldham College
- Oldham Leisure Centre
- Pennine Care

**Local Centres providing information and signposting**
- Link Centre
- Libraries
- Children’s Centres
- Schools
- Oldham College
- Carers Centre

**Front line workers with a role to provide info and signposting**
- Social care staff
- Access Oldham

**Online information**
- Oldham.gov.uk
- www.nhs.uk
- http://www.oldhamccg.nhs.uk/
- National and local specific interest websites
- Google
- Social media
- First Choice Homes Oldham
- Citizens Advice Bureau

**Community assets networks**
- Councillors
- Community groups
- Neighbours
- Interest/self help/support groups
- Voluntary, community or faith organisations

**Telephone based services providing information and signposting**
- Adult Contact Team
- Emergency Duty Team
- Health Watch Oldham
- Oldham Council Contact Team
- NHS Direct 24hr helpline
- Citizens Advice Bureau
What have people told us?

Service users said:
‘When approaching agencies often find staff unhelpful and they bounce you off to other people’

“I have always received helpful information from the people I have contacted both at The Link Centre and Oldham Council services’

Social Care staff said:
‘Website needs to be more accessible and up to date’
‘We are not sure what is available as things change so much’
‘Staff need access to training and resources that are up to date’

Carers said:
‘Talking to other carers is a good help. The Carers Centre is a useful source of information’
‘Having no one to look after my husband means I cannot always get out to find the information’
‘Forming a group of carers is the best way to gain advice’

Partners said:
‘We already work in partnership but we need to ensure we offer a joined up approach’
‘Information needs to be more consistent’
‘There is a lot on offer locally – good information and advice’
Where do we need to get to?

Our vision

We will work with our partners to provide information and advice services which are:

• **Personalised**: accessed easily and personalised where appropriate - using digital approaches where possible, but recognising that people may have differing communication needs

• **Preventative**: accessible and timely

• **Asset based**: building people’s capacity to access and use information, and to manage their own care and support

• **Joined up**: people can access support easily, without being passed around

• **High quality**: high quality, accurate, consistent and up to date

• **Efficient**: maximising the potential of the internet, streamlining the processes for producing information, reducing duplication, pooling resources, and making the most of our informal assets (such as the people in our community who are already experts)

Our priorities

**General**
Increasing general awareness of information and advice eg websites/leaflets

**Self finding**
Encouraging people to ‘self find’ wherever possible eg websites/leaflets/community assets eg libraries, information centres, groups

**Guided support**
Provision of support where required eg directories/community assets/GPs /frontline staff/carers centre

**Specialist**
Ensuring people have access to specialist advice and support to meet their needs eg advocacy/dementia/carers/financial
## How will we get there?

Below is a high level action plan - a more detailed action plan will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders. It will identify the key timelines and objectives that need to be delivered using the available resources. It will also link to other projects where appropriate to ensure best value and deliver the strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. General**  
increasing general awareness of information and advice | • We will build on public information and awareness services  
• We will improve our Health and Social Care web pages  
• We will ensure that an online resource including an information directory, access to self-service tools and an electronic market place is developed and made accessible to staff, partner organisations and the public. |
| **2. Self - Finding**  
encouraging people to ‘self serve’ wherever possible | • We will work with information and advice services across sectors and encourage the development of new partnerships to provide a range of options for where and how people access information and advice  
• We will work alongside colleagues who are delivering the ‘Residents First’ programme to avoid duplication  
• We will work towards inclusive and equitable information and advice services for people from hard to reach communities and groups  
• We will ensure that our preventative model is clear and that our ‘early help’ approach is embedded |
| **3. Guided Support**  
provision of support where required | • We will define how, when and where our information and advice offer is available and provided in accessible formats around our customers’ communication needs ensuring ‘Plain English’ and not jargon  
• We will use our resources to support and encourage people to ‘self find or self serve’ |
| **4. Specialist**  
ensureing people have access to specialist advice and support to meet their needs | • We will improve people’s access to financial information including independent financial advice  
• We will improve information and advice for people with a sensory impairment and mental health needs  
• We will improve access to information for those people transitioning to adulthood  
• We will ensure advocacy services are provided  
• We will provide where possible, specific representation in housing and welfare benefits  
• We will ensure information and advice is available in order to safeguard people  
• We will provide ‘dementia friendly’ information and advice  
• We will provide better information and awareness of autism. |
Partnership Working

In order to achieve our vision it is identified that there are key services, groups and organisations that the Council will need to work with to ensure a coordinated approach to the provision of high quality information and advice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oldham Council</th>
<th>Commissioned Services</th>
<th>External Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Access Oldham</td>
<td>• MiO Care</td>
<td>• Pennine Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adult Social Care Services</td>
<td>• Service providers</td>
<td>• Service users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public Health</td>
<td>• Age UK</td>
<td>• Carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Libraries</td>
<td>• Advocacy</td>
<td>• Emergency services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early Help</td>
<td>• Carers services</td>
<td>• Job Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub</td>
<td>• Action Together</td>
<td>• Community groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commissioning</td>
<td>• Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>• Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Welfare Rights</td>
<td>• First Choice Homes</td>
<td>• Day centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Councillors</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Clinical Care Commissioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Link Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td>• NHS Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• District Teams</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Health Watch</td>
</tr>
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</table>

How will we measure success?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring Framework</th>
<th>Data collection process/mechanism (including frequency)</th>
<th>Development plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence required</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bi-monthly monitoring by project group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement of Implementation Plan priorities (and associated milestones)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence required</strong></td>
<td><strong>Data collection process/mechanism (including frequency)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Development plans</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction: • More users and carers will report that they find it easy to get information and advice • We will achieve improved satisfaction with our website</td>
<td>• Increase the proportion of people who use services who find it easy to find information about support (ASCOF 3D(1)): 69.5% • Increase the proportion of carers who find it easy to find information about support (ASCOF 3D(2)): 60.7% • Questions used in annual ASC user survey • Questions used in Carers survey (bi-annual) • Contract monitoring with organisations who hold contracts for information and advice services such as ‘Age UK’ • Customer feedback on website • Socitm annual review of websites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of the information and advice provided is of a high standard: • Information being accessible, comprehensive and of good quality</td>
<td>• Quality monitoring is built into contract specifications</td>
<td>• We will implement the advice quality standard - <a href="http://www.advicequalitystandard.org.uk">www.advicequalitystandard.org.uk</a> • We will work together with partners to develop shared standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of information and advice: • Information and advice resolving issues at an early stage and helping people to plan ahead • Having a range of queries addressed without being passed around • Finding it easy to understand how the social care system works • We will develop a way of monitoring this across agencies, including regular customer feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase in digital contact: - traffic to web pages - number using online tools • Reduction in phone contact – call volumes to ‘Adult Contact Team’ • To work with people who have been given information and advice to evaluate their experience using TLAPs ‘I’ markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved take-up of information and advice and independent financial advice: • Understanding how social care is funded and what the council’s contribution will be</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Risk</td>
<td>Severity (probability/impact)</td>
<td>Mitigating action</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</table>
| Because of overcrowded agendas, the implementation of this strategy might not be prioritised by the officers of the council and other partners. | Medium/high                  | • Ensure that the strategy continues to be owned and prioritised by the Director of Adult Social Care  
  • Ensure that the designated Lead Member and senior officer continue to champion the importance of this strategy.  
  • Ensure that monitoring of this strategy is planned into the future agendas of the Health and Wellbeing Board |
| Because of the difficulty in measuring benefits and outcomes, it may be particularly difficult to demonstrate the impact of this strategy. | Medium/medium                | • Engage with stakeholders about how to measure success.  
  • Prioritise the establishment of a multi-agency working group to develop new monitoring processes  
  • Focus on early, demonstrable improvements in customer satisfaction |
| We may not get enough buy-in from key external partners to provide a joined up approach across Oldham. | Medium/high                  | • Engagement and effective communication  
  • Review provision on an ongoing basis  
  • Embed within specific contracts |
| Public are not aware of where to look for information on care and support | High/high                    | • Work with key internal/external stakeholders |