

Oldham Community Safety Partnership

Making a Difference Violence Reduction Strategy 2024-2029

Our Vision

Oldham is a vibrant and diverse borough where residents of all ages thrive and feel safe. We are committed to making a difference and will work in partnership with our communities and stakeholders to ensure Oldham is safe place to live, learn, work, visit and socialise.

We will support those affected by trauma and violence and will robustly challenge those who choose to engage in serious violence and cause harm to our communities.



Foreword

The Oldham Community Safety Partnership recognises the significant impact of serious violence and the detrimental impact it has upon those of all ages, who live, learn, work, visit and socialise in the borough. Violence reduction is already a key priority in the Borough's Community Safety Plan.

In accordance with the new Serious Violence Duty, a Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment has been produced and the Partnership is committed to ensuring the learning from the assessment is embedded in this Strategy and in the work going forward to keep people of all ages safe in the Borough.

The key findings from the Strategic Needs Assessment include:

- Trauma arising from exposure to domestic abuse has a significant impact in childhood and later life.
- Only 5% of violent crime reports result in criminal charges.
- Repeat offending is significant in many types of violent crime.
- Serious violence is committed by people of all ages. Most incidents of serious violence are committed by persons over the age of 25.
- There has been a significant increase in serious violence being committed by young females, with females accounting for 40% of offences committed by children and young people (up to 25 years), with the peak age for offending being 15 years.
- 34% of violent crimes committed by young people are committed by repeat offenders.
- 32% of victims of violence against women and girls are repeat victims

We will align with the work of the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit and the GM 'Greater than Violence Strategy'.

The Oldham Strategy will adopt a whole life population health approach and will align with the work of the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit and the GM 'Greater than Violence Strategy', with the two key pillars of 'Prevention' and 'Response' and five guiding principles:

1. Community Led Approach
2. Early and Timely Intervention
3. Partnerships for Change
4. Equality, Equity and Justice
5. Trauma Responsive Borough

Cllr Chris Goodwin
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

Community Led Approach

We will consult, collaborate and co-produce services and interventions with residents of all ages and businesses, as key partners.

We will proactively support voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups and will seek opportunities to help them to develop and deliver prevention and intervention activities.

We will support innovative projects which promote gender respect and equality, and which integrate communities.

We will connect services through place-based working with residents and the VCFSE sector to ensure activity is joined up and there are clear lines of communication.

We will welcome scrutiny of our services, from all age groups, and will proactively promote feedback to help us to inform service improvements.

Making It Real....

Case Study – Oldham Community Group

Jane came to a community group in Oldham which has supported victims of domestic abuse for over 20 years. Jane disclosed that she had been subjected to years of emotion and financial abuse from her husband. He controlled her finances and she had become isolated from friends and family. Before getting married Jane worked and had a good circle of friends. She felt low in mood and motivation and felt that her mental, physical and emotional health had deteriorated.

The group enabled her to talk through her experiences in a safe environment and helped support her to understand the forms of abuse, to seek support for her and her children, including through schools and the HAF programme, and to build her own self-esteem. Jane was given regular 1-1 support. The group provided information for financial and housing support and referred her to other services as needed. They helped her to notify organisations about her change of circumstances and referred her to counselling to get one to one specialist support to improve her mental wellbeing.

Over a period of 8 months Jane attended the Freedom Project, a domestic abuse survivor programme, in addition to the Healthy Me course. She joined a walking group and formed friendships. Jane says the groups, the 1:1 support and the workshops have helped her with her mental wellbeing and situation at home. She now feels empowered to make her own informed decisions and her children have received support from school and have attended holiday activities. Jane now has financial independence and has started volunteering to gain experience to aid with employability.

Early and Timely Intervention

We will promote investment in early intervention and prevention resources and activities.

We will be solution focussed and will use problem-solving methodologies to fully understand the root causes of serious violence, on an individual and geographic footprint.

We will share information across the Partnership without delay in order to identify where support, intervention and prevention is needed.

We will work with schools and colleges to ensure there is a multi-agency offer for young people identified as at risk of exclusion due to serious violence.

We will apply a contextual safeguarding approach at the earliest opportunity to those identified as at risk of, or involved in serious violence, in order to identify external factors, which impact upon behaviours and decision-making.

Making It Real....

Example – Oldham District Youth Team

The 'trusted adult' team works with young people who are at risk of becoming involved in serious violence in communities. They deliver sessions at weekends and in the evenings between 6pm and 9pm to meet the needs of the community and the young people.

The sessions are delivered in a structured and controlled environment. The centres are warm, inviting and safe environments where young people can engage in positive diversionary activities whilst gaining new skills and having fun.

Young people have had the opportunity to become involved in several projects including the Police Youth Scrutiny Panel, Make Your Mark and wider Youth Service campaigns. Alongside this, young people have been involved in targeted work looking at positive mental health, building on core skills, aspirations, community cohesion and accountability for their own actions, as well as having the opportunity to take part in activities and day trips which promote team building and respect.

The young people were also an integral part of the 2024 AVRO Day of Action, attending a forum at Oldham Athletic Football Club to discuss and share experiences of serious violence, before later putting senior Officers through scrutiny about the use of reasonable force and how the response to neurodiverse individuals is differentiated.

As trusted adults, the team offers a wider support network of safe people for young people to seek support from or to speak to in confidence if needed.

Partnerships for Change

We will have a clear communication plan which promotes Oldham as a safe borough and which proactively rejects serious violence in all its forms, and will listen, and respond as a Partnership, to what residents and communities tell us and work with them to develop solutions.

We will ensure the voices of victims and offenders of all ages, are at the core of our response to serious violence. We will use the information they provide and will work with them to drive change and improve service delivery.

We will work across Strategic Partnerships and Boards and ensure thematic areas of work fully recognise the impact of serious violence and that workstreams are aligned.

We will ensure policies and procedures are embedded in delivery and that practice and investment adds value and makes a positive difference to the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

We will together with businesses and communities to ensure we have safe night-time economies across the borough.

Making It Real....

Example – Complex and Contextual Safeguarding

Partners across the borough have applied learning from case reviews and have worked with the University of Bedfordshire to develop a contextual safeguarding model.

Oldham has a dedicated multi-agency Complex Safeguarding Hub and the Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Childrens Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board have worked collaboratively to develop an all-age Complex Safeguarding Strategy, which recognises the harms causes by serious violence and criminal exploitation in all its forms.

There is also a specific piece of work ongoing which will ensure there is a premium offer for young people who are transitioning into adulthood, in recognition of the impact of trauma, and the significant challenges and impact the move into older age services places upon them.

Equality, Equity and Justice

We will ensure there is a robust victim support system, which builds confidence in reporting and offers opportunities for restorative justice and reparation.

We will capture the voices of victims and survivors and will work with them and learn from their experiences to ensure our offer is fit for purpose.

We will ensure there is a robust response when serious violence does occur and will explore opportunities across the Partnership to use civil tools and powers, alongside criminal prosecutions, to protect communities from harm.

We will work with offenders, and criminal justice agencies to identify and understand the causes of repeat offending; and will develop initiatives which look beyond the offending and respond to the needs of individuals and communities.

We will challenge decision making if we believe a service response does not adequately recognise harm and protect residents and communities in the way we believe it should.

Making It Real....

Example – Probation Service – Victim Schemes

Oldham Probation Delivery Unit employs two Victim Contact Workers who currently support over 300 victims.

The Victim Contact Scheme (VCS) provides information to victims of violent and sexual offences where the offender is sentenced to 12 months or more in prison. The victim is told about the offender's sentence and what it means, will be updated on key changes in the sentence such as move to open conditions and will be asked about any concerns they have for their safety. The Victim Contact Worker supports the victim in making personal statements to the Parole Board. The Worker liaises with the Probation Practitioner to ensure the victim's views and concerns are considered when conditions are set for the offender's release on licence, such as a request for exclusion zones and no-contact conditions.

Launched in January 2023, the Victim Notification Scheme represents an extension of the VCS, is likewise a statutory offer in nature and opens victim contact for prison sentences under 12 months in relation to a range of domestic abuse offences including harassment and breach of restraining order. This represents an improved offer to victims of domestic abuse recognising the harm done and the importance of supporting and safeguarding victims.

Trauma Informed Borough

We will ensure the Partnership workforce understands the enduring impact of trauma caused by serious violence, the importance of early identification and intervention and how trauma informs risk management and decision making by individuals.

We will ensure that the impact of domestic abuse is recognised in all areas of service delivery and will work with education partners to support children and young people of all ages who are, or may be, affected by domestic abuse.

We will use the lived experiences of victims and offenders to develop trauma informed interventions.

We will promote the importance of mental health support within services and within the rehabilitation from offending offer.

We will offer free trauma-informed training to the VCFSE and will seek continuous improvement in services; and will share learning and best practice with peers.

Making It Real....

Example – TOG Mind Mental Health Training Commission

The Community Safety Partnership commissioned TOG Mind to deliver a significant training programme for over 200 staff across the Partnership and in the VFCSE. The training was offered to services free of charge.

The sessions were focussed upon 3 distinct areas, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Adult Mental Health First Aid and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT).

The CBT session was developed in consultation with local stakeholders to ensure the content was reflective of the offer in Oldham.

Making It Real....

Case Study – Oldham Youth Justice Service

Young person A was involved in serious violence at a young age, involving the use of a weapon. He was anxious and apprehensive about working with the Youth Justice Service. He engaged in restorative justice to understand the consequences and impact of his behaviour and had sessions with the Speech and Language Therapist and the Wellbeing Coach. His relationship with his mother was identified as challenging with regular 'clashes' taking place between them attended. As part of the work with the YJS, he attended weekly sessions with his mother to talk through their relationship difficulties. The changes in this young person have been clear to both his worker and his mother who has described them as 'profound'.