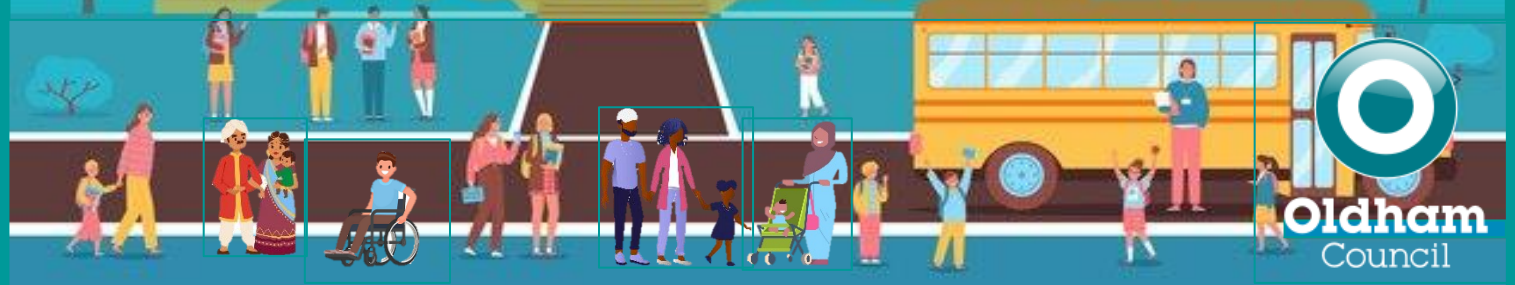


# Briefing to Schools and Early Years Settings



Volume:	7 – Spring 2026	Week No:	15 - 16	Date:	Thursday 8 January 2026
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**Warm wishes for a successful and rewarding New Year!  
Thank you for your continued support and partnership.**



## Early Years

### Early Years Census - January 2026

#### Guidance for Providers – Early Years Census 2026

The annual **Early Years Census** will take place during the **week beginning 12 January 2026**. Completion of the census is **statutory** for all private, voluntary and independent providers in England who are delivering government funded early education places at the time of census.

Only providers with children in receipt of funded early education during census week are required to complete a return. The deadline for submitting census data is **Friday 23 January 2026** in line with the Actuals submission deadline.

The new submission process is explained in the attached guidance document.

The Early Years Census consists of two separate data collections:

#### **1. Establishment level data**

Providers must submit establishment level information relating to their setting. This includes details of provision, capacity and staffing.

All required fields must be completed accurately to ensure correct submission to the Department for Education.

When recording the number of children on roll, providers should include **all children attending the setting**, not just those in receipt of funded early education.

Establishment level data must be submitted via the provider portal no later than **Friday 23 January 2026**.

#### **2. Child level data**

Providers must use the online provider portal to record child level data for all **children in receipt of funded early education**.

Only children who are **taking up a funded place during census week** should be marked as “**present at census**”. Providers should record the **normal pattern of attendance** during the **week beginning 12 January 2026**.

Where children are temporarily absent (for example due to illness or holiday), they should still be included. Where a setting is temporarily closed, providers should record the situation that **would normally have applied during census week**.

Providers must include any additional hours attended by a child which are **not funded** as part of the free entitlement.

Children for whom no funded early education is being claimed **must not** be included. Where a provider has **no eligible children**, a **NIL return** must be submitted by entering zero where applicable.

The deadline for submitting child level data is **Friday 23 January 2026**.

#### **Provider closed during census week**

DfE guidance states that providers should:

“Record the normal situation during census week. If children are temporarily absent, include them. If the provider is temporarily closed, record the situation that would have applied during the week.”

In line with this guidance, providers should submit a return where the setting has temporarily closed or restricted access for reasons such as:

- staffing shortages due to illness
- caring responsibilities affecting available staff
- public health advice relating to an outbreak

Where a provider submits a return while temporarily closed, **expected staffing levels for census week must still be recorded** at establishment level.

Providers **should not submit a census return** where they have chosen to close and are not delivering funded entitlements during census week due to:

- anticipated low attendance
- precautionary closure decisions

### Further information

If you have any queries regarding the Early Years Census, please contact the Early Years Team.

**Point of Contact:** [early.years@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:early.years@oldham.gov.uk)

## Share your experience as an Early Years Teacher - £50 thank you

We're looking to speak with Early Years Teachers with EYTS, EYPS or QTS working in nursery settings about your experiences and the challenges you face in your role.

We'd love to hear your perspective and get your feedback on some ideas we've been developing. Your insights would be incredibly valuable in helping us better understand what matters most to practitioners like you.

### What's involved:

- A one hour session where we'll chat about your experiences and ask you to help us review some service ideas.
- £50 voucher as a thank you for your time

If you're interested, please fill in this short form (takes about a minute) and we'll be in touch with more details: [Early Years Teacher Research – Fill out form](#)

**Point of Contact:** [foundationyears@beginbright.com](mailto:foundationyears@beginbright.com)

## Baby Bank Network

### **Attached – GM Start Well Safer Sleep Offer - Information for Referrers September 2025**

This comprises voluntary and faith organisations which support families in pregnancy and after birth, who are facing acute hardship, poverty, and crisis, with essential items for parents and babies.

GMCA have commissioned a short film, developed by Elephants Trail, to highlight the vital work of baby banks in GM and put out a call to action for businesses, organisations, and individuals to support through donations and volunteers. Baby banks rely on these contributions to be able to continue to serve some of GM's most vulnerable residents. Donations and volunteering can be given at-scale corporately or

individually and baby banks often have lists of in-need items (sleeping equipment, bedding, clothing, toiletries) on their websites.

To learn more, the short film can be viewed here [Cradle](#) and the GM press release here [First Baby Bank Network launched to help families facing financial hardship - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#).

To find your local baby bank visit [GM Baby Banks Network - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#).

Also attached is a leaflet for referrers to baby banks. Referrers are usually front-line practitioners who interact with families such as health visitors and social workers. The GMCA School Readiness Programme and NHS GM have invested in a Safer Sleep offer for vulnerable families, delivered via the GM Baby Bank Network, and accessed through a referral. Please see the attached leaflet for more information.

**Point of Contact:** [Hannah.Rowan@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.Rowan@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

## Making it REAL

Children across Royton have been celebrating the festive season together by boosting their literacy skills as part of Oldham Council's Making It REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) programme.

Forty families, including pupils from Heyside Pre-School and Blackshaw Lane Primary School's nursery and reception classes, participated in a fun Christmas literacy event — the latest in a series of 'Making it REAL' events.

"Making it REAL" is an evidence-based, award-winning programme that aims to create a positive home learning environment.

Professionals work with families to support children's early literacy and development, building parents' knowledge and confidence so they feel equipped to help their children read and write. Now, more than 130 children from 17 schools and settings across Oldham are involved in "Making It REAL", participating in home visits and literacy events throughout the year.

Laura Williams, Early Years and Primary Challenge and Intervention Officer at Oldham Council said: "It's brilliant to see families enjoying the REAL project, and to see local schools working together to foster a love of reading and early literacy skills in their pupils."

We want more schools to get involved with "Making It REAL," so we can boost literacy skills for every child in Oldham."

[Click here](#) to find more details.

**Point of Contact:** [Laura.Williams@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:Laura.Williams@oldham.gov.uk)



## Safeguarding

### Safer Sleeping for Babies

Sadly, within our local Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) area, which covers Bury, Oldham, and Rochdale, there have been six deaths in the past two years where unsafe sleeping practices were identified.

This highlights the importance of remaining vigilant about safe sleep practices, especially during times when routines are disrupted. Routines often change over the festive season. People may visit friends and relatives, have more to drink and go to bed at different times. It may be more difficult for parents and caregivers to find safe sleeping spaces for babies.



This applies to babies up to 15 months of age, but particularly in the first 6 months when babies are more at risk of SIDS.

Please check out the guides below and share them with families to help keep babies safe:

- [A guide to safer sleep this winter](#)
- [Co sleeping](#)

**Point of Contact:** [office@lullabytrust.org.uk](mailto:office@lullabytrust.org.uk)

## Free training: multi-agency response to child sexual abuse

From January to July 2026, Child Sexual Abuse Centre is hosting six free online workshops for safeguarding partners to reflect, plan, and implement the six recommendations from the 2024 National review into child sexual abuse within the family environment. These sessions will cover improving practice, professional skills, and communicating with children about abuse.

Join one, some, or all sessions, whatever works for you. Please see the links below to book your place

- Wednesday 14 January - workshop 1: Strategic planning  
[Find out more and book your place](#)
- Tuesday 3 February - workshop 2: Professional knowledge, skills and confidence  
[Find out more and book your place](#)
- Thursday 12 March - workshop 3: Enquiries and investigations  
[Find out more and book your place](#)
- Thursday 21 May - workshop 4: Assessment of people presenting risk of sexual harm  
[Find out more and book your place](#)
- Wednesday 17 June - workshop 5: Talking to children  
[Find out more and book your place](#)
- Monday 13 July - workshop 6: Health  
[Find out more and book your place](#)

**Point of Contact:** [info@csacentre.org.uk](mailto:info@csacentre.org.uk)

## Sufficiency

### Termly Sufficiency Data

A request, including a link for the Termly Sufficiency data will be sent out to all our Early Year Providers on **Friday 16 January 2026**. Completing this helps us ensure there is sufficient childcare within the borough and highlight any potential sufficiency issues that may arise in the future.

The deadline for completing this is close of business **Friday 30 January 2026**.

If you have any questions or need any assistance in completing the calculator, please contact the Early Years team.

**Point of Contact:** [early.years@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:early.years@oldham.gov.uk)

# Family Hubs

## Oldham Parenting Team

The Parenting Team in Oldham run regular groups to support parents. Scan the QR code for more information about the groups and for dates.



[Click here](#) to find out more about the Parenting Support Programmes available

**Point of Contact:** [parentsupporthub@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:parentsupporthub@oldham.gov.uk)

## CPD and Training

### Leuven Scales of Well-being & Involvement in the EYFS

Join us for this reflective and insightful CPD opportunity for your early years staff.

For practitioners committed to putting the child at the centre of all they do, this programme will support you to gain an understanding of how we can measure and support children's well-being as they develop emotionally, using the internationally recognised Leuven Scales of Well-being as a framework.

During the sessions, led by an Early Excellence Curriculum Consultant, we will focus on:

#### **The Signs, Signals and Levels of Well-being and Involvement**

An overview of the work carried out at the Centre for Experiential Education at Leuven University, Belgium the Process Oriented Monitoring System (POMS), and descriptions of the signs, signals and levels of well-being and involvement.

#### **Moderation of Levels of Involvement**

Moderation of levels of involvement and introduction to the screening process by studying film clips to ensure a shared understanding.

#### **Ten Action Points: An Audit Tool**

An introduction to the 10 Action Points, an audit tool developed by the Leuven team, to support and guide adjustments to practice and provision, in order to raise levels of well-being and involvement.

#### Benefits:

- Explore the critical roles well-being and involvement play in high quality learning
- Consider how to maximise the potential of your learning environment and interactions to support this
- Gain an overview of the Leuven Scales of Well-being and Involvement



Please note that this is a **three-part training - all sessions** must be attended:

- Monday 26 January 2026
- Tuesday 10 March 2026
- Monday 11 May 2026

[Click here](#) to book the afternoon session from 1.30pm – 3.00pm

[Click here](#) to book the twilight session from 6.30pm – 8.00pm

**Point of contact:** [early.years@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:early.years@oldham.gov.uk)

## Boys Communication and Language



**The sessions are aimed at EYFS Teachers, EYFS Leaders, PVI Staff and Childminders.**

Local data across Greater Manchester provides us with ongoing evidence that fewer boys than girls achieve the expected level of development at the end of the EYFS. This is particularly significant when it comes to early Communication and Language development.

This series of 2 x half day sessions (followed by an online 'showcase of practice' event) have been planned in partnership with Michelle Morris (Clinical Lead for speech and language for Greater Manchester Combined Authority). The sessions will focus on key research relating to boys' communication and language development. We will explore how an effective, well-planned learning environment can be both language rich and provide a meaningful context for talk. Research has shown that the role of the adult is crucial in both modelling communication skills and extending vocabulary. As part of the sessions, we will explore the adult role in depth, considering highly effective interaction strategies which can be used in any EYFS setting.

Although the sessions focus on boys' development in particular, the information and guidance will support you and your team in meeting the communication and language needs of all children in your setting.

These sessions are currently fully booked.

If you would like to join our reserve list, please email [earlyyears@bright-futures.co.uk](mailto:earlyyears@bright-futures.co.uk) and we will contact you if a place becomes available.

**Thursday 15 January 2026 & Thursday 12 March 2026**

**Point of Contact:** [earlyyears@bright-futures.co.uk](mailto:earlyyears@bright-futures.co.uk)

## Gain your EYTS with the Bright Futures SCITT - Fully-funded by the DFE

Bright Futures SCITT has an excellent reputation for delivering high-quality Early Years Teacher Training. In 2024, Ofsted said:

If you or your colleagues in your early years setting are ready to begin their journey to gaining Early Years Teaching Status, we would love to hear from you!



### Trainee Eligibility

To qualify for this course, trainees must:

- Be employed in an EY setting
- Have a level 6 Bachelors degree (any subject)
- Have GCSEs (or equivalencies) at grade 4/C in English language, maths and a science

### EYTS Course

- Tuition fees paid for by the DFE
- £7000 employer incentive for the trainee's employer
- 16 days of training in Altrincham from a variety of EY experts

- Start date: September 2026 – July 2027
- Membership of the Bright Futures
- Early Years Stronger Practice Hub

[Click here](#) for more information

**Point of Contact:** [admin@scitt.bright-futures.co.uk](mailto:admin@scitt.bright-futures.co.uk)

## SEND and Inclusion

### POINT

POINT offer a number of services, all the QR codes can be scanned to find out more information. The POINT Padlet is a useful resource for support and resources for children with SEND.



Introducing our new  
Padlet:  
for Your  
Updates, Resources,  
and Support



Oldham Parent  
Carer Forum  
0161 503 1555



Short Breaks &  
POINT Activities  
0161 503 1543



SEND Mediation  
& DRS  
0161 503 1558



SEND Training &  
Workshops Service  
0161 503 1551



Oldham SENDIAS  
Service  
0161 503 1540



What POINT do and  
where to find us  
0161 503 1547

### Drop-in Sessions delivered by POINT in partnership with Oldham Family Hubs

Do you have a child or young person who has or may have additional needs and/or disabilities, aged 0-25 with or without a diagnosis? Want to find out more?

For information, advice and support or just to connect, come down and see us. We offer peer to peer support, signposting, events, referrals into other POINT Services, and much more.

**Please promote the following sessions with your parents/carers:**

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday 14 January 2026	5pm - 7pm	Oldham Library
Thursday 22 January 2026	9am - 11am	Shaw Family Hub
Wednesday 28 January 2026	5pm - 7pm	Medlock Vale Family Hub
Wednesday 4 February 2026	9am – 11am	Spring Meadows Family Hub
Wednesday 11 February 2026	9am – 11am	Stanley Road Family Hub
Wednesday 18 February 2026	5pm – 7pm	Oldham Library
Wednesday 25 February 2026	5pm – 7pm	Medlock Vale Family Hub

**Point of Contact:** [jayne@point-send.co.uk](mailto:jayne@point-send.co.uk)



# Community

## Families First Partnership



### **Attached – Oldham Families First - December Newsletter**

This programme is a once-in-a-generation chance to reshape Children's Social Care - bringing together the council, education, police, health, voluntary, faith, and community groups to transform and improve our shared offer to families. Families First is more than just a programme; it's a bold journey of change driven by what children and parents truly need.

We're building a future where support is earlier, relationships are stronger, and outcomes are better. Join us in creating a system that works for families—because they deserve nothing less.

This newsletter includes updates on what Families First Partnership is doing, progress on key workstreams, upcoming co-design events, and useful resources to help you get involved.

If you would like to join our newsletter mailing list, please email us.

**Point of Contact:** [familiesfirstpartnership@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:familiesfirstpartnership@oldham.gov.uk)

## Reminders ...

### **Applications close soon for primary school places 2026**

Families wanting to apply for their child's Reception place in September 2026 should do so before the closing time.

Make sure you apply for their school place by **Thursday 15 January 2026**.

Apply online at [www.oldham.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/admissions)



**Thank you to colleagues who have contributed to this briefing.**

### **Submissions and House Style**

This document has been produced using a standard house style.

If you are emailing in any articles you want including in the weekly briefing, then please use the [Standardisation & Top Tips document](#) for guidance prior to submitting.



Keep up to date by [signing up](#) to the council's regular newsletter and by following local social media accounts at [www.oldham.gov.uk](http://www.oldham.gov.uk)



