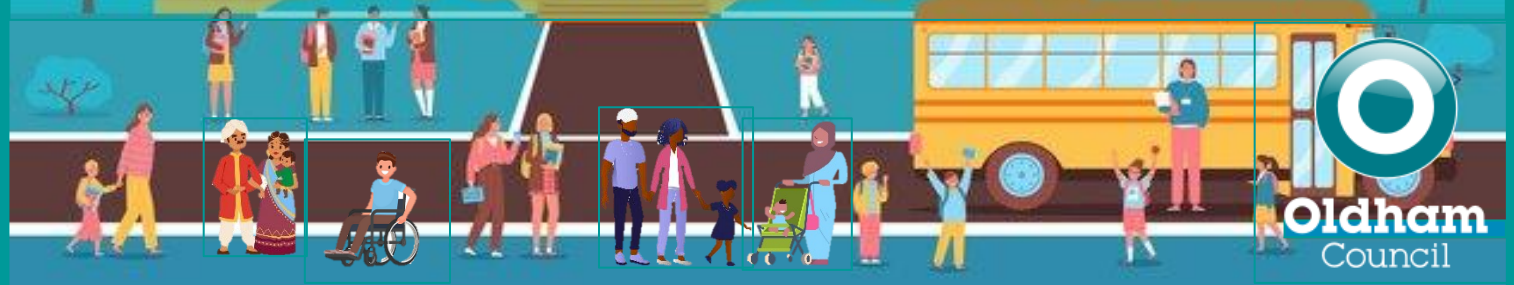


Briefing to Schools and Early Years Settings



Volume: 8 – Spring 2026

Week No: 17 - 18

Date: Thursday 22 January 2026

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Early Years

National Storytelling Week 2026

Created by [Society for Storytelling](#), this fantastic annual event is a joyful celebration of the power of sharing stories. Stories teach us about the world; they allow us to step into someone else's shoes and feel empathy; they help us to relax and escape and they can help develop essential [literacy skills](#).



In 2026, we will be celebrating National Storytelling Week from **Monday 2 February to Sunday 8 February** with FREE online events running on Tuesday 3 and Wednesday 4 February 2026. The events will be live-captioned and will have BSL interpretation.

[Click here](#) for more information and resources

Point of contact: young.writers@literacytrust.org.uk

New Ofsted report cards and grades video explainer: a guide for parents

We have heard from leaders that they would like support explaining our new grades and report cards to their parents. Our new [YouTube video](#) explainer has more information on exactly what Ofsted's new grades mean, including how we report on safeguarding. Early years settings may find this helpful when explaining their grades and report cards to parents.

Point of contact: claire.burton@oldham.gov.uk

The Explainer Series – Centre for Early Childhood

A series of animated films explaining brain development in early childhood, and how interactions between babies, young children and caring adults can make a positive difference to their social and emotional development.



Using the Centre for Early Childhood's Explainers

The Centre for Early Childhood Explainers have been designed to be used by people who work with babies, children and families, so that they are better equipped to have meaningful and consistent conversations with parents and carers about social and emotional development. We hope these films will be a useful tool in encouraging more nurturing adult-child interactions.

[Click here](#) to access the videos

Point of contact: Laura.Williams@oldham.gov.uk

Safeguarding

Free Webinar – Domestic Abuse Awareness for DSL's

FREE Safeguarding Spotlight webinar, [Domestic Abuse Awareness for DSLs](#) is out now. Research suggests that there is a spike in police recorded incidents and calls to helplines regarding domestic abuse over the Christmas period, so it is essential that DSLs are skilled in responding to this. Safeguarding Spotlights will be available every term and can be accessed through the [One Education website](#)

Point of contact: safeguarding@oneeducation.co.uk

Greater Manchester safeguarding children procedures updates

Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) adopt the Greater Manchester standardised safeguarding procedures, reflecting current guidance and best practice across the region. These procedures are set out in the [Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#)

Policies updates December 2025 highlights:

- [Children of parents with learning difficulties/disabilities](#) – Updated following recent legal judgements; professional support now led by Research in Practice.
- [Children with Disabilities and Complex Needs](#) – Chapter refreshed and updated.
- [Children Missing Education](#) – Guidance aligned with new attendance regulations, statutory guidance, and upcoming legislation, with insights from 2025 Ofsted and CQC reviews.
- [Child Criminal Exploitation](#) – New guidance added on child financial exploitation.

Stay informed - [sign up to the alerts](#) so that you will be notified when procedures have been written or updated.

Point of Contact: OSCP.group@oldham.gov.uk

Spotting child exploitation: join the #LookCloser campaign

Across the country, young people are being manipulated, sexually abused, and coerced into activities such as money laundering and drug dealing. Child exploitation is rarely obvious, but it happens everywhere. By understanding the signs, each of us can play a part in stopping it.

Through The Children's Society's [#LookCloser campaign](#), delivered in partnership with British Transport Police and the National County Lines Coordination Centre, they are working to raise awareness of child exploitation and how to report concerns.

The Children's Society are hosting [free learning events](#) running from January to March 2026. These sessions are designed for professionals, businesses, and members of the public who want to deepen their understanding of child exploitation, improve their ability to spot the warning signs, and learn how to take action.

Point of contact: Supportercare@childrenssociety.org.uk

Government consultation: proposed Child Protection Authority

On 11 December 2025, the government announced plans to create a new [Child Protection Authority \(CPA\)](#), a national body designed to strengthen accountability across the child protection system, identify emerging threats, and support consistent good practice among safeguarding partners. This follows findings from the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse (IICSA) and the Casey audit into grooming gangs.

The government is now consulting on the CPA's proposed functions, governance and how it should work alongside existing bodies. The CPA is intended to be an expert, evidence led organisation that brings greater clarity, unity, and continuous improvement to multi agency child protection. Children and families, frontline practitioners, local authorities, inspectorates, professional bodies, and safeguarding organisations are encouraged to respond.

The consultation is open until 6 March 2026; access the [consultation questionnaire online](#)

Point of Contact: OSCP.group@oldham.gov.uk

Responding to harmful sexual behaviour

Children display a range of normal, healthy sexual behaviours as they grow. When behaviours fall outside this range and could harm the child or others, they are considered harmful sexual behaviour (HSB).

[Oldham's HSB protocol](#) has recently been updated and should be used whenever there is any suspicion, allegation or observation of a child or young person displaying harmful sexual behaviour or being at risk of doing so.

Point of Contact: OSCP.group@oldham.gov.uk

NSPCC Newsletter

Attached – NSPCC Newsletter January 2026

Please find attached the stakeholder newsletter for Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Rochdale. This update highlights key NSPCC resources for schools and safeguarding. At the NSPCC, we're proud to offer a range of FREE safeguarding resources and programmes to support schools, educators, parents, and carers in keeping children safe.

Point of Contact: Simone.Moore@NSPCC.org.uk

Partnerships

Attached - Oldham Easter HAF Applications 2026 - Additional Guidance

Attached - Blank HAF Application_Easter 2026

Attached - Blank HAF Budget Proforma



Oldham Easter HAF Applications 2026

The application webform to deliver provision over Easter HAF 2026 in Oldham is now open. The application must be submitted via webform on the Oldham Council website. The link to the webform is here:-

<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/xfp/form/1183>

Please refer to the attached supporting document and links below for further advice and guidance.

DfE guidance here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2026-to-2027>.

Frequently Asked Questions, [click here](#) to access.

The strict deadline for the return of expressions of interest via the weblink is on or before **9.30am on Wednesday 11 February 2026**.

Point of Contact: Carrie-Ann.Varey@oldham.gov.uk

Health and Wellbeing

CBeebies Parenting

As a professional, you can signpost parents and carers to the trusted content to support children's language, communication and confidence.



You can also use the content in practice and share with families for free!

[Click here](#) to access the CBeebies Parenting website

Parenting Download Podcast

Lead by Katie Thistleton and Guvna B - '*Parenting Download*' focuses on unpacking the week's parenting headlines with experts and celebrity guests.

From talking to children about challenging topics with Tom Fletcher, to learning the best ways to keep holidays fun - you can expect to learn the best tips from the most unexpected of experts.

[All episodes are out now on BBC Sounds!](#)

Helping parents have fun this January

Inspire parents with these amazing activities for kids

- [Fun weather activities for kids](#)
- [27 things to spot on your winter sensory walk](#)

Please contact The Better Communication Team if you would like to develop your offer to families, provide evidence-based strategies and activity ideas to support SLCN in both settings and at home.

Point of Contact:

Jane Winterbottom – Jane.Winterbottom@oldham.gov.uk

Liz Metcalfe - Liz.Metcalfe@oldham.gov.uk

Sufficiency

The Termly Sufficiency Survey has been shared with all our Early Year Providers. Please can you on complete the survey as this helps us ensure there is sufficient childcare within the borough and highlight any potential sufficiency issues that may arise in the future.

[Click here](#) to access the sufficiency survey

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

CPD and Training

Early Years Training Calendar



Early Years Training Plan – Spring Term 2026

Please find attached the Early Years Training Calendar for the Spring Term 2026 for all our upcoming training for the next term.

Point of contact: early.years@oldham.gov.uk

Get involved with the Early Years Settings National Year of Reading Offer!

The National Year of Reading is officially here! Take part by signing up to the official Early Years Settings offer, delivered by the National Literacy Trust.

The Early Years spring term activity includes resources to help you make the most of storytelling in the everyday, professional development webinars for educators and memorable events for children.



This spring, choose your level of involvement:

Option 1: Go All In (Whole setting approach)– Nominate a representative from your setting to register for our Learning Management System for a guided journey through termly activities – plus, take part in a participatory award with prizes.

Option 2: Dip In (Individual approach) – Sign up to individual events and download resources as they go live.

To do now:

1. [Decide your level of involvement and sign up: Go All In or Dip In](#)
2. [Download our starter toolkit which includes a calendar and an all staff briefing presentation on the National Year of Reading](#)

Let's make 2026 the year every child gets the best start through stories!

Point of Contact: contact@literacytrust.org.uk

50 Things to do Before You're 5

Explore how the 50 Things to Do initiative can be used as a tool to strengthen partnerships with parents!



Join us for a **live webinar** to discover how 50 simple, low-cost and no-cost activities can be used to strengthen your partnerships with parents

During this 1 hour session we will learn:

- What is 50 Things to Do Before You're Five
- Why use 50 Things to Do Before You're Five
- Practical ways to embed 50 Things into your practice

Join us online on Monday 2 February 2026 4.00pm – 5.00pm

[Click here](#) to book your place.

Visit the [Oldham 50 Things to Do](#) website to learn more about the initiative and download the app to give it a try!

Point of contact: info@50thingstodo.org

Bright Futures SCITT Fully-funded EYTS Course and Information Evening

This is an employment-based route for candidates who are currently employed in an Early Years setting in the Northwest of England. We are now recruiting for September 2026. The EYTS qualifications allows you to teach in private nurseries, academy chains and independent schools in the 0-5 years age range.

Find more at our SCITT Information Evening online on 29th January 2026 at 6pm - [Book your place here](#)

[Click here](#) to book a place on the information evening

[Click here](#) for more information about the course

Point of Contact: admin@scitt.bright-futures.co.uk

Childcare Works & Dingley's Promise Free Resources

Childcare Works in collaboration with Dingley's Promise has created a collection of resources and videos to support inclusive practice for early years providers, childminders and schools.

This collection includes:

[SEND Assessment Guidance Handbook and Video](#) - Information to support the practical use of the Department for Education SEND Assessment Guidance and accompanying tools in your setting.

[A Reflective Approach to Identifying SEND and Inclusion Handbook and Video](#) - A framework through which to regularly review and adapt to ensure you are inclusive in all you do in your setting.

[The Use of Graduated Approach and Ordinarily Available Provision \(OAP\) in Inclusive Practice Handbook and Video](#) - Explore the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle in detail.

[Developing an Inclusive Curriculum Handbook and Video](#) - Practical ways to approach the development of a curriculum that is inclusive and accessible to all children.

All available to download on the [Childcare Works HUB](#)

Point of Contact: childcareworks@mottmac.com

Webinar: how the National Education Nature Park works for early years

The National Education Nature Park to find out how the Nature Park programme can support you with your everyday teaching and learning.



You'll learn what the National Education Nature Park is, how it's been tailored for early years settings and to meet early learning goals, and how to get started in your setting. In the meantime, check out the [guide to the Nature Park for early years](#)

[Click here](#) to register for the webinar to learn more on Wednesday 4 February 2026 at 12.30pm.

SEND and Inclusion

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 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

Recruitment and Retention

Youchoosework – Oldham



Introducing you choosework, a shared bank of flexible childcare workers, launched with funding from GMCA; the easier, smarter (and much more affordable) way to find reliable nursery and wrap-around staff when you need them most.

Drawing on our experience in teaching and nursery management, it can be tricky staffing can be in our sector, and that's exactly why we created youchoosework; to help nurseries and schools thrive with flexible, fully vetted workers who are trained, experienced, and ready to jump in and help out.

[Click here](#) to find out more

Point of contact: info@youchoosework.com

Community

Illuminate Light Night 2026

Illuminate Light Night returns to Oldham town centre on Saturday 21 February 2026 (6–9pm), bringing thousands of visitors into the town for an evening of light, culture and celebration.

We're encouraging local businesses to get involved by offering special promotions, themed food and drink, or smaller experiences that tie in with the event and help create a vibrant atmosphere across the town centre.

With large-scale light installations, the much-loved Illuminate Parade and immersive artworks including Happy as the Day is Long, Illuminate provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase your business to a wide and engaged audience.

If you'd like to take part or would like to discuss ideas, please email culture.team@oldham.gov.uk for more information. Early expressions of interest are welcome as plans continue to develop.



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.



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