

# OLDHAM SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE BENEFITTING FROM INNOVATIVE INVESTMENT



A trailblazing investment into Oldham schools is improving the emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people.

Oldham was chosen by the Department for Education in 2017 as one of 12 Opportunity Areas (OA) receiving a total investment of around £72 million to boost opportunities, learning and social mobility.

Oldham's OA programme, delivered alongside Oldham Council, has already committed £500k to delivering vital support and taking a 'whole school' approach in tackling barriers that hold young people back, with further investment planned. Three new advisors are already in place to help schools and colleges ensure they are offering the best environment and support to their pupils.

To ensure our borough becomes a better place to learn and achieve – as well as one where all children and young people can reach their full potential – an OA partnership board now brings together local school and council leaders, businesses and community organisations to move this innovative programme forward.

Their ongoing work and successes, which include the Child Outcomes Research Consortium's (CORC) Wellbeing Measurement for Schools pilot in Oldham, was highlighted today (November 15) by a Ministerial visit.

Nadhim Zahawi MP, Minister for Children and Families, visited Yew Tree Community School in Chadderton to talk with OA Board members and join staff from other schools involved in the pilot at an Emotional Health and Wellbeing workshop.

Councillor Paul Jacques, Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years, said: "Children and young people are facing many challenges in life that can affect their emotional and mental wellbeing, and we know that's no different here in Oldham.

"Along with our partners we must play an extremely important role in supporting them through those tough times – not just by listening to them, but also by acting on their needs.

"We're committed to helping to create environments that can lead to good social,

emotional and mental wellbeing because that lays the foundations for them to adopt healthier behaviours, improve educational attainment and make a strong transition into adulthood.

“There’s already some amazing work going on within our schools and colleges here that are adopting a multi-partner approach to producing more effective promotion of social, emotional health and wellbeing.

“The Oldham OA investment is complimenting and enhancing that work – which is good news for everyone.”

James Kempton, Independent Chair of Oldham Opportunity Area, said: “I am delighted that Minister Zahawi is visiting Oldham today to see the excellent work underway to support children and young people’s emotional health and well-being. Doing well at school is about more than just exam grades; young people today need to be resilient in order to succeed in the world of work.

“The challenge for young people growing up in disadvantaged areas is even greater.

“But Oldham’s children and young people deserve to have the best chance possible to do

well at school and in life, and the Opportunity Area investment in emotional health and wellbeing is one of the ways we can give them that chance.”

The OA programme is a key part of the Government’s aim to support residents in areas that face challenges and lack opportunities, restricting social mobility.

Mr Zahawi MP said: “The Opportunity Area programme is truly unique – it’s led and driven by the people who know the area best, and understand what motivates and influences their young people.

“One of the issues highlighted by young people in Oldham was poor mental health and wellbeing, which can act as a barrier to fulfilling their potential and succeeding. Being able to identify mental health problems early and making sure children and young people have the right support when they need it is vital – so Oldham’s plan focusses on improving their wellbeing and raising their aspirations.

“I am confident of the passion and commitment of those involved in delivering the plan for Oldham, and the future of its young people.”

