

# Salford Adolescent Strategy

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2023 - 2026



Salford City Council

Salford  
Safeguarding  
Children Partnership

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# 1. Common terms used throughout this strategy

## **Adolescent**

A child/young person 10 - 19 years of age.

## **Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership**

The local arrangements in Salford to oversee the safeguarding effectiveness of children.

## **Whole family approach**

A family-led strategy which provides adults and children with the tools to set, plan for, and achieve their goals together.

## **Family Partnership Model**

The Family Partnership Model (FPM) is based on the premise that successful interventions with families require a partnership approach, which identifies, recognises and uses parents' strengths to improve outcomes for children.

## **Trauma-responsive**

An approach to working with individuals that have experienced trauma.

## **Contextual safeguarding**

An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety.

## **SMART**

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

## **Vulnerability**

Being exposed to possibly being harmed.

## **Transition**

The process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another.

## **Safeguarding**

The action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

## **Poverty**

The state of having few material possessions or little income. Poverty can have diverse social, economic, and political causes and effects.

## **SEND**

Special Educational Needs and Disability.

## **Serious youth violence**

Any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime.

## **CCE**

Child Criminal Exploitation.

## **ACEs**

Are Adverse Childhood Experiences.

## **THRIVE**

A model that promotes positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in children and young people.



## 2. Introduction and purpose

In 2022, the Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) set its assurance priority areas for the year. One of these priorities was adolescents, with a focus on how we work together to effectively safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people.

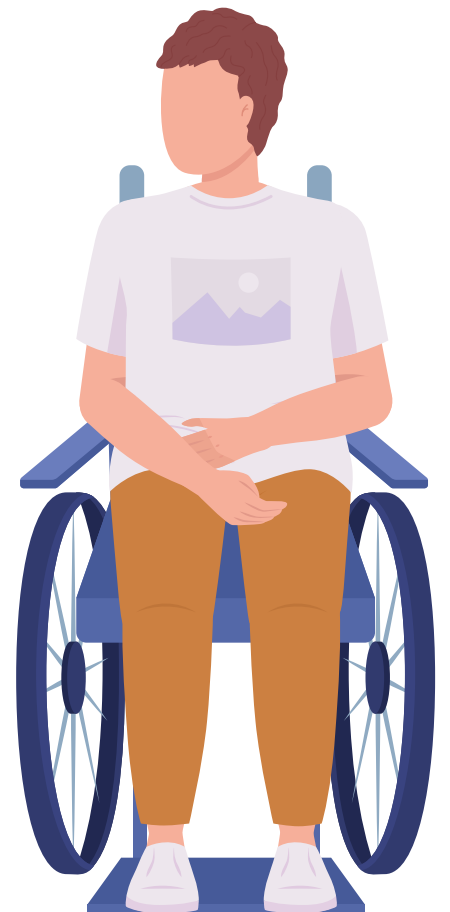
Salford had already produced a Salford Thrive Directory of Adolescent Support Services.

However, it was acknowledged an adolescent strategy was required to set out the clear priorities for children and young people in Salford.

The SSCP welcome this strategy which sets out how the partnership intends to achieve specific improvements in respect of the work of all agencies with young people in the city. Members of the board welcome the valued contribution to the strategy by the children and young people who provided feedback and the wide representation from partner agencies.

**Salford is ambitious for its children and young people and its vision is:**

**“All partners are committed to working together so every child in Salford is safe, well and able to reach their full potential”.**



Central to this ambition is to ensure all children, young people and their families receive the help they need at the earliest opportunity to enable them to thrive.

We will listen to young people to better understand their lived experiences and work in partnership with them. We will 'do with', not 'do to'.

## **For this strategy, the SSCP has chosen to adopt the WHO and UNICEF definition of an adolescent, which is 10 to 19 years of age.**

The SSCP recognises adolescence can be a confusing and challenging time for many young people, their parents and the professionals working with them. It is a period of physical, psychosocial and neuro-developmental change in which young people experience puberty, change schools several times, probably start a first job, form both short-lived and life-long bonds and friendships, develop opinions, self-identities and views about the future. They will usually achieve a level of emotional and physical independence from their parents and carers. In short, it is a time characterised by evolution and transition - in experiences, influences and the way they think and feel about themselves, the people around them and the world more generally. Adolescence can be exciting, overwhelming and terrifying - sometimes simultaneously.

Precisely because of all these factors, with adolescence comes exposure to additional external risks, alongside active risk-taking by young people as they experiment with new opportunities and a greater level of independence. The increase in the criminal exploitation of young people means some may become targets of exploitation because they have already lived through or are living with distressing experiences, or neurodiversity. Neurodiversity includes conditions such as autism, dyspraxia, dyslexia and learning disabilities, which makes young people vulnerable to manipulation by adults or their peers, and is a particular safeguarding risk affecting young people. This is also a generation that has a significant online presence, with their 'real' lives and experiences often created in mirror image on social media. There is some evidence harms that originates and develops online can quickly escalate into physical violence and/or abuse.

Against this backdrop, young people in our communities have also experienced an unprecedented level of disruption to their education and their lives more generally, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has required them to adapt rapidly and put plans on hold. Young people were isolated from their friendship networks, with social connection increasingly pushed online, which may have also elevated online risks and arising harm for some young people, (A Community of Practice overview of Adolescent Safeguarding practice and development across Greater Manchester - December 2021 Conducted and authored by Sarah Newsam, Strategy For Change)

An awareness and response from a wide range of partners is required when working to safeguard adolescents. We need to ensure we promote resilience and young people's ability to respond to changing challenges. Our role is not only to protect, but also to prepare young people for different transitional periods during adolescence including the transition to adulthood

The SSCP is committed to embedding a culture of understanding about the complexity of safeguarding adolescents where we:

- ➔ Identify adolescents as children first
- ➔ Understand the development needs of adolescence and the impact of adverse childhood experiences
- ➔ Understand the needs and risks for adolescents with SEND
- ➔ Understand the influences in adolescent lives (for example, child criminal exploitation), including those outside the family context
- ➔ Maintain a focus on the risks adolescents are exposed to outside the family and respond with the right conversation and the right action, at the right time
- ➔ Consider the positive and negative impact of risks adolescents take in exploring their growing independence
- ➔ Recognise the constrained choices adolescents may feel powerless to avoid
- ➔ Value the diverse range of experiences of adolescents in Salford and respond to the needs of adolescents of all genders, ethnicities, sexual identities and beliefs, and those who are disabled

The governance of this strategy will be within the SSCP board arrangements.

### 3. Context

#### Demographic:

The **10-17yrs** population of Salford is 23,561 (equates to **9%** of total Salford population: 262,697, ONS 2020)

**50.6%**

of the population in Salford are male with **49.4%** female

**86%** of the Salford population are White British (14% BAME)

#### Deprivation:

**Salford is ranked in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally**

with **23.3%** of children living in low-income families (average household income £30,056, 2019).

**33.4%**

of children are in receipt of free school dinners



**Children's social care involvement:**

**1822**

Early help assessments completed for children in 2021-22

**1295**

Children in need numbers (April 22)

**130**

Number of care leavers (April 22)

**334**

Number of child protection plans (April 22)

**44.27%** Emotional

**50.77%** Neglect

**3.72%** Physical

**1.24%** Sexual

**554**

Number of cared for children (April 22)

**39.5%**

child protection plans with domestic abuse as a factor (April 22)





**4.9%**

of children have an  
Education, Health  
and Care Plan

**Education:**

**92.1%**  
**Attendance**

**4.9%**

the number of 16/17 year olds  
not in Education, Employment  
or Training (Apr 22)

**16.8%** receive  
SEN  
support

**Youth crime  
and serious  
youth violence:**

**155**

violent crimes committed  
by the 10-17 population  
between 1.4.21 - 31.3.22



**Child sexual and criminal exploitation:**

**72**

referrals were made into the Complex Safeguarding Team (Salford Connect) in 2020-21

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**60%**

of all referrals were regarding child sexual exploitation (43)

**33%**

were regarding child criminal exploitation (24)

**4%**

were regarding multiple CCE and CSE (3)

**3%**

were regarding modern slavery (2).

Over the past two years, the profile of children at risk of exploitation has changed and the prevalence of serious youth violence (involving knife crime) is increasing across Salford. More children and young people are being identified as victims of child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Local data also points to an increase in children and young people with adverse childhood experiences including exposure to parental mental health issues, domestic abuse, substance misuse and neglect at home. These children and young people are more likely to experience exclusions from school and are more likely to have social, emotional and mental health issues which are factors that increase the risk of 10 to 19 year olds being targeted for the purpose of exploitation.

Salford like many other areas in England and Wales are seeing an increase in violent offending that often involves the use of weapons. We are seeing young children often with no previous offending history going on to commit serious violent offences; in some cases resulting in lengthy custodial sentences without agencies having the opportunity to intervene. It is imperative we recognise this as a partnership and respond so children and young people access and receive support at the earliest possible opportunity.












## Teenage pregnancy

There have been reductions in the number of teenage conceptions over recent years but young people are still more likely to be diagnosed with chlamydia than other age groups. The rate of teenage conceptions (15 to 17 years) has declined between 2015 and 2020 in Salford and in all of its comparators. The decline in conceptions in Salford was particularly large after 2018 and by 2020 Salford was significantly below statistical neighbours and close to the rate for the North West as a whole. However, conceptions in teenagers aged under 18 Salford are still significantly above the England rate. The Salford teenage pregnancy rate is higher than England, with 117 girls becoming pregnant in a year.

Ensuring we have a high standard of sex and relationships education in all Salford schools is vital if we are to reduce the risk of teenage pregnancy for our young people\*.

Schools will play an important role in ensuring young people have education and support to make positive choices about their sexual and reproductive health. Children and young people will also be supported so they can build healthy relationships and be less sexual exploitation.

This will:

-  Drive reductions in unintended pregnancies
-  Support further reductions in teenage conceptions
-  Increase the contraceptive options available and the opportunities to access them
-  Contribute to reducing the stigma associated with Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV
-  Implement preventative measures to reduce likelihood of HIV and STI infections
-  Increase the number of teenagers seeing testing for STIs and HIV across Greater Manchester as normal, especially in primary care, medical admissions units and A&E
-  Reduce the transmission of STIs and HIV
-  Reduce the spending on HIV treatment and social care associated with late diagnosis and onward transmission
-  Ensure better use of online services among teenagers

\* Oringanje C, Meremikwu MM, Eko H, Esu E, Meremikwu A, Ehiri JE. Interventions for preventing unintended pregnancies among adolescents. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2016, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD005215. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005215.pub3.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma

➔ The prevalence of ACEs in Salford will impact many of our adolescents ability to engage with services and education unless protective factors are in place to support them. Dr Christina Bethell's evidence suggests positive childhood experiences which can be statistically linked to good emotional and mental health in adults are:

- The ability to talk with family about feelings
- The sense family is supportive during difficult times
- The enjoyment of participation in community traditions
- Feeling a sense of belonging in high school
- Feeling supported by friends
- Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely cared
- Feeling safe and protected by an adult in the home

The most important implication of the research on ACEs is the need to prevent exposure to trauma and long-term stress in early life. Investment in giving every child the best possible start in life is therefore crucial. At an individual, family and community-level, embedding trauma informed practice across services and organisations children and young people may encounter throughout their life and strategies to build resilience are at the heart of the Salford model. However we know trauma can happen at any time across young people's lives. We will be mindful of the science and the growing body of evidence-based interventions which can help the body and mind heal after trauma and integrate these into our wider response.



## 4. What children and young people told us were their priorities

In September 2022, a survey was sent to secondary schools across Salford to gather the views of young people on what it was like to live in Salford and what improvements could be made. The survey consisted of a number of multiple-choice questions, using base data gathered from a smaller survey carried out via the SSCP listening hub.

There was also the opportunity for young people to add some narrative about what changes they would like to see in Salford. Demographic data was also collected.

### Findings:

#### Demographic results:

564 young people completed the online survey. Of these young people:

- 168 were 11 years old
- 122 were 12 years old
- 99 were 13 years old
- 81 were 14 years old
- 27 were 15 years old
- 3 were 16 years old
- 64 undefined

548 reported which geographical area of Salford they resided in. 43% of respondents were from Walkden. Other responses included: Swinton, Boothstown, Roe Green, Worsley, and Little Hulton.

## Findings:

### Responses:

#### Q1. What is it like to live in Salford?

Think about the problems teenagers have to deal with in Salford. (\*those selected by over 50% of the respondents).

Bullying	409*
Anti-social behaviour	354*
Mental health difficulties	344*
Gangs	342*
Drugs and alcohol	340*
Family difficulties	331*
Not feeling safe	319*
Crime	315*
Litter	291*
Nothing to do/ boredom	261
Physical health worries	246
No jobs for young people	213
No opportunities for young people	200
Housing problems	200
Pollution	160
Finding services to help	140

**Q2.** What services are there to help teenagers in Salford? (\*those selected by over 50% of the respondents).

Friends	426*
Parent/carer	412*
School	364*
Mental health services	348*
Police	325*
Health services	286*
Social worker	284*
College	270
Salford City Council	260
GP/nurse	243
Youth centre	226
Foster carer	211
Sports clubs	183
Dance/drama/performing arts	143
Faith leader	120
Housing	118

**Q3.** Is there anything more services could do to help? (choose up to 5).

**The top 5 were:**

- Help with mental health (386 respondents)
- Reduce bullying (356 respondents)
- Help at school (332 respondents)
- Reduce crime (320 respondents)
- Help with difficulties at home (286)

**Q4.** What changes can we make for teenagers in Salford? What would you like to see happen?

While there were some specific comments relating to individual circumstances, the following themes emerged:

- Cleaner streets/less rubbish
- Less knife crime and Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)
- More youth clubs/youth centres open more often
- More sports clubs/activities

**Findings:**



## Findings:

### Some specific quotes from young people:

**'Help with mental health difficulties'**  
(40 respondents mentioned mental health)

**'Help people having difficulties such as having nowhere to go or no job'**

**'Help people be kinder to each other'**

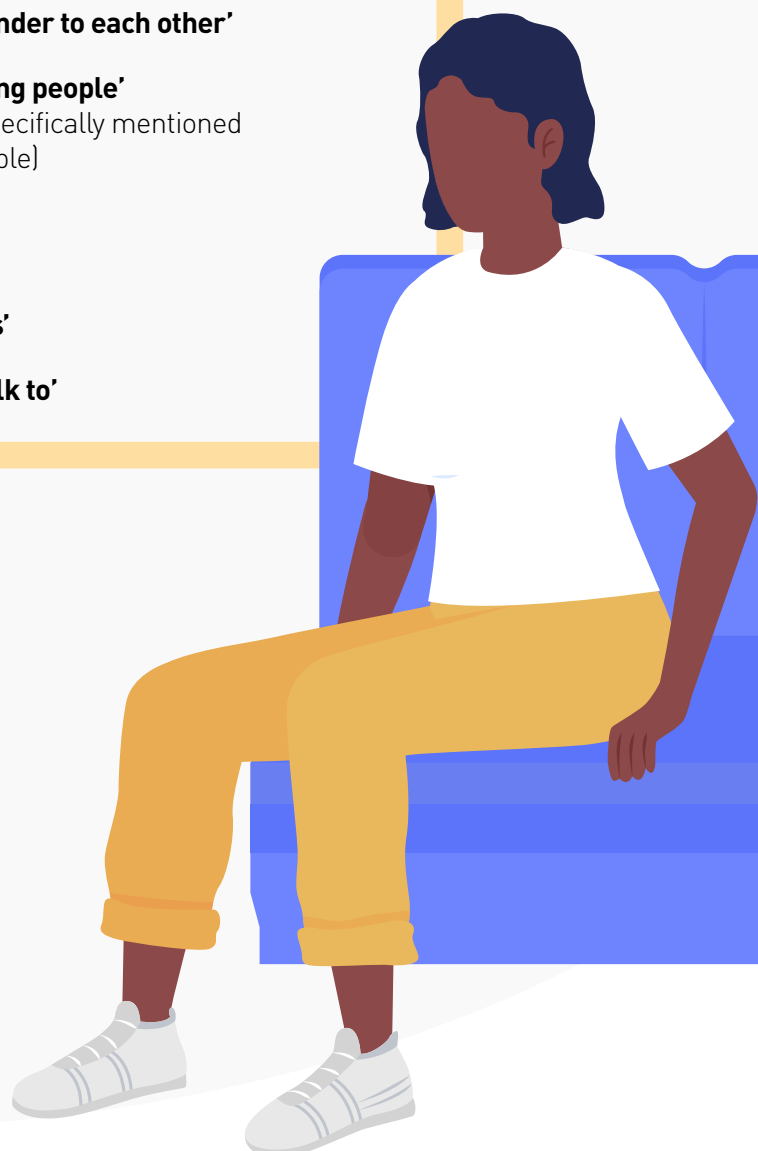
**'More jobs for young people'**  
(26 respondents specifically mentioned help for young people)

**'Cleaner streets'**  
(15 respondents)

**'More sports clubs'**

**'More people to talk to'**

The results of the initial survey were shared with Salford Youth Council, along with some proposed suggestions for priorities for the strategy. From the feedback obtained there was overwhelming support for the inclusion of a priority focused on supporting young people during the transition from primary school to high school. There were also suggestions relating to better use of spaces in Salford, including unused buildings and increased or improved outdoor recreational spaces.



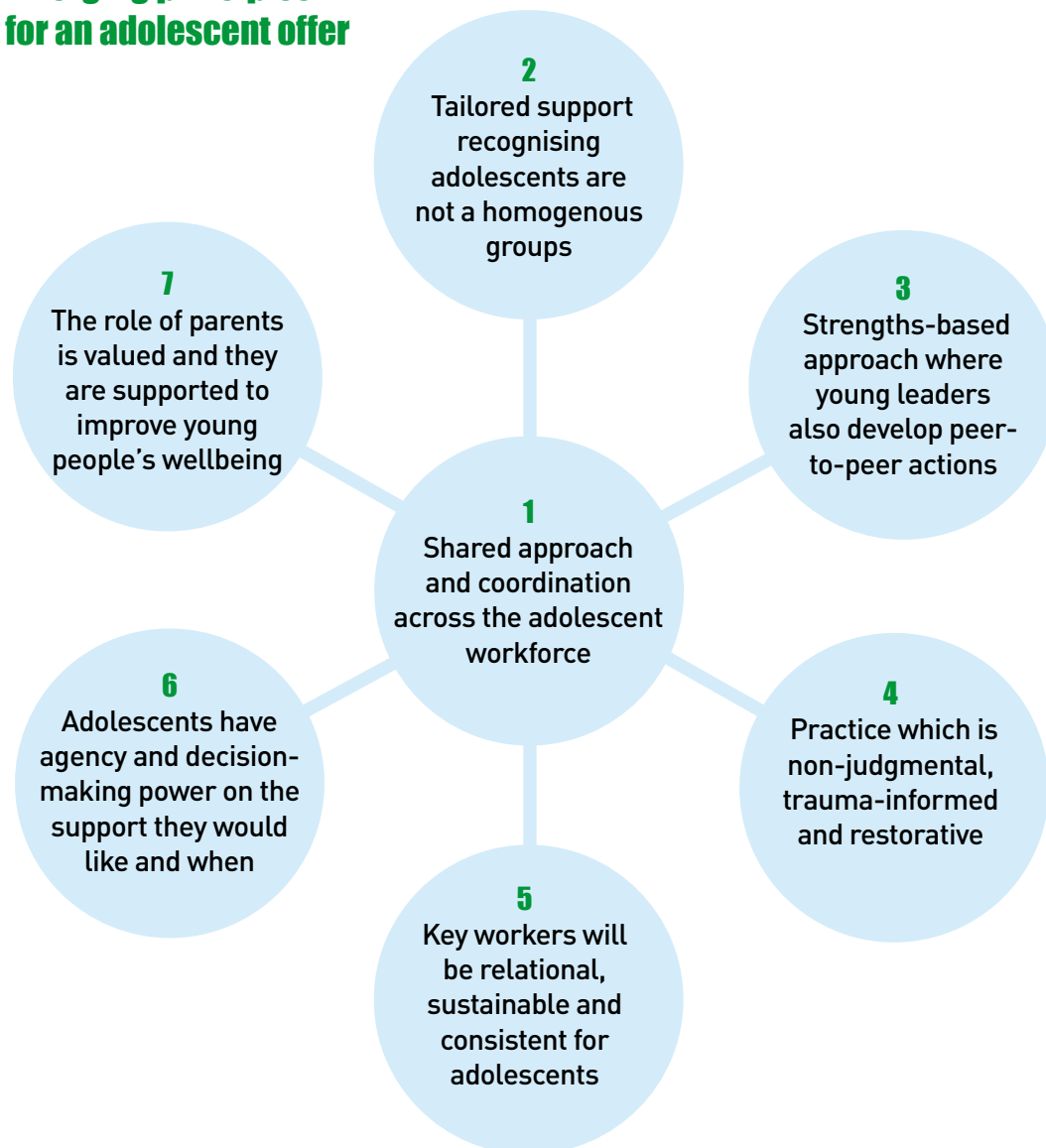
## 5. Emerging principles

It is important this strategy is aligned to and read in conjunction with the Greater Manchester (GM) Adolescent Framework.

The GM framework was devised with a range of stakeholders and young people and has identified seven emerging principles which are well aligned with the views and aspirations of the SSCP.

These are:

### Emerging principles for an adolescent offer



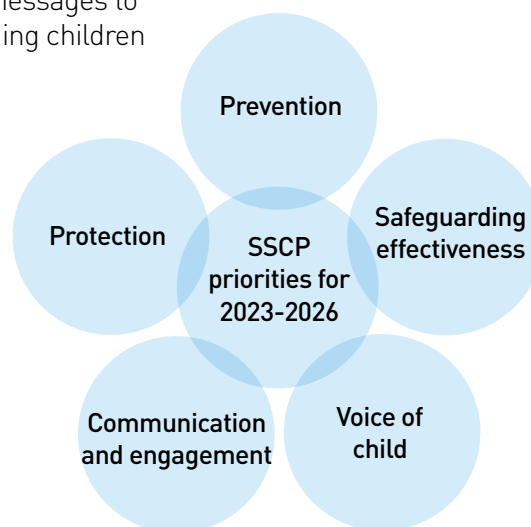
## 6. SSCP Strategic business priorities 2023 - 2026

In Salford we recognise safeguarding children can only be achieved by inter-agency and community partnership working. All children, regardless of their age and background deserve high

quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified. Professionals working with children and their families in Salford take their responsibility to keep children safe very seriously.

**In July 2022, the SSCP came together to agree the strategic priorities for the partnership for the next three years (for 2023-2026).**

- 1** We are committed to working together to prevent abuse.
- 2** Where necessary partners will take action to protect children from harm.
- 3** We will work together with other partnerships in the city to ensure there is effective communication and engagement activity, identifying cross cutting themes and targeting communications activity to share learning and key messages to improve safeguarding children practice.
- 4** Listen and respond to the voice of children and young people, their families and communities. This is a core thread throughout our partnership and all relevant sub-groups and associated work streams.
- 5** We will continue to evaluate practice and its impact to ensure professionals and organisations within Salford are effective in keeping children safe.



## 7. Adolescent priorities 2023 - 2026

This strategy does not seek to address all challenges facing adolescents in Salford. Instead, the SSCP has agreed to four priorities based on the local context (using local data), feedback from children and young people, and feedback from a range of professionals who participated in the adolescent task and finish groups. The priorities are also in alignment with the SSCP vision and the five strategic business priorities set out in section six.

### Priority 1: Helping Children and Young People to THRIVE

#### Outcome statement:

“We want everyone who comes into contact with adolescents to recognise when a young person is vulnerable and know how to respond. We want to improve opportunities for children and young people in Salford so every young person is able to reach their full potential, receiving the right help, at the right time, from the right person”.

We want this priority to ensure those coming into contact with adolescents have an awareness of contextual safeguarding, understand their needs, the impacts of trauma (including the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and associated factors such as missed opportunities around education) and their relationships to key family members. We want everyone to understand what services are available and how they can be accessed so children and young people can take advantage of opportunities which will enable them to achieve their full potential.

### **Actions to be taken**

- ➡ Ensure all practitioners are trained to listen
- ➡ Consider education for parents and carers on spotting the signs and how to respond
- ➡ Analyse the impact of the adolescent offer/directory of services
- ➡ Refresh communication strategy RE adolescent offer/directory of services.
- ➡ Training the workforce in relation to adolescent development, contextual safeguarding and trauma
- ➡ Ensure there is an effective youth service and education, training and employment offer across the city
- ➡ Consider activity to raise awareness of services across the partnership
- ➡ Supporting adolescents to attend school and education, training and employment

### **Impact measures**

- ➡ Number of professionals accessing training across the partnership and consideration as to how this has directly impacted on their practice (through evaluation)
- ➡ Practitioner survey to understand the workforce confidence in responding to needs of children and young people
- ➡ Data in relation to number of children and young people accessing support services at an early intervention level - it is hoped there will be an increase
- ➡ Improved data regarding school attendance

## Priority 2: Preventing harm from abuse and crime

### Outcome statement:

"We want to make sure children and young people feel safe within the community. We want young people to know how to access help, and speak to someone if they are worried about something".

We want this priority to really embrace the Whole Family Approach and the Family Partnership Model so young people and their families are resilient and can identify support for themselves when needed. Communication and engagement with young people and families is critical in ensuring information, advice, guidance and support can be accessed for the right families at the right time.

### Actions to be taken

- ➡ Plan for feedback/listening loop through Listening Hub. The SSCP has developed a virtual 'Listening Hub' with a wide range of partnership agencies to ensure each partnership is listening and communicate what action/s are being taken from what is being heard
- ➡ Ensure all practitioners are trained to listen
- ➡ Analyse the impact of the adolescent offer/directory of services
- ➡ Refresh communication strategy RE adolescent offer/directory of services
- ➡ Educating children on services available and how to keep safe
- ➡ Partnership to consider how data and information is shared and how this can be used to make communities safer through a coordinated response including 'disruption' for CCE, knife crime etc
- ➡ Whole Family Approach and Family Partnership Model to be embedded across the partnership

### Impact measures

- ➡ Children and young people will tell us they feel their voice is heard and they feel safe in the community
- ➡ More data and information generated and fed into the Listening Hub
- ➡ Increase in children accessing youth service provision

## Priority 3 : Listening and responding to the voice of children and young people

### Outcome statement:

"We want to listen to and engage with children and young people to ensure we understand what matters to them. We want to use this information to inform our services and we want to feed back to children and young people to give them some assurance".

We want this priority to consider the various methods in which we capture feedback and the lived experiences of children and young people. We want these approaches to be trauma-informed, to try to prevent young people having to repeat their stories. We want the partnership to be culturally aware and to hold each other to account, to make sure feedback and ideas from young people are taken forward, to improve how we deliver services in Salford.

### Action to be taken

- ➡ Ensure we capture, engage with and listen to the vulnerable and hard to engage groups and YP from various cultures and backgrounds
- ➡ Consider a 'You Said, We Did' exercise and feedback to young people
- ➡ How do we listen? Consultation through Listening Hub
- ➡ Plan for listening loop
- ➡ Consider the findings from the 'make your mark survey' and use this data to inform work plans

### Impact measures

- ➡ Children and young people will tell us that they feel listened to and be able to contribute to the work of the partnership
- ➡ Services will adapt and develop based on feedback from children and young people

## Priority 4: Understanding and supporting key adolescent transitions

### Outcome statement:

"We want all children and young people to be supported at all key transitional stages of adolescence including preparation for adulthood".

We want this priority to give consideration to the diverse needs and experiences of children and young people and the various transitional stages of adolescence. Transitions should not just consider the transition from youth to adulthood but also:

- Physical, psychosocial and neuro-developmental changes associated with puberty
- School changes i.e. transition from primary, secondary and further education
- Gender, sexuality and other identity changes
- Changes in primary caregiving and care experienced children
- Emotional and mental health difficulties and diagnosis

### Action to be taken

- ➡ Partnership to initially consider and evaluate provision and response to adolescent transitions. Any gaps or developmental areas to be taken forward in the form of a work plan
- ➡ Any training needs to be addressed through the SSCP

### Impact measures

- ➡ Children and young people will experience seamless transitions between services and from one stage of adolescence to another
- ➡ Professionals will report a greater understanding and response to supporting key transitions
- ➡ Children and young people will feedback how they experienced their transition and whether it could have been improved



## 8. What Next

The SSCP will continue to seek assurance on the implementation of the Salford Adolescent Strategy, ensuring it delivers what it has set out to deliver. It will also ensure any emerging trends in Salford surrounding adolescents are taken into account to inform future priorities. In line with the 2023 to 2026 SSCP strategic business priorities, the strategy will be shared across the partnership and with children, young people and families resident in Salford. To do this successfully, communication and engagement (one of the SSCP strategic business priorities) will be key.

To ensure delivery of the strategy, an Adolescent Work Group will be formed with representatives from across the partnership. An adolescent work plan will be devised to ensure each priority is accompanied by a set of SMART actions and impact and outcomes are measured. The activity of the Adolescent Working Group will be triangulated with the other partnerships in Salford to ensure a robust response and reduce duplication.

Accompanying this strategy, will be an Adolescent Strategy Plan on a page, which will provide a focussed summary of this strategy that can be accessible to all.

## 9. Appendix

Appendix 1 -

Salford Thrive Directory:

[www.partnersinsalford.org/salford-0-25-advisory-board/salford-thrive-ehwb/emotional-health-service-directory](http://www.partnersinsalford.org/salford-0-25-advisory-board/salford-thrive-ehwb/emotional-health-service-directory)

Appendix 2 -

Greater Manchester Adolescent Framework

[gmvruc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GM-adolescent-framework-Final-1.pdf](http://gmvruc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GM-adolescent-framework-Final-1.pdf)

<https://gmvruc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Practice-posters-1.pdf>

More information about work to protect children and young people in Salford can be found at: **Children and young people | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership**

