



2024



# THE YEAR-END REPORT



WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED A LOT  
TOGETHER, AND WE'RE EXCITED TO  
SHARE THE HIGHLIGHTS WITH YOU!



# KEY NUMBERS

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

40



NEW YOUTH COUNCILLORS JOINED US

24



FULL YOUTH COUNCIL MEETINGS

14,492



YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES HEARD THROUGH  
OUR CONSULTATIONS

£753



MONEY RAISED FOR CHARITY THROUGH  
SPONSORSHIP





# TEAM ACHIEVEMENTS

OUR TEAM'S MILESTONES



ISAAC BECAME THE 16<sup>TH</sup> YOUTH  
MAYOR OF OLDHAM



PENELOPE BECAME CHAIR OF  
OLDHAM YOUTH COUNCIL



LEAH BECAME VICE CHAIR OF  
OLDHAM YOUTH COUNCIL



# CAMPAIGNS

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



### STATIONARY CAMPAIGN

Following a successful motion to Full Council in 2023, where OYC requested unused stationery for distribution to schools, the Youth Council received enough pens, pencils, and rulers to create packs for every high school in Oldham. Additionally, Oldham Council Partners (Muse, CBRE, and Rowan Ashworth) generously donated a £1,000 cheque for OYC to purchase other stationery items, such as calculators.



### WHAT'S YOUR FLAVOUR?

With more young people taking up vaping, Oldham Youth Council wanted to raise awareness of the adverse effects and to let young people know where to get help to quit. OYC created a series of posters tackling the physical, mental, financial, and environmental effects of vaping. However, the posters haven't been released due to potential conflict with NHS guidance on using vapes to quit smoking.



### CREDIBLE WITNESSES

A collaboration with Little Fish Theatre and Oldham Theatre Workshop, this campaign used workshops and performances to engage young people in London and Oldham. The project also partnered with social workers and other professionals to create training and resources. It aimed to transform practices in schools, social work, and criminal justice, empowering youth to share experiences and foster testimonial justice.



# MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL

WHAT WE SAID

## FREE SCHOOL MEALS & HAF

In September, Oldham Youth Council (OYC) presented their sole motion of the year to Full Council, driven by the Make Your Mark consultation with young people about the cost-of-living crisis.

While the new UK government's manifesto pledged £315M for universal primary school breakfast clubs, OYC felt this funding could be better directed. We advocated for an increased Free School Meal (FSM) threshold to target support more effectively and enhance the wellbeing of young people experiencing poverty.

Additionally, OYC called for the continuation of the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) program. We believed that making HAF universally accessible, even without increasing its budget, would reduce stigma and encourage more FSM-eligible young people to participate.

At Full Council, the OYC motion faced an amendment—a first since 2012. The amendment proposed that funding for extending Free School Meal eligibility and continuing the Holiday Activity and Food program should occur in addition to, rather than instead of, the proposed breakfast clubs.

Oldham Youth Council had hoped to take another motion to Full Council in 2024. Though present at the December Full Council meeting, we unfortunately couldn't deliver the mental health motion we had prepared.





# REPRESENTATION

## TALKING WITH DECISION MAKERS

### MEETINGS

Throughout the year, Oldham Youth Council hosts numerous organisations, providing a platform for Youth Councillors to represent their constituents. In these meetings, Youth Councillors engage directly with decision-makers, offering valuable insights and suggestions to improve services across the borough.

- **Children's Society:** OYC offered insights into financial exploitation, discussing its impact on young people, their current understanding of the issue, and potential support networks.
- **Clinical Psychologists (NHS):** OYC met with the NHS's head of clinical psychologists to explore ways to promote careers in psychology and encourage more young people to consider the field.
- **CYP Participation Framework:** OYC was involved from the outset in shaping the Children and Young People (CYP) Participation Framework, culminating in a final sign-off meeting and the creation of its foreword.
- **Economic Vision for Oldham and Local Plan:** The Director of Economy consulted OYC on Oldham's current economic climate and future plans, including the Local Plan. Youth Councillors shared their opinions on Oldham's future and identified young people's priorities.
- **First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO):** OYC reviewed FCHO's draft anti-social behaviour policy, offering feedback on its effectiveness and suggesting improvements.
- **Kooth.com:** OYC members discussed the Kooth and Qwell online mental wellbeing platforms with staff, providing input on how to make the websites and apps more user-friendly.
- **Mental Health Consultation (NHS & Council):** OYC met with NHS staff and the Council's health team to discuss Oldham's mental health services for young people and strategies to raise awareness.
- **Town Centre Plan:** OYC engaged with Muse and Turley to discuss plans for the Town Centre, offering their opinions and volunteering to gather more youth voices through a "10 forward" survey.
- **Youth Vaping (Council Public Health):** OYC discussed current youth vaping and smoking data with the Council's public health team, exploring prevention strategies that avoid inadvertently encouraging smoking.



# CONSULTATION

WHAT WE LEARNED IN 2024

## MAKE YOUR MARK

A UK wide consultation carried out on behalf of UK Youth Parliament. OYC consulted nearly 13,500 young people (highest turnout in the Northwest, 4<sup>th</sup> in the UK) who said Crime & Safety and jobs, economy & benefits were the most pressing issues. They also wanted more help families around the cost-of-living crisis and more to be done about violent crime (including knife crime).

## #BEEWELL

Post-2024 #BeeWell survey, Oldham Youth Council (OYC) investigated why <50% of Oldham's youth felt unheard. Focus groups (with approx. 250 young people) revealed OYC had a lower profile than expected. It also revealed a lack of awareness of effective channels for young people's ideas, especially within schools where change felt unlikely.



Make  
Your Mark

## TOWN CENTRE PLAN

Oldham Youth Council partnered with Muse and Turley, reaching out to nearly 343 young people, to influence the Town Centre Plan.

## 10 FOREWORDS

In 2024, OYC's "10 Forward" survey (where each YCllr asks 10 friends a short survey) engaged 430 young people on free school meals, informing a September motion.



# EVENTS

## OUR TEAM'S MILESTONES



### OPERATION AVRO PANEL

Oldham Youth Council hosted a question and answer panel as part of Greater Manchester Police's Operation AVRO. The event brought together the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester, the Assistant Chief Constable of GMP, and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, allowing attendees to engage in discussions around policing and safety in Oldham and across Greater Manchester.



### GREEN SUMMIT

Opening Oldham's Green Summit at the Oldham Event Centre was a distinct honor for Oldham Youth Council. This platform allowed Youth Councillors to directly convey young people's desires for enhanced environmental initiatives and a greener future in their communities to key business leaders, Council decision-makers, and other organizations.



### OLDHAM PLAN 2024-2030

Oldham Youth Council attended the launch of The Oldham Plan 2024-2030. They gained insights from speakers about the plan's contents and discussed with other attendees their earlier consultation experiences. Significantly, OYC was honored to sign a pledge, committing to do everything within its power to help the plan achieve its ambitious goals.



# REGIONAL WORK

GM AND THE NORTH WEST

## YOUTHFORIA

Oldham Youth Councillors actively participated in six Youthforia meetings and the annual residential, connecting with young people from across the Northwest to meet, network, and learn. The diverse themes covered, including disability awareness, social media, Black History Month, and LGBTQ+ rights, significantly upskilled Oldham Youth Councillors.



## GM YOUTH COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMYCA)

Youth Councillors regularly attend GMYCA meetings in the city centre. This year, they have directly influenced projects such as the Bee Network transport links and the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc), which aims to establish technical education pathways within the city-region, through direct discussions with Andy Burnham.



# NATIONAL WORK

ENGLAND AND THE UK



## A New Chapter for Youth Voice: BYC Closure and UKYP's Future

In March 2024, Oldham Youth Council received the news that the British Youth Council (BYC), after 75 years of dedicated youth advocacy, would immediately cease operations. This closure was due to financial difficulties worsened by their key financial backer, The Body Shop, also closing. As a member of BYC, Oldham Youth Council had been involved in many of their programs, most notably the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and the Votes at 16 Coalition.

Following a period of uncertainty, the National Youth Agency (NYA) stepped in to assume responsibility for running the UKYP and is exploring the reinstatement of a national youth council.

Oldham continues to be represented by two Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs), who advocate for young people at a national level. While the transition to the NYA caused program delays, our representatives were able to attend the Annual Conference at Warwick University. Here, they engaged in crucial discussions about the future direction of UKYP and debated new manifesto pledges for the 2024-2026 term of office.

Unfortunately, due to the delays, the highly anticipated 2024 House of Commons sitting, typically held in November, has been postponed to February 2025.



# INTERNATIONAL WORK

CHALLENGING HATE

## LISTEN TO THE EARTH



### "Listen to the Earth" Program: A Journey of Learning and Leadership

In 2024, the Oldham Youth Council once again partnered with the Oldham Theatre Workshop for the "Listen to the Earth" program. After ten weeks of intensive preparation, young people journeyed to Oświęcim, Poland. There, they experienced the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps firsthand, gaining an understanding of the Holocaust's devastating effects. Participants also had the invaluable opportunity to meet with a survivor and hear her eye-witness testimony of the horrific conditions. Drawing on this powerful experience, Youth Councillors developed creative skills to produce resources that will be used in Oldham.

Consistent with previous years, the core objective of the project was to use Holocaust education to develop sensitivity and understanding. This immersive program empowered these young individuals to serve as positive role models within their Oldham communities.

### UP Conference: Challenging Prejudice and Discrimination

Upon their return, the participants channeled their experiences into planning the UP Conference. This event aimed to bring together young people from across Oldham to share the participants' of Listen to the Earth, crucial learning. Held in the Failsworth Suite of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the conference saw approximately 60 young people engage in workshops centered around prejudice, discrimination, the spread of hate, and practical steps young people can take to challenge it. The young people who traveled to Poland bravely led each of these workshops, drawing directly on what they had witnessed and the creative skills they had developed during their powerful journey.



# FUND RAISING

## OUR TEAM'S MILESTONES



To commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, OYC supported an event where participants walked 80km over two days, including an overnight sleepout at the Civic Centre. Sponsorship raised went to the Royal British Legion.



Youth Councillors dedicated their day to staffing a stall at a fun day and music event, which was held to raise money for the Royal British Legion. Running a tombola, tuck shop and leading games for the children attending was all part of the day.



Youth Councillors joined the Youth Service's Masculinity and Normality (MAN) project to raise £180 for Movember. Their efforts, which included a sponsored walk, hosting BBQs, and attempting to grow mustaches, helped combat prostate and testicular cancer and raised awareness of male suicide.



# FUN MEMORIES

MOMENTS THAT MADE US SMILE

## SUPER RESI 2024



### OLDHAM YOUTH VOICE FAMILY: SUPER RESI AT MOUNT COOK

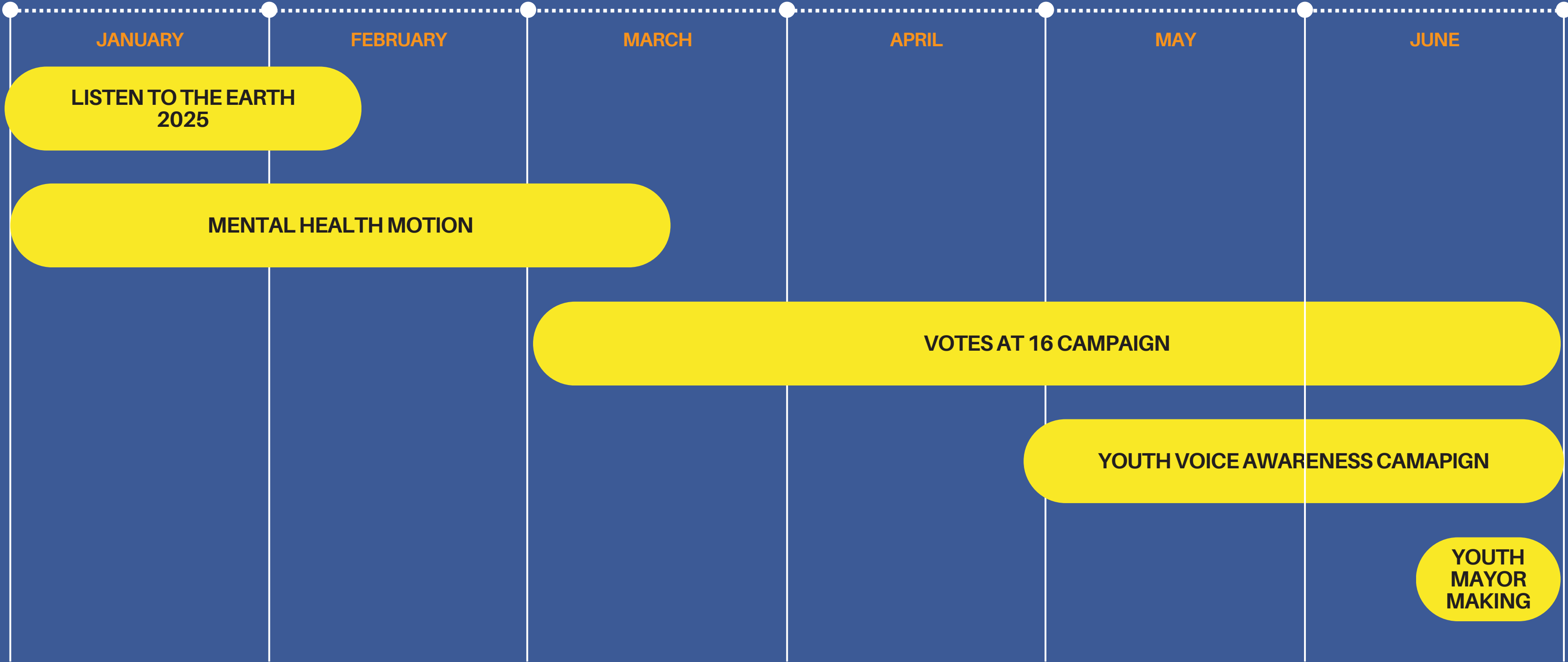
In August, 50 young people from Oldham's Youth Voice Family, including Oldham Youth Council Youth Councillors, embarked on their annual Super Resi at the Mount Cook Adventure Centre. Over three days and two nights, participants immersed themselves in various outdoor education activities such as Archery Tag, a High Ropes course, and engaging problem-solving tasks.

This year's residential specifically aimed to enhance personal communication and presentation skills. While the young people were already proficient at delivering presentations to groups, it was identified that focused skill-building was needed for one-on-one interactions, particularly when communicating with adults and decision-makers. The Super Resi provided a valuable opportunity to develop these crucial interpersonal skills.



# WHAT'S NEXT?

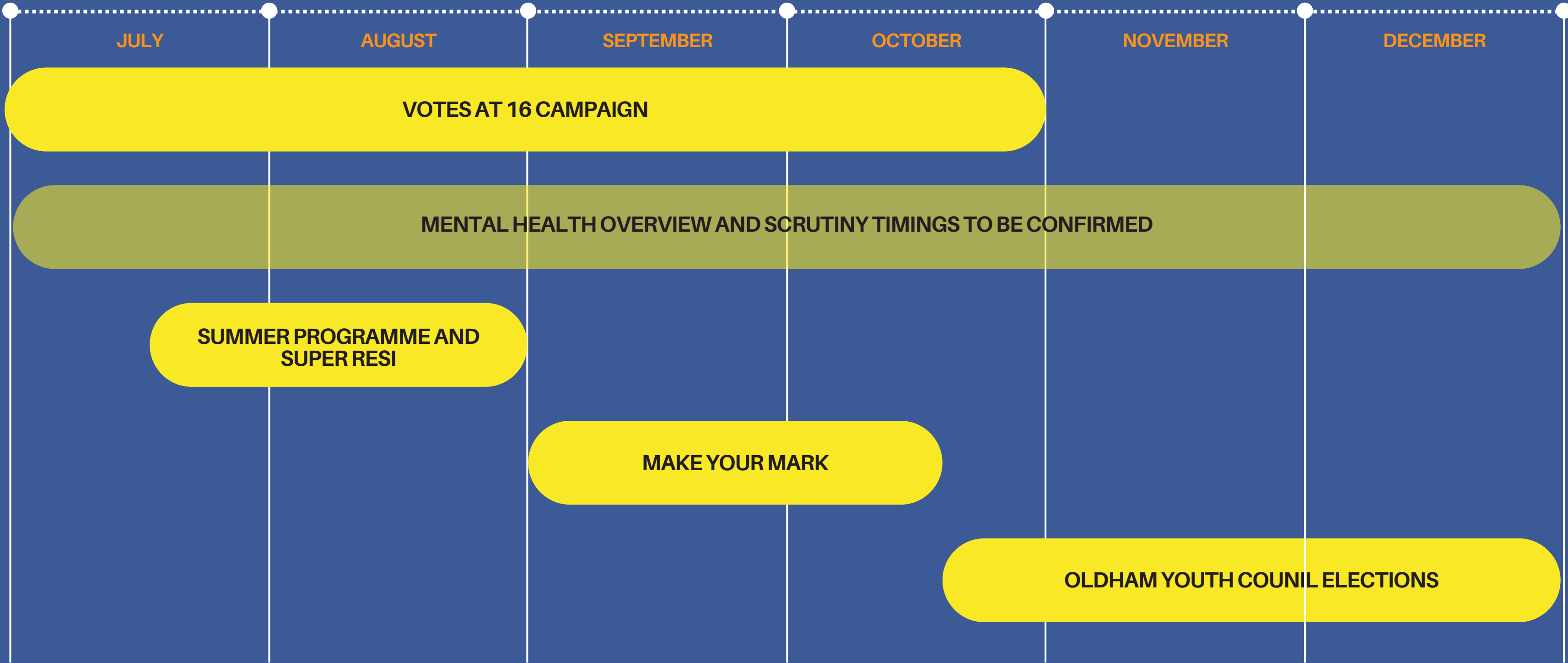
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025





# WHAT'S NEXT?

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025







# HERE'S TO 2025!



**2024 WAS A YEAR OF GROWTH,  
LEARNING, AND ACHIEVEMENT. WE'VE  
ACCOMPLISHED A LOT TOGETHER  
THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR  
JOURNEY. LET'S MAKE 2025 EVEN  
MORE AMAZING TOGETHER!**

