

REPORT TO: Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 13th June 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

SUBJECT: Children in Care of Other Local Authorities
(CICOLA)

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present a report around the current numbers of Children in Care of Other Local Authorities (CICOLA) and the possible impact on services within Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- i) The content of the report is discussed and comments invited
- ii) To make the recommendation that further work is undertaken to get an accurate picture on how many CICOLA's reside in Halton, ensuring that the procedures around notifications of CICOLA's is clearly in place.
- iii) To work with other key agencies, such as the Police, Education and Health to understand the demand and impact of CICOLA's on Halton services and to investigate the avenues for charging other Local Authorities for certain key services.
- iv) To refer the report to the Children & Young People's PPB for further consideration.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At any time there are a total of around 60,000 children that are looked after in the UK – this represents 0.5% of all children. Over the course of any year a total of 85,000 children will spend some time being looked after. Nationally 40% of children remain looked after for less than 6 months with 15% being looked after for 5 yrs or longer.
- 3.1 Local Authorities have statutory duty around in determining the most appropriate placement for a looked after child. However for a variety of reasons, for example type of specialist provision required, the young person could be placed out side of the Local Authority that they live in.
- 3.2 From 1st April the Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Children in Care guidance (guidance is attached) comes into play and acknowledges the importance of taking earlier, preventive action to support children and families so that fewer children become looked after, including through the provision of preventive and

early intervention services. This to reduce the need for care proceedings, as well as through clear robust links into universal and targeted services.

- 3.3 The statutory guidance seeks to improve outcomes for Children in Care by providing guidance on the implementation of section 22G of the Children Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act'). This section requires Local Authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the Local Authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the Local Authority's area ('the sufficiency duty').
- 3.4 Local Authorities need to assess existing commissioning practice and identify how to ensure services commissioned in another area from the Local Authority can be delivered more locally, wherever practically possible providing this is consistent with the child's welfare and safety.

CURRENT PICTURE FOR HALTON

- 3.5 Halton has the 2nd highest concentration of 1 bed homes on the region (St. Helens has the highest with 15). The costs per week range from £2600 - £4995 however the average placement cost for local provision equates to £4211 per week – this is substantially higher than the regional average cost which currently is in the region of £2750 - £2835 / week (variance due to sub regional figures (Merseyside / Cheshire / Lancashire Greater Manchester). The majority of local provision is registered for 10-17/18yrs for young people who have Emotionally Behaviourally Disturbed (EBD) needs predominantly.
- 3.6 For the generic needs of young people in relation to residential placements there are a large number of providers that are located within a 20 mile (sufficiency recommendation) radius of Haltons boundary. In total there are 116 children's homes with the current OFSTED inspection findings being –

83 - Good or outstanding
22 - Satisfactory
2 - Inadequate
7 homes not yet having received their first OFSTED inspection due to being newly opened provision
- 3.7 Within Halton there are 63 placements for Independent Fostering Agencies and 37 placements within a residential setting.
- 3.8 There are some issues with the quality of the current data and how Halton 'tracks' the young people in Care from other Local Authorities. The current figures show approximately 266 young people in Halton from other Local Authorities. These young people are aged from 1 to 17 years old and will include foster carers approved from other Local Authorities.

Using this data it appears that 80% of the young people come from Local Authorities within the North West region and only a small number at this time appear to come from other Local Authorities more than 100 miles away. It must be noted that the data is forever changing.

- 3.9 Figures of young people coming into Halton vary but we do know that Halton is “importing” young people in Care with a broad variety of needs and sometimes these are high. This has a significant impact upon local services, especially in relation to Educational facilities, CAMHS, Missing from Care and Youth Offending. The impact on CAMHS services is significant.
- 3.10 Using the current information we have looked through police data to look at the amount and type of police contact there has been and there has only been 36 separate pieces of intelligence for 16 individuals over the past 12 months mostly around anti-social behaviour and 12 arrests for 7 individuals.
- 3.11 There were 529 recorded missing incidents for young people missing from Care during 2010/11, 284 of those were from children from out of the Halton area. Essex, Lincoln, St Helens, Westminster and Brent account for 159 of these episodes. There has been a decline in the number of incidents in missing care for 2009/10 it was 62% and 55% for 2010/11. There is work ongoing around this with providers and the police under the refresh of the Missing from Home / Care Protocol.

FUTURE WORK

- 3.12 Work has already begun establishing a provider / purchaser relationship with the local Residential providers to explain the sufficiency agenda. In theory if the sufficiency duty is delivered by all Local Authorities this could mean that a mainstay of the referrals that local providers receive will diminish due to the high proportion of the placements being at significant distances from the placing authority. This could potentially offer an opportunity to influence the local market conditions especially if this work was undertaken in a collaborative manner with Halton’s neighbouring Local Authorities.
- 3.13 There is work being undertaken via the NEET strategy group to try and help inform a better picture around CICOLA and education placements and ways of looking to plan for chargeable services.
- 3.14 With regard to future developments the Commissioning process will help to decide how to use the total resource available for children, parents and carers in order to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way. A number of these themes have begun to be worked on both regionally and sub regionally in the North West. These include using the whole market approach to the provider sector, tendering exercises to implement framework contracts for Fostering as

well as current work streams relating to Residential services and Leaving Care services.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

No other implications

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

There needs to be further work undertaken to identify the impact of CICOLA's on Children's Services within Halton.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

There needs to be further work undertaken to identify the impact of CICOLA's on future Employment and Learning Services within Halton.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There needs to be further work undertaken to identify the impact of CICOLA's on Health Services within Halton.

6.4 A Safer Halton

There needs to be further work undertaken to identify the impact of CICOLA's on Criminal Justice Services within Halton.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There needs to be further work undertaken to identify the impact of CICOLA's on future housing demands within Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

A risk analysis will need to be undertaken as apart of the ongoing work around CICOLA's

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The nature of this work is to support equality and diversity

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972