

**ANNUAL REPORT  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD  
APRIL 2012 – MARCH 2013**



Cllr. Mark  
Dennett  
Chairman  
Children &  
Young People  
PPB

“I always like to start by looking back over the previous twelve months. A number of the issues we have looked at in year like the use of pupil premium, changes to the adoption process and the joint health & well being strategy for Halton, have been as a direct result of an ever-changing policy landscape from central government. We have been making sure that not only do we react to the pace of change, but we are also ahead. In fact it was noted that Halton is only one of two authorities in the North West to meet both of the government’s targets for adoption.

The educational attainment of our children and young people was once again, fantastic! I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our students who did so well, and also thank the parents, carers and teachers who supported them in achieving these fantastic results. The results show Halton’s continued commitment to drive up standards and improve the opportunities available to all of our young people as they move into adulthood.

During the year the board started two pieces of scrutiny topic work. The first is looking into the mental health and well being of our young people. Many of our children are under increasing pressures both at school and home and there is increasing anecdotal evidence that mental health and well being issues are increasing. The second work topic is looking at how we can increase the independent living skills for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Halton.

Looking back I think it has been a good and varied seventh year for the board and I would like to thank all of the members of the board, as well as all of the officers involved for their continued support and contribution.

Finally, I would like to conclude this report by thanking all of the officers and members (of all parties) involved in all of the ‘additional duties’ that take place to make sure that the children and young people receive that best care and support. Duties such as being a school governor with all of the responsibilities that that entails, statutory inspections of our care homes (Regulation 33) or of our social worker teams (Climbié visits), membership of the Local Safeguarding Board, the Adoptions Panel, the Children and Young People’s Trust, to name but a few of the ‘extra duties’ that both members and officers perform to support and improve the lives of the children and young people of our Borough.”

**Councillor Mark Dennett**

**Chairman, Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board** □

## MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2012/13 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors M. Dennett (Chairman) Cllr Horabin (Vice Chairman), E. Cargill, Cassidy, Fraser, P Hignett, Hodge, K Loftus, Logan C Plumpton Walsh, Woolfall and Co-optee Miss E. Lawler.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the work of the Council (and its partner agencies within Children's Trust Arrangements) in seeking: to ensure that children and young people in Halton have the best possible start in life and opportunities to fulfil their potential and succeed; and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan.

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year, and set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during the year.

### **Annual Review of Halton's Children and Young People Plan**

The Annual Review of the Halton Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 was considered. The plan has been agreed as the joint strategy of partners within the Halton's Children's Trust. It details how partners will co-operate to improve children's wellbeing and outlines the vision and aspirations for children and young people in the Borough. It provides the strategic direction and demonstrates how the Board will work together to commission services to address locally identified needs and better integrate provision

The key priorities for the Children's Trust are as follows:

- Improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support;
- Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning; and
- Improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people by targeting services effectively.

### **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Board considered Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the five priorities identified through the use of the information and intelligence available through the JSNA and local consultation. The five agreed priorities include improved child development, reduction in harm from alcohol and prevention and detection of mental health conditions.

The Board also considered reports on Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

## Summary of Education Attainment and Progress 2012

The main headlines for Halton were excellent again this year, with performance as a whole exceeding that of previous years:

In particular the following successes were highlighted:

- The number of reception aged pupils who achieved 6+ points in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication Language and Literacy was 6% higher than the previous year;
- There was an increase in attainment at the nationally expected level 2b+ in reading, writing and maths;
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and Mathematics combined at level 4+ rose by a further 6% to 84%, placing attainment in Halton's primary schools 5% higher than national outcomes;
- There was also an increase in the higher level 5s;
- In 2012 the gap between the attainment of FSM and non-FSM at level 4+ in English and maths combined reduced by 8% compared to the previous year;
- Halton's 5+ A\* - C GCSEs including English and Maths was 59%, an increase of 3% compared to 2011 and 9% higher than 2010. This placed Halton in line with the 2012 national average (59%) by this indicator and above the attainment of statistical neighbours (56%).
- In Key Stage 4 there had been a further rise in the DfE attainment floor standard from 35% to 40%. All secondary schools in Halton exceeded this threshold.

### Service Plans

This year the Board continued to take significant steps forward in the way it engaged with the service planning process. The PPB Members identified issues and activities they hoped could be prioritised in the service plans for 2011/2014

### WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2012/13

The Board decided that during the municipal year (2012/13) it would carry out a Topic reviews examining the following area:

- joint scrutiny topic on Apprenticeships with the Employment Learning, Skills and Communities PPB; and
- how we can further develop the effectiveness of Independent Living Skills, talk to children and young people with ASH in Halton

Children and Families

Members regularly considered matters relating to Safeguarding in particular in the work of the Halton Children's Trust and Safeguarding Children's Board. Members also received reports on complaints and the compliments services had received and the learning from these and the approach in Halton to addressing the Troubled Families project.

**Children in Need, Contract, Referral and Assessment Analysis**

Members have scrutinised referral and assessment activity and in relation to referrals during 2011/12 there had been 1132, which was a reduction on the on the previous year of 1395. There had also been a reduction of 13% for completion of assessments within 10 days.

The total number of open CiN cases as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 was 706 which was an increase of 7% on last year.

**Climbie & Regulation 33 Visits**

There are two Children's Homes in the Borough requiring 24 visits a year, carried out by Members, who are enhanced CRB checked and fully trained. Regulation 33 Visits also take place enabling scrutiny of care homes for children.

**Adoption** – members received and discussed the adoption scorecard which contained information on Halton performance, they also discussed the Government's expectations in terms of the timeliness of adoption processes and the number of children in care of other local authorities places in the borough.

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work, please contact Ann McIntyre on 0151 511 7332 [ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk](mailto:ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk)