

This Business Plan extract contains information in relation to the delivery of the Council's following strategic priority.

Children and Young People

Our overall aim is to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, and are ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future.

Key Developments

Improving outcomes for children and young people through effective multi-agency early intervention

Children, Young People and Families Plan 2018-21

This is now into its second year, the Halton Children, Young People and Families Plan marked a significant step forward in our collective ambition to put children and young people at the heart of what we do to ensure that their needs are understood and met, and that they have clear ways to hold us to account for our decisions. The chosen priorities were based on clear evidence about what is needed and what works, and crucially it was driven by what children, young people and their family told us. The Halton Children, Young People and Families Plan is the main Plan for all partners within Halton Children's Trust describing what we will do in Halton. A set of priorities was agreed with a collective responsibility taken by partners for improving the outcomes for every child and young person; we want to ensure that regardless of their circumstances, they will have access to the best services. The priorities are:

- Early Intervention – we want families to get help when they need it.
- Achievement and Ambition - we want children and young people to do well at school so they can get the education, training or job they want.
- Healthy and Safe – we want people to feel safe wherever they are and to understand how to look after their health.

The work identified in our Business Plan is aimed at addressing these three priorities.

Troubled Families

Halton have agreed to achieve significant and sustained progress or continuous employment results with 1,350 families over the planned 5 year life of the expanded Troubled Families programme. The Troubled Family Outcomes Plan has been developed to deliver on the expanded national programme. It provides a partnership-wide framework that states the significant and sustainable outcome measures applicable to families identified for support. The plan covers 6 core areas of family factors and when there are at least 2 factors present suggest that an integrated approach would be beneficial and will be monitored by the programme. Families will be prioritised on the basis that they are families with multiple problems who

are most likely to benefit from an integrated, whole family approach; and they are families who are high cost to the public purse. Halton is on track to identify all families by the end of the programme and as of the end of 2018 Halton has achieved payment by results for 662 families which is 50%

New local safeguarding arrangements

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (the Act) replaces Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with new local safeguarding arrangements, and introduced a new duty to be placed on three agencies, namely the Local Authority, the chief officer of police and the clinical commissioning group (referred to as Safeguarding Partners). There are many similarities between the current functions carried out by LSCBs and the new safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding partners must publish the new arrangements by June 2019 and implement them within 3 months of publishing. Once the arrangements have been published and implemented, the LSCB for the local area will cease to exist. In Halton the options have been explored and consultations with key stakeholders have taken place, work continues to draw up our agreements, we are on target to publish our arrangements.

iCART

iCART is the integrated Contact and Referral Team which is our single point of contact for both Early Intervention (EI) contacts and children social care contacts and referrals. The team consists of a number of agencies being co-located and in 2018 CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) joined the team as part of a shared vision to improving access to support and advice for emerging mental health issues.

Management capacity has been strengthened; there are two managers, one for social care and one for EI with deputies in place and the performance framework was reviewed. There is now a robust one in place with daily reporting on activity with tracking of timescales, and a weekly PIMMS (Performance Improvement Management Meeting) in place. A range of performance reports are available to the team and managers to inform the direction and planning of the service. This improved performance monitoring has seen the number of contacts continuing to rise identifying the key areas of need behind this as being domestic abuse and parenting for EI contacts, and domestic abuse and neglect for social care contacts.

A revised process was instigated with a target for a Child in Need (CIN) involvement to last for 6 months in the majority of cases, a revised closure and risk assessment process, with a clear contingency plan for those cases if issues re-emerge. As expected, there was a rise in re-referrals received through iCART and we will continue to audit and review the impact of this revised approach.

The performance report tracks contacts and referrals by agency, reason and outcome and there is a high level of information/advice and signposting across both EI and social care to other agencies. The rise in the last year is in particular areas of need and

the work referred to above will assist our understanding of how to review our service model.

Children in Need

In line with the increased demand, the number of single assessments completed has continued to rise however timeliness has remained consistently excellent, this reflects our approach that an assessment is a service and intervention and it is part of the reason why re-referrals are low, as closure and step down is informed by a robust analysis of need.

Random sample audits have been completed on a regular basis, these audits showed that the assessments are consistently showing the voice of the child, evidence of partnership working, a good approach to analysis of risk and sound analysis at the conclusion. Where areas to improve are identified these are tracked and are also informing staff development.

The (CIN) process has been revised to ensure a clearer focus on outcomes and progress being evidenced, with stronger monitoring of progress, escalation and timely closure and a more strengths-based approach. This has led to a reduced rate of CIN and a reduction in social worker caseload numbers.

Performance reports (PIMMS) have been revised to give a more immediate and accessible snapshot of performance and direction of travel each week so managers and staff can target areas to focus on and track the impact more clearly. Section 47 enquiries is an example of this, the number of enquiries leading to Initial Child Protection Conference was low but as we continually review the process via audits and management discussions we are satisfied that the number of s47 enquires being undertaken are appropriate. We are as a result looking at our process for managing risk and concern with vulnerable adolescents where a risk management approach and model may be more appropriate and relevant in line with contextual safeguarding models. This will be a priority area for us over the next 6 months.

We have a range of services for domestic abuse and have a commissioned service working directly with victims and children at Level 3 of Halton's Level of Need Framework, which has just been expanded to Level 2 and early help. A range of group programmes are also delivered which have improved their capacity to protect themselves and safeguard their children. We have no dedicated perpetrator programme, and whilst the some commissioned services do some work with this group, it remains an identified gap. A revised commission for domestic abuse is currently under development.

Children in Care

Decisions to bring a child into care are taken at a senior level, with the Divisional Manager making the decision. Following a recent review, a new Legal Gateway process has been implemented with the Operational Director chairing. Whilst new admissions have slowed we do have a cohort of children whose plan is long-term foster or residential care who because of their age (5-13 years) who will remain in care until reaching adulthood.

The North West has a rising population of Children Looked After (CLA) and above average rates of children placed on care orders at home. As part of the region's commitment to sector-led improvement and peer challenge, an in-depth multi-faceted approach has been agreed through the North West, we are now implementing the recommendations from the North West audit of Placement with Parents as part of our Legal Gateway process.

Work continues in meeting the actions identified in our Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-19. This multi-agency Strategy recognised that every Corporate Parent has a part to play in improving outcomes. It established shared priorities and the actions to be taken over a 3 year period in order to make a positive difference to lives and outcomes. The Children in Care Partnership Board was relaunched with stronger links and accountability to our Children in Care Council.

Progress in terms of the action plan is developed and monitored through a number of sub groups linked to key areas of the Strategy (health, education, employment and training and housing and accommodation).

The Permanency Planning Board chaired by the Operational Director feeds into the revised Children in Care Partnership Board. The aim with these revised structures is to drive improved outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

Our Children in Care Council is very active and produced a number of initiatives in the last year including a Corporate Parenting Pledge which was launched at a multi-agency event in addition to reviewing the Children in Care Pledge, and planning and co-ordinating a successful, children in care achievement celebration event. They have also played an active part in interviewing staff and advising officers on how to work with and engage with children in care and are active members of the Children's Trust.

The educational progress and achievement of children in care remains a Council priority and the focus of Halton Virtual School. Analysis of the end of key stage results shows that being in care in Halton has a positive impact on a child's educational achievement, particularly in the Primary phase. However, both progress and attainment at Key Stage 4 remains a challenge, particularly with young people who enter care late in their secondary education. Two Personal Education Plan and Progress Coordinators have been appointed by the Virtual School to track the completion and quality of personal education plans, the impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding, and also to ensure that all support is being provided to accelerate their progress. Whilst Care Leavers engaged in education, employment and training from 16 – 19 years remains good, there is a challenge to engage those who are 19 – 20 years old. Providing varied opportunities to enable young people to become employment ready is a focus for the Halton Virtual School.

Our Sufficiency Strategy 2017-20 was updated to reflect the changing fostering and residential care market locally. We want to shape the shape the market with a view to increasing the number of foster carers for our young people with the most complex

and specialist needs as a means to reduce the use of residential provision however foster care capacity is increasingly in short supply and so we have joined with our neighbouring Local Authorities in a central marketing and recruitment fostering hub which began in April 18. We recognise the skill and resilience of our foster carers and have acknowledged and rewarded them through our Foster Care Celebration event.

We have established a Centralised Placements Team (CPT) in order to further improve Halton's placement finding activity. By having a dedicated and consistent team focused on securing the best matched placements for children and young people, we are confident that we will be better positioned to manage the local market. The creation of the CPT will also give the Foster Team additional capacity as they currently source the placements, this will facilitate the fostering service to assess more foster carer applicants and boost both the frequency and quality of support to in-house foster carers. As part of the Centralised Placements Team it is planned to re-introduce the local Placement Provider Forum, linking its content directly with the Sufficiency Strategy in order to further drive more localised placements for children and young people in care

We consulted on and published a 'Local Offer' for care leavers, this provides information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the Local Authority including information about both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support that a Local Authority chooses to provide.

There were significant new statutory obligations placed on Local Authorities under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 placing additional stress on resources. Local Authorities are now providing support to any care leaver (up until the age of 25) who requests it, including the provision of a personal adviser, assessment of needs, preparation of a pathway plan, and the provision of any support identified in that plan to be appropriate. Local Authorities were under an obligation to inform care leavers of this opportunity for advice and support. The numbers of care leavers have increased which led to a restructure of the Personal Advisor service which is currently in progress.

We are in the process of finalising an agreement with Halton Housing to enable the Local Authority to act as the tenant for some local properties for our care leavers; these properties will have the potential to become sustainable for the care leavers. Work has also taken place with the Liverpool City Region Registered Social Landlords group in order to better utilise vacant properties for care leavers, a final formal agreement is currently being progressed. Linked to this work it is planned that a tender will be completed in 2019/20 for the Support element for care leavers

Early Intervention / Team Around the Family

Halton continues to invest in early intervention; we recognise that by intervening early this can improve life chances and prevent problems emerging at a later date which can prove to be costly. Demand for children, young people and their family requiring specialist support and intervention continues to increase and so this is an area under constant review and pressure.

Early Intervention (EI) Locality Teams support the work of partners at Level 2 of Halton's Level of Need Framework, CIN working at levels 3. Their work includes provision of direct work with families and support through family support workers and the delivery of targeted parenting support programmes. Early help workers and play workers based in local children centres also work with families across all levels of need. This work includes supporting families with 1-1 work and also group provisions. Halton Children Centres continue to offer a universal and universal plus programme of service delivery alongside targeted work that meets the needs of individual families and support them to prevent their needs escalating.

The EI teams also support the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process and as part of workforce development, 40 staff across a range of settings have now received a Level 4 qualification in working with complex children and families. The positive impact of this is seen in the quality of CAF assessments and plans. There is more training planned for 2019.

There has been significant work done on the recording of CAF activity in the last year and we have a much clearer picture of the levels of need and demand in this area which has increased from year end. Needs indicate an increase in demand for EI, with children with behavioural issues being the highest reason, adult needs are with housing, benefits, and domestic violence and health issues. We now capture a wider range of early help activity and CAF tracking is now in place in iCART to follow up on CAF's to check if they are undertaken or if not to discuss the reason why with the agency. The Early help offer within children centres also complete a pre-CAF assessment in order to understand the issues facing families and support them to get the right help.

There are a number of areas of work currently or about to begin in this area. The assessment process for EI is currently under review and exploring different models of early help assessments and plans that can support other agencies or reflect better the work they are doing.

Over the past two years Halton have adopted the Solihull approach in working with families and offering consistency. So far in the borough over 300 staff from all agencies including, Early Intervention, Health, Education and social care have now embedded this into their everyday work.

We want to develop a Children Communities Model in specific areas of Halton, which will more formally join up services for children, young people and adults such as schools, community centres, children centres and services in specific communities, who will shape and influence the design and delivery of services in that area. The aim is to have in place a truly integrated early help model which is designed around the needs in that community rather than the needs of services. If agreed to develop this model, planning and consultation will begin in 2019.

In response to a range of national and local policy developments, a new strategy 'Everyone Early Help Strategy 2018-2021' was published. It represents a refresh of our approach and reflects our desire for an integrated approach to Early Help across children, adult and older people's services and public health as part of a whole Council approach. This strategy is overseen by the Early Intervention Strategic Board. A booklet for parents about expected ages and stages of development is now given to all parents, and Children Centres have particularly focused on the 0-3 age group to ensure advice and guidance is given to all parents at the earliest opportunity.

Keeping Children and Young People safe by improving practice

Whether the LA has created an environment where social work can flourish is the hypotheses tested throughout the Ofsted inspection and Halton has a relatively stable workforce. Improving outcomes for children and families is our key objective and the Children and Families Service, 'Workforce Development Strategy' was published in June 2018 which outlines our approach to develop the competencies, skills and knowledge of our workforce to achieve this.

The strategy aims to grow and look after our own as we recognise that our workforce is our greatest asset and has been developed to ensure we deliver first class professional development opportunities and career pathways for our staff, it focuses on 3 areas;

- Recruitment and Retention
- Training, Learning and Development
- Leadership and Management

Halton have published their Recruitment and Retention Charter, the Supervision Policy has been reviewed and updated as has the Social Work Progression Guidance.

Our workforce continue to have opportunities to access a broad range of training; Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) develop and deliver core training, there is e-learning through Corporate Training delivered by the Council's Learning and Development Department and Health Training delivered by the Council's Public Health Improvement Team however, in reviewing the learning and the evidence base from the social work improvement programme, it was clear that systemic approaches delivered the most sustained improvement in outcomes. As a result, we are implementing a phased approach to a model of 'systemic social work practice' and as managers develop and embed this approach they will lead the way in implementing improvements in front line practice. Early indications are positive, with managers changing their approach to supervision and practice discussions informed by a strengths-based approach.

As part of raising the understanding and application of systemic approaches across the wider workforce we now have 16 staff trained in systemic family foundation skills. Staff using a strengths based approach to meet needs at a lower level.

We are developing our own in house experts to undertake more detailed direct work with children and families, particularly those on the edge of care but also children in care who may be having disruption in their placements. Three social workers have been seconded to be trained under Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), a further two social workers will be seconded onto the next IAPT training.

Whilst some work identified in the Strategy has been completed there is still work ongoing to develop a Social Work Induction Programme Booklet, the Student Social Work Policy, the Social Work Health Check and an Information Communication Hub.

Improving the offer for children and young people with SEND

On the 1st September 2014 the Children and Families Act introduced new reforms and statutory duties on Local Authorities for how services and support are delivered for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). One of the key changes was the introduction of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which replaced SEN Statements. Local Authorities have been transferring children who had existing statements to EHCP's and the deadline for completion of transfers was 1st April 2018. Halton achieved this with all transfers being completed and received a letter of thanks from the Minister.

The number of EHCP's completed within 20 weeks has also increased from 49% in 2014/2015 to 77% in November 2018 despite reductions in the numbers of Assessment Co-ordinators.

We face increasing numbers of requests for assessments and will be reviewing our assessment processes for EHCP ensuring the criteria for application for an EHCP is clearer, that outcomes are smarter and are effectively reviewed and revised when appropriate. We will also be looking to extend and strengthen the audit process for EHCP and introduce an evaluation process with parents/carers and children, children and young people.

Independent consultants have just completed a High Needs SEND Review. As part of their brief they developed a detailed understanding of the current SEND population, future needs both pre and post-16, barriers to inclusion, views of stakeholders and the resources available. Their final report with recommendations for consultation on future service provision in the borough will be considered in January 2019.

Although a multi-agency audit has been undertaken on a small number of EHC Plans based on the CWDC checklist, with a view to rapidly improving the quality and ensuring all EHC Plans are outcome focused, independent consultants will further develop the audit process and audit 60 additional plans in Spring 2019.

In March 2017 the Halton Local Area was inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission and they identified some key areas of strength and some areas for development, as a result of this an action plan was developed and it is monitored

through the SEND Strategic Group. Whilst work continues there have been some key developments, we now have a clear and robust multi-agency Information Sharing Protocol in place; the Local Offer is widely known and valued by professionals, children, young people and their families as a key local information resource and we will continue to promote this; there has been a new equipment protocol developed for Health and Children Social Care; an Occupational Therapist post transferred from Bridgewater to Children Social Care and, work commenced on developing an Equipment Policy for Educational Provisions covering Halton Borough Council and Health so that children and young people will be able to access their educational setting with their specialist equipment transferring with them at the right time and place, ultimately this will result in less duplication and a reduction in equipment costs bringing expenditure within budget. Work continues on meeting the objectives set out in the action plan.

To ensure a broader membership of parent/carer representatives across a wider group of organisations a consortium arrangement for parent carer participation has been developed. Instead of appointing an individual Co-ordinator, support will be provided to the consortium by Halton Speak Out, a highly respected third sector organisation that supports young people to be involved in decision making in Halton.

Our Business Plan last year identified a review of behaviour had been undertaken, a Strategic Lead identified and a SEMH Action Plan developed. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is a type of Special Educational Needs in which children/young people have severe difficulties in managing their emotions and behaviour. They often show inappropriate responses and feelings to situations. This means that they have trouble in building and maintaining relationships with peers and adults; they can also struggle to engage with learning and to cope in classroom without additional strategies and interventions. Addressing this area of need is a key priority as it impacts on school exclusions, children missing education and/or missing from home leaving these children vulnerable and more likely to under-achieve academically, they may also be at greater risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect than their peers.

The new Behaviour Support Team was established in October 2018 – the aim of the team is to work in partnership with schools/settings and parents/carers to improve their skills, capacity and resilience so that they can support children and young people with challenging behaviour. The Social Emotional and Mental Health Strategy will be launched and this team will commence work on implementing the identified actions in the strategy.

In October 2018 the “Protocol for Supporting Schools with Pupils with Challenging Behaviour” was agreed. Schools applying for support for pupils with challenging behaviour must have completed this and all school applications and decisions are now made by school representatives in line with the criteria, the Local Authority SEND Officers will now attend in an advisory role.

Social Emotional and Mental Health Resource Bases – The Local Authority received a capital allocation of £500,000 provided across three years (2018/19, 2019/20 and

2020/21) to support children with SEND, and, following widespread consultation and Executive Board approval, it was determined that SEMH resource bases would be provided at Halton Lodge Primary School and Beechwood Primary School. These bases will be new build accommodation at both schools for up to 6 children per school and it is anticipated that they will be in place for the 2019/20 academic year and will support those primary age children with SEMH difficulties through specific classroom bases, appropriate resources, and qualified SEND teaching staff. It is intended that this local investment will provide long-term financial savings to the Council and reduce the number of children who require out of borough educational provision.

Nurture provision

‘Nurture for Learning’ is our Strategy for schools to reflect on the six principals of nurture, it was launched in 2018 and behind this is a detailed action plan. There are now 17 schools offering nurture provision which is encouraging a more inclusive approach in those schools, work will continue to increase the number of schools.

We will continue to promote and develop more inclusive practice in all our schools aimed at reducing the number of fixed and permanent exclusions and the number of children and young people placed in specialist provision.

Transition

Young people of Halton led the Transition “Vision” for Halton and participated in a Transition Video which was launched in October 2018. The Transition Team led on the “Named Social Worker” project and this has been given national recognition. The aim of the project is to have a named Social Workers who can develop strong relationships and build trust, it provides a mechanism through which individuals can have more control over their lives and be more involved in decisions about their care and support. It also ensures that out of Borough residential placements do not become the only option for families.

Increasing employment opportunities for young people with SEND continues to be a challenge. We are currently going through procurement to engage a service to build on the work undertaken so far, to ensure that Halton can make available an appropriate offer of Supported Internships for young people aged 16-25 years. The work will identify and secure opportunities to increase the number of supported internships and pathways to employment on offer across Halton.

Improve progress and attainment across all key stages and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers.

The key priorities for Early Years and the School Improvement Team are to improve pupil outcomes and diminish the difference to national and between disadvantaged groups and their peers. Work is also targeted at holding schools to account when the quality of provision, pupil performance or strategic leadership are causing concern. The ambition is to raise aspiration, achievement and the quality of provision.

Whilst we are pleased with the progress, we recognise that we have a number of key areas of development which are detailed in our self-assessment, these include; increasing the level of challenge and robust, coordinated support schools receive proportionate to need; expand the data sharing protocol, increasing local accountability and increase capacity of sector to self-support and challenge. We want to draw on effective practice and strengths from inside and outside of Halton; focus on performance of disadvantaged pupils; and building leadership capacity at school leader level and also with strategic governance. Attendance and exclusions will continue to be monitored with the Education Welfare Service, promoted alongside the support offered by the newly established Behaviour Support Team.

Raise Achievement in Early Years.

Work within the early years sector continues to be supported by the 'One Halton' Strategic group who have an action plan to address improving the outcomes for children in Halton.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework published by the Department for Education that details the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements along with the learning and development opportunities for children from birth up to the age of five. Observations of the children's attainment in relation to individual Early Learning Goals are reported as to whether the children achieved the "Good Level of Development (GLD) during the summer term in the reception class. GLD is based upon reaching the expected standard in Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Literacy and Mathematics. All Ofsted registered Early Years Provisions, must follow the EYFS.

Assessment in 2018 demonstrated that Attainment in all Early Learning Goals increased, most notably in writing with an improvement of 4%. The percentage of pupils achieving all Literacy ELG's increased by 3.9% and all achieving maths elements increased by 1.5%.

Analysis of GLD performance shows that GLD has increased by 4% to 65%, this rate of improvement is higher than our statistical neighbours and the national rate of 0.8%. The number of children missing GLD has also reduced by 50%, partly supported by the use of the GLD tracker tool. All primary and infant schools are using this tool, which has enabled earlier identification of gaps in knowledge and the development of individual specific, targeted plans to address the areas requiring development.

In order to raise expectation and attainment, we have targeted schools performing in the lowest quintile of GLD results, to be challenged and supported by schools in a similar context but with widely differing results. Briefings for governors and headteachers were devised to ensure all strategic and operational leaders had a strong understanding of the expectations required to achieve the expected level of each ELG.

One Halton Strategic group has supported closer working with multi-agency colleagues which has raised the awareness of EYFS and increased expertise across the

borough. Halton Borough Council and the CCG jointly commissioned 'Chatterbugs', a Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) provider, to ensure all settings and schools are provided with SALT link visits to raise practitioner and teacher knowledge of strategies to support communication friendly environments and ways to increase the quality of questioning and interactions with children. It also provides specialist support for those children who have a speech, language and communication need.

The 'One Halton' Strategic group also developed a working party of all stakeholders to devise, produce and circulate parent advice and guidance booklets on milestones and expectations. 9000 booklets were circulated to settings, schools, child minders and GP surgeries and we are in the process of monitoring the impact of this booklet.

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 1 (KS1) is the legal term for the two years of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales normally known as year 1 and year 2, when pupils are aged between five and seven. Key Stage One assessments, based on the Key Stage One curriculum report teacher assessments as to whether the child is reaching the expected level or working at a higher standard in Reading and Maths or greater depth in Writing. Children also complete Key Stage One tasks as part of the statutory assessment process to inform teacher judgements in relation to reading, writing and maths.

There have been improvements across Key Stage 1 statutory assessments, particularly in writing and maths, with a 9% gain in both areas. There has been an improvement across all areas of working at the 'higher standard' and a reduction in the gap to national in all areas, to add to this success Halton made more improvement in 9 indicators than any other Local Authority in the country and in 2 other indicators Halton jointly ranked as the most improved.

Pupils take the phonics screening check at the end of year 1, Although the percentage of pupils meeting the phonics standard at the end of Year 1 has remained the same as 2017 at 79%, the gap to national has increased. Year 2 phonics, 93% pupils achieved the 'expected' standard; 1% above national.

Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 is the legal term for the four years of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales normally known as Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6, when the pupils are aged between 7 and 11 years. Assessments against the Key Stage Two curriculum are completed in the summer term of year six. In Key Stage Two, teachers do use teacher assessments to inform next steps planning, but the statutory assessment reported figures are based on tests in Reading and Maths and teacher assessment of the standard at which the child is demonstrating. Like Key Stage One, it is reported whether the child is reaching the expected standard; performing at greater depth or a range of indicators prior to expected.

There has been an increase in attainment in all measures at Key Stage 2. At the 'expected' standard we have seen increases of 6% in Reading (R), 3% in Writing (W),

4% in Maths (M) and 7% in RWM. Attainment at the 'higher' standard has also increased in all areas but most notably in writing.

Halton girls outperform girls nationally for reading and RWM combined at the 'expected' standard and are in line with national at the 'higher' standard. Boys and girls performance was identical at the 'higher' standard in maths and performance of disadvantaged pupils at KS2 'expected' in RWM has improved significantly by 8% to 45%, and is now in line with the National figure of 46%.

Key Stage Four

Key Stage 4 is the legal term for the years of school education which incorporate GCSEs, and other examinations, in maintained schools in England this was traditionally Years 10 and Year 11, when pupils are aged between 14 and 16, but increasingly schools start their Key Stage 4 curriculum in Year 9, although does depend upon individual schools as to when they start this curriculum.

Attainment 8 (A8) is an average score across eight subjects taken at GCSE, which will include English, Maths and a range of other subjects, whilst performance is not directly comparable with 2017 it does show an average A8 score of 44, in comparison to 44.3 nationally. Performance of disadvantaged pupils A8 also improved by 0.6 points to 35.9 and is just below the National figure of 36.8.

Progress 8 measure is based on the fine point scale of the scores achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage Two, compared to the performance of all pupils nationally with that same fine score. If a pupil makes progress in line with national, it will be reported as 0; a positive figure shows that pupils will have made more progress than all pupils nationally with the same KS2 score and a negative score shows that they will have made less progress than all pupils nationally with that same KS2 score. Halton's progress 8 performance in 2018 was -0.27, which was a 0.05 decline on 2017 performance.

GCSEs are graded on a scale of 9 to 1 with 9 being the highest grade. Grades 9-4 are identified as a standard pass and grades 9-5 identified as a good pass. English performance 9-4 in Halton is in line with the national unvalidated figure, there was also a 2% increase in Maths. Analysis shows the combined English and Maths at 9-4 is 57.7% and whilst this remains below the national average of 59.1% it is an increase of 2.7% from 2017. Key Stage Four Maths is an area for development across the borough, although individual school results do show a range of performance.

Key Stage 5

Key Stage 5 are the two years of education for students aged 16-18, or at sixth form, it is the stage of education where students go through more intense and challenging courses in very specific subjects. This stage is the last stage of secondary education where students of sixth form schools and colleges may take A levels or vocational

courses which will provide them with a range of qualifications which will support their entry into further training, work or university.

In terms of the unvalidated performance in 2018 our analysis tells us that the overall A Level pass rate (A*-E grades) has increased from 96.0 to 97.5% and there is a 100% pass rate for vocational qualifications. Based on the latest published figures for 2016/2017 for those who achieved Level 2 by 19 we are now performing slightly higher than national figure and, have narrowed the gap to 0.2% from 0.7% compared with regional performance. For those who achieved Level 3 by 19 years old we have narrowed the gap between regional and national to 2.2% from 2.6%.

Whilst the average point score has increased in Halton from 28.04 to 29.13 this is still below the England average of 33.05, North West average of 30.62 and Statistical Neighbour average of 32.07.

The majority of post-16 students now attend Riverside College who have developed links with a number of secondary schools both with and without sixth form provision. The 2018 DFE League tables shows this College to be in the top 10% of all colleges in 8 out of 10 measures of A Level, Vocational and GCSE performance. The College is also third in the country for vocational performance.

Improving participation and skills for young people to drive Halton's future

Young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known to the Local Authority

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority published a Skills Strategy 2018 – 2023. The purpose of the Skills Strategy is to create a framework to co-ordinate the actions of education and training providers, businesses and members of the workforce to improve skills and make the most of our collective talents, energy and resources.

The Strategy identifies that the percentage of young people in the NEET group remains unacceptably high, as does the economic inactivity in the younger age groups. Much of this is influenced by the volume and quality of jobs on offer, but this is fed by low aspirations and educational attainment levels - particularly in key areas such as English, Maths and Digital Skills - which remain lower than in the country as a whole. The strategy focuses on five outcomes, Outcome 1 being '*A higher percentage of our young people have good attainment levels in English, Maths and Digital Skills, and higher levels of work readiness*'.

The 14-19 Team support young people in transition from compulsory schooling into Post 16 so they can continue to gain qualifications and training that will allow them to be economically active and be part of a workforce in the future. Halton has been successful in maintaining the percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known to the Local Authority (Not Known) in 2017/18 with the overall percentage for 16 and 17 year olds being 5.2% compared to 6% nationally and 6.5% regionally. There are only two statistical

neighbours performing better than Halton, those being Darlington (4.4%) and Hartlepool (3.0%).

Post-16 offer of learning

The September Guarantee helps Local Authorities to fulfil their duty to provide education and training to young people by ensuring they have a suitable offer of post-16 learning by the time they leave secondary school. The offer should be appropriate to the young person's needs and can include full time education in school sixth form or colleges, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or employment combined with part-time education or training.

In 2018 we were successful in maintaining the percentage of firm offers of learning for 96.9% of 16 and 17 year olds, higher than the national performance of 94.4% and the regional performance of 95.9%.

Participation of 16 and 17 year olds in Education and Training

The Local Authority supports the participation of 16 and 17 year olds in education and training through the Raising the Participation Age strategy, delivered by the 14-19 Programme Team. In 2017 Halton saw a decrease in the number of 16 and 17 year olds who were participating in education or training and this decrease has continued in 2018 with the percentage being 90.8% in 2018 compared to 90.9% in 2017 and 91.4% in 2016. Further scrutiny of the data shows that Halton continues to have an increase in the proportion of young people entering employment without training, which does not meet the Government's measure of Participation for 16 and 17 year olds.

The Halton Borough Council 14-19 team will continue to work collaboratively with schools, colleges and providers to secure offers for young people and strive towards continued improvement in performance measures to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people in Halton.

Emerging Issues

Ofsted Social Care Inspections

In January 2018, a new universal inspection framework came into force. Driving improvement and catching LAs before they fall are the underpinning principles of the new framework, it is described as a system rather than a programme of inspection. The 'Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS) attempts to take a proportionate, whole system approach that is less intensive than the single inspection framework (SIF).

In addition to on-site inspection activity, this new way of working is supported and informed by an annual self-evaluation, the annual conversation and Ofsted's LA intelligence system. Under the ILACS Halton will be inspected differently based upon all known intelligence and our most recent inspection judgement. The ILACS system of inspection is described as one that is proportionate, flexible, and bespoke to each area Ofsted inspect with each feature of the system informing how the rest of it works. A Local Authority's current Ofsted grade will determine the kind of inspection it has next time, and the contact and support it receives in-between visits.

Ofsted Social Care Focused Visits

Focused visits concentrate on an area of anticipated good practice or possible concern. The self-evaluation and the annual conversation both feed into the process of identifying areas of focus. Ofsted undertook a focused visit of the front door (iCART) in July 2018 which overall was a positive assessment of the effectiveness of the service. 3 recommendations were made which have all been actioned.

Ofsted, Joint Targeted Area Inspections

In order to respond effectively to children's needs, effective joint working is needed at both a strategic and at a practice level, no single agency can deliver an effective child protection response by itself. The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) programme began in February 2016 with Ofsted, working alongside the police, health and probation inspectorates to look at how well local agencies work together in an area to protect children.

Each inspection will look in detail at a specific theme with the theme changing 6 monthly, the current theme is 'child sexual abuse in the family environment' previous themes included Children living with Domestic Abuse, and Neglect. Ofsted have announced that they will revisit previous themes meaning that Halton could be inspected on any one of the themes.

The Investing in Children and Young People Board is the Strategic Multi-Agency meeting where partners work together to support the planning for future inspections, monitor updates to guidance and findings from other Local Authorities who have been inspected.

Ofsted Consultation – Education Inspection

Ofsted launched a consultation on 16th January 2019 of proposals for changes to the education inspection framework. The consultation proposals are on how Ofsted inspects schools, early year settings and further education and skills. Feedback from consultation which closes on 4th April 2019 will inform if any changes are required to these draft frameworks and handbooks and will form the basis of all inspections of schools and other institutions from this September 2019. It is key that school leaders, teachers and governors understand the changes that may come into effect. This new framework has a much greater focus on the breadth and depth of the wider curriculum offer; it details four new areas of judgements and asks leaders to report on the number of exclusions and attendance. Short inspections will also take place over two days with the inspection being led by the three “I’s of “intention”; “Implementation” and “Impact” of the curriculum. As there will be less of a focus on data, the inspectors will phone the school no later than 10am and will arrive on site no later than 12.30pm on the same day to collate pre inspection information.

Social Work England

One of the elements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 was to establish a new regulator for social workers in England. A non-departmental public body, operating at arm’s length from government, ‘Social Work England’ will be the new specialist regulator for all child, family and adult social workers in England. They will take over responsibility from the current regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) at some point in 2019.

School Place Planning/School Admissions

Currently there are no primary capacity issues however pupil projections for secondary provision indicate additional capacity required in Widnes from September 2021, discussions will be held with Widnes secondary head-teachers. There is currently surplus capacity in Secondary Schools in Runcorn which is creating financial problems for at least 3 schools.

The Department for Education

The Department for Education (DfE) is planning to make changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), and is piloting the reforms in 25 schools, selected to be a representative mix of all schools, prior to a full national public consultation. The EYFSP provides the framework for assessing children’s development at the end of Reception. It is completed by teachers, based on their observations and professional judgement of children’s learning and development. The reforms being piloted are intended to reduce the assessment and moderation burden on teachers, improve the clarity and consistency of assessments made by teachers, and support children’s early development in language and vocabulary. The Pilot commenced September 2018, the evaluation report will be published in autumn 2019.

Service Objective: PED01	Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective multi-agency early intervention		
Key Milestone(s) (19/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with schools to maintain the level of attendance at Primary and Secondary schools (March 2020). (Martin West/Debbie Houghton) ▪ As a result of the review of Early Help Services, plan and implement transformation model (March 2020). (Val Armor) ▪ Workforce development – including targeted training, to be further developed and implemented (March 2020). (Val Armor) 		
Responsible Officer:	Operational Director, Children & Families Service	Linked Indicators:	PED01 01 – PED01 02

Service Objective: PED02	Keeping Children and Young People safe by improving practice		
Key Milestone(s) (19/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embed a systemic model of social work practice across the whole service; social workers, managers and senior leaders (March 2020). (Tracey Coffey) ▪ Implement and embed new Multi-Agency safeguarding arrangements to replace the LSCB (March 2020). (Tracey Coffey) ▪ Implement a revised safeguarding model for vulnerable teenagers under the Contextual Safeguarding Framework (March 2020). (Tracey Coffey) ▪ With a focus on multi-agency risk assessment, reduce caseloads to a sustainable and manageable level to give workers capacity to deliver quality and focussed interventions in improve outcomes for vulnerable children (March 2020). (Zoe Fearon) ▪ Monitor the demand for statutory services for children and young people (March 2020). (Zoe Fearon) 		
Responsible Officer:	Operational Director, Children & Families Service	Linked Indicators:	PED02 01 – PED02 11

Service Objective: PED03	Improve outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers		
Key Milestone(s) (19/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the process for children entering and exiting care to ensure there is sufficient range and choice of provision to meet their needs (March 2020). (Tracey Coffey) ▪ Review and quality assure the commissioning of services for Children in Care and Care Leavers to ensure that they meet the needs of Halton’s population and inform future commissioning decisions (March 2020). (Sam Murtagh) ▪ Restructure the Children in Care and Care Leaver service to create a more flexible, permanent and resilient workforce (March 2020). (Liz Davenport) ▪ Through the quality assurance of Personal Education Plans, identify areas of need and support to improve outcomes for individual Children in Care (March 2020). (Sharon Williams) 		
Responsible Officer:	Operational Director, Children & Families Service	Linked Indicators:	PED03 01 – PED03 08 Additionally Attainment Information for Children in Care and use of Pupil Premium Plus will be reported through annual reports.

Service Objective: PED04	Improve the offer for children and young people with disabilities and those with Special Educational Needs		
Key Milestone(s) (19/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the Social Emotional and Mental Health Strategy (SEMH) by March 2020. Impact to be monitored through the action plan. (Sharon Williams) ▪ Monitor the impact of the Behaviour Support Team in improving inclusive practice in schools by March 2020. (Sharon Williams) ▪ Review the current framework of support for children and young people with disabilities, including short breaks provision and direct payments (March 2020) with all recommissions co-produced with parents and young people. (Sam Murtagh/ Val Armor) ▪ Improve the quality of assessment criteria, Education Health and Care Plans, and quality assure all provision currently being utilised to ensure that provision meets the needs of our children and young people (March 2020). (Ann McIntyre/ Sam Murtagh) ▪ Work with schools to ensure that they are more inclusive (March 2020). (Ann McIntyre) ▪ Review in borough specialist provision and revise to meet the needs of Halton’s children and young people (March 2020). (Ann McIntyre) ▪ Implement and monitor dynamic risk register for Learning Disability as per Transforming Care requirements (March 2020). (Sam Murtagh) 		
Responsible Officer:	Operational Director, Education, Inclusion and Provision	Linked Indicators:	PED04 01 – PED04 08

Service Objective: PED05	Raise achievement across Early Years and all Key Stages, and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers		
Key Milestone(s) (19/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor and evaluate outcomes from the use of funding streams (including Free EY Entitlement, Pupil Premium) to raise achievement and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers (March 2020). (Jill Farrell) ▪ Review the process of risk assessment for schools and settings to target support and drive improvement (March 2020). (Jill Farrell) ▪ Build engagement, capacity and understanding of the strategic role of Governors (March 2020). (Jill Farrell) ▪ In partnership with schools, review and design an effective curriculum model that meets pupils needs whilst raising ambitions (March 2020). (Jill Farrell) ▪ Develop and implement the Reading Strategy (March 2020). (Jill Farrell) 		
Responsible Officer:	Operational Director, Education, Inclusion and Provision	Linked Indicators:	PED05 01 – PED05 05 Additionally attainment information will be reported through annual reports.

Service Objective: PED06	Improve participation and skills for young people to drive Halton’s future		
Key Milestone(s) (19/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closely monitor the cohort of young people not in education, employment or training and identify any common patterns/issues to inform actions, guide the effective use of resources and to identify any future commissioning needs. (March 2020) (Háf Bell) ▪ Work with schools, the College and training providers to review the post 16 offers of learning made to young people and increase the amount of offers made before the end of an academic year. (July 2019) (Háf Bell) ▪ Work with schools, the College and training providers to report where young people progress to Post 16 as quickly as possible so those who haven’t progressed can be identified and contacted to offer support (October 2019) (Háf Bell) ▪ Work with Post 16 education and training providers in the borough to support the development of provision that does have clear progression opportunities (March 2020) (Háf Bell) 		
Responsible Officer:	Operational Director, Education, Inclusion and Provision	Linked Indicators:	PED06 01 – PED06 04

Ref	Description	17/18 Actual	18/19 Target	18/19 Actual	19/20 Target
PED01 01	Increase the number of children with an early help assessment currently measured as those subject to CAF, pre-CAF or specific targeted interventions in Children's Centres at any point in the year (financial year cumulative to end of quarter)	N/A	N/A		450
PED01 02	Maintain overall attendance at school (Debbie Houghton to confirm definition and calculation for quarterly reporting)	95% (16/17)	N/A		95%
PED02 01	Monitor the rate of referrals to Children's Social Care per 10,000 0-18 year olds (forecast rate at end of financial year) (Zoe Fearon)	419	N/A		500
PED02 02	Monitor the rate of children in need per 10,000 0-18 year olds (snapshot at end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	421	N/A		380
PED02 03	Monitor the rate of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 0-18 year olds (snapshot at end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	51	N/A		45
PED02 04	Monitor the rate of children in care per 10,000 0-18 year olds (snapshot at end of quarter) (Liz Davenport)	96	N/A		90
PED02 05	Reduce the number of children and young people who enter the care system (financial year cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	75	70		68
PED02 06	Reduce the average caseload in Child in Need teams (snapshot at end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	N/A	N/A		18
PED02 07	Increase the proportion of missing incidents where a return interview completed (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon/Liz Davenport/Val Armor)	N/A	N/A		85%
PED02 08	Reduce the number of young people who repeatedly run away in Halton (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon/Liz Davenport/Val Armor)	N/A	N/A		
PED02 09	Monitor the number of young people going missing in the year (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon/Liz Davenport/Val Armor)	N/A	N/A		

Ref	Description	17/18 Actual	18/19 Target	18/19 Actual	19/20 Target
PED02 10	Monitor the number of young people flagged as at risk of child sexual exploitation (snapshot at end of the quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	28 (Mar 2018)	N/A	21 (Dec 2018)	20
PED02 11	Monitor the number of young people flagged as at risk of child criminal exploitation (snapshot at end of the quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	N/A	N/A		12
PED03 01	Reduce the number of children who are placed in residential care (snapshot at end of quarter) (Liz Davenport/Sam Murtagh)	42	34	47 (Dec 2018)	20
PED03 02	Reduce the number of children who are placed in independent fostering agency placements (snapshot at end of quarter) (Liz Davenport/Sam Murtagh)	62	35	71 (Dec 2018)	
PED03 03	Increase the percentage of children in care making progress against their expected outcomes (definition required) (Sharon Williams)	N/A	N/A		
PED03 04	Increase the percentage of children in care with 95% or above attendance (definition required) (Sharon Williams)	N/A	N/A		
PED03 05	Maintain the percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of quarter) (Liz Davenport/Sam Murtagh)	83%	N/A		95%
PED03 06	Increase the percentage of Care Leavers in EET (snapshot at the end of quarter)	59%	N/A		65%
PED03 07	PLACEHOLDER - Benchmarking year – Percentage of CIC provision where Quality Assurance Visit has been undertaken (cumulative from April to end of quarter) (Sam Murtagh)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
PED03 08	Monitor the budget spent on independent and out of borough placements for Children in Care (Forecast end of year) (Liz Davenport/Sam Murtagh)		N/A		N/A

Ref	Description	17/18 Actual	18/19 Target	18/19 Actual	19/20 Target
PED02 01	Monitor the rate of referrals to Children's Social Care per 10,000 0-18 year olds (forecast rate at end of financial year) (Zoe Fearon)	419	N/A	549 (Dec 2018)	N/A
PED02 02	Monitor the rate of children in need per 10,000 0-18 year olds (snapshot at end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	421	N/A		N/A
PED02 03	Monitor the rate of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 0-18 year olds (snapshot at end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	51	N/A	53 (Dec 2018)	N/A
PED02 04	Monitor the rate of children in care per 10,000 0-18 year olds (snapshot at end of quarter) (Liz Davenport)	96	N/A	95 (Dec 2018)	N/A
PED02 05	Reduce the number of children and young people who enter the care system (financial year cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	75	70		
PED02 06	Reduce the average caseload in Child in Need teams (snapshot at end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon)	N/A	N/A		18
PED02 07	Increase the proportion of missing incidents where a return interview completed (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon/Liz Davenport/Val Armor)	N/A	N/A		
PED02 08	Reduce the number of young people who repeatedly run away in Halton (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon/Liz Davenport/Val Armor)	N/A	N/A		
PED02 09	Monitor the number of young people going missing in the year (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter) (Zoe Fearon/Liz Davenport/Val Armor)	N/A	N/A		N/A

Ref	Description	17/18 Actual	18/19 Target	18/19 Actual	19/20 Target
PED04 01	Increase the percentage of Education Health and Care plans completed within 20 weeks (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	64.7%	N/A		75%
PED04 02	Reduce the number of incidents of fixed term exclusion (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Vanessa Nice/Sharon Williams/Debbie Houghton)	508	600		500
PED04 03	Reduce the number of children subject to fixed term exclusions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Vanessa Nice/Sharon Williams/Debbie Houghton)	304	430		350
PED04 04	Reduce the number of children subject to permanent exclusion (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Vanessa Nice/Sharon Williams/Debbie Houghton)	32	40		30
PED04 05	Monitor the number of children subject to an EHCP placed in independent and out of borough provision (Snapshot at end of quarter) (Eileen O'Brien) – long term target will be to reduce	N/A	N/A		N/A
PED04 06	Monitor the budget spent on independent and out of borough provision for SEND (Forecast end of year) (Sam Murtagh) – long term target will be to reduce	N/A	N/A		£250,000 reduction
PED04 07	Increase the percentage of children subject to EHCP placed in mainstream provision (Snapshot at end of quarter) (Eileen O'Brien)	18.9%	N/A		30%
PED04 08	Monitor the percentage of Special schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding (snapshot at end of quarter) (Jill Farrell)	100%	N/A	100% (Aug 2018)	100%

Ref	Description	17/18 Actual	18/19 Target	18/19 Actual	19/20 Target
PED05 01	Ensure all eligible children for the vulnerable 2 year old funding, access quality EY provision (internally collected termly information – may not match to published data from January census) (Jill Farrell)	130%	N/A		100%
PED05 02	Increase the take up of Early Years Entitlement for 3 to 4 year olds (internally collected termly information – may not match to published data from January census) (Jill Farrell)	93%	N/A		96%
PED05 03	Monitor the percentage of Early Years settings (pre-schools, day care, out of school clubs, childminders) with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding (snapshot at end of quarter) (Jill Farrell)	93% (Aug 2017)	N/A	90% (Aug 2018)	N/A
PED05 04	Monitor the percentage of Primary schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding (snapshot at end of quarter) (Jill Farrell)	85% (Aug 2017)	N/A	83% (Aug 2018)	N/A
PED05 05	Monitor the percentage of Secondary schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding (snapshot at end of quarter) (Jill Farrell)	76% (Aug 2017)	N/A	50% (Aug 2018)	N/A
PED06 01	Maintain the percentage of 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training (snapshot at end of quarter – published end of year information February) (Háf Bell)	4.4%	4.4%		4.4%
PED06 02	Maintain the percentage of 16-17 year olds whose activity is not known (snapshot at end of quarter – published end of year information February) (Háf Bell)	0.8%	0.8%		0.8%
PED06 03	Increase the percentage of 16-17 year olds with an offer of learning (September Guarantee) (Háf Bell)	96.9%	98%		98.2%
PED06 04	Increase the percentage of 16-17 year olds participating in education or training that meets the Governments definition of full participation (known as Raising the Participation Age) (Háf Bell)	90.9%	92.5%		93%