

**REPORT:** Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Children and Young People Directorate

**SUBJECT:** Children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Board of developments regarding the priority for the Children's Trust 'children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live' (Narrowing the Gap - NtG)
- 1.2 To decide on strategies which will support, monitor, evaluate and challenge developments for how well 'children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live'

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED:**

**That the Policy and Performance Board agree the strategies to be used to develop the priority: 'Children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live'.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### ***Getting to grips with the gap***

- 3.1 To narrow the gap is defined as closing the distance in outcomes between children who do well and those who do not. This could be for example in terms of health and / or education.
- 3.2 The gap represents a complex mix of factors relating to people and places such as prevailing cultures and subcultures, the ability to access services, economic activity, migration patterns, educational achievement and perceptions around life chances. We are dealing with areas and people where a complex range of factors present barriers to accessing the full benefits of a thriving Borough. This cannot be solved simply but needs to be approached with the tool box containing the widest range of services and measures and with a built in flexibility that allows some local variation and response to community engagement. To support children where the 'gap' needs to be narrowed

requires services that can respond to non-normative conditions, i.e. those found on the wrong side of the gap. This is how we can avoid simply compensating for the gap.

3.3 Most children and families are part of their local community, whether this is defined by geography (a village, estate, neighbourhood), by a common tie that binds families together such as culture or faith, or by an activity such as the learning community created by children's centres, schools and colleges. Communities are varied and diverse and include babies, children, adolescents and adults, but also elders, public services, voluntary organisations and community groups. Communities are made by families and provide important support to families. Strengthening communities improves the well-being of children and families. Engaging with vulnerable children, young people and families is best done through open access services based in children's centres, schools and other neighbourhood centres, which employ local people.

3.4 Some groups of children are more likely to fall behind than others and many children belong to more than one group and for most the gap is more than one outcome. Some illustrative examples of the groups where children and young people are more vulnerable of falling behind include:

- Children from poorer socio-economic groups (including white 'working class' boys)
- Children in care
- Children with disabilities
- Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Children excluded from school
- Children with poor school attendance records
- Children from different ethnic minority backgrounds
- Young Offenders
- Young carers
- Children at risk from significant harm – who are being abused or neglected or who are at great risk of it
- Children living with 'vulnerable adults', such as those with serious drug or alcohol problems, or who are mentally ill
- Children not fluent in English
- Children who are asylum seekers/ refugees.

3.5 In Halton there has been a considerable amount of success in terms of for example education. We need to ensure however that all young people are making and having the same opportunity of achieving.

3.6 The Children's Trust has as one of its key priorities:

## **Children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live**

To address this area and ensure that there is progress and impact on this priority 2 key approaches are being taken:

- i. Key indicators from the Children and Young People's Plan are being planned, developed, monitored and evaluated. These include decreasing the achievement and attainment gap for vulnerable young people and increasing the percentage of vulnerable young people in education, employment and training
- ii. Focusing on specific vulnerable groups consider educational attainment and achievement, parenting and access to pre-school provision.

Questions are being asked for example:

What are the most effective components of systems and processes which support prevention and early intervention?

How can parents and carers be supported to improve outcomes for their children?

How are more effective and productive links between services created?

What works to narrow the gap?

Building on the good practice already existing in the Borough and developing new ways of approaching this priority the target is to ensure that 'children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live'

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council's priorities are further developed through the PPB and used to support the Children's trust priorities.

### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

#### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Vulnerable children and young people in Halton have better outcomes and the gap is narrowed.

## 6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

All young people have improved life chances.

## 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Vulnerable children and young people in Halton have better outcomes and the gap is narrowed..

## 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live leads to further development of the Council's priorities.

## 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Children and young people do well whatever their needs and wherever they live leads to further development of the Council's priorities.

## 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

The main risk is in terms children and young people not succeeding unless the gap is narrowed.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

All work will take into account equality and diversity implications.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Narrowing the Gap	LGA website	Judith Kirk
Narrowing the Gap in outcomes for Vulnerable Groups	nfer website	Judith Kirk
Narrowing the Gap – the inspection of children's services	Ofsted website	Judith Kirk