

# Public Document Pack



## Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

Monday, 23 January 2023 at 6.30 p.m.  
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

S. Young

**Chief Executive**

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor Geoffrey Logan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Abbott	Labour
Councillor Marjorie Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Irene Bramwell	Labour
Councillor Chris Carlin	Labour
Councillor Louise Goodall	Labour
Councillor Valerie Hill	Labour
Councillor Eddie Jones	Labour
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Aimee Teeling	Labour

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail  
[ann.jones@halton.gov.uk](mailto:ann.jones@halton.gov.uk) for further information.  
The next meeting of the Board is to be confirmed.*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>		<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>		<b>1 - 8</b>
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)</b>		
	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
<b>3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>		<b>9 - 11</b>
<b>4. EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES</b>		<b>12 - 16</b>
<b>5. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES</b>		
(A) <b>CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE</b>		<b>17 - 19</b>
(B) <b>OFSTED FOCUSED INSPECTION</b>		<b>20 - 21</b>
(C) <b>SUMMARY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE</b>		<b>22 - 47</b>
(D) <b>ANNUAL REPORT - COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 1 APRIL 2020 - 31 MARCH 2021</b>		<b>48 - 82</b>
(E) <b>SUFFICIENCY DUTY REPORT 2022-2023 (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS THE CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT REVIEW (CSA))</b>		<b>83 - 133</b>

***In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.***

**CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 14 November 2022 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Abbott, M. Bradshaw, Bramwell, Carlin, Goodall, V. Hill, Jones, Loftus and Aimee Teeling

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Vasic, A. Jones, B. Holmes and A. Leach

Also in attendance: None

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
<p>CYP7 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2022 were taken as read and signed as a correct record. It was noted that the 12 September meeting was cancelled due to the passing of Her Majesty the Queen.</p>	
<p>CYP8 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>It was noted that no public questions had been received.</p>	
<p>CYP9 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; FAMILIES PPB ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021/22</p> <p>The Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2021-22. He gave thanks to Members and Officers for their commitment, support and hard work carried out throughout the year.</p>	
<p>CYP10 HEADTEACHER OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR HALTON CHILDREN IN CARE</p>	

The Board received the Annual Report of the Headteacher of the Virtual School, which gave the education outcomes and achievements of Halton's Children in Care (CIC).

The Annual Report (appended to the cover report) included detailed data, analysis and a summary of the work of Halton's Virtual School, during the academic year 2021-22. It was reported that the work of the School had continued throughout the academic year and the full Annual Report provided detailed analysis of how Halton's Children in Care had performed against each of the individual key performance indicators.

The Annual Report also gave a summary of the Virtual School's progress towards its identified key priorities for the academic year 2021-22 and identified the priorities for the Virtual School in 2022-23.

Members welcomed the report and the following was discussed following their questions:

- Bench marking for Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) – it was important that the right children were being targeted for this funding, such as those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The impacts being made on those currently in receipt of PPP were being monitored;
- Personal Education Plans (PEP) for those already in care – a PEP was completed for every school age child in care. This included a section of gathering the voice of the child and was an integral part of the process. The Virtual School were also looking at the use of an 'App' to gather their wishes and feelings in other ways, when they were reluctant to talk to professionals;
- Lateness/absence from school – although there was a spike of non-attendance during Covid, this had not been the case since the children had returned following this. It was noted that the attendance of CIC was better than those under Child Protection (CP), this would be looked at;
- Lowering the number of CIC leavers who were NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) – actions already taken were discussed, such as identifying traineeships and upskilling the core skills of the young person. It was recognised that there was a need to remove barriers to employment or further education for care leavers; and
- Effectiveness of PEP's – it was recognised a year

ago that this needed looking at. A new Post-16 Officer role was created following which an improvement was made. The Officer has since left though so this role was currently vacant and being recruited to.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the information provided; and
- 2) accept the Headteacher of the Virtual School's Annual Report as an accurate account of the performance on the education outcomes and achievement of Halton's Children in Care.

#### CYP11 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE

The Board received a presentation from the Strategic Director – People, which provided an update of the work undertaken to date, following the Ofsted focussed visit and the subsequent actions taken in response to their findings.

The Children's Services Department received the Ofsted visit in October 2021 and inspectors looked at the arrangements for Children in Need (CIN), including those who were subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP). Since then, steps had been taken to make improvements to the service, including the establishment of an Improvement Board. It was noted that Members received an initial update at the Board meeting on 13 June 2022.

Following consideration of the update and Members questions, the following additional information was provided:

- Administration support for social workers had been looked at so they could focus on the cases they were working on, this work was continuing but it was hoped to have one administration staff member for 5 social workers;
- Social workers spent a lot of their time using IT; it was recognised that the IT systems needed improvement so that paperwork could be streamlined;
- It was felt that agency staff did not share the same commitment to a team as a permanent member of staff would;
- Halton had eight student social workers who had now finished their training – 6 of them had taken jobs with Halton;
- A Memorandum of Understanding had been agreed with a higher education institute;

- An interim review had been carried out since the initial Ofsted focussed visit in October 2021. Improvements had been made and the annual review is due in January 2023; and
- It was suggested that retention incentives should be in place – it was noted an increased pay offer for social workers was being proposed.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the steps that have been taken and the role of the Improvement Board.

#### CYP12 HALTON LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY 2021-25

The Board considered a report and presentation of the Strategic Director – People, advising on the progress and updates in relation to the Halton Local Area SEND Strategy 2021-25 and current pressures.

Members were advised that throughout 2021-22 Halton, in common with other local authority areas, had seen an unprecedented growth in demand for Education Health and Care Needs Assessments. The number of applications for EHC Needs Assessments reached 353 for the academic year in July 2022. This represented a 35% increase in demand, presented in the table in paragraph 3.1.2.

The report outlined the impacts that the increased demand was making across the service. Considerable pressure was being placed on the capacity in both the SEN Assessment Team and those services that provided advice and assessments that contributed towards developing EHCP's, such as the Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy Services, Occupational and Physio Therapy services.

It was reported that these capacity issues had resulted in a decline in the completion rate for EHCP's, which was due to three main factors; these were described in the report. Further, Members were advised that the growth in demand for EHCP's was placing huge stress on the availability of specialist provision in Halton. Paragraph 3.2.7 gave details of capital developments that had been put in place over the last 3 years to help accommodate the increase in the numbers and complexities of pupils with SEND, as all specialist places and resource bases were oversubscribed for 2022.

The report made comparisons on the current pressures with national data and neighbouring authorities; gave information on funding / grants being made available;

and presented information on the new SEND Sufficiency Strategy currently being consulted upon.

In response to Members questions the following information was given:

- Alternative provision plans for Key Stages 1 and 2 – officers were currently working with schools to help understand the gaps here and what was being accessed presently. It was too early to decide now the depth of work required.
- Career paths were built into a child’s EHCP from age 14, however it was felt that this should be sooner and as early as leaving primary school;
- A ‘flightpath’ was more about aligning curriculums for children leaving school and going onto further education – so a college for example is better able to understand a pupil’s need better;
- A large number of headteachers had left the profession lately, which had provided some positives and some negatives – positives in a creative way with new ideas and ways of doing things and negatives such as not knowing the area and how things were done in Halton;
- Travel training support was provided for those students who needed it;
- One Members query regarding being excluded from travel and access to work schemes would be followed up outside the meeting as the information was not to hand at the meeting;
- DfE data showed that the sector where Halton trailed national rates of inclusion in relation to the proportion of pupils with an EHCP was secondary academies. Conversations regarding this were being had with them, as well as offering support, training and consultancy work, so that there will be consistency amongst the SEND provision across all secondary academy schools in the future.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives the presentation.

Operational Director -  
Education, Inclusion and Provision

CYP13 SUMMARY OF 2022 PROVISIONAL UN-VALIDATED ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES

The Board considered a report which provided a summary of the 2022 provisional un-validated attainment outcomes for Halton’s Children and Young People.

The data presented included a summary of Early

Years Good Level of Development (GLD) indicator; Key Stage One phonics results; and Key Stages 1, 2, 4 and 5 attainment information. This data provided the Board with an early indication of the educational attainment data across Halton's Schools before publication of the validated data by the Department for Education (DfE) in December. The DfE publication would include detailed national data on progress and provide comparative groups. Members were advised however, that the data provided in this report gave sufficient information for the Local Authority, schools and wider stakeholders to plan and prioritise actions.

The report also shared with the Board some key updates regarding educational priorities and developments both locally and nationally:

- Priority Educational Investment Area (PEIA) – of which Halton is one;
- Halton Learning Alliance – to be formally relaunched;
- Delivering Better Values Programme – which Halton was part of;
- Early Years Experts and Mentors Programme – Halton participating in; and
- Headteacher of the Virtual School – a successful appointment had been made – Mr Benjamin Holmes.

The following comments were made following the Officer's presentation of the item:

- One Member commented it was important to note that the attainment figures presented for England used in comparison had worsened since 2017, due to the pandemic;
- It was acknowledged that improvements needed to be made and it was disappointing that Halton was behind in all except two areas; it was hoped that the PEIA would help Halton to improve outcomes in the future;
- The challenges Halton faced in comparison to other areas of England such as London were discussed, as well as the impacts of Covid 19 still being felt in education;
- The educational aspirations of Halton's parents, and expectations of teachers and headteachers of pupils was discussed; and
- Halton Learning Alliance – this has been formally relaunched and will be led by the education sector. This will bring all education partners together and see schools working together.



RESOLVED: That

- 1) the presentation be received; and
- 2) Members note the key updates and implications for the Borough.

#### CYP14 SUPPORTING FAMILIES UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – People, which provided an update on the Supporting Families Programme and its current performance levels.

It was reported that following the Spending Review in October 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced an extra £200m boost to the Supporting Families Programme, which would now continue for the next 3 years (2022-2025) and allow the Programme to be expanded. The report outlined the improvements being made to the Programme by the DLUHC in order to achieve this.

It was noted that Halton signed up to the Programme commitments and funding agreement in April 2022, which included key parameters around performance requirements, resourcing the Programme, and service and data transformation. These were outlined in the report and a detailed update on all aspects of the Programme in Halton was provided as well as a performance update.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### CYP15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 2 2022/23

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 2 of 2022-23 (July 1 2022 to 30 September 2022).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the following Departments:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

Members were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

It was noted that the current targets would be subject to a review for future performance reports.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management reports for quarter 2 of 2022-23 be received.

*Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Children, Young People and Families Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 23 January 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Legal & Democratic Services

**SUBJECT:** Public Question Time

**WARD(s):** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
  - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
  - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;

- Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
  - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

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

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**REPORT TO:** Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 23 January 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**SUBJECT:** Executive Board Minutes

**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Children and Young People Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.**

## **3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

## **4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

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

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

None

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

None

### **5.3 A Healthy Halton**

None

### **5.4 A Safer Halton**

None

### **5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board**

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**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 17 NOVEMBER 2022**

<b>EXB49</b>	<b>CHILDREN SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PACKAGE – KEY DECISION</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – People, which set out a series of proposals to support the permanent recruitment and retention of staff in qualified social worker posts in Children’s Social Care.

The report set out the national and local context for the Children’s Social Care workforce, options for consideration and developing the right organisational offer to create the right environment in which staff can thrive in Halton.

Reason for Decision

To improve the recruitment and retention of Qualified Children Social Workers and reduce the reliance and cost of agency staff.

Alternative options considered and rejected

A review of schemes of a similar nature across the region have been considered and the proposal is set within similar parameters found regionally.

Implementation date

1 December 2022.

**RESOLVED:** The Board endorsed the following recommendations set out in the report:

- 1) proposals to support the conversion of agency social workers to becoming permanent (set out in para 3.8), including payment of a conversion allowance of £4,000 paid over a two year period;
- 2) agreement to fund Social Work England registration for permanent staff employed in a qualified social work role (up to Principal Manager level) for a two year period (set out in para 3.9b);
- 3) a recognition and performance allowance is paid to existing permanent staff employed in a qualified social work role. This would be a £2,000 payment paid over a two year period and would support the retention of existing staff (set out in para 3.9c);



- 4) a form of 'golden hellos' is offered to new recruits employed in permanent social work roles (set out in paras 3.10a, c); and
- 5) an annual allowance of £2,000 is paid to social work staff employed in case management child protection teams, reflecting these are considered hard to fill posts.

<b>EXB50</b>	<b>CHILDREN SERVICES IMPROVEMENT UPDATE</b>
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The Board considered an update report on the progress of Children Services as part of the improvement programme. Following on from the Ofsted ILAC Focused Visit in October 2021, a Notice to Improve was issued and an independently chaired Improvement Board was established. The Improvement Board oversaw the delivery of the Improvement Plan which had four overarching themes: Workforce, Quality of Practice, Partnerships and Future Model of Practice. The report provided an update on the work within each of these themes.

The Board was advised on the next steps which included a refresh of the Improvement Plan and an updated self-assessment alongside audit and staff development activity. In order to accelerate improvement additional investment of resource and capacity as part of the Corporate Transformation programme had been added providing capacity and opportunity to develop a sustainable improvement programme.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the content of the report be noted; and
- 2) the refreshed Improvement Plan be presented to the next meeting of the Executive Board.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 8 DECEMBER 2022**

<b>EXB54</b>	<b>SERVICES FOR MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS CHESHIRE FOR HALTON, CHESHIRE EAST, CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER AND WARRINGTON: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS</b>
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The Board considered a request to waive compliance with Procurement Standing Orders to allow the continuation of a contract with We are With You to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. The value of the contract extension for one year was £491,633. All local authorities had agreed to continue with a joint commissioning approach with Halton acting as the lead.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and

- 2) approval be given to the recommendation that the contract with We are With You be extended for a further twelve months without going through the Procurement process, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders.

<b>EXB55</b>	<b>THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES FOR 2023-24</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – People, which presented the proposal for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block Funding Formula for Halton’s mainstream schools and academies for the Council’s financial year 2023-24.

The report described how the DSG was split and how the National Funding Formula (NFF) was used by the Department for Education (DfE) to calculate the Schools Block element of the DSG allocated to Halton.

The Board was required to make a decision on the funding formula to be adopted for 2023-24. Further to the consultation paper sent to all schools (appendices A and B) and after its consideration at Schools Forum, it was agreed by them that the adoption of the NFF method, principles and rules should continue to be applied to mainstream schools and academies.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board approves the continuation of the National Funding Formula for 2023-24.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Children's Services
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Children and Young People
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Children's Social Care Update
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 Members of the Board to receive a presentation on an update of the work undertaken to date following the Ofsted Focused Visit which took place in 13 and 14 October 2021 and the subsequent actions taken in response to their findings.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members of the Board:**

- i) Note the steps that have been taken and the role of the Children's Improvement Board;**
- ii) Moving forward the key priorities and actions outlined in the Children's Improvement Plan**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Halton received a Focused Visit from Ofsted to its Children's Services department in October 2021. Inspectors looked at the arrangements for children in need, including those who are subject to a child protection plan.
- 3.2 In their report Ofsted made several recommendations identified as 'areas of priority action'. These included:
- The quality of assessments, so they are child focused and use history to inform an understanding of children's experiences and decision making;
  - The quality of plans and planning, to support a timely, multi-agency response, including decisive escalation to pre-proceedings when children's circumstances do not improve;
  - The quality assurance of social work practice.

- 3.3 Since then, steps have been taken to make improvements to the Service overseen by a Children's Improvement Board with regular reporting arrangements to the Department for Education.
- 3.4 On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November Ofsted conducted a Focused Visit on our front door arrangements, including how we respond to contacts, referrals, strategy discussions and child protection processes.
- 3.5 The letter was published on 13<sup>th</sup> January and whilst this is not a judgment inspection, it does form part of the system that monitors local authority progress.
- 3.6 The inspection provided further external validation of the work we have done to date. Although, we now these is a lot more to do we do appear to be doing the right things and given us confidence in moving forward with our plans to improve.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None identified.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None identified.

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

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

Having a strong and robust framework for identifying and responding across all agencies is the key to ensuring that children and young people are safe and protected, and partners are clear about their responsibilities and role in working together.

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

None identified.

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Children and young people whose health needs and level of development is potentially compromised are identified early and multi-agency support is in place to support them.

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Children who are at risk of harm are identified quickly and services work together to minimise the risk of harm and take action to formally protect children in a timely way.

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 All key stakeholders are committed to working together to ensure a robust and consistent approach to protect children in Halton.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Issues arising from a child's equality and diversity needs will inform the decision-making at the point of contact and it will be ensured that the voice of the child is to the forefront.

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

None.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Children's Services
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Children and Young People
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Ofsted Focused Inspection
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Members of the Board to receive a presentation on the outcome of the Ofsted Focused Visit which took place 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and the subsequent actions taken in response to their findings.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members of the Board:

- i) Note the findings of the OfSTED report;
- ii) Note the update on the improvement actions presented.

### 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Halton received a Focused Visit from Ofsted on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November as part of the inspection cycle. Ofsted will published their report on 13 January 2023.
- 3.2 The focus of the visit was the Council's first response in dealing with contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care & Early Help, including the strategy discussion / S47 process. Inspectors also took the opportunity to review our arrangements for managing allegations against professional, i.e. LADO process. As part of any inspection, inspectors also consider the recommendations from previous inspections, most notably the areas for priority action from the last focused visit in October 2021.

### 4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None identified

### 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None identified.

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

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

Having a strong and robust framework for identifying and responding across all agencies is the key to ensuring that children and young people are safe and protected, and partners are clear about their responsibilities and role in working together.

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

None identified.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Children and young people whose health needs and level of development is potentially compromised are identified early and multi-agency support is in place to support them.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Children who are at risk of harm are identified quickly and services work together to minimise the risk of harm and take action to formally protect children in a timely way.

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

None identified.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 All key stakeholders are committed to working together to ensure a robust and consistent approach to protect children in Halton.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Issues arising from a child's equality and diversity needs will inform the decision-making at the point of contact and it will be ensured that the voice of the child is to the forefront.

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

None.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Children's Policy and Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director, Children's Services
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Children and Young People
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Summary of Children and Young Peoples Mental Health and Wellbeing update
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide a presentation summarising key work taking place locally and at a regional level to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Including overview of preventative work that aims to keep children and young people mentally well and services that provide direct interventions and support when children and young people are struggling. The presentation won't address services which directly support children and young people with Special Educational Needs, although services discussed will provide support to this cohort.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- I. Members receive the presentation; and
- II. Members are aware of key work and services contributing to the positive mental health and wellbeing of children and young people

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 This presentation provides an overview of work taking place in Halton by a variety of organisations and teams such as; Halton Borough Council, Halton Public Health, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside- Halton Place (Integrated Care Board formally CCGs), NHS Cheshire and Merseyside (Integrated Care Systems, ICS) For further information regarding the structure of NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Health please visit <https://www.cheshireandmerseysidepartnership.co.uk/ics-development/>

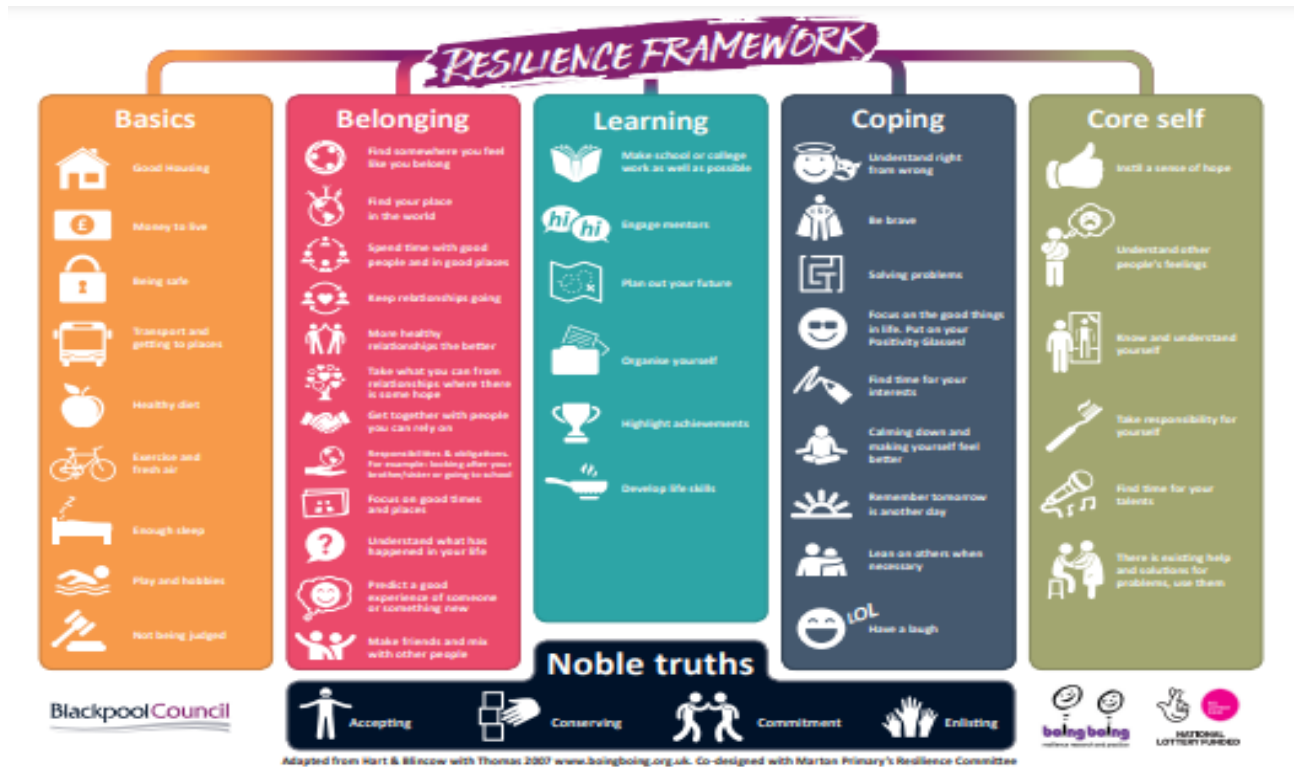
## 3.2 What do children and young people need to be mentally healthy?

Diagram 1 provides an easy read overview of The Resilience Framework which is a set of ideas and practices that promote resilience. More details on the framework is available to be viewed via <https://www.boingboing.org.uk/>. The framework is based on a body of research and practice development called Resilient Therapy (RT). This was originally developed by Angie Hart and Derek Blicow, with help from Helen Thomas and a group of parents and practitioners. The resilience framework demonstrates evidence based ideas that can be used to support a child or young person to improve



their resilience. The framework helps us to understand what children and young people need to be resilient shifting the narrative from ‘what is wrong with the child’ to ‘what does this child need’. The framework can also be used to help us to understand how a wide variety of services contribute to good mental health.

**Diagram 1 –Resilience framework, (Children and Young People) Oct 2012 – Boingboing, adapted from Hart and Blincow with Thomas 2007**



### 3.3 Overview of Core services

**Table 1- Overview of core/statutory services available and lead organisation/team responsible**

Lead Organisation	Services funded
Local Authority	Educational Psychology <a href="#">Educational Psychology Service</a>
	Specialist support for Children in Care (Banardos-Moving on 2gether) <a href="#">Moving on 2gether</a>
	Nurture <a href="#">Halton's Nurturing Approach</a>
Public Health	Mental Health and Wellbeing prevention agenda for educational settings *for a detailed overview of this offer please email <a href="mailto:Katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk">Katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk</a>

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside- Halton Place	<a href="#">Child and Adolescent Mental health Services (CAMHS)</a>
	<a href="#">Mental health Teams in Schools</a>
	<a href="#">Baby Infant Bonding Service</a>
	<a href="#">Eating disorder service</a>
	<a href="#">REACH 24 hour text support</a>
Mersey Care NHS foundation trust	<a href="#">24 Hour Crisis Line</a>

Table 1 provides an overview of core and statutory services funded locally in Halton. Please be aware this isn't a definitive list of what is available to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. There are many services which have a positive impact on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing without this being their sole focus such as: iCART, Early Help, Drugs and Alcohol substance misuse support, Children centres, Holiday Activity and food provision, Active Halton, Youth Provision and 0-19 health services (family Nurse Partnership, Health Visiting and School Health). There is also a significant amount of support available from the Voluntary Sector. Details of support available locally can be found via Halton's local [Mental Health Info Point](#)

### 3.4 Moving on 2gether

Specialist therapeutic support for Children in Care provided by Barnardos includes support and interventions available across Runcorn and Widnes to:

- Children in care (5-25yrs)
- care leavers
- extended care leavers (up to 25 years)

The service also provide information, advice and consultation to foster carers and professionals working with children under the care of Halton Local Authority.

Since April 2021 the service has supported 242 children, young people and their families. Diagram 2 provides a snapshot of outcomes achieved in Q1 2022/2023

#### **Diagram 2- snapshot of outcomes achieved during Q1 2022/2023**

	Q1
Total number of CYP / families supported by service	44
Number of Direct Hours delivered	109
Number of Indirect Hours delivered ( <i>Professionals Meetings on cases open to service</i> )	29
Consultations (on cases not open to service)	23
Number of Trauma Assessments	8
Number of Harmful Sexual Behaviour Assessments	0

Full reports are available from [John.bucknall@halton.gov.uk](mailto:John.bucknall@halton.gov.uk)

For more details of the service please visit [Moving on 2gether](#)

### 3.5 Nurture

According to Nurture UK a nurturing approach to learning addresses the impact of a pupil's social environment on their emotional wellbeing, their social skills, and how ready they are to engage in school and the wider community. By addressing the early nurturing experiences that pupils are missing, teachers can help them to develop the social skills they need to thrive, and the confidence and resilience to deal with whatever life throws at them – not just at school, but for the rest of their lives.

Haltons graduated approach to nurture in education advises the majority of children and young people will have their needs met within nurturing schools and settings through a nurturing approach.

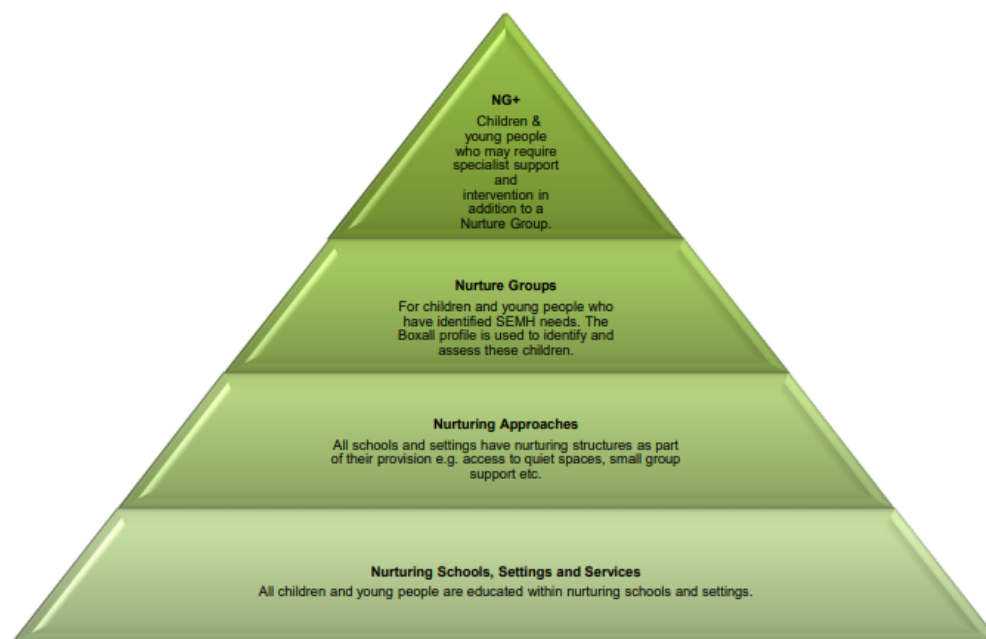
There is an expectation ALL schools, settings and services understand and embrace the six principles of nurture:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem
4. Transition is recognised as being important in children's lives
5. Language is a vital means of communication
6. All behaviour is communication

And adopts a graduated approach to nurture as shown in diagram 3

**Diagram 3**

**Halton’s Graduated Approach to Nurture in Education**



**Table 2-Overview of Schools who have engaged with the nurturing approach**

<b>New</b>	<b>Not yet established but have some form of nurture</b>	<b>Nurture established</b>	<b>Nurture is Fully developed</b>
Lunts Heath St Michael’s St Bert’s Simms Cross	St Clements Hallwood Park Weston Primary All Saints Upton Our Lady of Perpetual Succour The Grange St Chad’s Moore Woodside The Brow The Heath Murdishaw	Hallwood Park The Bridge Chesnutlodge Brookfields The Holy Spirit	Gorsewood Fairfield St Bede’s Jrs St Gerard’s (currently completing Whole School Approach to Nurture)

For details of the full strategy visit [Haltons Nurturing Approach](#) or contact [ami.mcnamee@halton.gov.uk](mailto:ami.mcnamee@halton.gov.uk)

### 3.6 Mental Health and Wellbeing Prevention agenda for educational settings

The Health Improvement team work with Schools and Colleges to support them to adopt a whole setting approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of staff, pupils and parents and carers. Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families describe a whole school approach as developing a positive ethos and culture – where everyone feels that they belong. It involves working with families and making sure that the whole school community is welcoming, inclusive and respectful. It means maximising children’s learning through promoting good mental health and wellbeing across the school – through the curriculum, early support for pupils, staff-pupil relationships, leadership and a commitment from everybody.

The Health Improvement Team provide a variety of interventions to help educational settings adopt a whole school approach including:

- Support to assess current practice against evidence based framework
- Support to improve staff wellbeing
- Staff training to improve knowledge and skills
- Support to implement Youth led campaigns
- Connection to specialist support

For full details of support available please email [katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk](mailto:katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk)

Number of primary schools supported	<b>39</b>
Number of secondary schools supported	<b>10</b>
Number of schools who have completed Mental Health and Resilience in Schools (MHARS) framework (a further 29 have started)	<b>20</b>
Number of schools who have achieved 5 ways to wellbeing award (a further 5 are working towards)	<b>16</b>
Number of staff attended self harm awareness training	<b>545</b>
Number of staff attended Mental Health Awareness training	<b>732</b>
Number of staff attended staff wellbeing workshop	<b>464</b>

Table 3 provides an overview of key outputs achieved since 2018. Education settings decide which aspect of the offer they engage with, driven by their needs, however they are always encouraged to complete the Mental Health and Resilience in Schools (MHARS) framework. The MHARS framework sets out 7 key areas for good mental health and wellbeing. Settings are supported to assess their current practice against the framework identifying areas for development as well as celebrating good practice.

### 3.7 NHS Cheshire and Merseyside- Halton Place

- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Health created Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Strategy- Each of the 9 local areas have to create an action plan by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2022. Halton Children and Young Peoples Mental Health and Wellbeing Board overseeing.

- A North West Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) review has previously been undertaken and from this 9 recommendations have been made which each of the 9 places will now need to do.
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Halton place will be commissioning the expansion of the Baby Infant Bonding service. The service currently works with mums with babies up to age 6 months, the expansion of the service will cover babies up to 2 years of age.
- Increased capacity funded for Eating disorder service during the pandemic.
- Launch of eating disorder website:

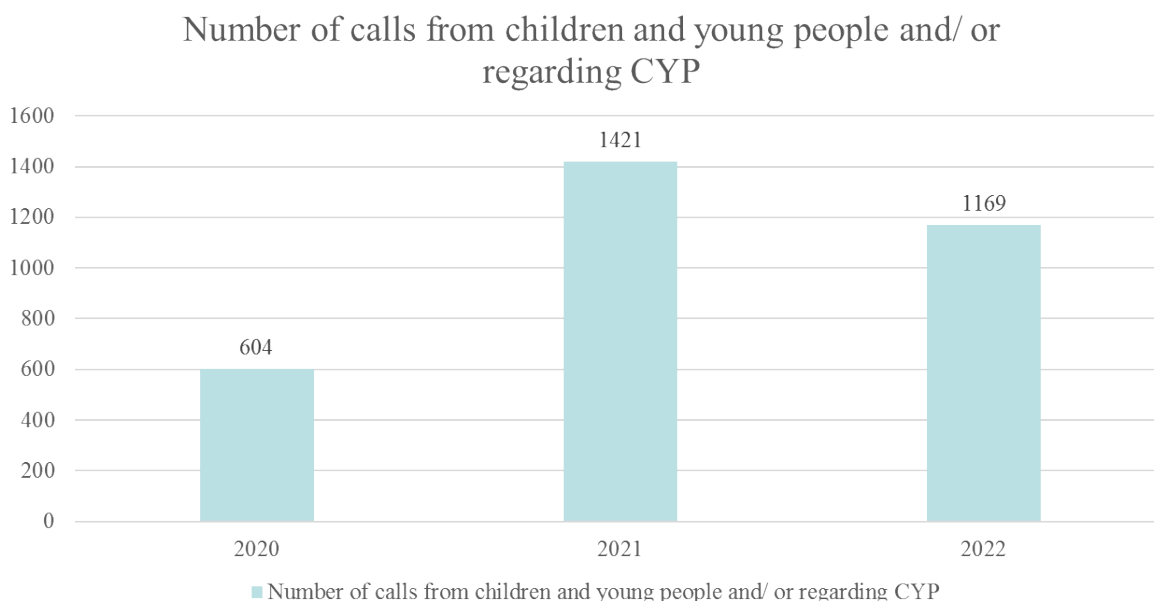
[www.merseycare.nhs.uk/our-services/warrington/children-and-young-peoples-community-eating-disorder-service](http://www.merseycare.nhs.uk/our-services/warrington/children-and-young-peoples-community-eating-disorder-service)

- Mental Health Support Teams in Schools- The service commenced work with 14 Halton schools in Jan 22 (The service initially planned to start earlier in 21/22 but delayed largely due to covid.) It is expanding to work with 45 schools from Sept 22.
- REACH 24 hr text support-173 supported from May to August 2022.

### 3.8 Merseycare 24 Hour Mental Health Crisis line

At the start of the pandemic, mental health trusts across the country had to adapt to new challenges. As part of their response to COVID-19, they set up or expanded 24/7 all age's urgent mental health helplines in just a matter of weeks, four years ahead of the original [NHS Long Term Plan](#) target. Locally in Halton the 24 hour Mental Health crisis line was established during the pandemic and was up and running by April 2020. The Help line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is available to people of all ages who need urgent mental health support including children and young people. Merseycare is the local mental health trust funded by NHSE to provide a 24 hour Mental health Crisis helpline to Halton. Diagram 4 provides an overview of the number of children and young people supported via the crisis line from 2020 through to August 2022. Data covers the following geographical areas; Halton, Knowsley, Warrington and St Helens.

**Diagram 4- Number of Calls to the Crisis line from Children and Young People and or regarding Children and Young People**



### What will Happen When you call?

When someone calls the Mental Health Crisis line, a dedicated mental health professional will offer assistance. They will talk to the caller, listen to their worries and try to understand their current problems. Through doing this, the caller and the health professionals will be able to make a plan on how best to meet the caller's current needs.

This could include:

- A mental health assessment or referral for an assessment
- Referral to one of our mental health care services
- Contacting your local psychological therapy service
- Contacting a different community service for support such as housing, financial advice or drug and alcohol issues

Details of the mental health crisis line can be found on the need help now page of the local Mental Health Info Point [www.halton.gov.uk/mhinfopoint](http://www.halton.gov.uk/mhinfopoint)

### 3.9 Additional support in response to the pandemic

Evidence suggests that some children and young peoples mental health and wellbeing was substantially impacted during the pandemic. In order to mitigate against this impact a variety of responses were initiated locally.

As part of the governments Mental Health Recovery Action plan 2021/2022 funding was allocated to the top 40 most deprived Local Authorities to help mitigate against the mental health impacts of Covid 19. Following a successful application Halton Public Health were awarded £267,206 to deliver 6 projects utilising Public Health England Prevention and

Promotion Better Mental Health funds.

Projects funded included:

- Bereavement support for Adults
- Bereavement support for Children and Young People
- Additional support to those struggling with financial insecurity and debt
- 5 ways to wellbeing activities to improve children and young peoples wellbeing
- Pilot programme to engage young males
- Part funded parenting programme coordinator

Halton Public Health also funded Educational Psychology to deliver a pilot wellbeing programme engaging parents/carers. The aim of the programme was to educate/support parents/carers to meet their own emotional needs so by default they are able to meet the needs of their children. Educational Psychology as part of the funding received will also deliver a trauma informed conference to schools.

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Halton Place funded additional support for children and young people for 1 year through the following VCSE organisations; Power In Partnership and Night Stop Communities Northwest CIC. Additional support was aimed at young people aged 18-25 with a specific focus on NEET. Additional support was up and running from February 2022. NHSE winter crisis funding was also accessed with the aim of preventing mental health crisis and was utilised to deliver 2- 12 week preventative programmes for 11-16 year olds.

In order to address the increase in emotional based school avoidance following the pandemic a multi agency response was established led by Safeguarding Children in Education and Educational Psychology.

### 3.10 Table 4- Numbers Engaged and Outcomes

<b>Service</b>	<b>Numbers Engaged / Outcomes</b>
Bereavement support for Adults*	<b>49</b> beneficiaries in 6 months
Bereavement support for CYP*	<b>159</b> beneficiaries in 7 months
Additional support for financial insecurity*	<b>581</b> beneficiaries in 7 months
5 ways to wellbeing activities	<b>2480</b> CYP accessed wellbeing activities
Pilot programme for young males	<b>30</b> beneficiaries in 6 months
Parenting programme coordinator	Variety of outcomes due to system change
Wellbeing programme for parents/carers	<b>11</b> parents engaged. Increase life satisfaction, self esteem, reduced anxiety * further 2 programmes to be delivered



Where's your head at programme	<b>50</b> CYP engaged over 6 month period
Power in partnership programme	<b>66</b> YP engaged Q1
Night Stop Mental Health Support	<b>5</b> beneficiaries Q1
Emotional based school avoidance work	multi-agency approach to emotional based school avoidance developed

Table 4 provides a summary of numbers engaged due to additional support provided in response to the pandemic.

The following services; bereavement support for adults, bereavement support for children and young people and additional support for financial insecurity, have been funded for a further 12 months by Halton Public Health until August 2023.

The Parenting Programme Co ordinator, who was recruited to support and oversee the delivery of the local parenting operational delivery action plan will continue to drive improvement within this field for up to 3 years due to additional funds found to extend the post. Outcomes achieved within the first 6 months include; creation of a single point of access for all parenting programme referrals, all referrals triaged by one person, working collaboratively with families to decide on best course of action, development of new data base, increase in referrals, training of additional staff to increase capacity and training 200 professionals in parental conflict.

Evaluation summaries and full evaluations for all projects funded via Public Health England Prevention and Promotion Fund Better Mental Health fund can be accessed by emailing [katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk](mailto:katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk)

Educational psychology wellbeing pilot involved the delivery of 4 wellbeing experiences to parents/carers based on the PERMA model; Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaningful and Accomplishment. Each experience consisted of 1 group session per week over 8 weeks. Parents who were accessing support via Haltons Early Help service were targeted to engage with the pilots. Priority was given to those struggling with the impact of trauma. Two out of the four sessions have been evaluated with 6 parents engaged from Runcorn and 5 parents engaged from Widnes. Improvements were seen in life satisfaction and reductions in anxiety. Several themes emerged such as: personal growth, increased self esteem and enhanced wellbeing. Once all 4 wellbeing experiences have been delivered a full evaluation will be completed.

Power in partnership programme and Night Stop Mental Health support services will continue until February 2023.

The Emotional Based school avoidance steering group developed a local procedure to support children and young people struggling with emotional based school avoidance. A pilot was funded utilising funding via NHS to support those with more complex needs. An evaluation is currently underway to establish the impact of the pilot. The Emotional Based school avoidance steering group continues to meet to address this ongoing need.

### 3.11 **Beyond transformation programme;- Improving emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people**

Children and young people (CYP) across Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M) are impacted severely by poor health outcomes and disproportionately negative health inequalities. The Beyond Transformation programme was established in April 2021 to meet NHS long term plan in relation to children and young people. It is funded via NHSE and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside. Its focus is on improving population health via a shift left in delivery to prevention and early intervention. Work takes place across 6 workstreams.

- Respiratory/Asthma
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Learning difficulties, disabilities and autism
- Healthy weight and obesity
- Epilepsy
- Diabetes

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing workstream focuses on the following projects:

- As One platform- Scoping digital single point of access across Cheshire and Merseyside
- Gateway project- Supporting CYP to access support before they reach crisis
- Paediatric /Mental health interface- Skill development for staff in acute physical health settings in relation to mental health presentations.
- Funded projects
  - **Team of life training**- training for front line staff to deliver team of life programme which focusses on building resilience via a narrative therapy approach.
  - **Next step training**- training for front line staff to enable them to utilise next steps cards which can support mental health conversations with young people.

## 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no new Policy implications as a result of this report

## 5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None

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

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

Services and projects discussed aim to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the borough.

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

Children and Young People who have their mental health needs met are more likely to be ready to learn impacting their future employment, learning and skills.

### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Services and projects discussed aim to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the borough.

### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Services and projects discussed aim to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the borough subsequently contributing to the reduced risk of suicide

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

None

## 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Covid has impacted population mental health negatively, the following cohorts have been specifically impacted; women, children and young people, adults who were shielding, adults living with children and lone mothers, ethnic minority population, adults with pre-existing mental health conditions, adults with low household income, unemployed. Risk of suicide has increased during the pandemic in the following: those isolated and lonely, those bereaved, those who have increased alcohol intake, those being domestically abused. Population mental health work that has taken place throughout covid has aimed to mitigate against these risks.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 All Public Health England Prevention and Promotion Mental Health Funded Projects engaged with marginalised children and young people populations.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

# It's all happening **IN HALTON**



[www.halton.gov.uk](http://www.halton.gov.uk)

# Children and Young people's Mental Health and Wellbeing update

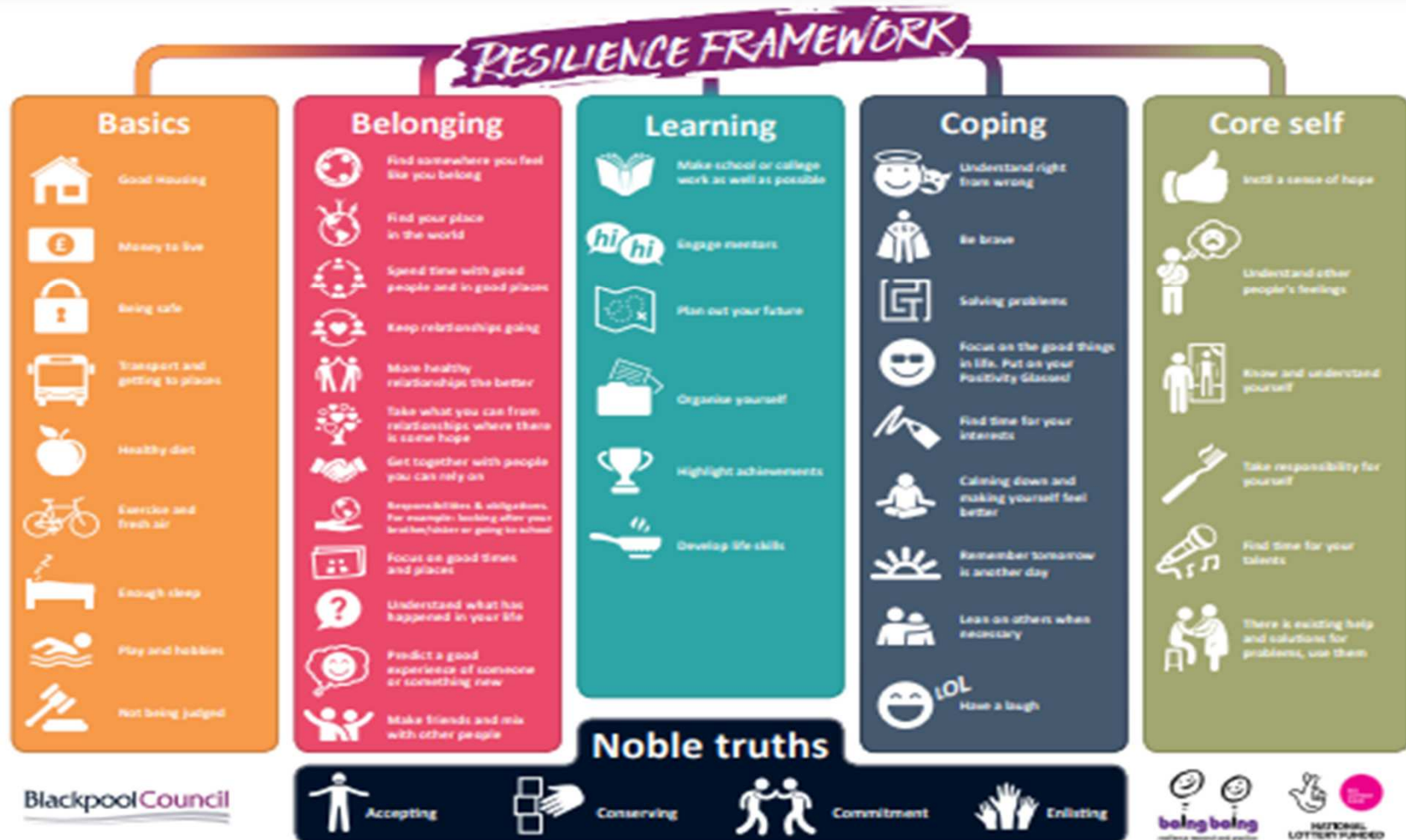
Mental Health and Wellbeing lead  
Halton Health Improvement Team

Kate Bazley

[katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk](mailto:katie.bazley@halton.gov.uk)



# Improving Resilience



Adapted from Hart & Blencow with Thomas 2007 [www.beingbeing.org.uk](http://www.beingbeing.org.uk). Co-designed with Marton Primary's Resilience Committee

# Core / Statutory Services

Lead organisation	Services funded
Local Authority	Educational Psychology <a href="#">Educational Psychology Service</a>
	Specialist support for Children in Care (Banardos-Moving on 2gether) <a href="#">Moving on 2gether</a>
	Nurture <a href="#">Haltons Nurturing Approach</a>
Public Health	Mental Health and Wellbeing prevention agenda for educational settings
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside–Halton Place	CAMHS
	Mental health Teams in Schools
	Baby Infant Bonding Service
	Eating disorder service
	REACH 24 hour text support
Mersey care	24 hour Crisis line

# Moving on 2Gether

## What we do

We provide specialist therapeutic support and interventions across Runcorn and Widnes to:

- children in care (5-25yrs)
- care leavers
- extended care leavers (up to 25 years)

We also provide information, advice and consultation to foster carers and professionals working with children under the care of Halton Local Authority.



Seeing you gives me someone to trust.  
- *Young Person*



Thanks so much for meeting with us all last week, it was really informative and useful to learn some strategies for the behaviours that XXX presents.  
- *SENCO from Young Person's school*



You have helped me so much with my guilt I carry, thank you!  
- *Young Person*



She's really good. I would definitely recommend her. She's like medicine.  
- *Foster Carer*



# Nurturing Approach

## Halton's Graduated Approach to Nurture in Education



# Mental Health and Wellbeing Prevention agenda for educational settings

Framework and Needs Assessment

Staff – Wellbeing

Staff Training

Connection to specialist support

Youth Lead Campaign Training \*Secondary's/Further Education

*“An incredibly useful and simple process that has given us immediate actions which have really benefited not just the students but staff too!”* Feedback re MHARS

## Examples of outcomes from completing MHARS

- Implemented supervisions for staff
- Further training on principles of nurture and imbedding nurture across the whole school
- Updated PHSE curriculum and trained staff to implement updated PHSE curriculum
- Create opportunities to volunteer in local school and community

## NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Health- Halton Place

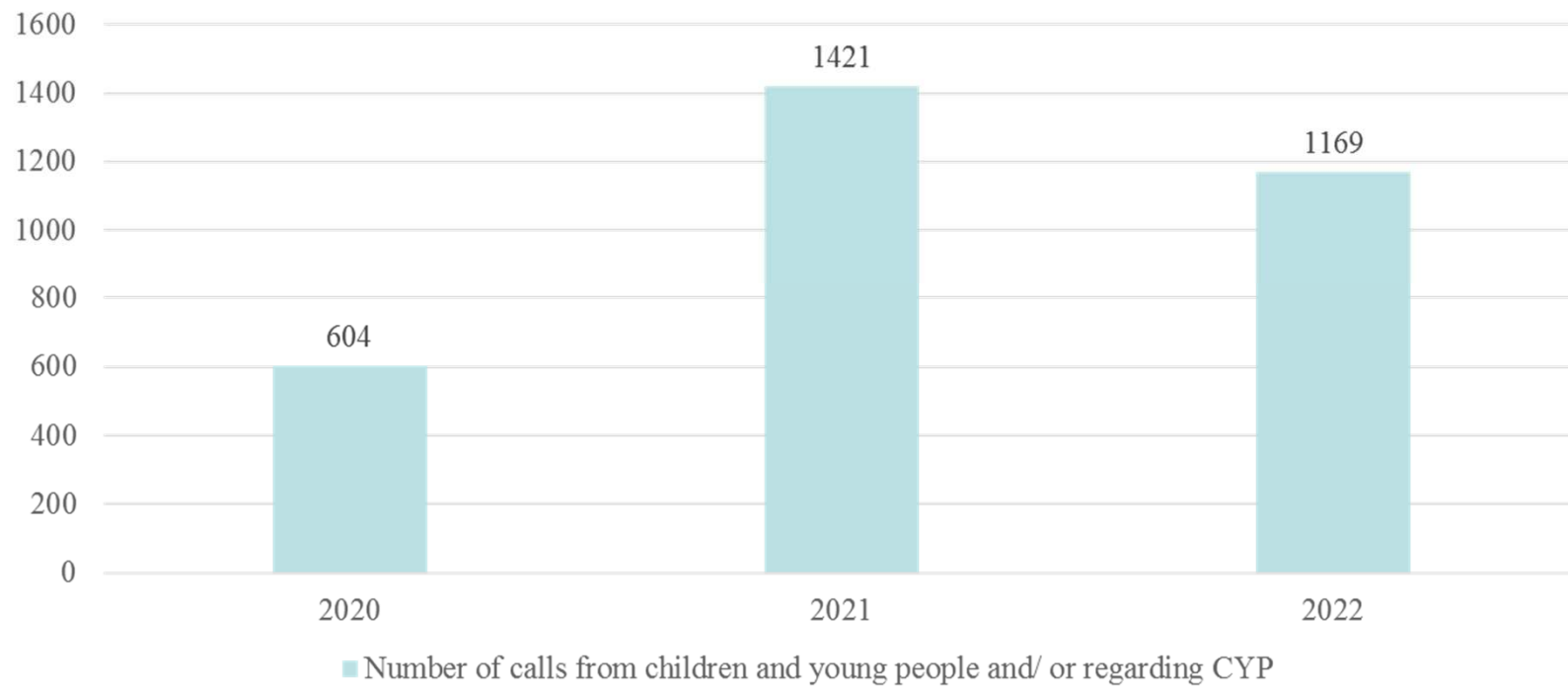
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside created Children and Young People Mental Health strategy- each area has to create an action plan by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2022.
- A North West Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) review has been undertaken and from this 9 recommendations have been made which each of the 9 places will now need to implement
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Halton place will be commissioning the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Halton place expansion of the Baby Infant Bonding service.

## NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Health- Halton Place

- Increased capacity funded for Eating disorder service during the pandemic.
- Launch of eating disorder website  
[www.merseycare.nhs.uk/our-services/warrington/children-and-young-peoples-community-eating-disorder-service](http://www.merseycare.nhs.uk/our-services/warrington/children-and-young-peoples-community-eating-disorder-service)
- Mental Health Support Teams in Schools- service commenced Jan 2022
- REACH 24 hr text support-173 supported from May to August 2022

# Mersey care 24 Hour Crisis line

Number of calls from children and young people and/ or regarding CYP



# Additional support in response to the pandemic

Lead Organisation	Service funded	Funding
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bereavement support for Adults</li> <li>-Bereavement support for CYP</li> <li>-Additional support to those struggling with financial insecurity and debt</li> <li>-5 ways to wellbeing activities to improve children and young peoples wellbeing</li> <li>-Pilot programme to engage young males</li> <li>-Part funded parenting programme coordinator</li> </ul>	PHE Prevention and Promotion Mental Health fund
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Educational Psychology funded to deliver x4 wellbeing pilots programme to parents/carers</li> <li>-Trauma informed conference to schools</li> </ul>	Additional funding received during Covid

# Additional support in response to the pandemic

Lead organisation	Service funded
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside- Halton Plac	Where's your head at x 2- 12 week programme for 11-16 year olds
	Power in Partnership for 18-25 year olds-1 year project <small>*from Feb 2022</small>
	Night stop mental health support for 18-25 year olds- 1 year funding <small>*from Feb 2022</small>
Local Authority	Emotional based school avoidance

# Numbers Engaged and Outcomes

Service	outcomes
Bereavement support for Adults*	<b>49</b> beneficiaries in 6 months
Bereavement support for CYP*	<b>159</b> beneficiaries in 7 months
Additional support for financial insecurity*	<b>581</b> beneficiaries in 7 months
5 ways to wellbeing activities	<b>2480</b> CYP accessed wellbeing activities
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Parenting programme coordinator	Variety of outcomes due to system change
Wellbeing programme for parents/carers	<b>11</b> parents engaged. Increase life satisfaction, self esteem, reduced anxiety
Where's your head at programme	<b>50</b> CYP engaged over 6 month period
Power in partnership programme	<b>66</b> YP engaged Q1
Night stop mental health support	<b>5</b> beneficiaries Q1
Emotional based school avoidance work	multi-agency approach to emotional based school avoidance developed



## Beyond transformation programme- Improving emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people

- **Digital single point of access-** scoping single point of access across the region
- **Gateway programme** -identifying and supporting Children and Young People before they reach crisis
- **Mental Health in Acute paediatric settings-** Skill development for staff in acute physical health settings in relation to mental health presentations
- **Funded programmes:**
  - Team of life training- Educational Psychology have accessed training and 30 Emotional Support Literacy Assistants (ELSAs) have been trained
  - Next step training- 59 staff trained locally out of 60 places

**REPORT TO:** Children, Young People & Families Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 23 January 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director, Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Annual Report - Comments, Complaints and Compliments relating to Children's Social Care Services 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Education and Social Care

**WARDS(S):** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To meet the statutory requirement to publish an Annual Report which provides an analysis on complaints processed under the Children Act 1989, Representation's Procedure and evidence how feedback from service users has been used to improve service delivery.
- 1.2 To provide the Board with an update and feedback on compliments made by clients and positive feedback from workers/professionals relating to Children Services in the People Directorate. This report will demonstrate the positive impact and outcomes on the lives of people accessing services in this Directorate.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 2.1 The reports presented are accepted as the mechanism by which Elected Members can monitor and scrutinise children's social care complaints and compliments.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The aim of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure is for Children and Young People to have their concerns resolved swiftly and wherever possible by the people who provide the service locally.
- 3.2 A complaint may generally be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response.
- 3.3 There are 4 categories to the representation process.
  - i. Statutory Complaints - the complainant is eligible as stated in the Representations Procedure to make a formal complaint.

- ii. Representations - where a complainant is not eligible under the Statutory Complaints Procedure to make a formal complaint, but their comments are noted and responded to. If it is not a complaint under the Statutory Procedure then the Corporate Complaints procedure may apply. These will often be as complex and take as much time as a statutory complaint and are recorded as Customer Care issues.
- iii. Customer Care issues – can also include advice and guidance, signposting, problem solving and early resolution to prevent complaint escalation.
- iv. Compliments – positive feedback

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Where identified through the complaints process, policies can be amended to improve service delivery. The learning taken from complaints, comments and compliments ensures the ongoing development of services to provide better outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- 4.2 Halton Council is a member of the North West Regional Complaints Managers Group. The aim of the regional groups, which meet bi-monthly, is to provide a forum in which peer professionals can discuss and learn about regional and national issues. Here there are opportunities to develop local practice standards, discuss performance and problem solve. The group also discuss proposed changes to legislation and procedures and prepare consultation responses where necessary.

#### **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 Failure to implement an efficient service could result in the Local Authority being challenged for not dealing with complaints in a timely and efficient manner and could result in the customer not receiving a service which could then detrimental to their safety and wellbeing.
- 5.2 Investing in a timely and thorough complaint investigation and response at Stage 1 identifies potential savings for the Local Authority which can prevent the complaints progressing to Stage 2 where there is a cost. It also prevents staff resources being directed to Stage 2 investigations.
- 5.3 Failure to meet the standards as prescribed in the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure and the Guidance “Getting the Best from Complaints” can potentially impact on the overall findings of an Ofsted Inspection.

#### **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 No matter who makes a complaint or a compliment they receive the same equality of access and provision.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 Children and Young People**

The learning taken from complaints and compliments ensures the ongoing development of services to provide better outcomes for children, young people and their families. The transparency of the process enables children, young people and their families to challenge our provision of services if they feel unhappy about any aspect of it and provides independent oversight if required.

### **7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Any findings from a comment, complaint or compliment relating to this priority will be used to inform the relevant service.

### **7.3 A Healthy Halton**

Any findings from a compliment relating to this priority will be used to inform the relevant service.

### **7.4 A Safer Halton**

Any findings from a compliment relating to this priority will be used to inform the relevant service.

### **7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Any findings from a comment, complaint or compliment relating to this priority will be used to inform the relevant service.

## **8.0 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>
Representation Procedure 1989	Rutland House	Dorothy Roberts Principal Policy Officer



# **Complaints Annual Report Children's Social Care Services 2021 / 22**



## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. The Children’s Social Care Statutory Complaints Process.....	4
3. The Corporate Complaints Process .....	5
4. Which Complaint Procedure should be used? .....	6
5. COVID – 19.....	7
6. Children’s Social Care Service .....	7
7. Key Messages up to here .....	8
8. Customer feedback data.....	9
8.1 Number of complaints Children and Families Division .....	9
8.2 The teams the complaints are made about.....	10
8.3 Who is contacting us and how .....	10
8.4 How quickly do we respond to complaints .....	11
8.5 Stage 2 investigations .....	11
8.6 Stage 3 Review Panels .....	11
8.7 Complaint outcomes and themes .....	12
8.8 The Local Government & Social Care (LGSCO).....	14
8.9 Actions taken and learnings .....	15
8.10 Complaints Training and Procedures.....	16
9. Compliments.....	16

## 1. Introduction

The report covers Children's Social Care Services for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, it details the complaints and compliments that have been formally recorded during this period. This introduction and up to chapter 4 are unchanged from last year's report, there has been no changes to the legislation, policy or procedure when dealing with complaints.

The Children's Act 1989 require all local authorities with Children's Social Care responsibilities in England and Wales to have a complaints procedure. The aim of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure is for Children and Young People to have their concerns resolved swiftly and wherever possible by the people who provide the service locally. 'Getting the Best from Complaints' provides guidance for local authorities on implementing the Children's Act and defines a complaint as being:

**A complaint may generally be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response.**

Statutory complaints relate to the provision of Children's Social Care and are handled in line with the national regulations referred to above, the key stages of which are set out in section 2 of this report: stage 1 - local resolution; stage 2 – investigation; stage 3 - review panel and section 4 - referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Complaints about Children's Social Care Services that do not fall under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure may be responded to under the local Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure which is set out in section 3 of this report. Some complaints may be addressed in accordance to internal HR procedures.

It is a requirement of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure for the local authority to have a designated officer who is responsible for the management of the procedure and who is independent of social care operational line management and of direct service providers. In order to contribute effectively to service development, the Complaints Management function is managed by the Principal Policy Officer based within the Policy, Provision and Performance Division in the Education, Inclusion & Provision Department.

There are other customer contacts which allow early resolution to prevent complaint escalation and this can include advice and guidance, signposting and problem solving direct with the customer. Another and very positive aspect is the recording and reporting of compliments and positive feedback received by the People (Children Services) Directorate.

This Annual Report is produced in line with national guidance and is designed to share information more widely with members of the public.

## 2. The Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints Process

The aim of complaint procedures is to resolve any dissatisfaction promptly, effectively and transparently and to inform service improvements to prevent service users experiencing the same issues in the future. We cannot promise to deliver the outcomes that complainants want, but we do make sure that complaints are dealt with as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

**STAGE 1** – the complaint will be allocated to the appropriate team manager who is asked to investigate the complaint. We always aim to resolve the problem as quickly as possible (within 10 working days) however, sometimes the complaint is complex so may take up to 20 working days.

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response or investigation at Stage 1 and feels that the complaint is not resolved, they or their representative can request to go to Stage 2.



**STAGE 2** - An external Independent Person is commissioned by Children's Services to further investigate the complaint. The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will aim to produce a report within 25 working days. However, if the case is complex, they can have a maximum of 65 working days in which to produce their reports. Once the reports have been finalised they are sent to the Adjudication Officer (usually the Head of Service) who will, after careful consideration of the reports, provide the complainant with a written response to their complaint.

If the complainant still remains dissatisfied with the decision/outcome following the independent investigation at Stage 2, they can ask to have their complaint reviewed by the Complaints Review Panel.



**STAGE 3** -. The Complaints Review Panel is made up of three external people who will review the complaint, but they will not reinvestigate or consider new complaints. The complainant can attend the panel meeting if they choose to and can bring a friend or someone they can trust.

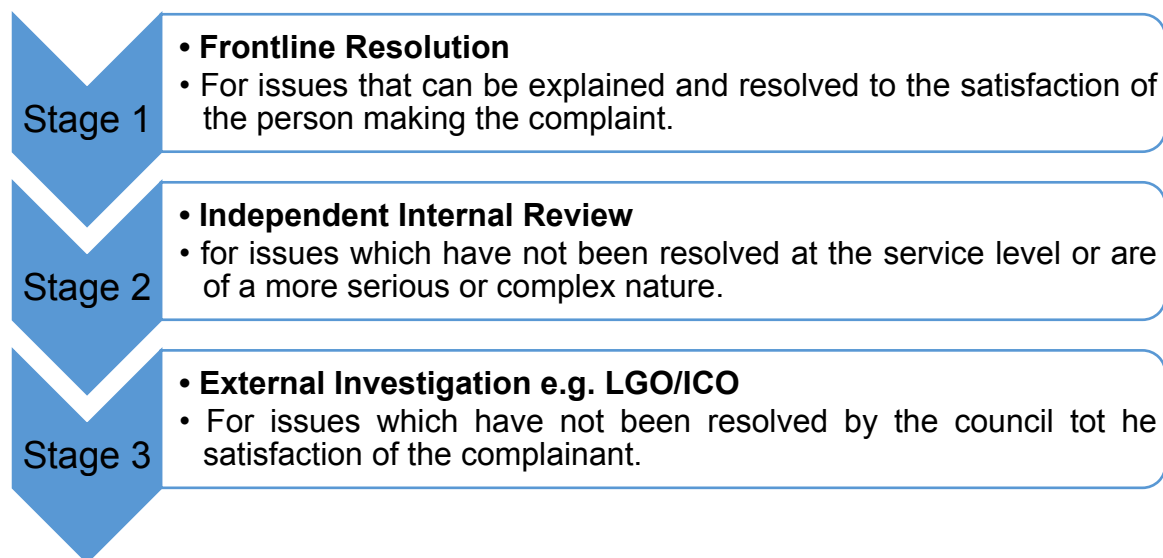


**STAGE 4** – If a complaint cannot be resolved locally, it can be investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). A complainant has the right to self-refer their complaint to the LGSCO at any stage during the complaint process. However, the LGSCO normally allows the Local Authority the opportunity to process a complaint through every stage of the complaints procedure, before investigating it themselves.



### 3. The Corporate Complaints Process

The Corporate Complaints Procedure consists of a two stage internal process.



The Council try to respond to all Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of receipt.

Where a Stage 2 review is undertaken the Independent Investigating Officer will aim to respond within 28 working days of receipt of the request.

The following types of complaints cannot progress beyond Stage 1 of the Procedure.

- Complaints about a Council policy or decision rather than the way that the policy or decision has been carried out.
- Complaints against the conduct of individual employees. Should such matters need to be progressed, after a Stage 1 response has been provided to the complainant, this will be done through the Council's internal management procedures.
- A decision where regulatory powers are being exercised (such as licencing and planning) unless the complaint relates to the way the matter has been administrated.
- Matters for which there is a right of appeal, a legal remedy, or where legal proceedings are ongoing.
- Matters that are of a general nature and do not relate to the provision, or lack of provision, of a service at an individual level.

#### 4. Which Complaint Procedure should be used?

The statutory guidance, Getting the best from complaints, sets out which of a council's children's social care functions that can be considered under the procedure. The guidance should always be read alongside the Children Act 1989, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the associated regulations referred to in the guidance itself.

The procedure covers complaints about councils' actions under Part 3 and some of Parts 4 and 5 of the Children Act 1989, as well as some adoption and special guardianship services. Generally, assessments and services in the following areas should be considered under the Statutory Procedure:

Children in need	Looked after children
Special Guardianship support	Post-adoption support

#### Complaints about the following tend to be exempt:

- Early Help
- Child protection including S47 enquiries and conferences
- Assessments of potential foster carers and adopters
- Foster carer registration
- Section 7 and Section 37 court reports

While these may be excluded from the Statutory Procedure, this does not prevent councils investigating them, it is expected that councils assess each complaint on its own merits and apply other procedures, such as the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

As a Council we do receive complaints where there is an overlap between those areas which are inside and outside the scope of the procedure, for example a case may have been at Section 47 Child Protection Conference and stepped down to Child in Need or, a Section 47 investigation concluded finding no concerns of a safeguarding nature and was instead referred to Early Help services for support.

The guidance allows councils to use their discretion to consider all parts of a complaint in a single investigation and response. Complainants should not be disadvantaged by any overlap between complaint procedures. Councils should consider which procedure is likely to produce the best result for the complainant and the child or young person.

## 5. COVID – 19

In January 2021 the government announced the third national lockdown. Under step one of the Prime Minister's roadmap for leaving lockdown, children returned to school with schools reopening on the 8th March 2021. From that point on and throughout 2021 - 22 lockdown eased and over a period of time restrictions were lifted. On the 24th February 2022 all COVID-19 rules were removed in England as part of the country's plan to "live with the virus".

COVID-19 was a crisis that has changed our world. Since its emergence and the first lockdown in March 2020, COVID-19 has continued to affect everything. The COVID-19 pandemic placed us under unprecedented pressure and created the most severe economic, social and health crisis in living memory. The impact of COVID-19 has not ended with a vaccine, it is still there but hopefully at a level that will not cause significant disruption in our daily lives.

Throughout COVID-19, for Children's Social Complaints in Halton it was business as usual in terms of accepting and acknowledging the complaint. The Principal Manager's capacity to investigate and respond to complaints within timescales remained an issue but this was more to do with issues within the Children Social Care workforce and the Ofsted Focus Visit.

## 6. Children's Social Care Service

A focused visit to Halton children's services took place on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (2 days of fieldwork contained within one week) with the findings released on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in need, including those who are subject to a child protection plan.

Ofsted's finding from this focused visit was that there had been a deterioration in the quality of social work practice for children in need of help and protection. Following this outcome the Local Authority was required to have an Improvement Plan that addressed the issues outlined in the focused visit and this has generated a great deal of work across the Children's Social Care workforce and, for those services that sit outside of that division that support them. Whilst Ofsted have identified improvements, the number of complaints and their nature have not changed, parents and carers will perhaps measure our performance on a different set of expectations, which are often personal to them.

There have also been significant challenges with staff recruitment and the retention of Social Workers in the department with a heavy reliance on agency staff. Management also had to step in to make up capacity to ensure children were safe.

In the previous year the Principal Policy Officer assisted managers greatly due to the impact of COVID-19 and their capacity to investigate and respond, this has continued through 2021-22 because of the above.

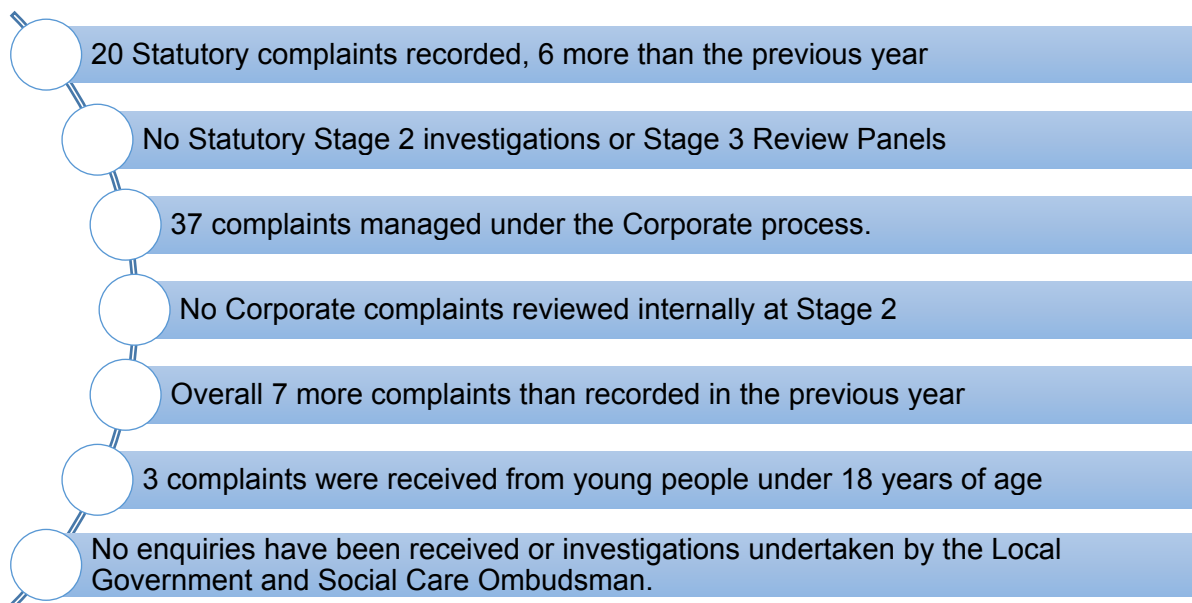
## 7. Key Messages up to here

One of our challenges is to make sure that we respond to and manage rising customer expectations and demands, but also recognise the opportunities this presents.

It is vital to continuous service improvement to know when things have gone right and when people are happy with the services they receive. However, on those occasions when things go wrong, complaints are equally valuable. They provide a chance to identify errors and to make sure the same mistake is not repeated in the future, we listen to feedback in order to continuously improve our services.

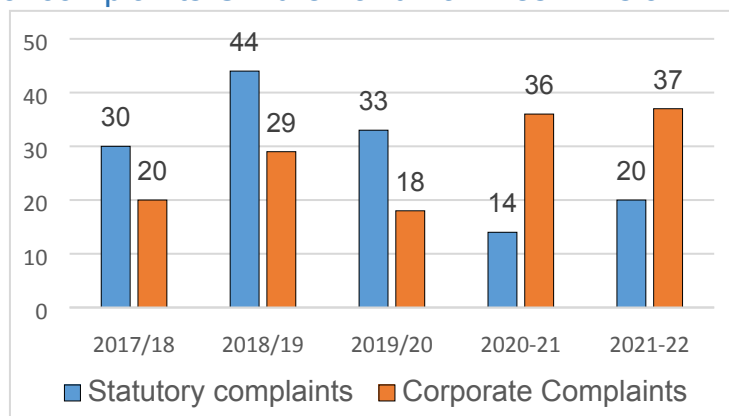
Feedback is around us all the time, every time we speak to someone we communicate feedback, it's impossible not to give feedback. For most of us in our day to day work there is that opportunity to pick up on those small signs of frustration, receive that feedback and address it there and then but sometimes regardless of best efforts or intentions they will escalate to a complaint.

Children's Social Care involvement is an emotive and worrying time for families and so managing their expectations can be a challenge.



## 8. Customer feedback data

### 8.1 Number of complaints Children and Families Division



	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020-21	2021-22
Total Complaints	50	73	51	50	57

Overall the numbers of complaints received remain comparable to previous years.

The volume of complaints does not, in itself, indicate the quality of a council's performance. High volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems. Low complaint volumes can be an indicator that all is well but can also be a worrying sign that an organisation is not alive to user feedback. The important information however is the outcome, not necessarily the number received.

It is also not always a negative thing to have complaints increase, it can evidence that clients know how to complain, that they have confidence in the process and are willing to engage in order to achieve a fair explanation of the facts

Last year was the first year that that the number of complaints investigated under the corporate process exceeded those under the statutory process, this has coincidentally been the two years of COVID-19.

Whilst technically lockdowns ceased, the social distancing and the health and safety requirements continued. This in turn continued to affect the delivery of some services to families i.e. for part of the year some visits/meetings were undertaken by video conference and direct work took place outdoors.

The Children's Services Directorate is continuing to see an increased demand across all of its services when funding for some elements of the service are being reduced. The Council is facing these budget pressures at a time when children and young people, parents/carers, education providers are continuing to deal with the resultant and ongoing effects of COVID-19, and the challenges that brings. With this in mind we need to be aware of the likelihood in the increased number of complaints in the future.

## 8.2 The teams the complaints are made about

	Statutory	Corporate
CIN & CP	10	28
CICCL	8	1
DAAT		2
EDT		2
iCART		1
INGLEFIELD	1	
SAFEGUARDING		2
TRANSITION	1	
COMPLAINTS		1
	20	37

The greatest number of complaints continues to be in the Children in Need and Child Protection (CIN & CP) Division. The frontline service deals with a large number of cases with very difficult issues to address. Numbers are comparative to the previous year, just 3 less.

For the Children in Care and Care Leavers service (CICCL) the number of complaints received increased from 3 last year to 9 in this year.

## 8.3 Who is contacting us and how

Parents continue to be the highest majority when it comes to making complaints, 39 out of 57.

Halton Borough Council commissions the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to support Children in Care and Care Leavers. All young people in contact with the team are offered access to an advocate so that their voices can be heard, this is often at the point of service delivery where the matter can be resolved rather than progressing to a complaint. In this financial Year NYAS supported 9 complaints;

- 3 were from young people under 18 years of age
- 6 were in relation to supporting Care Leavers.

Of note is the fact that 3 of the 6 care leavers that NYAS supported were doing so in relation to their own children being open to the Child in Need service.

2 Complaints were in relation to young people with disabilities.

Halton continues to have a low ethnic minority. No complaints were received from someone in an ethnic minority.

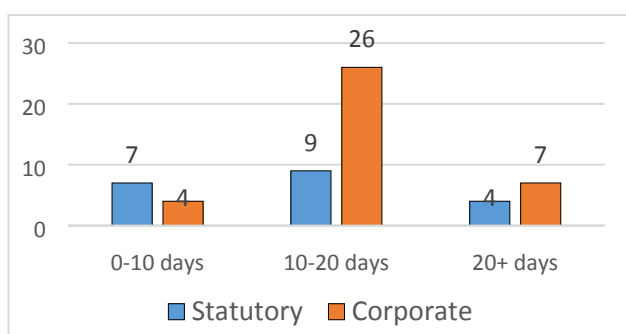
E-mailing complaints continues to be the preferred method to make a complaint, this is probably due to the ease of access on mobile devices and the desire for them to have their own written record. Due to COVID-19 these last two years, it has restricted movement in terms of post and access to Halton Direct Link offices and so this is also reflected in the increased emails.

	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
Email	19	43%	19	58%	43	86%	48	84%
Telephone	14	32%	8	24%	5	10%	7	12%
Complaint Form	5	11%	4	12%	2	4%	0	
Letter	6	14%	2	6%			1	2%
Meeting							1	2%

## 8.4 How quickly do we respond to complaints

In regards to statutory complaint timescales, there was a decline in responding within 10 working days and there has also been an increase in those taking longer than 20 working days. This may be reflective of the issues within the Children Social Care Service but also, some complaints are complex and involve multiple issues to respond to and therefore require comprehensive responses which can take significant time to compose. Social Workers have the right to respond to complaints made in respect of the work they undertake on the councils behalf and so other commitments such as their attendance at court hearings can impact on their availability.

<b>Statutory</b>	<b>% within 10 days</b>	<b>% within 20 days</b>	<b>% over 20 days</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>9%</b>



Overall the number of Statutory and Corporate complaints responded to within 20 working days was 81%. A 1% increase from last year

Despite the challenges faced this year, the majority of complaints have been responded to in a timely manner. Responses that took longer were either complex, lengthy or due to staff capacity/availability.

## 8.5 Stage 2 investigations

No stage 2 external independent investigations took place under the statutory complaints procedure.

The Corporate Complaints team did review one complaint at Stage 2 and concluded that each of the matters raised had been fully and properly considered and that a detailed explanation had been provided. Where there are conflicting accounts of what occurred the Council is unable to objectively determine which account is correct.

## 8.6 Stage 3 Review Panels

No Stage 3 Review Panels took place under the statutory complaints procedure.



## 8.7 Complaint outcomes and themes

We record complaints under 3 main categories, 'service provision' is about how we have done things, and it's about how we have delivered it and the quality. 'Assessment and review' is about the process, have we done what we should have done in accordance to policy, procedure or regulations as well as challenges to the content of the assessment and the outcome of it.

The Complaints Procedures are not designed to deal with allegations of misconduct by staff and this is the third category however, they will be interwoven into the complaint. Complaints about staff conduct are often linked to the decisions they have made or the service they have provided and so for recording purposes we look at the context of the complaint. Complaints received about staff conduct do not necessarily mean that they are making poor decisions, rather, it can be an indicator that complainants do not agree with the rationale or policy on which the decision is based. Complainants will disagree with the social workers analysis of the information and the judgement made, this then leads to complaints about their conduct and these can be difficult to manage. Complaints of this nature would be responded to under Stage 1 of the Corporate Procedures only. Should any further action be required this would be dealt with in accordance to the organisations disciplinary procedures.

In the majority of cases, complaints have multiple issues that need responding to and that will cross over all three categories and so the Principal Policy Officer taking into consideration the main crux of the complaint, the desired outcome, and the complaint findings will determine the category. Of the statutory complaints received in 2021-22;

- 25% were categorised as Assessment / Review Process
- 56% as Service Provision
- 14% in respect of staff

In comparison to last year there has been a shift in the number categorised as Assessment and Review Process from 50% to 25% the difference therefore has shown as an increase in service provision and in respect of staff.

Once a complaint has been concluded it will be recorded as being

- Upheld - this means that the service made mistakes or provided a poor service that amounted to maladministration or service failure.
- Not upheld – the service acted correctly
- Partly upheld - where there are complaints with multiple issues there may be a mix of complaints that were up held and not upheld and so overall for recording purposes they will be recorded as partly upheld but, it can also be recorded as this if it is a single element where it was not wholly the fault of the service.

<b>Statutory and Corporate</b>	Upheld	Not upheld	Partly upheld	Total
Assessment / Review Process	0	14	3	17
Service Provision	4	21	7	32
Staff	0	7	1	8
Total	4	42	11	57

### **Previous Year Comparison**

2020-2021 comparison	5	33	12	50
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There were 12 (21%) complaints were linked to Court cases in the Court arena, The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) can decide not to investigate because another body, such as Court as it is better placed to consider it, there is no such limit placed on Councils. The guidance allows councils to decide not to investigate a complaint if it would prejudice a concurrent investigation, including those in court proceedings. We do not refuse to accept a complaint because it is in the Court arena. Providing a response may aid clarification for families who are going through an already worrying time, following this they will be advised to challenge the content, views and analysis of the Social Worker in the Court arena. These matters are recorded under corporate complaints and at Stage 1 as there is no recourse to Stage 2 due to the legal proceedings.

The world of Children's Social Care complaints is unique, families often do not want Social Workers involved however, the statutory duty to safeguard requires them to be involved and so before any work commences, conflict can be there at the onset.

The theme of delay and communication is perhaps not surprising given the issues as identified in point 6 of this report i.e. challenges with staff recruitment and retention, reliance on agency staff.

The following table, provides a summary of those complaints upheld or partly upheld.

<b>Issue complained about</b>		<b>Remedy, comment</b>
Confusion around contact	Upheld	Apologies, contact rearranged
Delay in receiving copies of minutes	Upheld	Apologies, minutes were given
How they felt they were spoken to	Partly upheld	Apologies, advice given to staff
Refused financial assistance	Upheld	Apologies, financial assistance given
Social Worker did not cancel arranged appointment, unnecessary delay	Upheld	Apologies, advice given to staff member
Social Worker did not respond to messages left	Upheld	Apologies, advice given to staff member
Core Group meeting cancelled, drift and delay due to number of Social Workers within short period (4 left, 1 promoted).	Upheld	Apologies, permanent worker allocated to progress. Developing Workforce Strategy
Social work visit after case closed. Reason not communicated.	Upheld	Apologies and explanation i.e. outstanding action identified at case audit.
Speed of dealing with the issue.	Partly upheld	Apologies and explanation. Issue investigated by Independent Fostering Agency hence delay. Issue resolved.
Drift and delay in assessment, meetings and progress	Upheld	Apologies, staff absence/ shortage, case reallocated. Developing Workforce Strategy.
Not provided with report 3 days prior to meeting as per procedure. Not provided with copy of minutes from a meeting	Upheld	Apologies, meeting arranged for a later date. Copy given, system issue.
Not receiving documents in a timely manner	Upheld	Apologies, staff shortage service prioritising.
Did not respond to message left	Upheld	Apologies, oversight

The following table provides some themes of complaints made that were not upheld.

Not providing immediate response to text, calls or emails
Placement move
Staying put arrangement
Biased / discriminated in the other parties favour
Disagree with content of the report/assessments/information held in records
Attitude, tone, content of Social Workers response, feel intimidated
Contact with family
Children Social Care involvement, not necessary
Alleged Data Protection breach but was a safeguarding issue
Student Bursary for Care Leaver, was given but weren't aware progressed to university

Communication - the nature of Children's Social Care means that often workers carry out difficult conversations with families at a very emotive time and this can lead to complaints about communication when in is a difference in perception or recollection.

Statutory Duty - complaints are received disputing the need for Children Social Care to be involved in carrying out assessments, these are rarely upheld due to the statutory duty placed on the Local Authority to investigate children safeguarding concerns, the service recognises this to be a stressful and worrying time for families.

Factual accuracy – where there is a disagreement over the content of an assessment or report, it is important that we establish the detail as there is a difference between factual accuracy and the opinion or analysis made by the worker involved. We do also have to consider the arena for reports to be presented, reports requested by courts should be challenged in the court arena.

## 8.8 The Local Government & Social Care (LGSCO)

During this financial year no enquiries have been received from the LGSCO in relation to Children Social Care.

Local Government &  
Social Care  
**OMBUDSMAN**

The Local Government Ombudsman published a focus report about the statutory complaints procedure in 2015. The common issues identified then remain the same today, failing to recognise a children's statutory complaint, choosing the wrong procedure, unnecessary delays in the procedure, refusing to complete all stages of the procedure. In March 2021 The LGO published a guide to share learning from their investigations about how councils should apply the regulations and statutory guidance and to address the most common questions they get asked in the hope that this guide would result in greater consistency for those who complain about the service they receive from councils.

## 8.9 Actions taken and learnings

Complaints are used by the Council as an opportunity to learn and improve, we try to ensure that the same issues do not reoccur. Everyone is capable of making a mistake no matter how well trained and motivated they are however, in the workplace the consequences of human error, an 'action or decision which was not intended' can impact on others, staff do not set out to get it wrong. No complaints were as a result of a deliberate deviation from a rule or procedure.

Whilst not as a direct result of a complaint received, complaints are a contributing factor to the development of the Social Work Practice Standards, this clarifies expectations from Social Workers when working with families i.e. visits and meeting timeliness, assessments, communicating these and case recording.

Child Protection Conference meetings being cancelled and rearranged are now challenged by the Head of Safeguarding. This has improved the timeliness of documentation/reports and resulted in fewer cancelled meetings.

The Children and Young People Service, Workforce Strategy was completed and work continues to progress to evolve the workforce. Its aim is to develop employees to be a confident, competent and skilled.

There are always complaints from customers in relation to not being able to get in touch with their allocated social worker immediately or directly and it is difficult to know how to prevent these long term. Of the complaints received about this, only 1 was upheld for failing to respond.

In last year's Complaints report we stated that as a result of an LGO report an assessment pack was developed and is given to families at the beginning of their involvement, it explains the processes and types of questions asked during the assessment, and ensures that families are consistently given the same information at the onset. It also captures some other themes raised in complaints such as the availability of staff when ringing and leaving messages so that they can understand why they may not get an immediate response as well as a section on 'frequently asked questions'. Within the pack it also contains information on how to make a complaint. This information is being received by families, there have been complainants who have referenced finding the contact/complaint information from this.

Learning from complaints is discussed by investigating managers with individual staff members and where appropriate their teams to inform practice, they are also shared with the relevant heads of service.

Local Government Ombudsman publish findings from cases they have investigated elsewhere in the country; they provide an opportunity to reflect on the consequences of processes not being applied, learn from them and develop our own practice. A selection of these reports are shared with the Senior Management Team to cascade to appropriate staff.

## 8.10 Complaints Training and Procedures

No training sessions took place in this financial year in part due to COVID-19 and the Ofsted Focus inspection both of which put the service under significant pressures. Training did occur for some new staff as part of their induction with emails being sent to staff to confirm the process.

The Principal Policy Officer will continue to work proactively alongside the workforce making enquiries and challenging findings in order to help catch issues quickly and resolve dissatisfaction locally to prevent unnecessary escalation. This in turn will enable the workforce to further develop their own complaint handling skills.

## 9. Compliments

A separate report is compiled that records all the positive comments received and so this is a snapshot.

Year	Total
19-20	67
20-21	92
21-22	73

A slight reduction in the amount of compliments and positive feedback recorded this year.

It is important to remember that all the Divisions, Team around the Family, Children in Need, Children in Care and the Safeguarding Unit work together to support families. As an example, a child on a Child Protection Plan could be open to the Child in Need Division and the Safeguarding Unit.

	19-20	20-21	21-22
<b>CIN</b>	25%	44%	26%
<b>CIC</b>	42%	14%	19%
<b>TAF</b>	33%	42%	53%
<b>SG</b>			2%

*Email - I met the Social Workers during the most difficult period of my life and during a time when my faith and trust in Social care had been completely shattered. I was incredibly wary of working with both social workers. However, in my opinion they both went above and beyond in their dedication to my family's case and worked with immeasurable integrity that I am extremely grateful for. Their actions provided me with a degree of closure and with hope for the future. I believe they are a credit to Halton social care and I just wanted to officially commend them for their actions. Kind regards. (Client)*

*Card - Thank you for helping me, you are the best social Worker in the world. (Client under 18ys)*

*Card - For a much loved and truly inspirational lady, a huge thank you, thank you for making a difference and being so supportive. (Client)*

Email - *Even though there is still a little way to go for him, I just wanted to thank you. You have been a help to us as a family and I don't think it would have been easy without you. You are the only person who has gained his trust outside of the family.* (Client)

Text - *We passed the fostering panel! Thank you for all your support and having faith in us.* (Client)

Email - *I just wanted to say I'm very grateful for all your help and support with myself, my children and partner too. You have been one of the most genuine social workers we have ever worked with. You have listened to us, gave us advice and brought in any outside support we have needed. You have always been at the end of the phone if we needed you and have made my children feel supported and listened too when they have felt concerned. Thank you for putting the time and effort into helping my family it means so much to me that I had you believing in me as a mum.* (Client)

Email - *Today we have been granted the SGO therefore we are handing in our 28 days' notice to fostering. Thank you for all our support and training, without your guidance and advice this could not have occurred. Thank you C for your friendship and belief in our abilities.* (Client)

Email - *A supervision order has been granted so we are no longer acting as friends and family foster carers. We are now acting as grandparents which is what we have always wanted. I would like to pass on my thanks to you for your help, kindness and support. It has always been given in a very warm and unobtrusive way and has been a godsend to us. I would also like to thank L and would like it known that she has done an amazing job and has always seen the positive and has given us so much help and support in getting us all to the happy place that we have strived to reach. I really can't express my gratitude enough and wish you the very best of wishes for the future.* Thank you. (Client)

Email - *I just wanted to email to thank you for your input into the meeting that was held with regards to my daughter's application to College, I found your input really helped. You may not remember but you had dealings many moons ago, it was yourself who explained how direct payment would work and you helped me put it all into place, where it has remained and has given me and family much needed respite. Thank you for your support it really was appreciated.* (Client)

This compliment is a good illustration of the long memories people have and just how much of an impact we have on the lives of people and children/adults we work with even when their lives are very demanding, we can do something quite small to make a difference.

# Compliments Annual Report

## People Directorate Children's Services

2021 / 22



## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Customer Feedback Data .....	4
3. Children and Families Service.....	5
3.1 Child Protection and Children in Need .....	5
3.2 Children in Care and Care Leavers.....	7
3.3 Team around the Family .....	8
3.4 Safeguarding Unit .....	12
4. Education, Inclusion & Provision Department .....	12
4.1 Inclusion 0 - 25 .....	12
4.2 Policy, Provision & Performance .....	13
4.3 Education 0-19yrs .....	14
4.4 Commissioning.....	15



## 1. Introduction

The report details the compliments that have been formally recorded for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 in respect of the Children's Services Department of the People Directorate.

A compliment is *"an expression of praise, commendation, admiration or respect,"* for someone and for something they have done, it is given freely.

There is a statutory complaint process for Children's Social Care that handles negative feedback and affords customers the opportunity to let us know when we have not performed to their expectation. Complaints get logged, formalised and circulated however, compliments and thanks were often just expressed to one individual and never acknowledged again. It is these comments that make the job rewarding and that measure our success or impact on a family and so this report was developed to capture some of those positive comments and balance this negative input from complaints, with the positive feedback and compliments that are received.

It's hard to quantify the impact of a compliment, much less to describe its effect in a few bullet points. Nonetheless, here are a few observations about compliments.

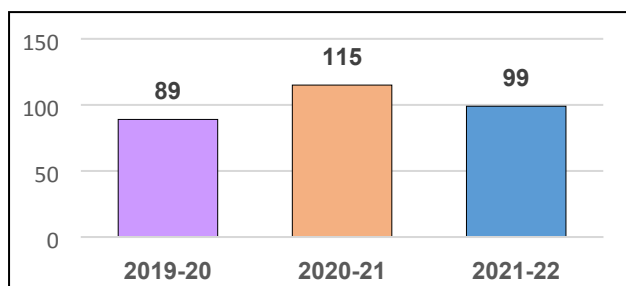
- Compliments are a measure of awareness from our Service Users; it is their acknowledgment of the positive relationships developed with staff supporting them and of the good developments and positive effects services have had on their family.
- Staff benefit from receiving compliments, knowing that they are noticed and that they are valued is powerful in motivating continued efforts enhancing their performance and contributing to their improved skills.
- Compliments affirm the right behaviour and actions. If someone is questioning their ability or actions, a compliment can give them a clear sense of their direction. People strive to do more of what brings praise from others, it stimulates and strengthens their purpose and enthusiasm for their work.
- Compliments can be used as a form of quality assurance, on a service level compliments can influence the development or continuation of service provision, identifying the things that need to be kept or identifying what needs to change.

I am sure there will be more compliments and positive feedback received, that staff hear or receive this positive feedback all the time and just put it down to being the job!





## 2. Customer Feedback Data



A slight reduction in the amount of compliments and positive feedback recorded this year.

### Number of Service Users providing a Compliment for Children Services

	19-20	20-21	21-22
%	63%	60%	58%
Number	56	68	57

### Number of Professionals who provided positive feedback to services

	19-20	20-21	21-22
%	37%	40%	42%
Number	33	47	42

Recognition from external agencies and other internal departments demonstrate good working relationships. Recognising the value of working together and the contribution each makes to achieve positive outcomes for families is a recognition of the excellent work undertaken in Halton.

### How Service User Compliments are received

Electronic communication unsurprisingly continues to be the most accessible means to provide compliments and positive feedback and, it increased this year with;

- 64% using email
- 11% providing verbal feedback
- 4% purchasing a card
- 10% completing feedback forms
- 1% writing a letter
- 10% via text

### Compliments by Operational Department

The Children's Services compliments report relates to the Education, Inclusion & Provision Department (EIP), and the Children and Families Service Department (C&F).

	19-20	20-21	21-22
C&F	75%	79%	74%
EIP	25%	21%	26%

### 3. Children and Families Service

Year	Total
19-20	67
20-21	92
21-22	73

	19-20	20-21	21-22
CIN	25%	44%	26%
CIC	42%	14%	19%
TAF	33%	42%	53%
SG			2%

#### 3.1 Child Protection and Children in Need

1. Email - I met the Social Workers during the most difficult period of my life and during a time when my faith and trust in Social care had been completely shattered. I was incredibly wary of working with both social workers. However, in my opinion they both went above and beyond in their dedication to my family's case and worked with immeasurable integrity that I am extremely grateful for. Their actions provided me with a degree of closure and with hope for the future. I believe they are a credit to Halton social care and I just wanted to officially commend them for their actions. Kind regards. (Client)
2. Email - The team met each Friday for 'Feel good Friday's'. Each member of the team will speak of something or someone who has had a positive impact on their week. The team as a whole spoke of the positive impact you have on the team. You always say hello, share your knowledge and expertise and offer to support when we need an extra person for visits no matter the time. As a team we wanted to pass on our thanks and appreciation for the positive impact you have. I can honestly say there is never a day that he doesn't give 110%. (Professional)
3. Verbal - Carer reports that she has felt very supported and she feels that as a family, they have been able to build really positive, supportive and open relationship with all the social workers involved. She stated that she felt that the workers involved have transformed the working relationship from a negative experience to an extremely positive and supportive relationship. She felt that she had not always been able to trust the relationship with services before the Fostering Team and Z became involved. She said she could not speak highly enough of the workers and that if she has any questions or issues they are dealt with as soon as she raises them. (Client)
4. Verbal - Supervision Order granted. The Judge in his judgement spoke about the exemplary social work practice and measured responses of the Local Authority. (Professional)
5. Email - I wish you were the SW for all my cases!! You are doing an excellent job – well done!! (Professional)
6. Verbal - Just to let you know that Z from Bedfordshire was very complimentary on the phone to me on Wednesday about the support that the Widnes team have been able to give her with visits to X etc. She was very appreciative. (Professional)
7. Card & Chocolates - Thank you so much for all your help. (Client)
8. Email - I just wanted to say it has been a pleasure to work with you, you have been efficient through B's placement and have always responded quickly to any queries we have had. My foster carers have enjoyed working with you and have both commented on the high level of communication and good multi agency working, this has been appreciated. In times of absence your manager has been equally communicative which was much appreciated when M had to leave the placement. As I said on the phone, working with you has been our first experience of working with Halton LA and we really look forward to working with you, Halton and the wider team in the future. (Professional)

9. Card - Thank you for helping me, you are the best social Worker in the world. (Client under 18ys)
10. Card - For a much loved and truly inspirational lady, a huge thank you, thank you for making a difference and being so supportive. (Client)
11. Email - I must say thanks for all your support throughout my time at Halton. You are truly a good guy with excellent qualities, i.e. friendly, genuine, patient and extremely supportive. (Professional)
12. Verbal - I have just had a telephone conversation with his parent who told me that he has been very impressed with her work "If I leave her a message she gets back to me, if she says he will do something then she does it." She has been approachable and reliable. He said that she had been "amazing" and he has found her very easy to work with.(Client)
13. Email - I just wanted to say I'm very grateful for all your help and support with myself, my children and partner too. You have been one of the most genuine social workers we have ever worked with. You have listened to us, gave us advice and brought in any outside support we have needed. You have always been at the end of the phone if we needed you and have made my children feel supported and listened too when they have felt concerned. Thank you for putting the time and effort into helping my family it means so much to me that I had you believing in me as a mum. (Client)
14. Email - Thank you for organising today's strategy meeting. We feel so reassured that X and mum will get the support they need and this I think was a great example of agencies working together. I really appreciate all you have done to make this happen. (Professional)
15. Email - Even though there is still a little way to go for him, I just wanted to thank you. You have been a help to us as a family and I don't think it would have been easy without you. You are the only person who has gained his trust outside of the family. (Client)
16. Email - Before the conversation ended she was at pains to point out just how highly you are regarded in iCART and with every professional she has come across in her work over the past few weeks. She couldn't sing your praises highly enough and wanted to ensure I pass that message on. (Professional)
17. Email - I just wanted to highlight the amazing work that A and B have been doing with the families they are offering support and interventions to. Without the intervention/support A and B have offered the outcome may have been different for the families. Both of them have gone above and beyond to ensure the best possible outcomes for families, working in a child focused way and have supported me and professionals. Making sure that support is offered timely and appropriately. With two particular families I am confident without their intervention/support the outcomes for the children would not have been as positive. They offered consistency in professional relationship, so that the child's voices are heard and from that they have offered appropriate interventions for them families. I just want to say thank you and I feel privileged that I am working with you both and you are sharing you skills and knowledge to make changes for the families we are working with. (Professional)
18. Verbal - I held foster carer reviews this morning and I wanted to share that it was an absolute pleasure to hear the foster carer offer very high praise indeed for all the support you have given them. They have had a particularly difficult time over recent months due to bereavement, they have been able to maintain placement for Z throughout and credit you with providing much of the support for them to do so. Well done you!! Keep up the fabulous work. (Client)

19. Email - Can I also add how supportive you have been over the last couple of weeks. It is so important that we all communicate and sing from same song sheet. So, the children are getting the same message and stability they need during these difficult times. I understand how busy you both are and how hard you work. I understand one thing can take up you whole day! But you both always keep me informed, it makes my job so much easier so we can support the children in school. It is an absolute pleasure to be working alongside you both. Once again thank you. (Professional)

### **3.2 Children in Care and Care Leavers**

20. Text - We passed the fostering panel! Thank you for all your support and having faith in us. (Client)

21. Verbal - You have gone above and beyond to ensure items have been presented as quickly as possible despite challenges with other agencies to get statutory information through due to Covid challenges. You massively under estimate and under-sell your contribution to the smooth running of fostering panel. (Professional)

22. Email - Huge praise for my manager who has been incredibly supportive over the last 12 months/2 years – I have had an incredibly challenging series of events in my home life and she has been available and responsive (both in work and occasionally out of hours!!) throughout. I have felt incredibly supported by her, she has been an absolute star. I would say she has totally exceeded her remit of support as my manager although she would say she was just doing her job! This is nothing I haven't already said to her already. (Professional)

23. Evaluation - We would like to thank everyone for their ongoing support, it has been an exciting first six months, has been so patient with us. She was holding weekly calls at one point, answering any queries and guiding us in the right direction, we couldn't have done it without her. (Client)

24. Email - Just to flag up the praise the Guardian gave in her report - commenting that the significant progress was no doubt aided by the LA putting in the appropriate resources and by the fact that the same SW had been involved for so long. (Professional)

25. Verbal - Just wanted to share some positive feedback from IFA Foster Carers. They have been at fostering panel today to discuss a long term match and they spoke very positively in terms of your work with them which will be reflected in panel minutes. Z - they were very complimentary about your communication with them about contact timetables and sharing information with them about how things have gone. X – they were very complimentary about your availability and communication with them. They were impressed with your engagement with the child. Well done ladies, keep up the good work. (Client)

26. Email - Thank you for passing on yours and panel's kind comments about the carers following the meeting today. It is so pleasing when working together really works as I believe it has done in this case. We cannot fault Halton at all with the way that the case has been managed, particularly in terms of the social worker being so proactive and passionate about securing permanency for our young boy. As an organisation we are so happy to be able to part of his life and look forward to helping him reach his fullest potential, but more importantly watching him enjoy his childhood in this very well matched placement. I would just like to add that I was very impressed with the Halton panel today, they were robust yet friendly in asking questions that they had quite rightly considered needed further clarification. I look forward to working with Halton over the coming years. (Professional)

27. Email - Can I just say you are one of the best social workers I have ever come across and I have worked in residential for almost 20 year's. (Professional)

28. Email - I just wanted to email to thank you for your input into the meeting that was held with regards to my daughter's application to College, I found your input really helped. You may not remember but you had dealings many moons ago, it was yourself who explained how direct payment would work and you helped me put it all into place, where it has remained and has given me and family much needed respite. Thank you for your support it really was appreciated. (Client)
29. Verbal - They wanted to share with me how wonderful the responsiveness and support has been to them from both M and L – she said that you are both 'worth your weight in gold'. (Client)
30. Email - A supervision order has been granted so we are no longer acting as friends and family foster carers. We are now acting as grandparents which is what we have always wanted. I would like to pass on my thanks to you for your help, kindness and support. It has always been given in a very warm and unobtrusive way and has been a godsend to us. I would also like to thank L and would like it known that she has done an amazing job and has always seen the positive and has given us so much help and support in getting us all to the happy place that we have strived to reach. I really can't express my gratitude enough and wish you the very best of wishes for the future. Thank you. (Client)
31. Email - Today we have been granted the SGO therefore we are handing in our 28 days' notice to fostering. Thank you for all our support and training, without your guidance and advice this could not have occurred. Thank you C for your friendship and belief in our abilities. (Client)
32. Email - I have several case with Z and just wanted to say what a pleasure it is to work with him. His reports are really informative and clear that he has a good understanding of each of the children he is the SW for. He is child centred in his approach and the children's views are clear in all of his documents he has made good links with other professionals and this is evidenced in the CIC review meetings and reports. I really like that he follows up everything he says he will but equally he is balanced and will accept when something has not been done and gives clear apologies to the young people even when the task that was not completed was not down to him. He presents in CIC reviews very professional has a lovely tone that is welcoming to families even when he is challenging or reporting difficult information. The young people clearly like him and his approach for example one of the young people when she found out Z was going to be his SW raised concerns that he might shout at her (previous negative experience of males) she now tells me that she likes Z and he is funny and has asked to see him more. This has been a really positive experience for a young person to have a good male role model and that all males don't shout. I always look forward to working with him. (Professional)
33. Email - Sorry for the late reply, been so busy, started a new job and been working on music, can honestly not thank you enough for putting us onto X it was an opportunity of a lifetime and he wants us to come back next year. All the best. (Client)

### **3.3 Team around the Family**

34. Evaluation - I used to really scared and anxious, all you've done is help and stop me from worrying. We are really thankful and grateful. Tactics have been really helpful and we can see improvement. (Client, Care leaver)
35. Evaluation - It has turned everything around, there is no more arguing, I have felt supported, I felt that I am doing things right, the children have felt they have someone else to talk to other than me. I am so grateful that you came into our lives, I feel that it has all worked out. The

biggest thing for me was having a drink to cope, but it was making things ten times worse. Now I know what to do instead. (Client)

36. Evaluation - It's an emotional subject facing it, we were at zero, rock bottom, now I know what I am doing. She was dead supportive, very understanding, empathetic and non-judgemental and I don't think she is given enough credit. (Client)
37. Verbal - You've really helped us get the support we have been fighting for. Since you became involved everyone is on side and listening to us. (Client)
38. Verbal - Everything you've told us has worked and the situation has improved. We are communicating more and Mum is over the moon as the child is like a different child'. (Client)
39. Email - Being with Early Help has pushed me to do a lot out of my comfort zone. Having a person to call when I am down or worried or even when I need a boost, not just a helper but like a friend. You are not judged and can be open and honest. I got a lot of help, down to a washer, a cooker, single bed, table and chairs with no fuss. With Early Help they helped me with bills and appointments and are like my rock. Without my keyworker I wouldn't be where I am now or feeling as confident, even in my own home. It is not something I or anybody else should feel ashamed of. Everybody needs a little help now and then. It has helped me be able to help my son. Thank you. (Client)
40. Email - I just wanted to send an email to pass on my huge thanks to them both and to acknowledge all their hard work and support to us CSW's in regards of contact bookings under the difficult circumstances of Covid 19. Both ladies have been absolutely fantastic, they have gone above and beyond in accommodating all our bookings and helping me, and they are both always so professional/ friendly and welcoming to the families we are working with. I just wanted to say it is very much appreciated and to put a more formal acknowledgement in writing to yourselves in recognition. (Professional)
41. Email - Both my boys really enjoyed the group session. Plenty to keep both entertained. It was very well organised. I loved being back at the children centre myself especially after struggling with Covid & anxiety but I felt completely safe. The group numbers was just right so the children could see other children but not overcrowded to feel overwhelmed or unsafe. Thank you so much for inviting us. My son kept on saying how much fun he had in the car on our way home. It was such a relief to see my other son interacting with other people outside our household and put my mind at ease he hasn't been too affected by the lack of social interaction. Can't wait to be able to come back to groups again once we can book on. (Client)
42. Card - Thank you for your support over these last 12 months, you have been a great help to us. (Client)
43. Email - I want to thank you for your continued support via phone calls/texts and emails to my family. I can say with great confidence that the support is the best support I have received, you made sure I was kept updated with support options, was proactive in keeping in contact. The service and support you have provided myself and my two ASD boys has been second to none. I hope we continue to work together to ensure my boys have access to the services they need in order to reach their full potential. (Client)
44. Evaluation - I loved being able to do baby massage with my daughter, a huge thank you, we have loved it, it has been fab and I believe it has been of benefit to us both. (Client)
45. Evaluation - She is fantastic and very approachable and so kind. Brilliant baby massage leader. (Client)
46. Evaluation - This has given me something to look forward to every week, she has helped build my confidence. (Client)

47. Card & Flowers - Thank you for the baby massage classes, we have loved them, you were so lovely and made us feel really welcomed. We really enjoyed them. (Client)
48. Text - You have restored my faith in the negative press I had believed about Social Care. Thank you for your time and effort. You must deal with some harrowing things!! God bless. (Client)
49. Email - I attended the MAP meeting today. I am so impressed with how brilliant the two boys have engaged with professionals. It is great to see them doing so well financially and home conditions. J is doing well at college still. He has an excellent attitude to learning even though he is changing courses next year. He has brilliant attendance. I feel it should be noted that she has done a fantastic job in helping the boys. J thanked us for our support. I agree that the MAP should be closed but we will all continue to support the boys. (Professional)
50. Text - I found the work really good, it helped me out a lot at a difficult time, it gave me loads of strategies to keep calm and focus on myself and look toward the future. (Client under 18ys)
51. Email - I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all the help you have given Luke. It has really helped him deal with some of his issues and get back on track with school and home. Thank you. (Client)
52. Evaluation - The impact this service has had is that I now no longer react to every situation, instead, I can take a second to think about it and respond as appropriately as I can. This service has made a colossal difference to my life. It has given me a level of control over my life that I didn't have before. It was a bittersweet moment when our last session came to a close. (Client)
53. Email - The help I have received has made a massive difference in our lives. It has changed my attitude so much, our life is so much better. Her help has given me so much life changing tactics, all the different referrals have helped me, honestly been life changing for me and my children. Thank you. (Client)
54. Email - Thanks so very much for everything you've done for us, Always such a comfort knowing you were there and we'll miss you loads. Thanks for making a difference to our lives and helping Declan's future xx. (Client)
55. Email - Just wanted to say a huge thank you, for going out of your way for B, running around getting parts and fixing his chair, we would be lost without his house chair! Thanks so much. (Client)
56. Evaluation - We have had more support over the last two months than in the last eight years due to the involvement of her and her team. We have been directed to groups to help with our son's sleep and behaviour and she has been in regular contact to support with his emotional wellbeing and behaviour. (Client)
57. Email - Thank you so much for letting me be part of the audit. That was so interesting and informative. It is lovely to see how much hard work is going on in the borough and all the proactiveness to support our families. (Professional)
58. Email - I have worked with children and families for almost 40 years mainly in Cheshire/Halton Borough Council I have worked with many of you over the years and it has been a privilege to work with you in improving outcomes for children and families. I have decided it is time for me to retire and spend more time with family and friends and to follow pursuits that interest me. I would like to say how much I have enjoyed working with you all and wish you well in the future you all do an amazing job in such difficult circumstances and always strive to improve outcomes for the children and young people we work with. (Professional)

59. Email - Please can you pass on from us, our thanks for all the support they have provided to our children and families over the years. I have really valued their advice and enjoyed working with them. (Professional)
60. Email - Oh my goodness, how do I start, you are an angel. What you have done and achieved is just unbelievable. Since you have stepped in everything has started moving, allowing me to be involved and adhering to their terms. You are a very beautiful, empathic person, and as long as we can have people like you involved i'm sure many issues for people in the same situation can be dealt with. When I spoke to you about my daughter the first time and I'm sorry, it broke my heart, as it does every day with her issues. I felt like you held my hand and made sure things would get better. You are amazing and I really hope your manager sees this letter/email, you have made such a big difference in such a short time. I wish you so much happiness and love. (Client)
61. Text - Just wanted to say you have been amazing with my son. He has been very open with you and seems to have a great connection with you. You always made yourself available if I wanted to tell you anything going on with my son and always checked in on him, Thank You. (Client)
62. Verbal - Spoke with the father of tracked child SS. He is very happy with his son's care at Inglefield. Even with the reduced service/closures during Covid, he said how they kept in touch and gave support as they could. He gets on well with the staff, he says how they communicate well, letting him know of any concerns/worries about SS, always keep him informed. He said that 'staff are brilliant', and that S likes to go there. Because S has been going there a long time (about 7 years), and that the staff team has been there a long time too, he and S have got to know the staff well, 'it feels like a little family' when S goes there. (Client)
63. Letter - Thanks to her we don't panic as much, she has shown us that there is help if we need it and taught us that our parenting is good .Thank you for being very supportive and understanding of our family, we are going to miss you lots and miss those calls to see how we all are. You have helped us more than you think, we are very grateful, thank you so much you are one in a million. (Client)
64. Email - Firstly, I wanted to thank everyone involved for such a successful transition for E into Bright Futures last week. All the work behind the scenes has already proven really beneficial for E's family, his new staff team and most importantly E. (Professional)
65. Email - Just want to say thank you for all your help over the past 18 months. You have been amazing. You have called and checked we're all okay and gave lots of help and support. You let us know about forest school which the boys loved and about grants to help the boys with sensory stuff over lockdown Thank you so much for everything. (Client)
66. Text - Hi, regarding your time with B, we feel he understands more now due to what you have discussed and this has helped him a great deal. Regarding the chat around drugs we had, we feel we understand a lot more. Many thanks for what you have done. (Client)
67. Card - Thank you so much for all the amazing work you have done with us and for us. We honestly can't thank you enough. You've helped us to get all the support she needs to get through her GCSE's and you've helped us get our happy confident child back, we will never forget what you have done for us. (Client)
68. Email - I just wanted to say thank you for keeping us sane! Ha ha. No seriously thanks so much for all your help this year we would have been lost without you x. (Client)

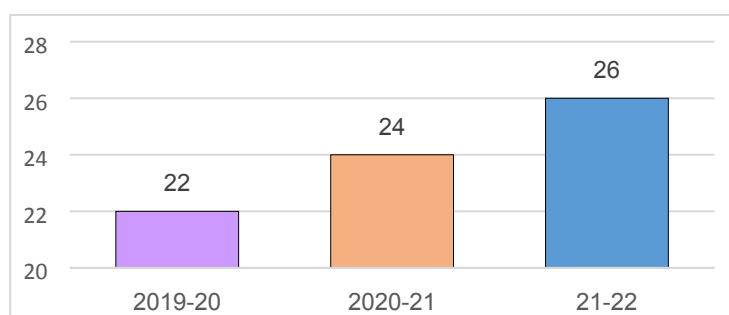


69. Email - I will always do what I can if I'm available especially for Disabled Childrens Service (DCS), the staff and services have been an absolute lifeline for our family over the years and especially during COVID. I don't think I've actually fed back about DSC support during COVID? I really felt very supported at a difficult time, thankfully I never needed the actual full support offered but knowing help was only a phone call away helped me as a Mum feel less anxious about the unknown situation that was developing. Activities the children engaged with helped massively also. Thanks again. (Client)
70. Text - Thanks for the support over the last few months. I know it's your job but trust me it just helps when we have support workers like yourself. Keep doing what you're doing you're helping lives and families. I'm a little nervous for this next chapter on my own but I got this. Thanks again. (Client)
71. Text - Thanks for the support over the last few months. I know it's your job but trust me it just helps when we have support workers like yourself. Keep doing what you're doing your helping lives and families. I'm a little nervous for this next chapter on my own but I got this. Thanks again. (Client)
72. Email - She has developed a wonderful relationship with both the child and Mum. Mum has told me on multiple occasions she feels well supported by her and knows she can contact her anytime. She has kindly taken it upon herself to arrange teatime visits in an attempt to ease Mum's anxieties. I am very grateful to her for supporting the family so brilliantly during this period. I would also like to add that I am very grateful to yourself and the ladies for welcoming me and working in partnership for our young people. You run a service that is greatly appreciated by parents and they are always singing staff praises when I go out and visit them. (Professional)

### 3.4 Safeguarding Unit

73. Email - It is not often we get positive feedback as social workers so I am really pleased to share that I have been asked to pass on her thanks to you. She has specifically asked me to thank you for your contribution to the carers review process as the IRM for the children. She commented that you are 'always prompt' with your contribution and that 'you always complete a detailed, balanced report'. She added that 'it never feels like you have just rushed through it and I'm extremely grateful for all his hard work because the feedback you provides, hugely supports what I do in reviewing carers performance'. Well done and thank you for all your hard work, it was lovely to hear the positive comments from her today. (Professional)

## 4. Education, Inclusion & Provision Department



### 4.1 Inclusion 0 - 25

74. Email - Many Thanks for all your hard work and support with her. (Professional)

## 4.2 Policy, Provision & Performance

75. Email - I was speaking with K from Warrington BC yesterday evening and she was full of praise for our SEND local offer website. Warrington are apparently rather jealous of some of the content and structure. As this is pretty much entirely down to your effort, tenacity and skills I just wanted to let you know that the quality of what you are pulling together on the local offer is recognised by our peers outside of Halton. Well done. A massive thank you from me too. It really is coming together. (Professional)
76. Email - Thank you so much for setting up the meeting yesterday and giving us the opportunity to talk to you and the team supporting the young people through Career Connect and Training Attention – it was really helpful. Many thanks for bringing us into the group. I hope working with our team has great benefits for the young people you are advocating for and supporting. I am really happy and humbled to get to see the determination and organisation of your team in understanding and helping these young people. It is great to be working with you. (Professional)
77. Email - Despite all the rubbish we face with the medical side he and your team have been brilliant and we can't thank them enough!! They have been there for us from the beginning even when the school seemed so far away!! (Client)
78. Email - It has been a pleasure for me to work with you on Halton procedures, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your help with coordinating the updates. (Professional)
79. Email - Can you also pass on my thanks once again to J she has done an outstanding job on the work experience for our students, I really can't fault her she has worked extremely hard. (Professional)
80. Email - I really want to thank you from the bottom of my heart you are an incredible person and we have been so lucky that my son had you as a 1:1. Not only have you helped him understand that it's ok to be himself and helped him in a short time to go from having zero confidence and struggling handling his emotion to him now having more confidence and learning to recognise his emotions and talk, but you have also helped me and his step dad see the happy boy again. I always say in terms of his meltdowns that no matter how he acts during the meltdowns them actions don't define him as a person and despite when you first met him having read his background in his previous school you have always seen the real him from day one, you really do have a special gift and should be winning awards. Throughout his whole life you will always be a person he remembers he has been so blessed to have your support and we are both sad you have to go but we wish you all the luck in the future I will give you updates and pictures of his progress. (Client)
81. Email - I attended a meeting with the SEND Parent/Carer Forum yesterday, and wanted to let you know that they were very complimentary about the way you work with them. Thanks for the work you do, and for the way you do work with them, it is appreciated, by them, and by me. (Professional)
82. Email - Thank you so much for your help. It has been invaluable.(Client)
83. Text - Thank you for everything that your all doing with her school work she really gets on well with the teachers and it's showing in her work you've got a great team thank you for supporting us with her future. (Client)
84. Email - I would like to thank you for all your support to me- you have been amazing and it is very much appreciated. (Professional)

85. Email - I am so pleased to have been able to work with you last year and hope to do so again in the future. It has really been an inspiration and a learning opportunity for me to see the dedication of you and your team, and the many ways you work to support young people who are struggling. It is great to see the young people supported with so much compassion and integrity. (Professional)
86. Email - Congratulations to you and all the team for the fantastic impact your work had last year amidst the full impact of Covid. It is such important work done so well and with the young people firmly at the centre of it all – I am really proud to have been involved last year, and hope we will be able to be part of the programme next year again. (Professional)
87. Email - I just wanted to give a compliment directly for Z with regard to X and the support she is offering her. Also a compliment to your whole service for generally keeping in touch with young people and acting as a bridge into the 'system'. I think especially in Covid times these small links with the 'system' are so crucial to young people's long term futures and a voice outside of the family that will bear fruit long past them turning 19. (Professional)
88. Email - Thank you so much for hosting the zoom event last night, the huge positive impact/help it gave to the parents and carers who did attend was amazing, so much that the parents and carers requested another event for the Local Offer. Well done to all involved. (Professional)
89. Email - I just wanted to let you know that she is doing a fantastic job as our EWO. She is efficient, organised, helpful and always responds to our queries and emails. We have now had several meetings with her including attendance surgeries with parents and each time she has done exactly what we have asked including pursuing Penalty Notices. She is careful to ensure that all criteria for legal proceedings is met and she ensures we are kept informed. She works with parents effectively too, being assertive but empathetic to their circumstances. We did say we were going to email you so are happy if you wish to share our comments with her. (Professional)
90. Email - Thank you for your continued support during the time we were setting up the forum. It has been a pleasure to work with you during this time. (Professional)
91. Email - They were both in school today for our audit and were so supportive and helpful. I found the whole experience really useful and such a positive experience. I wanted to pass that on as I like to say when people are really good at their job and it is appreciated. (Professional)
92. Email - Thank you so much for the time you spent on the Local Offer zoom last night for the forum members, it truly was a great presentation and the knowledge that it has given to us will be empowered onto our parents. We are very lucky to have such a great tool in Halton for our Parent carers. (Professional)

### **4.3 Education 0-19yrs**

93. Text - Thank you so much for all your help! We wouldn't of been where we are today if it wasn't for all your help and support you have gave to our son and us as a family we could never thank you enough.(Client)
94. Email - Just wanted to say thank you again for today's meeting, your input was very much appreciated. I'm grateful for your continuous support. You really have helped a lot I wouldn't even nowhere to begin with your support. (Client)
95. Email - I just wanted to say how much of an impact she has made on my family. My daughters progress since we were referred to portage. To feel like you are truly listened to and

understood as a parent in this process is so nice, she is so helpful and always goes above and beyond to help with any worry/query we have. She said to me that 'nobody gives you a handbook on this process it's all very overwhelming' and she is so right - I feel so lucky because she has been our 'handbook' her knowledge and direction have been invaluable! People are quick to complain about things but not so quick to compliment. I spoke to another mum who used the portage service a few years ago and she also spoke so fondly of her and I just thought that ought to be recognised. (Client)

96. Email - As always, we would like to thank Halton and the Early Years Team in particular, for providing so much support over this very difficult time. I know that at the beginning, things were very uncertain and most settings went into a "mild panic". However, you all made it very clear from the start that we were being supported, and that meant a lot and still does. Please pass on our sincere thanks to everyone. (Professional)
97. Email - I hope you don't mind me contacting you, but I just wanted to share some good news with you. He passed all of his GCSE's except French (he got a 2) and one of the combine science grades (he got a 4 and a 3). He was absolutely beaming yesterday and I am so proud of what he has achieved. I just wanted to share the news with you, as you always believed in him and without your support, may not have been as successful as he was – so thank you. He is enrolling at Cronton on Monday for Art and Design UAL level 2. He has the qualifications to go straight in at level 3, but feels that he needs to build up his confidence and decide which specialism he want to progress with in the following year. (Client)
98. Email - Not enough praise is given for the work that yourselves and your colleagues do. I have learned so much over the years and wanted to thank you before I left. (Professional)

#### **4.4 Commissioning**

99. Email - Not enough praise is given for the work that yourselves and your colleagues do. I have learned so much over the years and wanted to thank you before I left. (Professional)

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2023
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Executive Director Children's Services
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Children, Education & Social Care
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Sufficiency Duty Report 2022-2023 (previously known as the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Review (CSA))
<b>WARD(S)</b>	Borough-wide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The report aims to provide a summary of the revised Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report, now known as the Sufficiency Duty Report (SDR). It details any achievements since the last review and outlines Halton's current position. It also highlights any gaps in provision and how these are being addressed. The report shares the longer term effects of how Covid-19 are impacting the childcare sector. Despite the impact of COVID-19, the childcare market in Halton continues to be secure and sustainable. However, Early Year's providers have expressed fears around what the future may hold, due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic and the increasing costs of living, such as fuel bills.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- i) **Members approve the revised Sufficiency Duty Report (previously known as the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment).**

## 3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 Sections 6 and 7 of 'The Childcare Act' (2006) and the associated statutory guidance: 'Early Education and Childcare – Statutory guidance for local authorities' (March 2018), requires all Local Authorities in England to undertake and provide an annual childcare sufficiency report to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and to make it available to the public.

3.2 In accordance with the above, Halton's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) has been reviewed and updated (now known as the Sufficiency Duty Report (SDR)). The purpose of the document is to:

- Assist parents to find suitable childcare across the borough;
- Help inform the Local Authority regarding supply and estimated demand for childcare places in all age ranges, in particularly for the Free Early Years Entitlement places;
- Provide information for anyone who is considering setting up new childcare provision in the borough or becoming a childminder.

#### 4.0 **ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE LAST CSA REVIEW**

4.1 Since producing the last CSA Review, the following have been achieved:

- The percentage of Day Nurseries with a good or better Ofsted outcome has remained at 100% (excluding one nursery, who has not been inspected yet);
- We have retained the number of childminders who are able to deliver the Free Early Years Entitlement;
- We continue to fund an average of 523 funded 2 year old children per term;
- From September 2017, 30 hours childcare was introduced for working parents. Currently 100% of day nurseries, 83% of pre-schools, 100% of nursery schools, 20% of nursery classes, 50% of nursery academies are offering the extended hours. This is in addition to the 46 childminders registered to deliver the FEYE for 15 or 30 hours;
- We continue to secure childcare for all vulnerable children and children with SEND.

#### 5.0 **SUMMARY OF SDR REVIEW**

5.1 The SDR provides the following information:

- A brief introduction to the review, outlining it's purpose and rationale;
- A description of the Halton context;
- A statement about Safeguarding;
- An update re the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Framework;
- Details of Halton's market segments and their characteristics;
- Details of Halton's Early Years market, including;
  - the percentage of Free Early Years Entitlement places by sector;
  - the numbers of 3 & 4 year old places by setting type;
  - the number of early years settings;
  - Ofsted grades for all sectors;
- The supply and estimated demand of childcare places;
- A brief outline of Halton's SEND provision, Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP);
- Details of the affordability and flexibility of Halton's childcare,

- sustainability and staffing;
- Rates of pay and flexibility
- An overview of the changes in childcare places since the last CSA and projected new places;
- Guidance around financial help with childcare costs;
- Details of any apparent gaps in provision and an action plan to show how these gaps will be met;
- Early indications of how the effects of Covid-19 are impacting childcare and sustainability in Halton.

## 6.0 **CURRENT POSITION**

6.1 Overall, the Halton Sufficiency Duty Report 2022-2023 continues to reflect a vibrant, sufficient and high quality Early Years and Childcare market that delivers choice, high quality and affordable service to parents and carers. Halton as a borough has sufficient childcare places to meet demand.

However, this review has been undertaken at a time when the Early Years Sector is under increasing pressure due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and other factors, such as the increase in fuel costs. Although, early indications show that the sector remains sustainable at present, this will need to be carefully monitored over the coming months.

The report shows what the majority of areas in Halton do have sufficient supply of childcare places in all age ranges, except for the following:

- Widnes overall has a deficit of approximately 13 places for 0-2 year olds which has reduced from last year.
- Halton Brook CCRA has a deficit of approximately 31 places for funded 2 year olds, which has remained the same as last year.
- Windmill Hill CCRA has a deficit of approximately 42 extended entitlement places, which has halved since last year and 37 places for out of school care for 5-10 year olds, which has increased.
- Kingsway CCRA has a deficit of approximately 20 places for funded 2 year olds, which has reduced from last year.
- Upton has a deficit of 12 places for funded 2 year olds, 56 universal places for 3 and 4 year olds, 49 extended hour places and 11 places for out of school care for 5-10 year olds.

However, it is important to remember that parents do not always access childcare in the ward where they live and children do not always attend a school in the ward where they live.

With regards to the shortage of funded 2 year old places in Halton Brook CCRA, the Two Year Old Funding Officer reports that she

continues to be able to find alternative places in the area. Furthermore, if parents have requested a particular setting where there are no available spaces, they are happy to wait for availability.

With regards to the shortage of extended places in the Windmill Hill CCRA, this category applies to working families. These families may travel to other wards to access their FEYE. This may mean accessing a setting, which is outside the Windmill Hill CCRA or even out of the borough, if it is closer to their workplace.

Concerning the shortage of out of School places in this area, local knowledge would support the fact that, in reality, no such shortage exists. In addition, the majority of primary schools offer after school activities, which parents may use as childcare.

With regards to the shortage of funded 2 years old places in the Kingsway CCRA, the nursery which opened in Farnworth Ward last year has now opened Phase Two of the building, which has increased overall capacity for this age range in the general Farnworth/Kingsway areas.

The shortage of 2, 3 & 4 year old FEYE places (both Universal and Extended) in the Upton CCRA would appear to continue to be due to the expansion of new housing estates in that area. The Day Nursery, as mentioned above, which opened in Farnworth ward will also help to alleviate the shortage of 3 and 4 year old places in the Upton RA (and Farnworth/Kingsway areas).

An Action Plan is included in the SDR showing how the Local Authority will work with a range of partners to address the above gaps to ensure sufficiency.

## 7.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in 2020 has radically changed the way we live our lives. The impact of this global pandemic has yet to be fully determined, but repercussions are beginning to be felt within the Early Years sector.

The main challenges faced by Early Years providers are around staffing & recruitment, learning and development, supporting children with SEND, and a reduction in occupancy. This has led to increased concern around future sustainability, especially within the Pre-School sector. There are also increasing concerns around the increase in fuel prices and national living wage.

## 8.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Currently none identified, but some providers are facing challenges of sufficiency due to reduction in occupancy; less staffing flexibility; increasing costs of fuel and overheads, making some financially vulnerable.



9.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

Close working with the sector will continue to monitor demand and supply with uptake and changing demographics and falling birth rates.

9.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Research has proven that the earliest years of a child's life are crucial to their development for laying the foundations of success at school and in later life. In Halton, we want to ensure we have high quality childcare available for all parents or carers that need it, in all age ranges. The Family and Childcare Trust Childcare Survey (2018) states: *'Childcare supports parents to work, keeps valuable skills in the workforce, helps children do better at school and can narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers'*.

9.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

High quality childcare which results in children experiencing success within education will increase training and employment opportunities for pupils and students.

9.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Raising children's achievements through access to affordable and sustainable early years childcare provision will have a positive impact on the emotional health and wellbeing of challenging pupils and students. Access to quality provision also plays a key role in the early development of language and communication skills which are essential to future learning, vocabulary development and access to the wider curriculum and developing and maintaining relationships

9.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified

9.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified

10.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

10.1 Raising children's achievements through access to affordable and sustainable early years childcare should reduce incidents of challenging behaviour.

11.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

11.1 Raising children’s achievements through access to affordable and sustainable early years childcare provision should ensure that all children are able to receive timely support and intervention, thereby reducing inequalities in life chances.

12.0 **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>
The Childcare Act 2006	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk">www.legislation.gov.uk</a>	Operational Director – Education Inclusion and Provision & Operational Director Resources
Early Education and Childcare – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2018)	<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>	Operational Director – Education Inclusion and Provision & Operational Director Resources

# Sufficiency Duty Report

*(Previously known as Childcare Sufficiency Assessment)*



## Review 2022-2023

<b>Index</b>	<b>Page No</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Rationale	3
4. Achievements since the last CSA Review	5
5. Context	5
6. Map of Runcorn and Widnes (split by wards)	7
7. Population of Halton	9
8. Childcare Market Segments	10
9. Structure of the Halton Early Years Market	12
10. Quality of Childcare	14
11. Supply and Estimated Demand of Childcare Places	15
12. Halton SEND Provision	24
13. Disability Access Fund (DAF)	25
14. Affordability of Halton Childcare	26
15. Sustainability	28
16. Staffing	28
17. Average Hourly Rates of Pay – PVI Sector	29
18. Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	29
19. Flexibility of Halton Childcare	30
20. Change in Childcare Places since last CSA and Projected New Places	32
21. Help with Childcare Costs	33
22. Details of which Out of School Clubs pick up from which Schools	34
23. 'At A Glance' Table	37
24. Gaps in Provision	38
25. Other factors Impacting on Childcare	39
26. Conclusion	40
Action Plan	41
27. Glossary of Terms of Definitions	43
28. References	43
29. Contacts	44

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research has proven that the earliest years of a child's life are crucial to their development for laying the foundations of success at school and in later life. In Halton, we want to ensure we have high quality childcare available for all parents or carers that need it, in all age ranges. The Family and Childcare Trust Childcare Survey (2018) states: *'Childcare supports parents to work, keeps valuable skills in the workforce, helps children do better at school and can narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers'*.

## 2. PURPOSE

Sections 6 and 7 of 'The Childcare Act' (2006) and the associated statutory guidance: 'Early Education and Childcare – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' (March 2018), require all Local Authorities in England to undertake and provide an annual childcare sufficiency report to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and to make it available to the public.

The Act places a statutory duty upon Local Authorities to play a strategic role in facilitating the childcare market, ensuring there is secure, sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 years for disabled children). The Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, or 'Sufficiency Duty Reports' as they are now known, give Local Authorities the chance to work with local partners, filling gaps in the market and shaping childcare services in their area, to meet the needs of local families.

The Local Authority is not under a duty to provide the childcare directly. It is intended that formal childcare should, in the main, be delivered by providers in the private and voluntary sectors.

The information in this document has been produced to:

- Assist parents to find suitable childcare across the borough;
- Help inform the Local Authority regarding supply and estimated demand for childcare places in all age ranges, but in particular for the Free Early Years Entitlement places;
- Help anyone who is considering setting up new childcare provision in the borough or becoming a childminder.

Whilst the information presented in this Sufficiency Duty Report provides a 'snapshot' of supply and demand for childcare places in Halton, this can change on a regular basis. Despite the impact of COVID-19, the childcare market in Halton continues to be secure and sustainable. However, Early Year's providers have expressed fears around what the future may hold, due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic and the increasing costs of living, such as fuel bills.

**Note: Halton Borough Council does not guarantee the accuracy of this Sufficiency Duty Report, nor does the council accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss, damage or any other consequences arising from the use of the information in this document.**

## 3. RATIONALE

Not all families require childcare. Some parents do not work, whilst others work flexibly. Furthermore, some parents rely on extended family members, such as grandparents, rather than

use formal childcare. Because of these factors, it is difficult to accurately calculate the number of children that will require childcare in Halton. The impact of COVID-19 and increasing over-head costs, such as fuel, will also continue to have an effect.

In order to assess the level of demand for all forms of childcare provision across all market segments, a range of demand factors have been applied to the total child population by ward and age range.

The factors applied, where relevant, are:

- Percentage impact of unemployment rate
- Percentage impact of “day to day activities limited a little” (*this category was previously known as Limiting Long Term Illness*)
- 100% Full Time Equivalent (FTE) place take-up, less average % usage
- Average household income as a % of the LA average
- Average % vacancy
- Percentage of part-time working
- Discount for children attending schools out of borough
- Percentage impact of Extended School Services
- Percentage impact of partners looking after children
- Own holiday cover
- A percentage discount for 3 and 4 year olds based on date of birth

These factors will have varying impacts on the ultimate demand for formal childcare, for example, the higher the rate of unemployment and limited day to day activities within a ward, the lower the demand for formal childcare, whereas the higher the level of household income, the greater the demand.

It must also be noted that, unlike school place planning, which is based on compulsory attendance and defined school catchment areas, early education and childcare trends can be unpredictable. Families are able to choose whether or not they take up a place and are free to access early education and childcare wherever they wish across the borough, or even in other boroughs. Therefore, whilst some choose to access child care close to where they live, others may prefer to take up places closer to where they work. When it comes to the Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE), most families use all the hours available to them. However, some choose only to access part of their entitlement. This can make it difficult to accurately forecast the number of places needed.

Childcare market management is further complicated by the fact that providers can change the age profile of the places they offer without notice. These factors make precise forecasting extremely difficult and mean that caveats must be applied to information within the Sufficiency Duty Report.

**We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in producing this document including:**

- **All the childcare providers who completed our surveys; and**
- **Members of Halton Borough Council’s Early Years Team**

#### 4. ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST SUFFICIENCY DUTY REPORT

Since producing the Action Plan for the last Sufficiency Duty Report, the following have been achieved:

- The percentage of Day Nurseries with a good or better Ofsted outcome has remained at 100% (excluding one nursery, who has not been inspected yet);
- We have retained the number of childminders who are able to deliver the Free Early Years Entitlement;
- We continue to fund an average of 523 funded 2 year old children per term;
- From September 2017, 30 hours childcare was introduced for working parents. Currently 100% of day nurseries, 83% of pre-schools, 100% of nursery schools, 20% of nursery classes, 50% of nursery academies are offering the extended hours. This is in addition to the 46 childminders registered to deliver the FEYE for 15 or 30 hours;
- We continue to secure childcare for all vulnerable children and children with SEND.

#### 5. CONTEXT

Halton is a largely urban area. Its' two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn, situated 10 miles upstream from Liverpool, and separated by the River Mersey. It consists of 21 wards (although this has been reduced to 18 wards in the recent ward boundary changes - see original map on page 7 and the new map on page 8). The ethnic composition of Halton remains predominantly white, with 98% of the population falling into this category (Census 2011). This is significantly higher than found regionally or nationally, suggesting a relative lack of ethnic diversity. From the 2021/22 School Census, the first language of 96% of school-aged pupils is English or is believed to be English. Christianity is the main religion in Halton, 75% of people identified as Christian on the 2011 Census. 19% of the population have no religion.

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems associated with its neighbours on Merseyside. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, and shows that Halton is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of 'the 20 local authority districts with the highest proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally'.

A more in-depth breakdown of Halton's context may be found by following this link: <https://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/CensusandStatistics/CensusandStatistics.aspx>.

It is acknowledged that high quality early years and childcare provision between the ages of 0-4 years is crucial to the life chances of children, and as such makes a major contribution to breaking cycles of deprivation, thus reducing the gap in educational achievements and improving future job prospects.

Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer communities, which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future. This vision is brought to life in Halton's Children, Young People's and Families Plan 2018-2021, which sets out clear,

measurable goals, in order to achieve this ambition. The plan draws on the collaboration of parents, the Council, schools, health, police, voluntary sector and young people.

### **Safeguarding**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure and it is a requirement for all adults working with children to take the necessary steps to safeguard children. Childcare providers must also ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children, have the necessary policies and procedures in place and ensure that all staff are adequately trained in child protection.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 sets out the responsibility for Early Years and Childcare and states that early year's providers must:

- Train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues and that training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. complete safeguarding training that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect; and
- Have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years setting and who should liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. This lead should also complete child protection training.

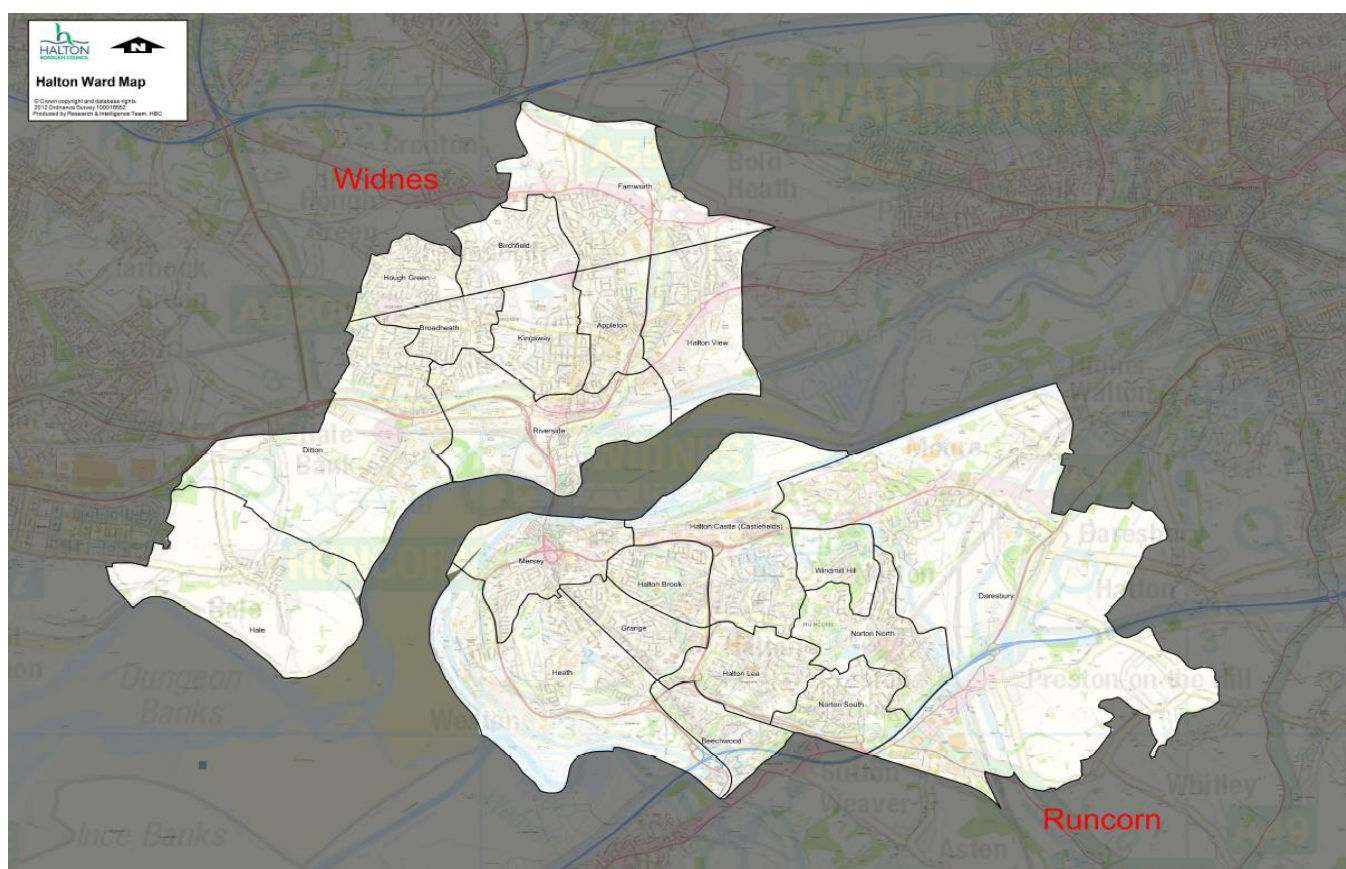
Settings are encouraged to ensure that their staff attend appropriate safeguarding training to ensure that they meet the requirements of the relevant legislation and also ensure that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place. All settings are requested to complete a safeguarding audit on an annual basis to ensure that they review their safeguarding practices regularly.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. A revised framework came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.



## 6. ORIGINAL MAP OF RUNCORN AND WIDNES (split by wards)



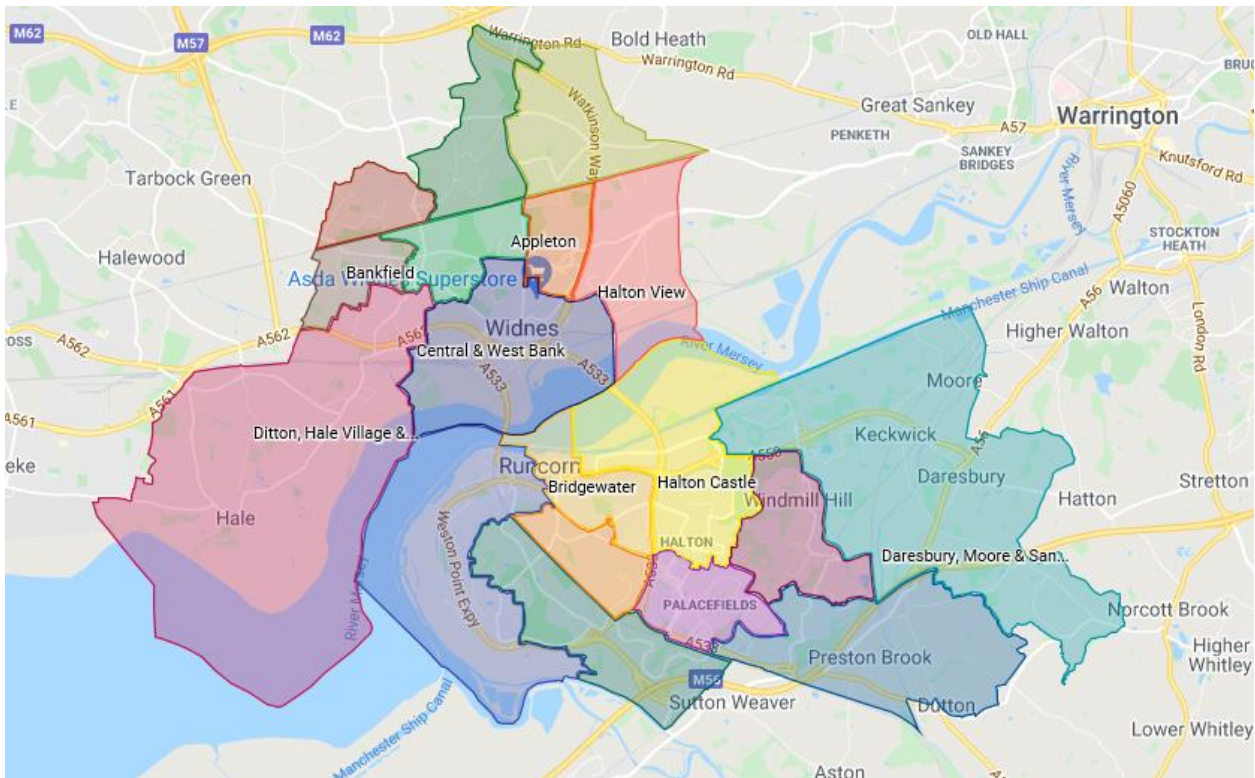
### WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES

An electoral review of Halton was carried out in 2019. The aim of the electoral review was to establish wards, which had equal numbers of voters.

Following the review and recommendations made by the Local Government Boundary Commission, some Halton wards have been merged and the boundaries moved. The number of Halton wards have been reduced from 21 to 18. The new ward names are:

Appleton	Grange
Bankfield	Halton Castle
Beechwood & Heath	Halton Lea
Birchfield	Halton View
Bridgewater	Highfield
Central & West Bank	Hough Green
Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor	Mersey & Weston
Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank	Norton North
Farnworth	Norton South & Preston Brook

**MAP OF NEW WARDS AND BOUNDARY CHANGES FROM 2020**



**NEW CHILDREN’S CENTRE REACH AREAS (BASED ON NEW WARD BOUNDARIES)**

RUNCORN	
Children’s Centre Name	Wards covered by the Reach Area
<b>Brookvale</b>	Norton South & Preston Brook Halton Lea
<b>Halton Brook</b>	Bridgewater Halton Castle
<b>Halton Lodge</b>	Beechwood & Heath Grange
<b>Windmill Hill</b>	Daresbury, Moore and Sandymoor Norton North

WIDNES	
Children’s Centre Name	Wards covered by the Reach Area
<b>Ditton</b>	Bankfield Ditton, Hale & Hale Village
<b>Kingsway</b>	Central & West Bank Highfield
<b>Upton</b>	Birchfield Hough Green
<b>Warrington Road</b>	Appleton Farnworth Halton View

**NOTE:** Although we acknowledge the ward boundary changes and new Children’s Centre Reach Areas, this SDR is based on the original wards and CCRA’s. This is due to the fact that the updated population figures for the new wards are not available yet. It is hoped that the updated population figures based on the 2021 Census, will become available in 2023 and will, therefore, be reflected in the 2023-2024 SDR.

## 7. POPULATION OF HALTON

The table below shows the population of the children and young people in Halton, identified by age and ward.

	Age Ranges																			Totals	
	0-1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		19
Appleton	102	104	109	119	86	92	94	98	106	88	108	94	86	92	86	62	62	62	58	61	1769
Beechwood	24	30	35	36	37	22	36	22	38	43	35	29	38	40	47	31	39	26	29	27	664
Birchfield	51	65	62	58	76	69	78	92	101	83	112	123	109	105	114	107	82	110	88	66	1751
Broadheath	66	80	69	80	93	72	65	86	74	78	88	88	84	88	89	93	68	66	64	61	1552
Halton Castle	73	76	92	84	75	96	81	91	88	93	101	99	100	98	103	76	78	81	80	73	1738
Daresbury	64	59	76	69	59	58	68	63	71	70	63	62	79	76	69	65	72	68	56	53	1320
Ditton	78	89	87	82	84	90	83	82	106	101	86	73	96	87	80	66	89	67	75	64	1665
Farnworth	97	92	119	124	107	139	122	146	127	122	97	119	105	105	105	113	108	104	92	73	2216
Grange	73	72	80	93	94	95	117	100	103	105	107	101	94	110	101	101	83	72	79	94	1874
Hale	13	21	15	19	17	19	11	7	14	17	16	14	10	19	16	20	14	11	14	19	306
Halton Brook	77	73	87	80	85	92	86	96	107	112	120	92	106	83	99	105	91	77	96	69	1833
Halton Lea	48	65	55	75	73	80	81	86	83	83	116	88	97	89	82	89	86	92	80	76	1624
Halton View	74	62	67	77	74	82	63	68	58	60	69	69	88	61	67	68	74	53	68	59	1361
Heath	46	35	46	37	51	50	48	55	61	61	66	62	69	68	77	58	53	60	64	44	1111
Hough Green	65	75	72	73	91	87	98	85	87	104	83	79	77	82	64	63	57	67	81	57	1547
Kingsway	67	70	68	84	82	86	95	101	86	94	122	117	111	88	118	106	84	83	94	86	1842
Mersey	93	101	97	88	98	94	106	119	84	76	87	91	70	68	80	71	63	54	69	68	1677
Norton North	54	53	67	72	74	84	69	87	67	84	91	86	91	81	90	83	107	75	71	43	1529
Norton South	80	74	81	68	87	103	99	103	114	103	106	98	111	103	103	93	83	89	75	72	1845
Riverside	57	90	80	73	89	86	78	90	86	89	89	74	81	80	81	51	60	57	58	47	1496
Windmill Hill	42	32	37	40	48	44	40	36	42	47	34	47	47	41	40	47	33	31	28	24	780
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1344</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>1501</b>	<b>1531</b>	<b>1580</b>	<b>1640</b>	<b>1618</b>	<b>1713</b>	<b>1703</b>	<b>1713</b>	<b>1796</b>	<b>1705</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>1664</b>	<b>1711</b>	<b>1568</b>	<b>1486</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>1419</b>	<b>1236</b>	<b>31500</b>

Figures may not sum exactly due to rounding Source: ONS: Mid 2020 population estimates for 2020 wards and 2021 LAs in England and Wales

## 8. CHILDCARE MARKET SEGMENTS

The childcare market in Halton, in common with all local authority areas, is sub-divided into a number of specific market segments; this differentiation is based on the age of the child and the type of provision that is being delivered.

It is important to recognise each of these market segments have distinct characteristics, which will influence demand and determine the most appropriate geographical area for the measurement of childcare sufficiency.

Table 1 provides details of Halton's market segments and their characteristics.

**Table 1**  
**Market Segments**

<b>Market Segment</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>0-2 Year Old Full Day Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply is predominantly provided by PVI Day Nurseries and Childminders</li> <li>• Parents are required to pay for this provision, therefore price and other economic factors determine the level of demand</li> <li>• Provision accessed by working parents</li> <li>• Parents can take 12 months maternity/paternity leave so children may be 1 year old before they start using formal childcare</li> </ul>
<b>2 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply predominantly provided by Day Nurseries and PVI Pre-schools</li> <li>• Demand is determined by Government eligibility criteria.</li> <li>• Places are preferred close to child's home</li> </ul>
<b>2 Year Olds Fee Paying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places supplied by Day Nurseries, Pre-schools and childminders</li> <li>• Used by parents not entitled to the 2 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement</li> </ul>
<b>3 &amp; 4 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement Universal 15 hours plus Extended 15 hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places supplied by Day Nurseries; Pre-schools; Maintained Nursery Classes, Maintained Nursery Schools, Nursery classes in Academies, Childminders and possibly Out of School Clubs</li> </ul>
<b>3 &amp; 4 Year Old Wraparound</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supply is predominantly provided by PVI Day Nurseries; Pre-schools; and childminders</li> <li>• Parents are required to pay for this provision, therefore price and other economic factors determine level of demand</li> <li>• Provision accessed by working parents</li> </ul>
<b>5-10 Year Old</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places provided by a range of PVI and maintained sector settings</li> </ul>



<b>After School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are required to pay for provision, therefore economic factors influence demand. Places are generally on school site or close to school</li> </ul>
<b>5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places provided by PVI sector settings. Parents are required to pay for provision, therefore economic factors influence demand</li> <li>Parents generally are able to drop-off and collect their children travelling to and from work; therefore places can be accessed across a wider area</li> </ul>

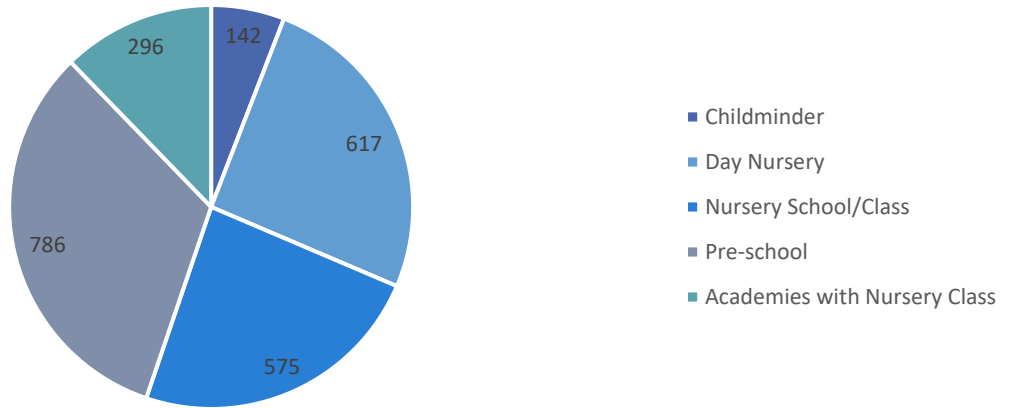
Table 2 shows the Children's Centre Reach Areas in Runcorn and Widnes and their respective wards.

**Table 2**  
**Children's Centre Reach Areas (CCRAs)**

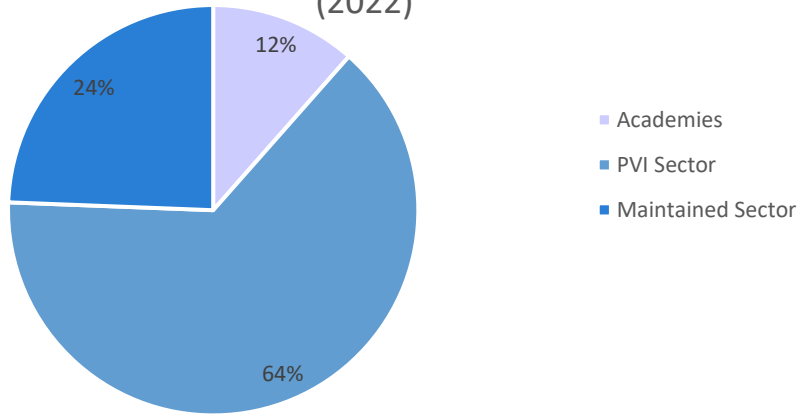
<b>RUNCORN</b>		<b>WIDNES</b>	
<b>Children's Centre Name</b>	<b>Wards covered by the Reach Area</b>	<b>Children's Centre Name</b>	<b>Wards covered by the Reach Area</b>
<b>Brookvale</b>	Beechwood Halton Lea Norton South	<b>Ditton</b>	Broadheath Ditton Hale
<b>Halton Brook</b>	Halton Brook Halton Castle	<b>Kingsway</b>	Kingsway Riverside
<b>Halton Lodge</b>	Grange Heath Mersey	<b>Upton</b>	Birchfield Hough Green
<b>Windmill Hill</b>	Daresbury Norton North Windmill Hill	<b>Warrington Road</b>	Appleton Farnworth Halton View

## 9. STRUCTURE OF THE HALTON EARLY YEARS MARKET

Number of 3 and 4 YO Places by Setting Type (2022)



Percentage of Free Early Years Entitlement Places by Sector (2022)



% of EY Settings by Setting Type (2022)

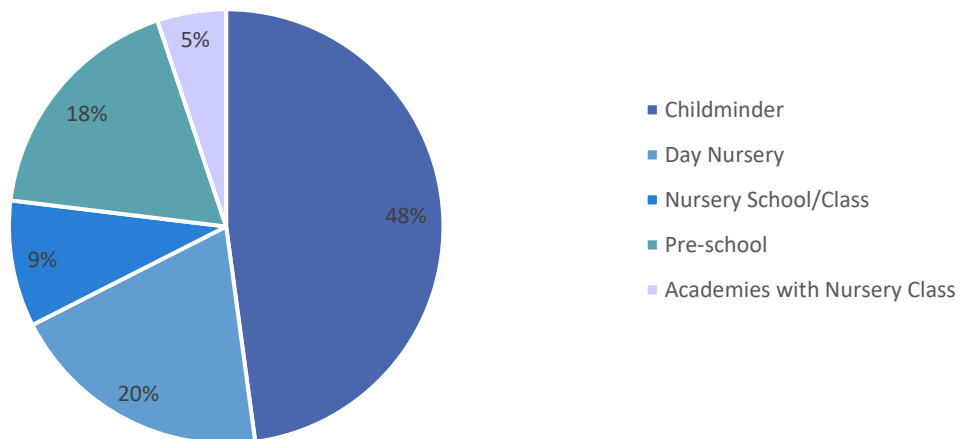


Table 3 below gives an overall picture (as at August 2022) of the size and scale of the current Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) and maintained childcare in Halton, by sector and ward.

**Table 3 Overall Numbers of Childcare Providers by Type**

	No of Childminders	No of Day Nurseries	No of Pre-schools	No of Nursery Schools	No of Nursery Classes	No of Academies with Nursery Classes	No of SEN Nursery Classes	No of Breakfast and Out of School Clubs	No of Holiday Clubs	TOTALS
Appleton	5	3	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	15
Beechwood	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Birchfield	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Broadheath	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	6
Daresbury	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	10
Ditton	3	1	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	10
Farnworth	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	12
Grange	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6
Hale	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Halton Brook	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	8
Halton Castle	3	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	12
Halton Lea	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	7
Halton View	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	7
Heath	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	10
Hough Green	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	9
Kingsway	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Mersey	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	5
Norton North	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Norton South	7	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	11
Riverside	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5
Windmill Hill	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>156</b>

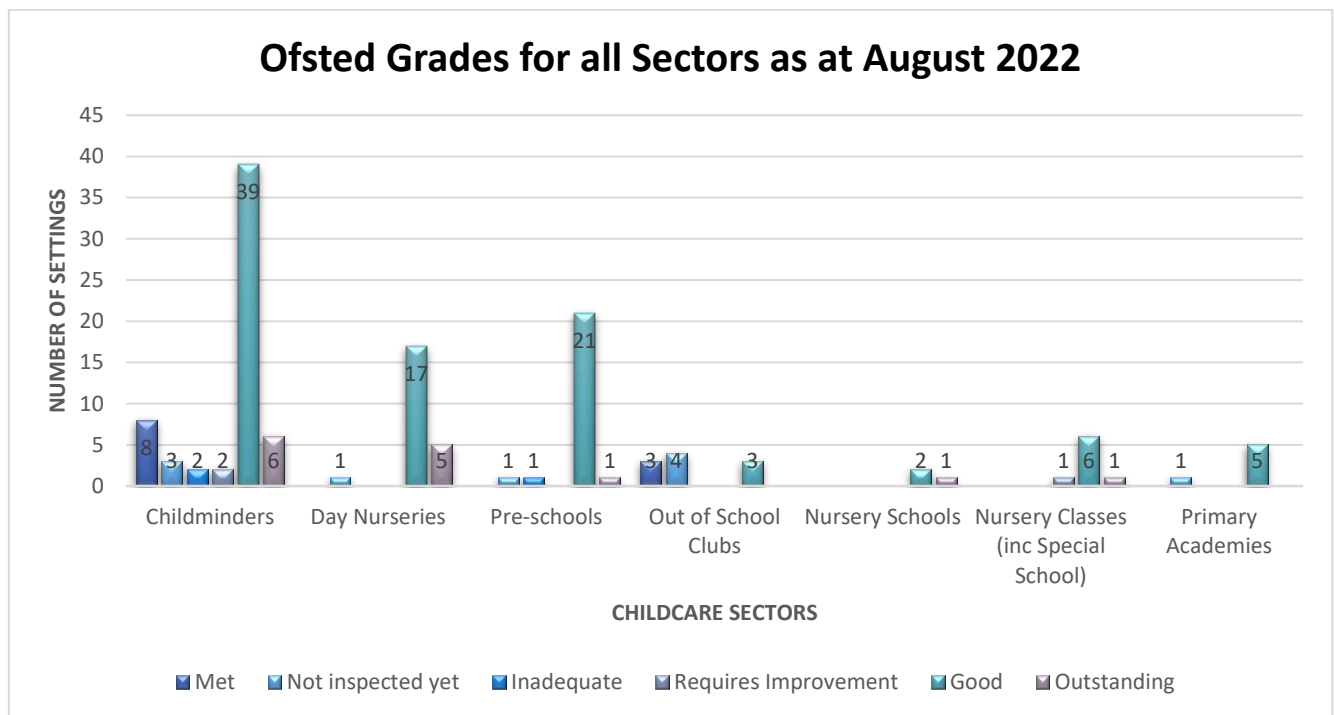
Note: Two out of school clubs and two holiday clubs, have not been included in the above figures as they are not currently offering a service but are still registered with Ofsted.

### 10. QUALITY OF CHILDCARE

It is acknowledged that the quality of childcare is a significant factor affecting a child’s future. High quality early education improves children’s school readiness.

Ofsted is the sole arbiter of quality and through the inspection process, each childcare setting will receive one of four grades: outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

The table below compares the Ofsted grades for all sectors in Halton, as at August 2022.



*Note: Some childminders have a MET grade, due to the fact that they did not have any early years children on roll at the time of inspection. OSC Clubs can only receive a MET or NOT MET grade.*



## 11. SUPPLY AND ESTIMATED DEMAND OF CHILDCARE PLACES

The following tables show the current potential number of childcare places available in each market segment and the estimated demand for places in each.

With regards to the FEYE for 3 and 4 year olds, the summer term always has the highest occupancy and the autumn term the lowest. This is due to single point entry, as children who have turned 4 move into reception in September. Therefore the supply figures used in this Assessment are a 'snap-shot' from a particular week in May 2022.

Like any other business, childcare providers will respond flexibly to meet the demand of the local market, therefore the figures in this report can be subject to change.

**0-2 Year Olds** – This age range of childcare is delivered by day nurseries and childminders.

Not every child in this age range will require formal childcare. Maternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave, which allows parents to take up to twelve months off work after the birth of the child and can be shared between both parents, can reduce the demand for formal childcare for 0-1 year olds.

Table 4 details the supply and estimated demand for 0-2 Year Old Full Daycare

**Table 4 0-2 Year Old Full Daycare**

0-2 Year Olds Full Daycare Places		
Town	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	369	332
Widnes	394	407
<b>Total</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>740</b>
23 Surplus places overall		

*Population Source: ONS 2020 population estimates  
Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022  
Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2022*

The Sufficiency Factor of 23, is slightly more than last year's sufficiency factor of 15. This can be explained by the fact that settings can change the number of places offered for 0 to 2 year olds so they can accommodate changes in demand. Historically, we have seen settings change their age allocations throughout the terms to ensure they can accommodate as demand changes.

Table 5 below gives the results from the Childcare Surveys from the Day Nurseries and childminders (who responded) detailing whether they could meet demand for 0-2 Year old places during week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

**Table 5 Could you meet demand?**

Childcare Market - could you meet demand for places for 0-2 Year Olds during w/c 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2022?				
Day Nurseries		Childminders		
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)
91%	9%	63%	12%	25%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 \*43 childminders responded to surveys (72%)

The supply figures show we have an excess of approximately 23 places in this age range and can therefore meet demand across the two towns. The “Could you meet demand?” table also supports this, as it shows that day nurseries and childminders generally can meet demand for 0-2 years.

**2 Year Old Free Entitlement (FEYE)** – This type of childcare is delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders.

Demand for funded 2 year olds is calculated differently to other age ranges, as the figures are provided by the DfE.

Each Local Authority receives a DfE list 8 times a year. These lists provide details of parents’ names, postal addresses, email address and mobile contact numbers, drawn from the DWP, who may be eligible to receive the funding. The information provided is, generally, three months old before it reaches each Local Authority. Emails and postcards are sent out half-termly to prospective families, prompting parents to complete a referral form, in paper form or online <https://halton.me/2-year-old-referral-form/>. Eligible children are placed at the setting of choice, depending on space available. Professionals across Halton, from Health, Early Help, Social care and Early Years settings, can also complete referral forms with parents.

Over the past few years the termly DfE list has steadily risen in numbers. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, more parents have become eligible due to changes in personal circumstances. The number of children funded in Halton is, approximately, 523 plus per term.

Table 6 below shows Halton’s current supply and demand for the 2 Year Old Free Entitlement, split by Children Centre Reach Areas:

**Table No 6**

## 2 Year Old Free Entitlement

2 Year Old Free Entitlement		
Children's Centre Reach Area	Estimated Supply of Places	Estimated Demand for Places
Brookvale	82	77
Halton Brook	50	81
Halton Lodge	167	100
Windmill Hill	97	81
Ditton	106	77
Kingsway	41	67
Upton	42	60
Warrington Road	148	133
<b>Totals</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>675</b>
Town	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	396	339
Widnes	337	337
<b>Total</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>676</b>
57 surplus places overall		

*Population Source: ONS 2020 population estimates  
Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022  
Demand Source – DfE List August 2022*

The sufficiency factor of 57 shows that there are ample places available for this age range across Halton. However, there would appear to be deficit places in Halton Brook, Kingsway and Upton.

Table 7 gives the results from the Childcare Surveys from the Day Nurseries, Pre-schools and childminders (who responded) detailing whether they can meet demand for 2 Year old places during week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

**Table 7 Could you meet demand?**

Childcare Market – could you meet demand for places for 2 Year Olds during w/c 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2022						
Day Nurseries		Childminders			Pre-schools	
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)	Yes	No
83%	17%	72%	12%	16%	95%	5%

*Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 \*43 childminders responded to surveys (72%)  
Not all the pre-schools take 2 year olds, so the above results are only based on those who offer 2YO places*

The supply figures show we can meet the DfE estimated demand overall, despite an apparent deficit of places in Halton Brook, Kingsway and Upton CCRAs. However, as noted above, settings will change their age allocations throughout the terms to ensure they can accommodate as demand changes. The “Could you meet demand?” table indicates that day nurseries,

childminders and pre-schools can generally meet demand for funded 2 years. The most difficult term for placing 2 year olds is the summer term, as most settings have filled their places by this time of year.

**3 and 4 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement Places (Universal Hours)** – This type of childcare is delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools, maintained nursery schools, classes, academies and childminders.

Table 8 below shows Halton’s current supply and estimated demand for the 3 and 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement, in each of the Children Centre Reach Areas:

**Table No 8 3 & 4 Year Old Free Entitlement (Universal Hours)**

<b>3 &amp; 4 Year Old Free Entitlement (15 Universal Hours)</b>		
<b>Children's Centre Reach Area</b>	<b>Estimated Supply of Places</b>	<b>Estimated Demand for Places</b>
Brookvale	275	252
Halton Brook	336	217
Halton Lodge	346	309
Windmill Hill	308	243
Ditton	413	251
Kingsway	284	220
Upton	144	200
Warrington Road	465	393
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2571</b>	<b>2084</b>
<b>Town</b>	<b>Supply</b>	<b>Demand</b>
Runcorn	1265	1021
Widnes	1306	1064
<b>Total</b>	<b>2571</b>	<b>2085</b>
486 surplus places overall		

*Population Source: ONS 2020 population estimates  
Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022  
Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2022*

**Table 9 Could you meet demand?**

Childcare Market - could you meet demand for places for 3 & 4 Year Olds 15 Universal Hours during w/c 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2022?						
Day Nurseries		Childminders			Pre-schools	
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)	Yes	No
91%	9%	75%	9%	17%	96%	4%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022

\*43 childminders responded to surveys 72%

Table 8 shows we have approximately 486 excess places for the Universal Hours in total across the borough. Table 9 also indicates that providers can meet demand for the majority of time. The only area where there appears to be a deficit of places is Upton CCRA.

**3 and 4 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement Places (Extended Hours)** – This type of childcare is delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools, maintained nursery schools, classes, academies, childminders and, potentially, out of school clubs.

Table 10 below shows Halton's current supply and estimated demand for the 3 and 4 Year Old Extended Hours, in each of the Children Centre Reach Areas:

**Table 10 3 & 4 Year Old – Extended Hours**

3 & 4 Year Old - Extended Hours		
Children's Centre Reach Area	Estimated Supply of Places	Estimated Demand for Places
Brookvale	90	88
Halton Brook	54	51
Halton Lodge	161	94
Windmill Hill	77	119
Ditton	111	88
Kingsway	67	52
Upton	66	115
Warrington Road	182	126
<b>Totals</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>733</b>
Town	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	382	352
Widnes	426	381
<b>Total</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>733</b>
75 surplus places overall		

Population Source: ONS 2020 population estimates  
Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022  
Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2022

**Table 11 Could you meet demand?**

Childcare Market – could you meet demand for places for 3 & 4 Year Olds 15 Extended Hours during w/c 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2022?						
Day Nurseries		Childminders			Pre-schools	
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)	Yes	No
91%	9%	78%	9%	13%	95%	5%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022

\*43 childminders responded to surveys (72%)

Not all the pre-schools offer extended hours, so the above results are only based on those who do offer extended hours

Table 10 shows, overall, we have sufficient supply of places except in Windmill Hill and Upton CCRA's. The 15 extended hours can be used any time between 6am and 8pm, as long as no session is longer than 10 hours per day and the child does not attend more than two sites on any one day. This gives parents the flexibility to use breakfast and after school care as part of the extended hours. For example, a child could attend a breakfast club and pre-school on one site in the morning and a childminder in the afternoon, still allowing the parent to work a long day.

The most difficult term for placing 3 year olds is the summer term, as most settings have filled their places by this time of year. The autumn term generally has the lowest occupancy, as any 4 year olds will have left to go to reception class.

Table 11 indicates that providers could meet demand for extended hours.

### Impact of 30 Hours (Extended Offer)

Since the Extended 15 hours was introduced in September 2017 the take-up has steadily increased, except for the last two years when numbers dropped slightly. This is most likely due to the pandemic.

**3 and 4 Year Old Wraparound** – This type of childcare is predominantly delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders.

Table 12 below shows Halton's current supply and estimated demand for the 3 and 4 Year Old Care, split by town:

**Table 12 3 and 4 Year Old Wraparound**

3 & 4 Year Old - Wraparound		
Town	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	300	168
Widnes	329	211
<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>379</b>
250 surplus places overall		

Population Source: ONS 2020 population estimates

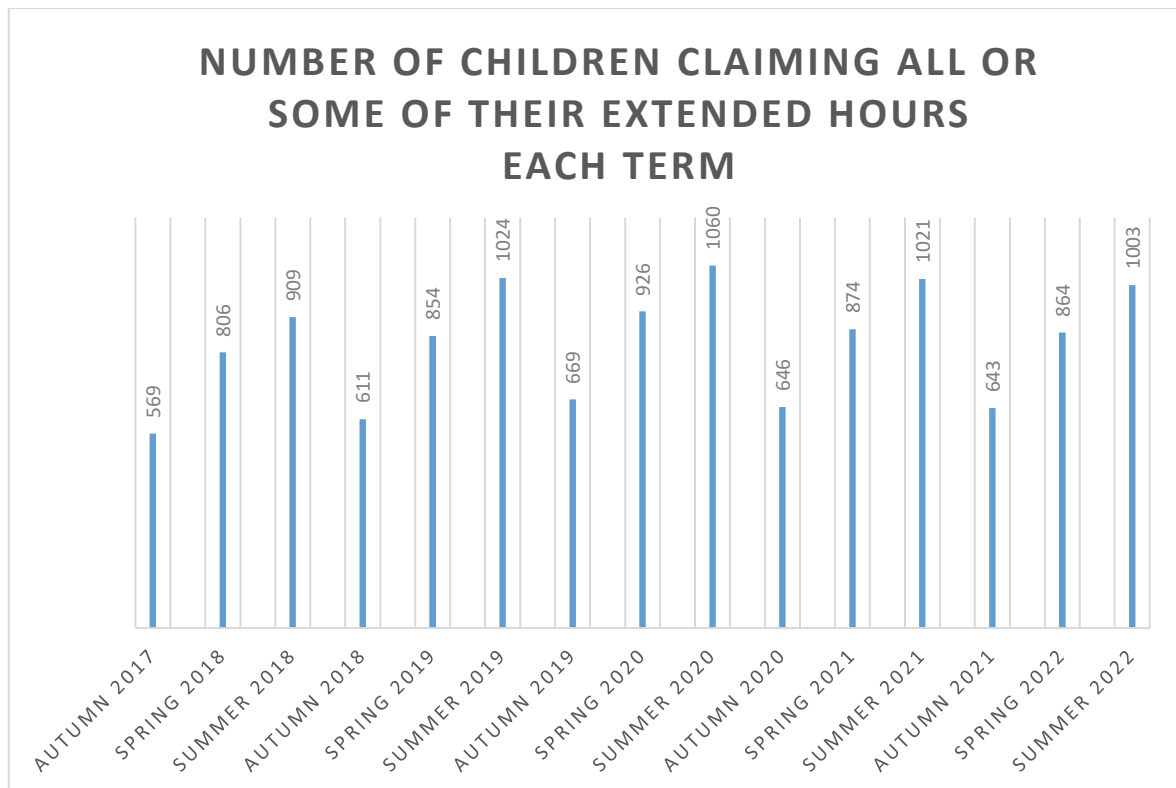
Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022

Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2022

The supply figures show we can meet demand for 3 and 4 Year Old Care or Wraparound Care.

### Supply of Extended Hour Places compared to Take-Up

The graph below shows the number of children claiming Extended Hours entitlement since the Extended Offer was introduced in Autumn 2017 up to Summer 2022.



We have continued to estimate demand for Wraparound Care because some families who are only entitled to 15 universal hours may need a few extra Wraparound hours. However, we may have over-estimated demand for Wraparound care, as parents who are working the equivalent of 16 hours on minimum wage will be entitled to 30 hours. They will, therefore, use less Wraparound and more Extended Hours. It is expected that in the future, demand for Wraparound places will reduce and the supply of places allocated for Wraparound can be added to the Extended Hours supply. This will result in a larger stock of places.

In addition, we have spare capacity of approximately 486 places in the Universal Hours supply (see Table 8) which could also be used for Extended Hours, if required.

It must also be noted that the estimated supply and demand is based on Summer 2022 data and this tends to increase in the Summer Term and decrease in the Autumn Term.

A further consideration is that there are some children living in Halton who claim some or all of their FEYE in neighbouring authorities (universal and/or extended hours). Conversely, some children live outside of Halton but claim their FEYE at childcare providers based in Halton.

### 5-10 Year Old Before and After School Provision

Ofsted allows before and after school providers to determine the number of children they provide care for, up to a maximum number, determined by the size of their premises. It is up to each provider, therefore, to ensure that they have the correct staff:child ratio in place for the ages of the children attending the setting.

Instead of having a separate registration for school aged children, day nurseries, childminders etc. have extended their provision to offer places to older children before and after school and during the holidays. Many schools also run breakfast and afterschool clubs, which are exempt from separate registration by Ofsted.

Table 13 below, shows supply and estimated demand for out of school care, split by CCRA.

**Table 13 5-10 Year Old Before and After School Provision**

5-10 Year Old Before and After School Provision		
Children's Centre Reach Area	Estimated Supply of Places	Estimated Demand for Places
Brookvale	139	57
Halton Brook	72	52
Halton Lodge	127	62
Windmill Hill	99	136
Ditton	115	51
Kingsway	36	12
Upton	101	112
Warrington Road	313	103
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1002</b>	<b>584</b>
Town	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	437	307
Widnes	565	278
<b>Total</b>	<b>1002</b>	<b>585</b>
417 surplus places overall		

*Population Source: ONS 2020 population estimates  
 Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022  
 Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2022*

The analysis of the 5-10 year old Out of School market (Table 13) indicates that there is sufficient childcare provision in six Children's Centre Reach Areas with deficit of places in Windmill Hill and Upton CCRAs.

**Table 14 Could you meet demand?**



<b>Childcare Market – during w/c 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022 could you meet demand for age 5+ places ?</b>
---

Breakfast Clubs		Out of School Club		Childminders		
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No Answer or N/A (some childminders do not take this age range)
<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>		<b>58%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>26%</b>

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 \*43 childminders responded to surveys (72%)  
(16 OSCs replied to survey. Results above are from those who did respond and offer a breakfast club)

The above table shows that providers are able to accommodate demand for before and after school provision.

Most schools offer extra-curricular after school activities for both primary and secondary aged children, and parents will use these as 'childcare'. Consequently, use of these activities combined with informal childcare, such as family and friends, means that there is a lower demand for out of school care than would be expected. However, it should be noted, that these activities often only run for up to an hour and are not always consistent. Furthermore, they can be cancelled at short notice and vary from term to term. This makes the collation of any information regarding the provision of before and after school care more difficult as it is not possible to collect consistent data around extra-curricular activities.

A small discounting factor has been applied to the figures in Table 13 to take account of the fact that some children attend provisions that are out of borough. These children will be expected to attend out of school provision in the borough where their school is, thereby reducing demand in Halton.

### 5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision

Table 15 below, shows supply and estimated demand for Holiday Care split by town.

**Table 15 5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision**

5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision		
Town	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	367	206
Widnes	291	186
<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>392</b>
266 surplus places overall		

<p>Population Source: ONS 2020 population estimates Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2022</p>
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**Table 16 Could you meet demand?**

Could you meet demand for age Holiday Care places for age 5+ during May 2022 half term				
Holiday Care		Childminders		
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)
100%		58%	16%	26%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 \*43 childminders responded to surveys (72%)  
(16 OSCs replied to survey. Results above are from those who did respond and offer a Holiday Club service)

Table 15 shows that there are sufficient places for children accessing 5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision. During the height of the pandemic supply and demand for out of school and holiday provision for 5-10 year olds was affected. However, the market for this type of provision appears to have reverted back to pre-Covid conditions.

### 11-14 Year Old Out of School and Holiday Care

Many parents and carers consider children within this age group to be 'old enough to look after themselves'. Therefore, families tend to access more informal arrangements for childcare, through play schemes, leisure and recreational activities.

Halton successfully provides FREE activities and food to children and young people, eligible for benefits related to free school meals and other vulnerable groups of children, under the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme. This programme runs during the Easter, Summer & Christmas breaks. The activities aim to engage children aged between 4-17 years. However, many are targeted at the cohort of 11-14 years.

Halton is also pro-active in commissioning a variety of services from different organisations to provide short breaks, educational, artistic and sporting activities for young people across the borough. For the purposes of the SDR, these activities are classed as 'childcare' for ages 11-19. The activities are held at various times during the evenings, weekends and school holidays throughout the year. For more information go to;

- Halton Play Council [www.haltonplaycouncil.co.uk](http://www.haltonplaycouncil.co.uk)
- The Vibe [www.vibe.org/halton](http://www.vibe.org/halton)

Full information on the different organisations that work with 11-19 year olds in Halton can be found on Halton's [Local Offer](#) and [Family Information Service](#) websites.

## 12. HALTON SEND PROVISION

Local Authorities have a legal responsibility to publish a Local Offer. Schools and early years providers must provide information for parents on how they support children with SEND and should regularly review and evaluate the quality and breadth of the support they offer. The [Local Offer](#) is published on the Halton Borough Council website.

In addition, childcare providers can apply for 'Top-up Funding'. The purpose of this funding is to support providers to address the needs of individual children with SEND. Currently, there are three opportunities a year for providers to apply for Top-up Funding. Once awarded, the funding remains in place for twelve months.

Halton's Families Information Service (FIS) offers a Brokerage Service to parents, which helps to find suitable childcare for their child's disability/additional needs.

Table 17 gives details from the Childcare Surveys regarding how many children were attending various types of childcare during week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022, who were on a SEND Support Plan or in receipt of an Education Health Care Plan.

**Table 17 Number of children attending childcare with SEND**

	Number of children who:	
	were on a Support Plan	have an EHCP
Day Nurseries	174	19
Pre-schools	90	12
Childminders	4	0
Out of School Clubs	43	18
Maintained Nursery Schools	25	7
Nursery Classes/Special Schools	18	1
Primary Academies	10	3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>60</b>

*Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022*

### 13. DISABILITY ACCESS FUND (DAF)

From April 2017, the Government introduced the Disability Access Fund (DAF) for early years providers, to support children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

DAF should be used by early years providers to make reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or help build inclusive capacity (this may be for the child in question or to benefit children as a whole attending the setting). Detailed information about the DAF eligibility criteria, entitlement, documentary evidence required, procedure, payment and application process can be found in the DAF section on the Local Offer Website.

The DAF funding is a one-off payment of £800 per year, which is paid directly to the childcare provider. It is available to 3 and 4 year olds who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and who are claiming FEYE.

Table 18 below shows the number of children who have received DAF, since its introduction in 2017.

**Table 18**  
**Number of Children who have received DAF each term**

Term	Number of children who have received DAF
Summer 2017	4
Autumn 2017	28
Spring 2018	15
Summer 2018	55
Autumn 2018	17
Spring 2019	13
Summer 2019	30
Autumn 2019	16
Spring 2020	17
Summer 2020	10
Autumn 2020	11
Spring 2021	19
Summer 2021	13
Autumn 2021	21
Spring 2022	11
Summer 2022	11

Source: Synergy Database

#### 14. AFFORDABILITY OF HALTON CHILDCARE

This section gives details of the average prices for the various sectors as at July 2022.

DAY NURSERIES	Full Day 10 hrs	Full Day 10 hrs	Half Day/ Session 5hrs	Half Day/ Session 5 hrs	Weekly £ 50hrs	Weekly £ 50hrs
	£ 2021	£ 2022	£ 2021	£ 2022	£ 2021	£ 2022
Halton overall	44.58	47.35	26.06	£28.69	209.00	£224.27
Runcorn	46.08	48.21	28.41	£29.60	215.80	£220.84
Widnes	43.07	46.55	25.86	£27.77	200.50	£227.69

Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 and FIS

PRE-SCHOOLS	3 Hour Session Price (for 3 and 4 Year Olds not entitled to FEYE)	3 Hour Session Price (for 3 and 4 Year Olds not entitled to FEYE)
	£ 2021	£ 2022
Halton overall	11.54	11.74
Runcorn	11.58	11.88
Widnes	11.41	11.36

Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 and FIS

OUT OF SCHOOL CLUBS	Breakfast Club £ 2021	Breakfast Club £ 2022	3-6pm/ 6.30pm £ 2021	3-6pm/ 6.30pm £ 2022
Halton overall	4.74	4.85	9.49	10.21
Runcorn	5.13	5.58	9.56	10.58
Widnes	4.43	4.41	9.43	9.99

*Not all providers gave this information Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2022*

HOLIDAY CLUBS	Full Day £ 2021	Full Day £ 2022	Half Day £ 2021	Half Day £ 2022
Halton overall	24.50	26.15	14.38	14.68
Runcorn	24.00	25.67	14.60	14.90
Widnes	25.25	26.88	14.00	14.33

*Not all providers gave this information Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2022*

CHILDMINDERS	HOURLY RATE 2021 £	HOURLY RATE 2022 £
Halton	4.65	£4.75

*Not all providers gave this information*

*Source: Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 and FIS*

**Table 19**  
**Average Charges Comparison Table**

Table 19 gives the Halton average rates for 2022 compared to the North West and England averages.

	Day Nursery 10hrs per day £ (age under 3)	Day Nursery 25hrs per week £ (age under 3)	Day Nursery 50hrs per week £	Childminder Hourly Rates £	After School 3 hour session £
Halton average	47.35	112.14	224.27	4.73	10.21
North West average	46.20	125.69	230.98	4.10	10.62
England average	53.08	135.28	265.38	4.72	13.35

*Source: Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2022  
Coram Family and Childcare - Childcare Survey 2022*

The above table shows that the average Halton day nursery daily rates (10 hours per day) is higher than the North West but lower than the England average.

Halton's 25 and 50 hours per week are lower than the North West and England averages.

Halton childminders average hourly rates are above the North West and England averages.

A three hour after school session in Halton, costs less than the North West and England averages.

## 15. SUSTAINABILITY

All childcare providers need to ensure they remain financially sustainable by ensuring they have sufficient children attending each term to cover their costs. However, childcare also needs to be affordable to parents.

To help providers with marketing their vacant places, the Families Information Service offers free advice to parents detailing local childcare providers suitable to their needs.

The FEYE funding rates for 2, 3 and 4 year olds paid to providers are determined by the amount of income received from the Government each financial year.

In April 2017, as part of the 3 and 4 year old FEYE funding, Halton introduced an additional 'Quality Supplement', which is paid to providers who have staff with a Level 5+ relevant childcare qualification.

## 16. STAFFING

Staffing costs are the largest expense for childcare providers and increase each year. Staff must be paid at least the minimum wage. An additional expense is the recent introduction of the Work Place Pension scheme. This will have financial implications for childcare providers regarding their sustainability.

A common difficulty childcare providers have is recruiting high quality, well experienced staff. Staff of this calibre expect higher wages, however, the childcare sector is traditionally amongst one of the lowest paid professions. Consequently, young people are not taking up childcare as a career.

Table 20 gives details of the number of staff employed in the PVI sector and whether male or female:

**Table 20**  
**Number of Staff Employed**

	Staffing		
	Total	Female	Male
Pre-schools	144	142	2
Day Nurseries	458	449	9
Out of School Clubs	107	100	7
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TOTALS %</b>		<b>97.5%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

Source: Childcare Surveys 2022

**17. AVERAGE HOURLY RATES OF PAY – PVI SECTOR**

	Manager £	Deputy/ Supervisor £	Room Leader/ Senior (L3+) £	Level 3 Assistant £	Level 2 Assistant £
<b>Day Nurseries</b>	<b>14.59</b>	<b>11.93</b>	<b>10.38</b>	<b>10.17</b>	<b>9.26</b>

*Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 but not all settings provided this information*

	Manager £	Deputy/ Supervisor £	Senior Practitioner (L3+) £	Level 3 Assistant £	Level 2 Assistant £
<b>Pre-schools</b>	<b>13.87</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>9.85</b>	<b>9.84</b>	<b>8.20</b>

*Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 but not all settings provided this information*

	Manager £	Deputy/ Supervisor £	Level 3 Assistant £	Level 2 Assistant £
<b>Out of Schools</b>	<b>12.85</b>	<b>10.80</b>	<b>9.64</b>	<b>9.45</b>

*Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022 but not all clubs provided this information*

**18. EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM (EYPP)**

In April 2015, the Government introduced Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This is additional funding designed to narrow the attainment gap between young children from low-income families and their peers.

Early Years Providers receive an extra £342 per year, paid termly, for each eligible 3 and 4 year old claiming the Universal Hours of the Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE). This is dependent upon the family receiving one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – For places starting in the summer term of 2018 (on or after 1st April 2018), or any subsequent term, if a parent is entitled to Universal Credit they must have an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £7,400, assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods, or,
- They are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales
- They have left care in England or Wales through:

- an adoption order
- a special guardianship order
- a child arrangements order

To ensure the funding is being utilised effectively, Ofsted inspectors will look at how settings are using the funding to help disadvantaged pupils and 'narrow the gap'.

When evaluating the achievement of pupils, inspectors will consider how well:

- Pupils make progress relative to their starting points
- Pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education
- Gaps are narrowing between the performance of different groups of pupils
- Pupils who are eligible for the EYPP have achieved since joining the setting

Once a child is eligible for EYPP, the childcare providers will receive the funding each term until the child moves into Reception Class.

## **19. FLEXIBILITY OF HALTON CHILDCARE**

This section provides details on how the various childcare sectors offer flexibility, especially for those parents working irregular hours.

### **Childminders**

There are currently 60 Ofsted Registered childminders in Halton (30 in Runcorn and 30 in Widnes).

Childminders can care for up to six children aged under 8 years of age – usually no more than one under 1 year old and two between the ages of 1-5 years old. They can also care for a number of children over the age of 8. If they work with another childminder or have an assistant, they can care for more.

Childminders in Halton offer a flexible service to suit parent's needs, in particular, with regards to early starts and late finishes. They provide breakfast, after school and holiday care services.

Many of the childminders delivering the FEYE are able to offer all, or some, of the FEYE hours. They also offer a drop off/pick up service to pre-schools/day nurseries/nursery schools/classes and deliver wrap-around care.

Opening hours for Halton childminders generally range between 7am-6pm, some also try to accommodate shift patterns.



**Table 21 – Number of Childminders Registered to Deliver the FEYE**

NUMBER OF CHILDMINDERS REGISTERED TO DELIVER THE FEYE						
	Summer 2017	Summer 2018	Summer 2019	Summer 2020	Summer 2021	Summer 2022
Number of Ofsted Registered Childminders	96	84	82	76	71	60
Number of Childminders set up to deliver FEYE	45	49	50	56	46	46
% of Childminders set up to deliver FEYE	47%	58%	61%	74%	65%	77%

### Day Nurseries

All 23 day nurseries (including the two maintained) offer full day care to children between the ages of 0-5 years. They generally open 8am-6pm (however, some do open earlier/later).

All day nurseries in Halton offer the Free Early Years Entitlement.

Approximately 83% of the day nurseries extend the Free Early Years Entitlement over more than 38 weeks.

In Halton, 5 day nurseries also offer breakfast, after school and holiday care for children aged between 4-11+ years of age.

### Pre-schools

All 24 Halton pre-schools offer the Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE). The majority are open for morning and afternoon sessions, however, a few only open for either morning or afternoons. All open term time only and are therefore able to offer the Early Years Free Entitlement over 38 weeks. Of the 25 pre-schools, 19 offer 30 hours.

Flexibility is further increased as 15 pre-schools also offer a lunch club. This enables parents to use their free entitlement for part of the day and pay for any additional hours, at a considerably lower rate than a day nursery.

Five pre-schools also have before and after school clubs on the same site. This enables families to extend their daily childcare usage for more hours, which gives the child consistency of care. These families can split some of their 30 hours (if entitled) between the breakfast/after school club and pre-school.

## Out of School and Holiday Clubs

Halton currently have 21 registered Out of School Clubs and 11 Holiday Clubs.

Opening times for breakfast clubs range between 7:30am-9am, and after school clubs generally run between 3pm-6pm.

Some primary schools in Halton run their own breakfast clubs. The majority of remaining primary schools have access to either an independently run (Ofsted registered) breakfast club on the school site or, off-site registered OSCs/childminders who offer breakfast clubs and a drop-off service.

The majority of primary schools offer extra-curricular or after school activities ranging from 1-2 sessions per week, for up to 5 sessions per week. Many of these activities are free and reduce demand for formal after school care run by Ofsted registered clubs.

Families may use after school activity clubs for their childcare needs as they are usually less expensive or, in some cases, free of charge. However, these clubs are not consistent as they may not cover the whole term and can be cancelled at short notice. These activities can reduce demand for formal OSC care.

Holiday Clubs generally open between 7:30/8:00am and 6:00/6.30pm.

*\*Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2022*

## 20. CHANGE IN CHILDCARE PLACES SINCE LAST CSA AND PROJECTED NEW PLACES

Table 22 below gives details from the Childcare Surveys regarding whether the PVI sector intend to create more places or open further settings in Halton, in the next 18 months:

**Table 22**  
**Changes in Childcare Places**

Provider Type	Future plans to expand				Opening another setting			
	Yes	No plans at present	No plans at all	Didn't reply	Yes	Maybe	No	Didn't reply
Pre-schools	8%	58%	34%	0	0	4%	96%	0
Day Nurseries	4%	53%	43%	0	4%	0%	96%	0
Out of Schools Clubs	0	39%	35%	26%	4%	0	70%	26%

*Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2022*

This section details any settings who have closed, opened, or are hoping to open, since the last SDR.

*Note: The number of places for any settings which have already closed have been deducted from the Supply figures, however, any new settings due to open have not been included in the Supply and Demand Tables in Section 11.*

### **Day Nurseries**

Two day nurseries have closed since the last CSA was published, one in Widnes and one in Runcorn.

### **Pre-schools/Maintained Nursery Classes**

Two maintained nursery classes closed in July 2022, both in Halton Castle ward, however, a private company are opening a pre-school in one of the nursery classes in September 2022. They will be able to offer 24 places.

A voluntary pre-school based on a school site in Halton Lea ward closed in autumn 2022, however, the school are opening their own pre-school in September 2022, offering 24 places each session.

A further pre-school opened in a primary school in Hough Green ward in September 2021 offering 21 places each session.

### **Out of School/Holiday Clubs**

An out of school club will be opening in a primary school in Halton Lea ward in September 2022, which will be able to cater for 30 children.

An out of school club is due to open in a school in September 2022 in Mersey ward offering 40 places.

### **Childminders**

The number of registered childminders in Halton has reduced from 71 to 60.

## **21. HELP WITH CHILDCARE COSTS**

The cost of childcare can be a major expense and this may be a deciding factor in whether parents return to work or training and, if so, whether they use 'formal' (registered or approved) or 'informal' (family and friends) childcare.

Financial help is available, providing the childcare provider is a:

- Registered childminder/play scheme/nursery or club
- Childminder with an Ofsted registered Childminding Agency
- Registered school

The Government introduced the '[Childcare Choices](#)' website which provides details of all the financial help available towards the cost of childcare. This is a 'one-stop shop' which allows parents/carers to see if they are eligible and, if so, to apply directly on-line. The website contains information regarding:

- 15 hour free childcare for two year olds (FEYE)
- 15 hours universal childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds (FEYE)

- 30 hours extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds of working parents (FEYE)
- Tax Free Childcare\*
- Tax Credits towards Childcare
- Universal Credit towards Childcare
- Financial support whilst studying

The website also has a calculator, which gives estimates of amount of help available to enable parents decide which scheme is the most beneficial to them financially.

The date the child becomes eligible for FEYE depends on the child's birthday.

If child's birthday is between	Child becomes eligible
1 January to 31 March	<b>The beginning of term on or after 1 April</b>
1 April to 31 August	<b>The beginning of term on or after 1 September</b>
1 September to 31 December	<b>The beginning of term on or after 1 January</b>

**Example:** If child was born on 15<sup>th</sup> April, the child is eligible from the next term, which starts September.

Since September 2018, Foster Carers who work the equivalent of 16 hours on minimum wage, outside of their foster caring role, may also be entitled to claim 30 hours childcare (subject to specific criteria). Foster Carers should contact their Social Worker for more information.

## 22. DETAILS OF WHICH OUT OF SCHOOL CLUBS PICK UP FROM WHICH SCHOOLS

Below is a list of all Halton schools, split into Runcorn and Widnes, giving details of which out of school clubs drop off/pick up from them (as at August 2022):

### RUNCORN

RUNCORN SCHOOLS	Out of School Clubs who offer a pick up/drop off service to this school
Astmoor Primary	Acorn Link Club
Beechwood Primary	
Bridgewater Park Academy	Acorn Link Club
Brookvale Primary	Brookvale OSC ( <i>on school site</i> )
Castle View Primary	Grange Link Club ( <i>pick up only</i> ) Willow Link Club
Cavendish High School	
Daresbury Primary	Daresbury Kids Club ( <i>on school site</i> )
Gorsewood Primary	
Hallwood Park Primary	
Halton Lodge Primary	Willow Link Club

<b>RUNCORN SCHOOLS - continued</b>	<b>Out of School Clubs who offer a pick up/drop off service to this school</b>
Hillview Primary	New Shoots Link Club <i>(on school site)</i> Willow Link Club
Moore Primary	Cygnets of Moore <i>(on school site)</i>
Murdishaw West Primary	
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	
Our Lady Mother of the Saviour	Palace Fields Link Club
Palace Fields Primary Academy	Palace Fields Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
Pewithall Primary	Willow Link Club
Runcorn All Saints	
St Augustine's Primary	Acorn Link Club
St Berteline's Primary	
St Chad's High School	
St Clement's Primary	Willow Link Club
St Edward's Primary	Willow Link Club
St Martin's Primary	
St Mary's Primary	Acorn Link Club
The Brow Primary	
The Grange Academy	Grange Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
The Heath High School	
The Holy Spirit Primary	
Victoria Road Primary	Early Learners OSC
Westfield Primary	
Weston Point Primary	Willow Link Club
Weston Primary	Willow Link Club, Early Learners OSC
Windmill Hill Primary	Windmill Hill Nursery <i>(on school site)</i>
Woodside Primary	Willow Link Club

## WIDNES

WIDNES SCHOOLS	Out of School Clubs who offer a pick up/drop off service to this school
All Saints Upton Primary	Upton Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
Ashley Special School	
Brookfields Special School	
Chesnut Lodge Special School	
Ditton Primary	
Fairfield Primary	Kids Space Ltd <i>(on school site)</i>
Farnworth Primary	Whizzkids <i>(on school site)</i> St Basil's Link Club
Hale Primary	Kids Club Hale <i>(on school site)</i>
Halebank Primary	
Lunts Heath Primary	Early Learners Link Club
Moorfield Primary	Funky Monkey's Kids Club
Oakfield Primary	
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour	Our Lady's 1st Steps Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
Simms Cross Primary	
St Basil's Primary	St Basil's Link Club <i>(on school site)</i> Whizzkids
St Bede's Infants	The Village Care Club <i>(on school site)</i> Early Learners Link Club
St Bede's Juniors	Early Learners Link Club
St Gerard's Primary	
St John Fisher Primary	St John Fisher Care Club <i>(school site)</i>
St Michael's Primary	St Michael's Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
St Michaels with St Thomas (previously known as Spinney)	
St Peter & Paul High School	
The Bankfield High School	
Wade Deacon High School	
Widnes Academy	Jiggy Childcare (West Bank)

*Any out of school clubs who are still registered with Ofsted but are not currently operating a service, have been removed from these lists*

*Note: Some childminders will also offer a pick up/drop off service to the schools in Runcorn and Widnes*

### 23. 'AT A GLANCE' TABLE

Table 23 shows 'at a glance' which areas have sufficient/insufficient places to meet demand in each age range/childcare category.

**Table 23 – 'At a Glance' Table**

**Key:** Y = Sufficiency N = Insufficiency (includes number of places)

Children's Centre Reach Area	0-2 Year Old Places	2 Year Old Places FEYE	3 & 4 Year Old FEYE Universal Hours	3 & 4 Year Old Extended Hours	3 & 4 Year Old Wraparound Care	5-10 Year Old After School Care	5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision
Brookvale		Y	Y	Y		Y	
Halton Brook		N (-31)	Y	Y		Y	
Halton Lodge		Y	Y	Y		Y	
Windmill Hill		Y	Y	N (-42)		N (-37)	
Ditton		Y	Y	Y		Y	
Kingsway		N (-20)	Y	Y		Y	
Upton		N (-12)	N (-56)	N (-49)		N (-11)	
Warrington Road		Y	Y	Y		Y	
<b>Town</b>							
Runcorn	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Widnes	N (-13)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Halton sufficiency overall</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>

## 24. GAPS IN PROVISION

Table 23 indicates that the majority of areas in Halton have sufficient supply of childcare places in all age ranges except for the following:

- Widnes overall has a deficit of approximately 13 places for 0-2 year olds.
- Halton Brook CCRA has a deficit of approximately 31 places for funded 2 year olds.
- Windmill Hill CCRA has a deficit of approximately 42 extended entitlement places and 37 places for out of school care for 5-10 year olds.
- Kingsway CCRA has a deficit of approximately 20 places for funded 2 year olds.
- Upton has a deficit of 12 places for funded 2 year olds, 56 universal places for 3 and 4 year olds, 49 extended hour places and 11 places for out of school care for 5-10 year olds.

However, it is important to remember that parents do not always access childcare in the ward where they live and children do not always attend a school in the ward where they live.

### Halton Brook CCRA

With regards to the shortage of funded 2 year old places in Halton Brook CCRA, the Two Year Old Funding Officer reports that it has always been possible to find an alternative place in the surrounding area. Furthermore, if parents have requested a particular setting where there are no available spaces, they have been happy to wait for availability.

### Windmill Hill CCRA

With regards to the shortage of 3 and 4 year old Extended places in the Windmill Hill CCRA, families are willing to travel to other wards for their FEYE. This may mean accessing a setting, which is outside the Windmill Hill CCRA or even out of the borough.

Concerning the shortage of out of School places in this area, local knowledge would support the fact that, in reality, no such shortage exists. In addition, the majority of primary schools offer after school activities, which parents may use as childcare.

### Kingsway CCRA

With regards to the shortage of funded 2 year old places in the Kingsway CCRA, a new nursery has recently opened in Farnworth Ward. Although this new nursery is not situated in the Kingsway CCRA, geographically it is located close by and parents may be willing to travel.

### Upton CCRA

The shortage of 2, 3 & 4 year old FEYE places (both Universal and Extended) in the Upton CCRA would appear to be due to the expansion of new housing estates in that area.

In recent years, prospective childcare providers have considered developing childcare in this CCRA, notably the Birchfield ward. However, no suitable buildings appeared to be available and it was proving too costly to buy land to build premises.



However, the new Day Nursery which has recently opened in Farnworth ward will help to alleviate the shortage of 3 and 4 year old places in the Upton RA. In particular it will help the Birchfield ward, as Birchfield ward is next to Farnworth Ward (see map on page 7) and parents are willing to travel across wards to receive their free childcare.

In addition, Birchfield and Hough Green wards are both on the edge of neighbouring authorities e.g. St Helens, Knowsley and Warrington. They are also in close proximity to the M62 motorway. This means that if parents work further afield, they may choose to claim their Universal/Extended FEYE in a childcare setting nearer to their work, thereby reducing demand for places in Halton.

With regards to the shortage of out of School places, local knowledge would support the fact that, in reality, no such shortage exists. In addition, the majority of primary schools offer after school activities, which parents may use as childcare.

## 25. OTHER FACTORS IMPACTING ON CHILDCARE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in 2020 has radically changed the way we live our lives. The impact of this global pandemic has yet to be fully determined, but repercussions are beginning to be felt within the Early Years sector.

The main challenges faced by Early Years providers are around staffing & recruitment, learning and development, supporting children with SEND, and a reduction in occupancy. This has led to increased concern around future sustainability, especially within the Pre-School sector (See tables below).

	Key Challenges currently faced by Early Years Providers			
Type of Setting	Staffing /Recruitment	Learning and Development	Supporting children with SEND	Reduction in Occupancy
Pre-Schools	17%	29%	46%	42%
Day Nurseries	48%	22%	39%	30%
Childminders	0	23%	0	14%
Out of School Clubs	22%	9%	9%	26%

*\*Percentages based on number of settings who returned their CSA surveys*

	Percentage of settings who foresee Sustainability Issues during the following terms		
Type of Setting	Autumn 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
Pre-Schools	33%	25%	21%
Day Nurseries	22%	22%	22%
Childminders	12%	9%	9%
Out of School Clubs	13%	13%	13%

*\*Percentages based on number of settings who returned their CSA surveys*

## 26. CONCLUSION

Overall, the Halton Sufficiency Duty Report 2022-2023 continues to reflect a sufficient and high quality Early Years and Childcare market. Despite the pandemic, new provisions are opening up and parents and carers continue to have a wide choice of high quality and affordable childcare services.

However, the Early Years sector have indicated that there are increasing concerns around recruitment and retention of staff, the high numbers of children coming into settings with Special Educational Needs, and the reduction of numbers of children, especially in Pre-Schools. There are also concerns around the increasing costs of fuel and overheads. The potential effects will need to be carefully monitored over the next few months to ensure that the childcare market in Halton remains vibrant and buoyant.

The report does identify some gaps in provision and the Action Plan below details how the Local Authority will work with a range of partners to address these gaps to ensure sufficiency.





**CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT**  
**ACTION PLAN 2022-2023**

<b>OBJECTIVE 1 – IMPACT OF COVID-19 &amp; OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>	<b>BY WHOM AND WHEN</b>
To continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 and other factors, such as increasing fuel bills, on the childcare sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue to collect information from our early years providers to gain local intelligence around the impact of Covid-19 and other environmental factors through termly sector meetings</li> </ul>	Early Years Team – Termly
<b>OBJECTIVE 2 – GAPS IN PROVISION</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>	<b>BY WHOM AND WHEN</b>
Halton Brook, Kingsway and Upton CCRA – shortage of 2 Year Old Funded Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue to monitor DfE estimates.</li> <li>○ Encourage existing providers in this area to expand their provision or re-configure their buildings, if possible, to accommodate more funded 2 Year Olds.</li> <li>○ Encourage new providers to enter the local childcare market in these areas.</li> <li>○ Promote the FEYE funding to childminders with either a Good or Outstanding Ofsted Grade and encourage them to register to deliver the FEYE.</li> </ul>	Early Years Team – ongoing
Windmill Hill and Upton CCRA – shortage of Universal and Extended Entitlement Places for 3 and 4 Year Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage existing providers in these areas to expand their provision or re-configure their buildings, if possible, to accommodate more funded 3 and 4 Year Olds.</li> <li>○ Encourage new providers to enter the local childcare market in these areas.</li> <li>○ Promote the Universal and Extended FEYE funding to childminders and encourage them to register to deliver the FEYE.</li> <li>○ Promote the Extended FEYE funding to maintained nursery schools/classes not currently offering the extended offer.</li> <li>○ Promote the Extended FEYE funding to Out of School Clubs and encourage them to register to deliver the FEYE.</li> </ul>	Early Years Team – ongoing

Windmill Hill and Upton CCRA – shortage of Out of School Places for 5-10 Year Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage existing Out of School Clubs to offer a drop off/pick-up service to the schools where there is no provision.</li> <li>○ Encourage new providers to enter the local childcare market in these areas.</li> <li>○ Ensure schools in these areas make parents aware that they have the 'Right to Request' Wraparound and/or Holiday Care. Schools should work with local providers to offer a service or offer the service themselves. For link to DfE guidance click <a href="#">Here</a></li> </ul>	Early Years Team – ongoing
<b>OBJECTIVE 3 – PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>	<b>BY WHOM AND WHEN</b>
<p>Continue to promote:</p> <p>Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE) for 2, 3 and 4 Year olds</p> <p>Tax Free Childcare (TFC) to parents and childcare providers</p> <p>Disability Access Fund (DAF) to childcare providers</p> <p>Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) to childcare providers</p> <p>Local Offer website to parents of children with SEND</p>	All via literature, social media, HBC Website, outreach events (when possible)	Early Years Team, especially FIS, Local Offer Team - ongoing
<b>OBJECTIVE 4 – ENSURE HALTON CONTINUES TO HAVE A CHOICE OF HIGH QUALITY CHILDCARE IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>	<b>BY WHOM AND WHEN</b>
Ensure all Halton childcare providers remain high quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue to offer support, guidance and training to existing and new childcare providers regarding EYFS, Safeguarding and Welfare requirements and Learning and Development</li> </ul>	Early Years Team - ongoing, especially the Quality Improvement Officer and the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer

**27. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

<b>ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
CCRA	Children's Centre Reach Area
CSA	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
DAF	Disability Access Fund
DfE	Department for Education
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
EYPP	Early Years Pupil Premium
FIS	Families Information Service
FEYE	Free Early Years Entitlement
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HBC	Halton Borough Council
HCYPSP	Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OSC	Out of School Club
SDR	Sufficiency Duty Report
SEND	Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

**Definition of a 'Reach' Area**

A Reach Area is a number of wards based around a Children's Centre that is meaningful and accessible to local parents.

**28. REFERENCES**

Halton Children & Young People's Plan 2018-2021

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Halton Families Information Service

Halton council democracy statistics and census information

Halton's Synergy Children's Database (Servelec)

2011 Census

Office of National Statistics

Childcare Provider Surveys 2022

Coram Family and Childcare – Childcare Survey 2022

Child and Family Poverty – Department for Work and Pension Statistics (2011)

Proportion of children in out-of-work benefit households measure for 2014 – Department for Work and Pensions (2015)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

**29. CONTACTS**

If you would like any further information regarding this Sufficiency Duty Report contact:

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For any general information regarding childcare in Halton, contact:

Families Information Service on 0151 511 7375,  
e-mail: [haltonfis@halton.gov.uk](mailto:haltonfis@halton.gov.uk) or visit: [www.halton.gov.uk/fis](http://www.halton.gov.uk/fis)

For advice on how to set up childcare, see document entitled:

“Local Authority Guide to setting up childcare provision on non-domestic premises”.

Click [Setting up Childcare in Halton](#)



