

Public Document Pack



Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

Monday, 11 November 2024 at 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Councillor Geoffrey Logan (Chair) | Labour |
| Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair) | Labour |
| Councillor Sandra Baker | Labour |
| Councillor Victoria Begg | Labour |
| Councillor Louise Goodall | Labour |
| Councillor Eddie Jones | Labour |
| Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones | Labour |
| Councillor Tony McDermott | Labour |
| Councillor Margaret Ratcliffe | Liberal Democrats |
| Councillor Mike Ryan | Labour |
| Councillor Aimee Skinner | Labour |

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.*

The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 20 January 2025

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

Part I

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| 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. | |
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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, 9 September 2024 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Baker, Begg, Goodall, Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, McDermott and Ryan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Ratcliffe and Skinner

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, B. Holmes and K. Appleton

Also in attendance: Councillor T. McInerney, in accordance with Standing Order number 33

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

CYP10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

CYP12 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes relating to the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio, taken from the Executive Board meetings held since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix one for information.

CYP13 ANNUAL REPORT - 2023-24

The Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2023-24. The Board met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2023 to March 2024.

Action

RESOLVED: That the 2023-24 Annual Report be received and noted.

CYP14 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE

The Board received a presentation on the progress made in the areas identified by OFSTED as areas for improvement, including workforce stability.

The Board was advised of the Council's strengths and responses to these, and the key findings and action taken to date.

Members scrutinised the responses given and offered challenge on areas where progress measures and financial implications were identified and the following information was provided:

- Previously, embedding a systemic model of social work practice had been hindered by previous staff instability and high rates of agency staff. Some staff who had been trained on systemic models had moved on to other local authorities. Halton would have this practice in place in the future;
- Agency staff numbers were at 41% so were slowly reducing. Recruitment challenges were still being faced with competition from neighbouring authorities;
- Despite the number of agency workers, a reduction in costs was being made due to having a fixed pay rate, which was not the case previously;
- Following challenge, assurance was given and an explanation provided on the processes and procedures in place for supervision of children placed out of Borough, including the Post 16 cohort and care leavers;
- Detail and explanation was provided on the creation of a new 'Edge of Care' Service, and the rationale behind this decision. This included benefits to families and children, as well as cost saving through prevention of children coming into care;
- Following the establishment of an additional post, the new Principal Social Worker would be starting in September. They would support practice improvements further. This role brought with it the opportunity to be part of the social workers network which Halton has not had before;
- Some specific social worker posts in Halton were fixed term contracts; and
- The new *Connect2Halton* recruitment service would be used going forward to recruit temporary staff when

required. In the long term, this would reduce costs for the Council.

Officers provided updates and statistical information on the use of the Family Hubs in Halton since they opened. A further update would be provided at a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the presentation is noted.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

CYP15 SEND IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND PARENT SURVEY

The Board received a presentation on the progress made against the SEND Improvement Plan and the findings of a recent parent survey.

The Delivering Better Values (DBV) Programme was outlined, which aimed to support local authorities and their partners in improving the delivery of SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) services for children and young people. The DVB Programme focussed on financial sustainability whilst ensuring good outcomes for children with SEND.

Workstreams one and two were explained, which included work around *Thrive* and *Team Teach* training, and the plans for *Emotional Based School Non-Attendance* training.

The outcomes of the Children and Young People and Parent/Carer Surveys were presented. These had identified 5 priorities, below, details of which were given in the report:

1. Strategic Oversight and Governance;
2. Cohesive communication / joined up systems;
3. Joint Commissioning;
4. Early identification of need and access; and
5. Education Health and Care Plans.

Overall the parents / carers expressed dissatisfaction with the process and communication from both Education and Health professionals, although there was greater satisfaction with social care services. Further details of these areas of dissatisfaction were presented.

The following responses were provided to Members' questions:

- Although 73% of schools had signed up to *Thrive*, 27% had not. The main reasons were because they

had already done something similar at their schools or, there were capacity issues. So they either plan to access the training in the future, or already had equivalent training embedded;

- Discussions regarding the business models of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) in relation to excluding pupils with SEND – officers had met with CEO's of 90% of all MATs in Halton to discuss working together to improve school attendance, including the impact of suspensions. Meetings would be held with the dioceses' as well in the coming months to discuss the same;
- Data was being collected regarding exclusions of children with SEND, which would be presented when available;
- Two senior quality assurance officers had been recruited to work with schools around the Local Authority's statutory duties, including attendance, inclusion and alternative provision;
- Academy schools were required to engage with local authorities on statutory matters/duties;
- A list of schools with resource bases within them would be provided to the Board for information;
- Raise Academy was now open and Members were invited to contact the Head Teacher if they wished to visit. An open day was being arranged for the Schools' neighbours; and
- The Board requested further information and reporting on the number of children for whom there was an open search for an independent special school, due to no suitable provision in Borough being identified. The Board noted the financial implications, including transport costs associated with this placement, as well as the impact upon the child in accessing education outside of the Borough.

It was noted that the complete survey's Q and A would be sent to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That the Plan and comments made be noted.

CYP16 SUPPORTING FAMILIES UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director of Children's Services, which provided an update of the Supporting Families Programme.

It was noted that the Programme had been transferred to the Department of Education (DfE) from the

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in April 2024. This would enable the Education Secretary to deliver a coordinated, whole system of support for children and families, as well as ensuring services were sustainable for local government.

The report described the revised Supporting Families Outcomes Framework and the ten headline outcomes set out within this. Below these outcomes sat descriptors of family needs that made up the eligibility criteria for the Supporting Families Programme, as well as suggested data sources for identifying families with these needs.

The report outlined details of the refreshed Early Help System guide published in March 2024 and Halton's position within this. This included feedback on the progress of 2022 priorities which helped confirm Halton's 2023 priorities; these were presented in the report.

Further, information on performance, funding and commissioned services was provided, as well as a case study example, showing how one family had engaged positively with the Programme.

Members noted that the Programme was 100% grant funded and there was no expectation that this would continue beyond March 2025. In response to questions, it was confirmed that there would be no direct impact on children 'on the edge of care' once it was ended.

It was commented that as the Programme offered key services, cessation of these would impact on other services, so much so, that the Local Authority may have to fund them. Officers would return to the Board with further details on the financial implications of this and more details around how this would affect supporting families.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CYP17 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 1 of 2024-25 (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2024-25 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the various function areas reporting to the Board as follows:

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

- 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.

Members requested that the financial implications for services in both areas be considered and included in future reports. Examples given were providing the details of the three most expensive packages of children in care and school placements (anonymised). Details such as these would help to give a better understanding of the impact on budgets.

In response to questions relating to unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the expectation that requests for accommodation would be made from Government in the coming weeks, it was reported that so far this had not happened. It was confirmed that two of these children were in care at the moment, one in foster care and one in residential care.

One Member suggested, following her conversations with constituents from the Syrian community, that they be approached to assist with fostering children from the same country, as they seemed open to this. This would be passed onto the Fostering Board to consider.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management reports for quarter 1 of 2024-25 be received.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

Meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| REPORT TO: | Children, Young People & Families PPB |
| DATE: | 11 November 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Chief Executive |
| SUBJECT: | Public Question Time |
| WARD(S) | Boroughwide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE 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 **RECOMMENDATION: 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**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

None identified.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

None identified.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

None identified.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

None identified.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Children, Young People & Families PPB

DATE: 11 November 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Minutes relating to the relevant 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 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None.

5.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None.

5.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None.

5.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None.

5.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None.

5.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

8.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None identified.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

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|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Children, Young People & Families Policy and Performance Board |
| DATE: | 11 November 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director - Children's Services |
| SUBJECT: | Quarterly Monitoring Report 1 st April 2024 – 30 th June 2024 . |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children and Young People |
| WARDS(S): | Borough Wide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the key performance indicators identified to measure progress against each of the priorities identified within the Children and Young People Plan.
- 1.2 To provide an update on Directorate spending and budgets as at the end of quarter 2 (30th September 2024).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 The Quarterly Monitoring Report (QMR) is accepted as the mechanism by which Elected Members can monitor and scrutinise progress going forward.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The format of the QMR has changed from what has been reported previously in order to comply with the new Corporate reporting template.
- 3.2 The content i.e. performance measures of the QMR have also changed from what has been reported previously in order to correlate with the priorities identified in the newly launched Children and Young People Plan (September 2024).
- 3.3 Quarter 1 QMR was presented to the CYP & Families PPB in the meeting held on 9th September 2024, in the old format with the old measures. This report is also for Q1 but reports on the new measures. At the time of compiling this QMR, the data for Q2 was not yet available. Doing this report for Q1 is to demonstrate the format and allow for comments so that any amendments can be made in preparation for future reporting.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The priorities identified within the Children and Young People Plan inform policy development within Children's Services.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Budgetary decisions over the duration of the Children and Young People Plan 2024-2027 will be informed by performance information.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The Children and Young People's Plan is informed by Halton's Corporate Plan and reflects its key priorities for a Healthy Halton for Children and Young People.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Keeping our children local to Halton and improving their educational outcomes will build stronger communities, create better employment opportunities that will support talent within Halton to remain in Halton.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Children and Young People's Plan is informed by Halton's Corporate Plan and reflects its key priorities for all Children and Young People in Halton.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need

The Children and Young People's Plan considers the support, services and opportunities within the borough for vulnerable children and young people and their families.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Reducing travel requirements for educational placements, visits and family time will reduce our carbon footprint.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Investing in organisations that wish to give back to the local Halton community.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Progress against each of the priorities identified within the plan will be tracked and inform future reports to the Policy & Performance Board

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 The Children and Young Peoples Plan considers equality and diversity issues.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

None identified

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

Departmental Quarterly Monitoring Report

Directorate: Children’s Services

Departments: Children Social Care and Early Help, Education

Period: Quarter - 1st April 2024 – 30th June 2024

1.0 Introduction

This quarterly monitoring report covers the **Children’s Services Directorate’s** first quarter period up to 30th June 2024. It describes key developments and progress against ‘key’ milestones and performance indicators for the service in line with the Corporate plan.

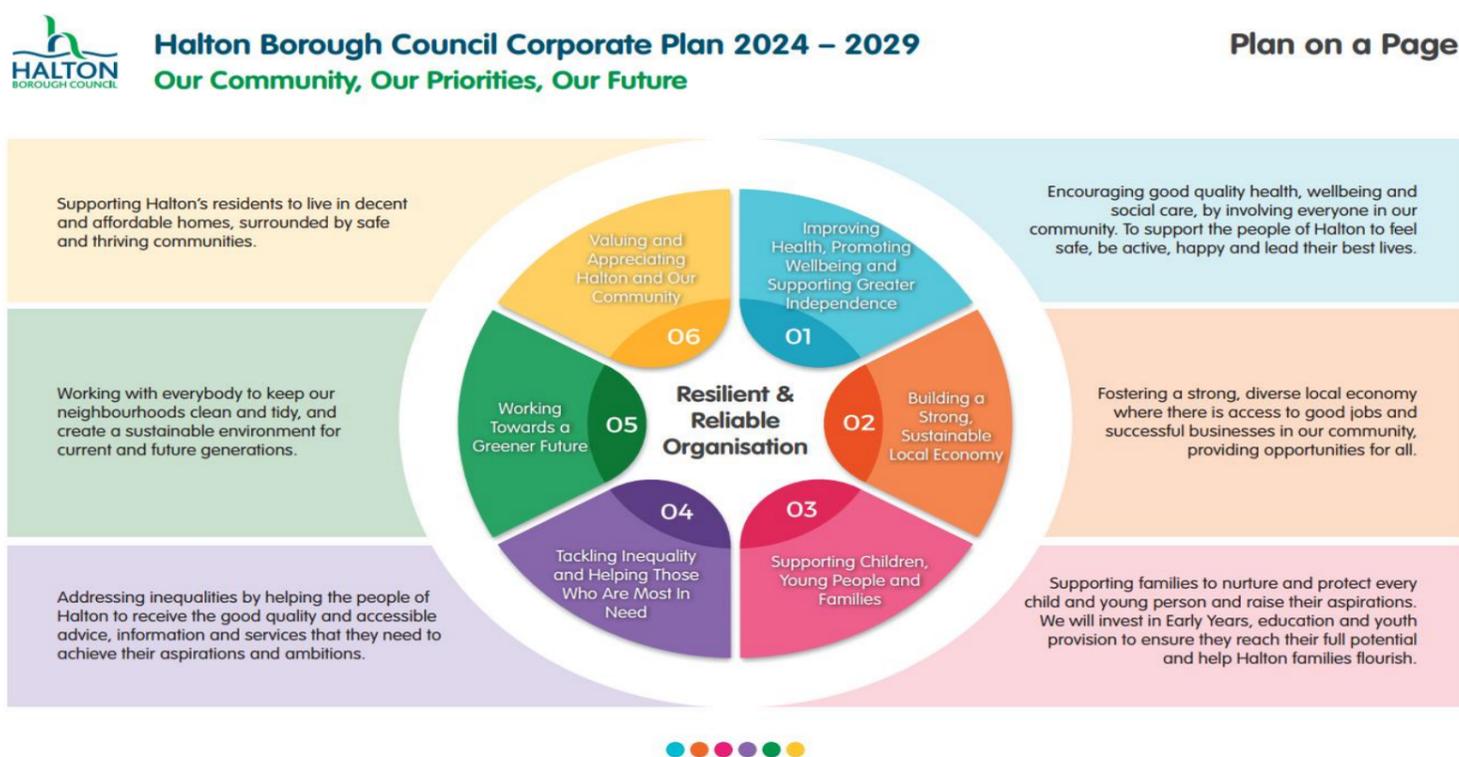
2.0 Data Quality Statement

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, it has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use, this has been clearly annotated.

3.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1: Progress Against Objectives / Milestones
- Appendix 2: Explanation of Symbols
- Appendix 3: Progress Against Performance Indicators
- Appendix 4: Financial Statement

Appendix 1: Progress Against Objectives / Milestones



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P1 | Safely reduce the number of children needing to be looked after by the Local Authority and improve safeguarding. |

| Milestone | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|--|-------------|--|
| P1.1 Increase in the number of families accessing support through the Family Hub on a quarterly basis (Source – Val Armor) | ↑ | Steady increase in attendances from previous 12 months, currently stable at almost 5500 attendance per quarter under 5 and over 11000 attendances all ages. The online portal has helped to increase registrations. |

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| | | | All monthly reporting figures are in a family hub dashboard whilst this is in its infancy the data is already seeing an increase in families accessing support. Further details will be available Q2 |
| P1.2 | Increase the number of successful PLO outcomes i.e. prevent Children entering care (Source - Rebecca Gamble - Andy Jones) |  | During this quarter, 9 children were successfully stepped down from pre-proceedings, preventing them from entering care. This marks an improvement compared to Quarter 4, when only 3 children were stepped down. |
| P1.3 | Decrease the number of Children in Care on a quarterly basis (Source – Jamie Pope) |  | 374 children in care, a positive reduction of 2% from previous quarter Q4 381. |
| P1.4 | Increase the number of partner led MAPS (Source – Val Armor) |  | Quality work is currently on-going with the partner lead MAPS, so correct numbers cannot be reported for Q4 & Q1. At the moment we only have school MAPS. Data should be available for Q3 onward. This work is also going to be monitored and scrutinised in the early help Partnership Board. An ongoing training programme and support is offered to partners to help them take the lead but few agencies are taking this up |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P2 | Improve the stability of care placements. |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|--|---|---|
| P2.1 | Reduce the number of children who moved between placements (Source – Jamie Pope) |  | 12% 3+ placement moves in last 12 months compared to 10% in previous quarter Q4. |
| P2.2 | Reduce the number of children who are/were placed in out of Borough in residential care (Source – Jamie Pope) |  | 17% of those placed in residential were placed in borough, compared to 12% in previous quarter. |
| P2.3 | Reduce the costs of out of borough residential placement placements (Source – Jamie Pope) | | Information requested, not provided |
| P2.4 | Reduce the number of children who are placed in independent fostering agencies (Source – Jamie Pope) | | Information requested, not provided |
| P2.5 | Reduce the costs of out of borough independent foster placements (Source – Jamie Pope) | | Information requested, not provided |
| P2.6 | Increase the number of Foster Carers and kinship carers (Source – Jamie Pope) | | Information requested, not provided |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P3 | Improve SEND provision |

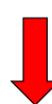
| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|--|---|---|
| P3.1 | Increase the % of EHCP's completed within 20 weeks (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Source – Charlotte Finch) |  | Rate at 64.6% by end of Q1 2024-25. Previous formal position (SEN2 2024) was 26.3%, and Q1 2023-24 was 19.5%. Too early to say what final position will be but evidence of vast improvement in Q1 figures. |
| P3.2 | Increase the % of EHCP Annual reviews that are carried out within 12 months (Source – Charlotte Finch) |  | Rate at 60.9%, similar position to Q1 2023-24 (59.6%). Too early to say what Q4 position will be, but previous indications are that the rate improves during Q2. |
| P3.3 | Increase the % annual reviews responded to within the statutory time frame (Source – Charlotte Finch) | | Information requested, not provided |
| P3.4 | Decrease the proportion of children subject to an EHCP placed in independent and out of borough provisions (Source – Lee Ellis) |  | 122 CYP (7.5% of EHCP caseload) placed INMSS end of Q1 2024-25. No comparison available for Q1 2023-24 but down from 8% as at end of Q4 2023-24. New resource base placements commencing 2024-25 may help drive this down further, but too early to say what Q4 position will be. |
| P3.5 | Decrease the spend on independent and out of borough (OOB) provision for SEND (Source – Lee Ellis) |  | There is a planned approach to assessing and reviewing all high cost placements, which will be based around liaising with providers and reviewing need. |

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| P3.6 | Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) – Increase the number of assessments done within 4 weeks of referral receipt (unless assessment to be undertaken within setting/school) (Source – Lee Ellis) |  | Reported Q1 2024-25 position was 0% |
| P3.7 | SaLT – Increase the number where treatment commenced within 12 weeks of referral receipt (Source – Lee Ellis) |  | Reported Q1 2024-25 position was 0% |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P4 | Increase number of children attending schools graded good or outstanding and improve attainment outcomes at all Key Stages. |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| P4.1 | Increase the % of Early Years settings (pre-schools, day care, out of school clubs, childminders) with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding (snapshot end of quarter) (Source – Sarah Campbell) |  | Halton State-funded Nursery Schools maintain 100% 98% of all Early Years settings (pre-schools, day care, out of school clubs, childminders) were Outstanding or Met. |
| P4.2 | Increase the % of schools and settings with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Schools Secondary (Source - Ben Holmes) |  | Halton State-funded Special Schools maintain 100% Published position at the end of June 2024: 82% Primary and 63% Secondary. 15 Halton settings were inspected in the 2023-24 academic year, with just one report not yet published. 93% of those published inspections received or maintained an overall Outstanding or Good judgement, with one setting maintaining the Requires Improvement outcome. |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P5 | Improve pastoral and behaviour support and reduce the need for children to be excluded. |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| P5.1 | Reduce the number of incidents of Suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Source - Debbie Houghton) |  | The number of suspensions is increasing from 1021 at Q1 in 22/23 to more than double at 2083 in 23/24. Team around the school continues to offer support to schools for children at risk of exclusion or suspension. |
| P5.2 | Reduce the number of children subject to suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Source - Debbie Houghton) |  | The number of children subject to suspension has increased from 457 in 22/23 to 786 in 23/24 |
| P5.3 | Reduce the number of permanent exclusions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Source - Debbie Houghton) |  | To end of Q1 there were 56 permanent exclusions, 18 of these children were SEN Support, 3 undergoing statutory assessment and 8 with an EHCP at the time of exclusion. This compares to 44 at the end of Q1 22/23. |
| P5.4 | Increase the % of early EHCP reviews for SEND Children subject to exclusion (Source – Charlotte Finch) | | Information requested, not provided |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P6 | Improve attendance at school, college and in Early Years settings including sufficiency of places. |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|--|-------------|--|
| P6.1 | Child Care Expansion roll out - Increase the number of eligible working parents who access child care support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From April 2024, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds who access 15 hours childcare support. From September 2024, eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3-year-olds who access 15 hours childcare support (Source – Sarah Campbell) | New measure | 36% of the population (503 children) were accessing a funded place for eligible working parents of 2 Year Olds (May 2024 Headcount/GP Registrations Data May 2024) 9 month and over funded places not available until September 2024. |

| P6.2 | Increase number of eligible children for the vulnerable 2- year-old funding accessing EY provision (internally collected termly information – may not match to published data from census) (Source –Sarah Campbell) |  | 93% of children eligible for vulnerable 2 year old funding accessed provision (410/439 children) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|--|------------------------|------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| P6.3 | Increase the % taking up of Early Years Entitlement for 3- to 4-year-olds. (Source –Sarah Campbell) |  | 89.8% of 3 & 4 Year Olds children taking up Early Years Entitlement of 3 & 4 Year Olds (May 2024 Headcount/GP Registrations Data May 2024) same as in last quarter. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| P6.4 | Increased attendance at schools: a) Primary b) PRU c) Secondary d) Special (Source - Debbie Houghton) |  | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Autumn/ Spring 2022/23</th> <th>Autumn/ Spring 2023/24</th> <th>Autumn/ Spring 2022/23 – 2023/24 change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a) 94.03%</td> <td>a) 94.36%</td> <td>a) 0.34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b) 46.93%</td> <td>b) 49.28%</td> <td>b) 2.35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c) 90.54%</td> <td>c) 90.01%</td> <td>c) -0.53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d) 87.45%</td> <td>d) 88.36%</td> <td>d) 0.93%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>From Nexus formal data release Autumn/ Spring attendance data 2023-24. Previous comparison data from formally released Autumn/ Spring data 2022-23. Attendance has increased on the previous year apart from Secondary where there has been an average attendance drop of 0.53%.</p> <p>The Education Welfare Service continue to support schools to improve attendance through both a traded and statutory offer. In August 24 new Guidance Working Together To Support School Attendance from the DfE came into force, which reinforced a support first model. Schools and the LA are required to work to this new Guidance which sets out new duties and there was also a National Penalty Notice Framework to ensure consistency across the country.</p> | Autumn/ Spring 2022/23 | Autumn/ Spring 2023/24 | Autumn/ Spring 2022/23 – 2023/24 change | a) 94.03% | a) 94.36% | a) 0.34% | b) 46.93% | b) 49.28% | b) 2.35% | c) 90.54% | c) 90.01% | c) -0.53% | d) 87.45% | d) 88.36% | d) 0.93% |
| Autumn/ Spring 2022/23 | Autumn/ Spring 2023/24 | Autumn/ Spring 2022/23 – 2023/24 change | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a) 94.03% | a) 94.36% | a) 0.34% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b) 46.93% | b) 49.28% | b) 2.35% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c) 90.54% | c) 90.01% | c) -0.53% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| d) 87.45% | d) 88.36% | d) 0.93% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| P6.5 | Reduce the number of children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) including those open to CIN or CP. a) CIN b) CP c) SEND (Source - Debbie Houghton) |  | 325 is the number of children who were EHE at any point during September 23 to end of June 24. In that time period there were 47 new children who went EHE. This is an increase on the previous academic year with parents citing a number of reasons including bullying and school unable to meet their child’s needs. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| P6.6 | Reduce the number of children who are missing education (Source - Debbie Houghton) a) CIN b) CP c) SEND (Source - Debbie Houghton) |  | There are no children confirmed as missing education. However in that time period the CME officer tracked 189 reported incidences of children missing education . However with support of the CME officer working together with other LAs and services all of the children were supported back into education. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| P6.7 | Reduce the number of children Not in Receipt of Full time education (NIROFTI) . a) CIN b) CP c) SEND (Source - Debbie Houghton) |  | 163 instances of part time timetables with 28 new instances in this period. Schools are required to notify the local authority of any child on a reduced timetable, not accessing a full time education offer. The reasons for children accessing a reduced education offer could be due to health needs or a return to school following time off due to health issues, a permanently excluded child starting at a new school or due to SEN needs. A part time timetable is a short term intervention to re-integrate a child back into school and a full time education offer. A part time timetable is usually in place for a maximum of 6 weeks. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| P6.8 | Reduce the number of children accessing alternative provision or educated other than at school a) CIN b) CP c) SEND (Source – Charlotte Finch) | | Information requested, not provided | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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|---------------------------|---|
| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P07 | Improve professional practice including the quality of children and families social work. |

| Milestone | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|--|---|--|
| P7.1 Increase the number of audits grades as good in the sub section ‘Identifying & Responding to Need, Abuse & Thresholds’ (Source – Susanne Leece) |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 2024 - 100% in Early Help were graded ‘good’ - 13% Help & Protect were graded ‘good’ May 2024 - No audits completed due to ILAC inspection June 2024 -100% in Early Help were graded ‘good’ -22% Help & Protect were graded ‘good’ |
| P7.2 Increase the number of audits grades as good in the sub section ‘Providing Effective Help’ (Source – Susanne Leece) |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 2024 -67% in Early Help were graded ‘good’ -13% Help & Protect were graded ‘good’ -40% CiC were graded ‘good’ -67% CL were graded ‘good’ |

| | | | |
|------|--|---|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2024 - No audits completed due to ILAC inspection • June 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -67% in Early Help were graded 'good' -22% Help & Protect were graded 'good' -33% CiC were graded 'good' -25% CL were graded 'good' <p>Although a good 'at a glance' indicator of practice quality, month on month comparison of the percentage of audit gradings alone do not provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of practice improvement activity. In small audit cohorts such as these (CL = 4 actual audits) small variances in the number of audits graded good can have a significant impact on the percentage.</p> |
| P7.3 | Increase the number of children who benefit from management oversight and supervision graded 'good' through the audit sub section 'Making Good Decisions & Management Oversight' (Source – Susanne Leece) |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -67% in Early Help were graded 'good' -13% Help & Protect were graded 'good' -20% CiC were graded 'good' -0% CL were graded 'good' • May 2024 - No audits completed due to ILAC inspection • June 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -100% in Early Help were graded 'good' -0% Help & Protect were graded 'good' -0% CiC were graded 'good' -25% CL were graded 'good' <p>As above: Although a good 'at a glance' indicator of practice quality, month on month comparison of the percentage of audit gradings alone do not provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of practice improvement activity. In small audit cohorts such as these small variances in the number of audits graded good can have a significant impact on the percentage.</p> |
| P7.4 | Increase the number of children's casefiles receiving an overall grade of 'Good' through the audit process (Source – Susanne Leece) |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2024 – 22% (4) audits were graded 'good' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -x2 EH -x1 DAT -x1 Help & Protect • May 2024 – No audits completed due to ILAC inspection • June 2024 – 25% (5) audits were graded 'good' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -x3 EH -x1 DAT -x1 CL |
| P7.5 | Increase the number of social workers accessing training through the Social Work Academy (Source - Kadie Molyneux) |  | The Social Work Academy went live from 22.04.24 and so there is no baseline data as at the end of March 2024. We have started to record the numbers of Social Workers accessing training through the Academy from 22.04.24 and as at the 30.06.24 there have been 124. As a part of the development of the Social Work Academy a training needs analysis will be completed by July 24, a training plan will be developed to target focused areas of practice improvement which will increase the number of social workers accessing training through the Social Work Academy. |
| P7.6 | Increasing the number of permanent staff (Source – Katherine Appleton) | | Information requested, not provided |
| P7.7 | Reduce the number of agency workers and associated costs (Source – Katherine Appleton) | | Information requested, not provided |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P8 | Reducing Child obesity |

| Milestone | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|---|---|--|
| P8.1 Increase % breast feeding and initiation and maintenance at 6 – 8 weeks (Source – Rebekah Walsh) |  | Initiation = 56% (23/24 average = 52%) 10-14 days = 47.6% (23/24 average = 42.9%) 6-8 weeks = 33.2% (23/24 average = 27.5%) |
| P8.2 Maintain/increase the number of schools engaging in the Healthy Schools Programme which includes whole School approaches to tackling obesity. (Source – Rebekah Walsh) |  | The end of the school term saw us achieve the highest update since pre-covid across the school year 2023/24. 100% of primary schools engaged, 75% of special schools and 50% of secondary schools. Ongoing work in 2023/24 to understand the needs of secondary schools, to increase uptake there. |
| P8.3 Increase the number of parents if children under 5 accessing the 'HENRY' Programme (Source – Rebekah Walsh) |  | 5 referrals to the HENRY Right From the Start course this quarter, which is lower than previous quarters. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | HENRY will be incorporated in to the new Family Hubs 0-5 pathway, and additional staff to be trained in Q3, which will enhance capacity to promote and deliver more courses. Additional standalone workshops also run as an introduction to HENRY – 39 parents/carers booked on to these sessions in Q1 |
|--|--|--|--|

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P9 | Improve access to positive opportunities. |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| P9.1 | Increase the number of care leavers accessing the Care leavers group (Source – Debbie Gates) |  | We have developed the Care leaver forum, which now has 7 members on a regular basis. We now have co-chairs for the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council. |
| P9.2 | Increase the engagement for CIN, CIC and Care leavers via Barnardo's contract (Source – Lee Ellis) |  | There is a considerable and current waiting list which needs to reduce via improving through put from the service. Meetings are planned with the provider to explore how best to do this. |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P10 | Improve Mental Health provision. |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|---|---|--|
| P10.1 | Increase the numbers of Primary and Secondary school educators being trained as Thrive Licensed Practitioners. (Source – Mike Stapleton Chambers) |  | We are currently ahead in our roll out of Thrive. Implementation of the training has started for a number of our schools. March 24 – 0 schools trainers as it is a new project June 24 - 5 schools End of year target all Halton schools – On Target |
| P10.2 | Increase the number of strengths and difficulties questionnaires completed for Children in Care and Care Leavers (Source – Jamie Pope - Sarah Wilson, Bridgewater) | | Information requested, not provided |
| P10.3 | Increase the number of health assessment (initial and review) for Children in Care (Source – Jamie Pope - Sarah Wilson, Bridgewater) | | Information requested, not provided |
| P10.4 | Reduce the number of children who are accessing education under Section 19 (Source – Debbie Houghton) |  | As at 31.03.24 there were 20 children who were accessing education under Section 19, this increased to 31 at the end of June. At the end of June 2023 there were 24. Children receiving education under section 19 include those permanently excluded from Primary (until a new school is found) Children with Health conditions unable to attend school and children excluded from special schools with EHCP's. |
| P10.5 | Reduce the % waiting time for CIC to access MH provision (Source – Jamie Pope - Helen Whittick) | | Information requested, not provided |

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| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P11 | Strengthen the voice of children and young people. |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| P11.1 | Increase the number of 'good' gradings within Children Social Care casefile audits for the child's voice and how it informs their plans (Source – Susanne Leece) |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -100% in Early Help were graded 'good' -13% Help & Protect were graded 'good' -20% CiC were graded 'good' -33% CL were graded 'good' May 2024 - No audits completed due to ILAC inspection June 2024 |

| | | | |
|-------|--|---|---|
| | | | -67% in Early Help were graded 'good' -22% Help & Protect were graded 'good' -67% CiC were graded 'good' -20% CL were graded 'good' |
| P11.2 | Increase the number of children and young people involved with the Children in Care Council (Source – Debbie Gates) |  | The CICC has grown substantially, we have gone from 2 members to 14 members since January 2024. We now have co-chairs for the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council. |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Corporate Priority | Priority 1 – Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence. Priority 3 – Supporting Children, Young People and Families Priority 4 – Tackling inequality and helping those who are in most need |
| CYP P12 | Improve pathways into meaningful employment with training and both Further and Higher Education |

| Milestone | | Progress Q1 | Data and any supporting commentary |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| P12.1 | Reduce the percentage of 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment or training or whose activities are not known to the council (Source – Haf Bell) |  | Average NEET (not in education, employment and training) & Not Known figure from April 24 – June 24 is 8% compared to 6.5% in the same period in 2023. There is a lack of Post 16 provision which allows a young person to join part way through an academic year. We've seen a greater number of young people leaving provision during the academic year with no progression to another course possible, affecting the overall NEET & Not Known figure. A business case for additional Post 16 provision has been submitted to the Department for Education. |
| P12.2 | Increase the number of good quality path way plans as identified through the audit process for Care Leavers (Source – Jamie Pope) | | Information requested, not provided |

Appendix 3: Progress Against Performance Indicators

| | STRATEGIC ISSUES | BASELINE POSITION | OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 1 | OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 3 | INTERVENTIONS | KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| A | Develop and embed Family Hubs and extend their provision to include 19 to 25 age range with additional needs | | | | | |
| B | Wraparound Care Programme - Submitted a supply and demand analysis to the DFE, recruit a Wraparound care coordinator to lead on expanding the project. | | | | | |
| C | Pause Project - secure further funding from partners for 3-5 years submit funding bud | | | | | |
| D | Utilise the grant of £1m from Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme. | | | | | |
| E | Implement redevised structure for children and need service. | | | | | |
| F | SEND - Commission a specialist equipment provider to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Halton schools/settings. | | | | | |
| G | SEND - 'Tell it once' framework co-produced and launched. | | | | | |
| H | SEND - Complete a multi-agency joined up review of current ICT systems and processes understanding current ICT platforms used for information storing and sharing and how they interlink. | | | | | |
| I | Halton Alternative Provision Strategy and Alternative Provision offer co-produced with all system partners. | | | | | |
| J | Review the Neglect Strategy. | | | | | |
| K | Develop an Section 19 Policy and establish an Education Inclusion Panel to determine when the LA Section 19 duty applies and education offer. | | | | | |
| L | Halton Priority education Action Area Plan, £1.8M allocated across 3 years to tackle attendance and attainment. | Whats gone on in the quarter towards achieving that, what the update, i.e, meeting and outcome or decision making | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| M | Deliver new statutory duties under the DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. | | | | | |
| N | Submit a bid to the DfE for new post 16 provision in Halton | | | | | |
| O | Support the Right to succeed agenda - Halton Lea Cradle to Career 2024-26 for the design, delivery and reporting of a youth offer. | | | | | |
| P | Establish 'The Food Active Healthy and Active Futures Pledge', a whole school approach to tackling obesity. | | | | | |
| Q | National Child Measurement Programme (data provided annually) | | | | | |

Appendix 4: Financial Statements

Progress Symbols are used in the following manner

| | Performance indicator |
|---|--|
|  | Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u> . |
|  | Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe. |
|  | Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken. |

CHILDREN & FAMILIES DEPARTMENT**Revenue Budget as at 30 September 2024**

| | Annual Budget | Budget to Date | Actual Spend | Variance (Overspend) | Forecast Outturn |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Employees | 15,065 | 6,758 | 8,283 | (1,525) | (3,056) |
| Other Premises | 415 | 141 | 160 | (19) | (34) |
| Supplies & Services | 1,723 | 1,135 | 1,449 | (314) | (610) |
| Transport | 360 | 138 | 112 | 26 | 45 |
| Direct Payments | 1,097 | 548 | 631 | (83) | (178) |
| Commissioned services to Vol Orgs | 224 | 101 | 101 | 0 | 0 |
| Residential Care | 17,570 | 6,168 | 10,321 | (4,153) | (7,394) |
| Out of Borough Adoption | 96 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 96 |
| Out of Borough Fostering | 4,253 | 1,716 | 2,176 | (460) | (991) |
| In House Adoption | 548 | 165 | 129 | 36 | 68 |
| Special Guardianship Order | 2,510 | 1,115 | 1,144 | (29) | (70) |
| In House Foster Carer Placements | 2,739 | 1,194 | 1,031 | 163 | 302 |
| Lavender House Contract Costs | 234 | 80 | 73 | 7 | 15 |
| Home Support & Respite | 340 | 179 | 174 | 5 | 8 |
| Care Leavers | 248 | 134 | 188 | (54) | (107) |
| Family Support | 53 | 22 | 30 | (8) | (22) |
| Contracted services | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Early Years | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Emergency Duty | 132 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (51) |
| Youth Offending Services | 321 | 10 | 10 | 0 | (140) |
| Transfer to Reserves | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 47,939 | 19,606 | 26,014 | (6,408) | (12,119) |
| Income | | | | | |
| Fees & Charges | -33 | -7 | 0 | (7) | (14) |
| Sales Income | -4 | -2 | 0 | (2) | (3) |
| Rents | -81 | -21 | -24 | 3 | 0 |
| Reimbursement & other Grant Income | -766 | -450 | -365 | (85) | (111) |
| Transfer from reserve | -5 | -5 | -5 | 0 | 0 |
| Dedicated Schools Grant | -50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Government Grants | -10,371 | -5,285 | -6,270 | 985 | (86) |
| Total Income | -11,310 | -5,770 | -6,664 | 894 | (214) |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 36,629 | 13,836 | 19,350 | (5,514) | (12,333) |
| Recharges | | | | | |
| Premises Support | 398 | 199 | 199 | 0 | 0 |
| Transport | 16 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Central Support | 2,274 | 1,137 | 1,137 | 0 | 0 |
| Asset Rental Support | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HBC Support Costs Income | -955 | -478 | -478 | 0 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | 1,733 | 867 | 867 | 0 | 0 |
| Net Departmental Expenditure | 38,362 | 14,703 | 20,217 | (5,514) | (12,333) |

Financial Position

The net departmental expenditure is estimated to be over budget profile at the end of financial year 2024/25 by £12.333m with the majority relating to Social Care Services.

Growth budget of £6.079m has been provided to support pressured areas for financial year 2024/25 but unfortunately this has not been sufficient to support the increasing spend across the service.

The overall forecast outturn position at the end of 24/25 has increased by £0.716m since 31 July 2024. The forecast for residential placement costs has increased by £1.2m since last reported at the end of July 2024. Higher funding than originally anticipated relating to Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and reduced forecast spend in other areas has helped mitigate the overall forecast overspend.

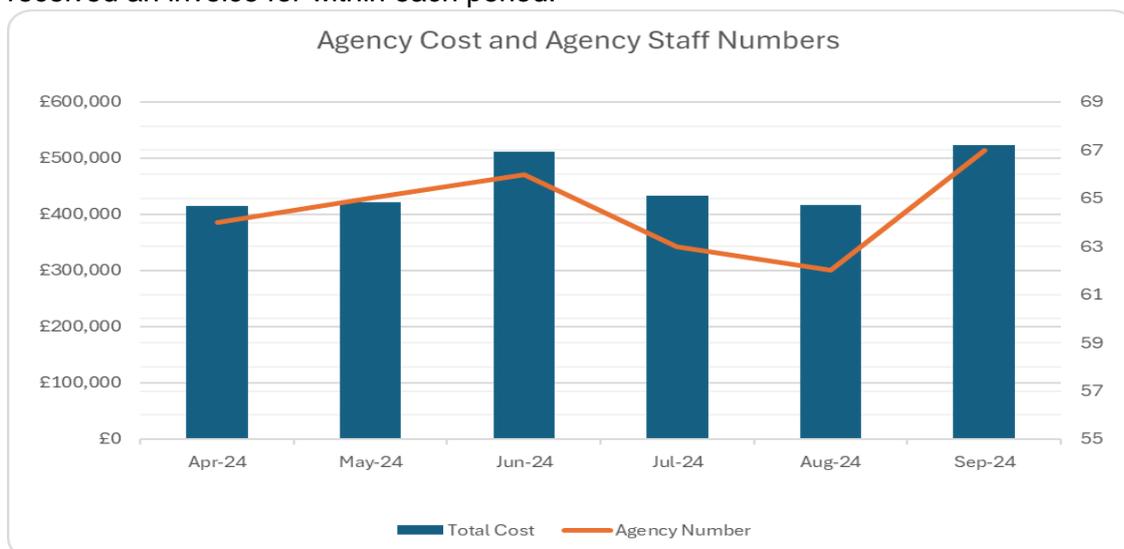
The financial picture for the Children and Families Department continues to be one of serious concern. The main issues relate to the difficulty in the recruitment of social workers and the subsequent extortionate agency costs, along with the spiralling costs of residential placements. This has been an ongoing problem for a number of years. Urgent action to reduce these costs should now be taken as a priority as this level of spend cannot be sustained without resulting in significant financial harm to the Local Authority.

Please see below for further details

Employee Expenditure

Employee costs are over budget profile at the end of financial year 2024/25 by £3.056m. There continues to be heavy reliance on agency staff to fill vacancies across the structure.

The chart below demonstrates agency cost that cover the month of April to September based on the period that was worked. An estimated figure has also been included in September for invoices that we have not yet received for work that was provided in September. The chart also includes the number of agency members of staff that we have received an invoice for within each period.



Various workstreams are in place to target the difficulties in recruitment, including a recruitment work group, social work academy and market supplements for applicable posts.

The current number of agency staff that are in addition to the establishment has risen to 18. In some cases this is due to agency staff not being stepped down when posts are recruited to by permanent employees.

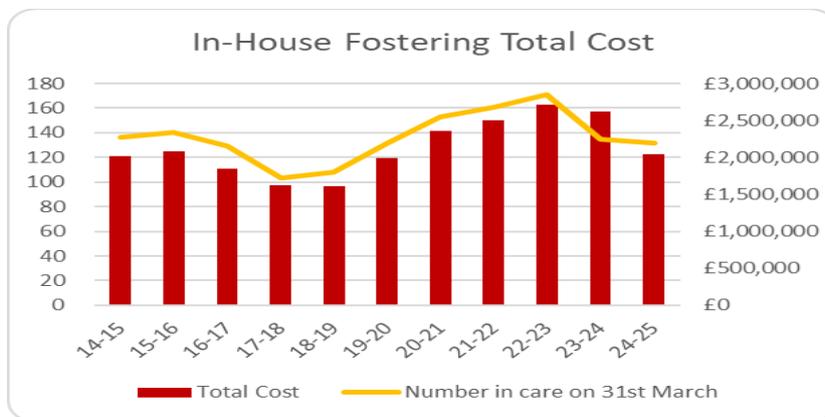
Agency spend forecast across the department is expected to remain high for financial year 2024/25, at 30 September 2024 agency spend was £2.715m.

Supplies and Services

Supplies and services expenditure is forecast to be £0.610m over budget profile at the end of financial year. Supplies and Services is diverse and covers a number of areas including nursery fees, consultancy, translation costs, equipment and support provided to young people.

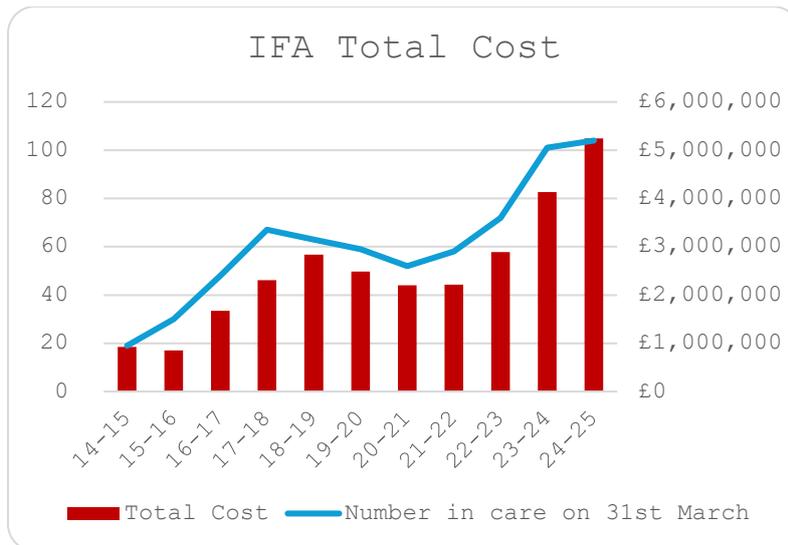
Fostering

Inhouse fostering placements is estimated to be £0.302m under budget profile for financial year 2024/25. Inhouse fostering budgets were increased to support the budget pressure in this area.



Work continues to recruit and retain Halton’s In-house foster carers, along with training to develop carers enabling them to accommodate more specialist placements and support and mentor each other. This therefore means that costs could increase. However, the ability to accommodate young people within in-house provision provides a substantial saving in comparison to Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or residential care.

Increasing numbers of children in care and insufficient in-house fostering provision has meant increased reliance on IFA. Higher numbers of children placed within IFA provision and increased IFA rates has resulted in an estimated forecast for the end of 2024/25 as £0.991m over budget.



Special Guardianship Order

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) at the end of financial year 2024/25 is estimated to be over budget profile by £0.70m.

These are long term placements for young people, where the carers are granted parental responsibility for the young person in their care. This is a positive outcome for the young person as these are stable placements and the children are no longer classed as a 'child in care'. They are also less expensive than other placements so they are financially beneficial too.

Residential Care

Out of Borough Residential Care continues to be the main budget pressure for the Children and Families Department as the costs of residential care have continued to rise year on year.

| Provision | Weekly Costs | 30-Sep-24 | | 31-Jul-24 | |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| | | No. Placed | Estimated cost for the year | No. Placed | Estimated cost for the year |
| Residential | £2000 - £3000 | 3 | 425,275 | 2 | 197,563 |
| Residential | £3001 - £4000 | 15 | 3,177,897 | 14 | 2,576,320 |
| Residential | £4001 - £5000 | 11 | 2,464,877 | 12 | 2,707,103 |
| Residential | £5001 - £15000 | 41 | 16,205,195 | 38 | 15,556,103 |
| Secure | £6397 - £8137 | | | | |
| Leaving Care | £443 - £7175 | 18 | 2,643,101 | 19 | 2,742,900 |
| Parent & Child | £2000 - £5500 | 6 | 715,298 | 6 | 663,491 |
| Total: | | 94 | 25,631,643 | 91 | 24,443,479 |

At the end of financial year 24/25 the estimated overspend is £7.394m over budget for residential placements. Overall cost of packages are increasing due to the complexity of support the young people require as well as standard package cost increases.

The graph below illustrates the rising costs of Residential Care, for consistency this does not include the costs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as these costs were not included previous years.



UASC Residential Care

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) currently placed in care has remained steady.

Funding for financial year 23/24 has now been paid by the Home Office for both UASC and Leaving Care. Funding for 24/25 is yet to be agreed but we are hopeful this will be confirmed in the coming months.

| Provision | Weekly Costs | 30-Sep-24 | | 31 July 2024 | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| | | No. Placed | Estimated cost for the year | No. Placed | Estimated cost for the year |
| UASC | £300-£500 | 36 | 460,218 | 38 | 499,215 |
| UASC | £500-£5000 | 21 | 785,402 | 20 | 843,014 |
| Total: | | 57 | 1,245,619 | 58 | 1,342,228 |

Residential Care continues to be a persistent pressure on the budget. The numbers of young people in residential placements remains high and the cost of placements is rising significantly.

This is a national issue and market factors such as low supply and high demand have resulted in the costs of residential care packages rising significantly over the last year, meaning that the level of spend is unsustainable at the current rate.

A number of initiatives are taking place to try and address the issue including a High Cost Placement Panel where high cost packages are individually scrutinized to ensure the placement is the right for the young person and at the best available cost for the placement.

Income

Income is forecast to be underachieving at the end of financial year 2024/25 by £0.214m, The underachievement relates to Social Work Academy funding not meeting the original expected levels and the number of NHS joint funded packages reducing.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Children and Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board |
| DATE: | 11 November 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director - Children's Services |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children & Young People |
| SUBJECT: | Children's Social Care High Cost Placements |
| WARD(S) | All Wards |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on high cost placements within Children's Social Care.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Children's Social Care has seen an increase in the need to use residential provisions over a number of years due to a reducing number of foster carers and difficulties nationally to recruit foster families. The shortage of foster families has meant not only an increase in the use of residential placements but the age of children living in residential provisions has reduced.
- 3.2 Residential provisions for children are not routinely the first consideration of care when children are unable to live within their own families. ¹It is recognised that for most children outcomes are better when they reside within a family environment receiving care consistently from one or two carers. There are studies that evidence that for some children who reside in smaller residential provisions with a consistent staffing group and who remain in the care of the provider that they can also achieve positive outcomes.
- 3.3 Placement cost £15K per week. 9th placement. Placement searches were difficult with only this regulated provider identified following notice from his previous home.
- 3.4 Placement cost 15K per week. Previous placement requests have resulted in a number of unregulated providers as no regulated provision would provide accommodation. This current placement has therapeutic provision and is managing to engage child in education. 9th placement.

1: every child 2011 (fostering better care)

- 3.5 Placement cost £15,982 – short term crisis placement. Further placement searches remain live and no offers have been made.
- 3.6 All three children in high cost placements have diagnosis of ADHD. All three children have experienced adverse child experiences, including abandonment, separation, domestic abuse. Whilst there continues to be live placement searches none of the children above have had any providers come forward to care for them. Prior to each placement, negotiations have taken place with the providers to reduce the cost of the placements, none of these negotiations have been successful and it is likely due to a number of children both regionally and nationally looking for placements. Failure to agree the placements would have resulted in the child having no placement.
- 3.7 Over the last 9 months, significant efforts have been made to engage with providers to establish provisions locally for children that meet their needs. The local authority have engaged with not for profit agencies and those agencies who reflect similar ethics as the council in respect of prioritising the needs of children, the priority being their welfare and the care being of high standard, agencies who do not profiteer of children's trauma. One not for profit has commenced the process to open up a provision in Halton that will allow for children like those above to be placed locally in a provision that works with the LA to secure stability and thus improving the outcomes of our children. If the provision is granted planning permission, the organisation will work with Halton council to identify three young people in higher cost placements to occupy those beds.
- 3.8 The strategies implemented to date have resulted in some reduction to placement costs for individual children and there has been a reduction of the numbers coming into care due to efforts made in improving practice and risk management and diversion strategies. Further work is needed to bring the numbers of children in care down and improve placement sufficiency.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No policy implications

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The local authority can not continue to pay high cost fees for children's accommodation due to the financial implications on the council and the impact on children. The progression of a number of work streams to reduce the placement expenditure are underway and include the following areas:
- 5.2 Developing effective relationships with organisations that prioritise the care needs of children above making a profit. Developing further

residential and foster carers to meet the needs of children with complex needs and have a diagnosis of ADHD. Challenging providers who charge significant fees but deliver a less than satisfactory service which results in further rejection for children and compounds their presenting behaviours. Targeting our foster carer recruitment strategy to include emergency placements, respite placements and specialist in house foster carers to care for children who other carers find challenging.

- 5.3 Implementing an edge of care team that reduces the number of children who come into care. Developing the discharge from care service to ensure that discharges are timely for children and families so only those children who need to be in our care, are in care. Improving social work practice to appropriately assess the needs of children and respond quickly to reduce the risk of children coming into care.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

By strengthening our service delivery we can support families to remain together safely due to being able to access services at an earlier stage, improving coping strategies. Provision of care will support the development of independence for our children so that they can live in suitable accommodation and have regular contact with services that support; emotional wellbeing, reduce isolation and respond to changing situations.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Keeping children local to Halton and improving outcomes will build stronger communities, supporting talent within Halton to remain in Halton.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The multi approach to reducing the need for social care statutory intervention, will support keeping families together safely, improve the local resources to keep children in Halton, support family time for those who cannot remain with families.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Progressing our offer to care leavers and those in care so that they have the same life chances as their peers re-dressing the inequalities they face.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Reducing the travel requirements for visits and family time, reducing our carbon footprint.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Investing in organisations that wish to give back to the local Halton community.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 To take no action will result in significant pressures on the Local Authority and limit the services provided to all residents

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Children who can not live safely at home should have the opportunity to stay in their local area with providers that support our aspirations and children's aspirations.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Reducing the travel requirements for visits and family time, reducing our carbon footprint.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

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

DATE: 11 November 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Children's Services

SUBJECT: Annual Report - Comments, Complaints and Compliments relating to Children's Social Care Services 1st April 2023- 31st March 2024.

PORTFOLIO: Children & Young People

WARDS(S): All Wards

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 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 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**
Any findings from a comment, complaint or compliment relating to this priority will be used to inform the relevant service.
- 6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**
None identified.
- 6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**
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.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need
Any findings from a comment, complaint or compliment relating to this priority will be used to inform the relevant service.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

None identified

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 Getting the Best from Complaints Statutory Guidance | Rutland House, Runcorn | Dorothy.Roberts@halton.gov.uk |



Compliments Annual Report

Children's Services

2023 / 24



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1. Introduction

The report details the compliments that have been formally recorded for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 in respect of the Children's Services 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.

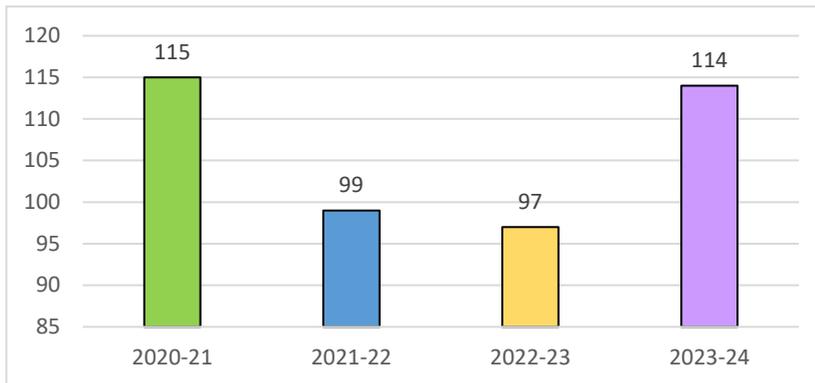
It's hard to quantify the impact of a compliment, much less to describe its effect in a few bullet points. Nonetheless, here are a few observations about compliments.

- 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.
- A little appreciation is medicine for the soul, and can be contagious. 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



The number of recorded compliments has increased in recent years, from 97 in 2022-23 to 114 in 2023-24. The number of compliments received will likely be higher across the Directorate due to under reporting, staff can get embarrassed sharing these or see it as just part of the job!

Number of Service Users providing a Compliment for Children Services

| | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| % | 60% | 58% | 60% | 60% |
| Number | 68 | 57 | 58 | 68 |

Number of Professionals who provided positive feedback to services

| | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| % | 40% | 42% | 40% | 40% |
| Number | 47 | 42 | 39 | 46 |

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. Recognition from external agencies and other internal departments demonstrate good working relationships.

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;

- 61% using email (down from 72%)
- 23% from feedback and nomination forms
- 7% received via a text message
- From 4% purchasing a card (same as last year)
- From 2% to 3% have purchased flowers
- 2% verbal feedback

Compliments by Operational Department

| | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CSC & EH | 79% | 74% | 67% | 66% |
| EIP | 21% | 26% | 33% | 34% |

Children's Social Care and Early Help Services (CSC&EH) receive more compliments than Education, Inclusion and Provision (EIP) this will be due to it being more of a family facing service with a larger staff base. In EIP some services are not directly school/parent/child facing.

3 Children's Social Care & Early Help Service

| Year | Total |
|-------|-------|
| 20-21 | 92 |
| 21-22 | 73 |
| 22-23 | 65 |
| 23-24 | 75 |

| | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CIN | 44% | 26% | 12% | 16% |
| EID | - | - | - | 8% |
| CIC | 14% | 19% | 12% | 32% |
| TAF | 42% | 53% | 71% | 41% |
| SG | | 2% | 5% | 3% |

Historically EDT, iCART and DAAT (EID) were recorded under the division of CIN however, in the latter part of year it became a separate division.

3.1 Child Protection and Children in Need

1. Email - I just thought I would take the time to feedback how well I thought the meeting was run by you today – it was very clear and a great plan going forward. (Professional)
2. Email - I just want to say the above level of need meeting which you chaired today was outstanding – How you explained the outcomes and spoke to the family and professionals , shared history and sensitive information. The meeting was delivered in a very clear and professional way with clear actions to support the family through next steps. Both young people remained central to their plan. All agencies and parents having clear actions to improve outcomes for the family. Just wanted to share that. (Professional)
3. Text - Thinking of you and all the care you give these beautiful children your my star 🌟🌟🌟 (Client)
4. Text - Arh as said your such an angel all the children in your case load are very lucky 🍀 (Client)
5. Email - I just wanted to share some positive feedback in relation to 'D'. I chaired a core group meeting for a family on Friday as professionals had raised worries about Mum's interactions with one of her children, I believe that professionals feel that Mum is 'difficult' and my hypothesis was that professionals weren't being open with Mum about their worries. During the meeting I asked professionals to share what they were worried about/had reported and it was only 'D' who spoke up. The way 'D' shared information with Mum about what she had observed during her visits was balanced, considerate and open. 'D' showed a great understanding of the pressures within the home and included Mum within her feedback to the core group too, this supported Mum to feel included and not 'got at'- something which Mum had raised with me prior to the core group meeting. 'D' was in tune with what the family need and I know she is and is going to continue to be a valuable support to this family. (Professional)
6. Email - I've just had a conversation with the Guardian for the children. She was very complimentary of the Social Workers Initial Evidence. Mentioned that it was very thorough, and gave a clear picture of what life is like for the children. (Professional)
7. Text - I'll never forget how above and beyond you've gone for my babies. Not just saying this because of the outcome but you're really one of the good ones, you take the time to listen, you actually care about my kids and their welfare and not just because it's your job to, I appreciate everything, even when I've been challenging at time, always make me find

strength at the hardest of days, can't wait for the following months ahead to continue to working together to get the best from the Kids, thanks soooo much!Xxx (Client)

8. Email - can I just take the opportunity with you copied in to say thank you to 'L' and 'C' who have all worked really hard to get these documents prepared and send to me ahead of the direction deadline which means I have had sufficient time to review them. It really makes a big difference as the SW team has been able include some further analysis to make the docs as helpful to the court as possible. 😊 Thank you! (Professional)
9. Email - Hiya mate its' P' just want to say a big thank you for everything you have done for my girl and are still doing I'm so proud of how she has turned her life around thanks again mate x (Client)
10. Email - Just want to say thank you so much for the time you've spent being my families social worker, I've never ever had a good experience with social services so it was very refreshing to meet someone like you who's involved in social, I just want to say I appreciate what you've done for us and I can't thank you enough for being a good social worker who genuinely listened to mine and my children's cares and needs, so thank you and we will miss you but I'm very happy to see the back of you hahahah, I wish you all the best and I hope the new job goes well for you, thank you x (Client)

11.



12. I just wanted to give you a quick email to tell you that I appreciate 'V' a lot these past few months. She really is trying her best and I could not be more grateful for that. This is the opposite to a complaint, whatever you want to call it. She even text me at 9.30pm to let me know last night that it has been agreed that the children are to stay in my care, that means a lot especially considering the anxiety I have so knowing that information before bed was a huge relief. The fact that she has come out to my house to apologise to me for something that is clearly out of her control shows how much she cares about getting this sorted, I have only been keen on two out of the many social workers I have had. I just want to make sure she is noticed for her hard work, all of the house staff say the same thing about her, that she's a rare social worker and definitely one of the good ones. (Client)

3.2 EDT, iCART and DAAT (EID)

13. Email - I have been impressed by her professionalism and her understanding in terms of her relationships with professionals. She has answered all of my emails and her communication is excellent – in fact one of the best. She appears to be a strong social worker who will show empathy to families but also is aware of being quite strict with expectations. She is good with ensuring everyone is listened to at meetings and respects professionals as well. I think she will be a great social worker! (Professional)
14. Email - I just wanted to send a quick email to say how fantastic K has been with a family that we have been supporting this week. She has really pushed the case forward, as well as that, she went out of her way to keep me up to date, even when it was late and she could have easily have waited until the next day, as she realised that this was a case that I really needed the updates for! The personal touch and understanding, not just for the family but for us as joint professionals was really appreciated. I know everyone is quick to complain about social care, so wanted to share some positive feedback with you! I know as a manager, getting one

bit of good news in the middle of the usual moans can make a difference to the day! 😊
(Professional)

15. Email - Thank you for sending the assessment over. I just want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Thank you for being understanding and being the reassuring voice I needed during the assessment process. You're a credit to the social services team and I'll always be grateful for how you dealt with our families difficulties. (Client)
16. Email - I understand that you have been working on the situation of my nephew, Thank you for the work you have done on this.(Client)
17. Email - I strongly feel that I need to express my feelings and appreciation to you regarding the Social Worker. From the bottom of my broken heart, I cannot thank her enough. She is so compassionate, caring, thorough, understanding, professional, and approachable. She explains every detail/step in depth to enable us to understand and comprehend. This has been and continues to be the most difficult time of my life, and probably my son's. I am honoured to have her support and guidance on the journey. She always has my son's best interest at all times, and also mine. She is such an asset to Social Services. (Client)
18. Email - We have been in court this week for an initial hearing. Our counsel has been very complimentary of the authority. Counsel has shared that we were like a breath of fresh air, balanced, thoughtful and child focused. She said you always know when the SW is excellent too as when you are leaving court, they are still there talking to the parents. (Professional)

3.3 Children in Care and Care Leavers

19. Email - I just wanted to draw your attention to the allocated Social Worker being praised in Court by The Honourable Mr 'A' the following terms 'Thanks to SW for extremely hard work on this case to get case where it is. This Court sees a large number of these cases. Not all to this point. Highly commended for all work done'. Thank you all for your assistance. (Professional)
20. Form - Email - Everyone was having a wonderful time on my arrival. She was really happy and smiling and watching a video clip. I believe a wonderful dinner was made although she told me she didn't like the eggy bread (?). It was wonderful to see everyone :) (Professional)
21. Voice mail - Just received a copy of the report and after the last court hearing, even before I started reading it, I was dreading it. It was hard to read because it was about the worst time in our lives but by the end of reading it I was crying with relief, just because of how it was written and I just wanted to thank you for getting it right and how you wrote about us. Thank you (Client)
22. Card - Thank you for helping me on my journey in life up to now, and all that you have done. You've comforted me when I cried, and laughed with me when we have had fun. You've made it extra special by making sure I'm safe, when we've been to contact you stayed with me in every place. I have loving Nanny, and she will always remind me of what you've done for me. In case that I may forget. Because of your empathy and caring nature and you fighting my cause, I could have ended up with those that might not give me a loving childhood. So thank you again for the protection, ensuring that I was safe. I'm now living with 'M' who will carry on loving me and give me an amazing life. Loving wishes and many hugs and kisses. (Child)



23. Email - She has been a consistent supportive presence during his little life so far, as such contacts have been well managed resulting in more positive experience for him, She has also supports us as a fostering family and as such we feel she deserves this recognition. (Client)
24. Email - FAB – think they are delighted – they really do deserve a week away, I can't thank the team enough for enabling our carers of 45 years to have a week away - they care for 'C' and the only place he stays is at Inglefield – so we are very grateful for this support. (Professional)
25. Email - Thank you to everybody this break will be much appreciated with thanks (Client)
26. Email - In a meeting yesterday with the Quality Assurance team your name came up in connection with the Care Leavers audits that have been undertaken. You were described as a “positive asset to the organisation” of particular note was your vision, commitment and enthusiasm. I wanted to pass these comments on to you so that you know that all of your hard work is recognised and valued, and that you are making difference to the lives of our Care Leavers. (Professional)
27. Email - This is such a lovely update about the work from 'R's PA. She really has gone above and beyond to support 'R' in being her birth partner; it's made us feel really touched by her commitment. How nice for her to have been part of 'E' coming into world and an excellent example of being a corporate parent in the request sense! She even cut the cord! Please pass on our thanks and appreciation for this 😊 (Professional)
28. Email - I just wanted to raise how moved I am after speaking to her Personal Assistant (PA) regarding the support that she has recently provided 'R' with. The PA was extremely supportive with 'R' through her recent pregnancy and has gone above and beyond for her. I was impacted when 'R' shared in a core group that she would not have anyone with her during the birth of her daughter. The PA changed that and ensured that she supported 'R' when she needed someone most. I just wanted to send this as a thanks and recognition of how much this will have meant to 'R' and how grateful I am (I am sure 'R' is also) for the continued support. (Professional)
29. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For working closely with me to secure a school place for my young person – He kept in regular contact and was easily available. He should be recognised for the hard work he does! (Client)
30. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For helping me move into my first flat, being very helpful, always happy and always there when I need you! (Client)
31. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For going above and beyond to help. Really cares for me and my sisters. Never lets me down and is always on time. For always listening and giving good advice. For being there for me my whole life, helping me out so much – I am very grateful! (Client)
32. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For being there for us through the happy and not so happy times. She has been proactive and is always ready to listen. (Client)
33. Staff nomination celebrating Success - To acknowledge the excellent support she provides to our family. She is an outstanding supervising social worker. She is efficient, organised and reliable as well as being empathetic, friendly and understanding. (Client)
34. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For proving to me that social services do keep families together and for being amazing with my girls. (Client)

35. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For being my birthing partner and not leaving until I had actually given birth even though it was past her working hours. She has been like a mum to me for the past 2 ½ years. (Client)
36. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For always being there to talk to me when I am struggling and for helping me to understand things properly when I am in a stop. (Client)
37. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For being a great support worker, always going above and beyond for the young people she supports.(Client)
38. Staff nomination celebrating Success - he is my new social worker, he has been very patient with me. He plays football, basketball and computers with me and I really like him, he makes me feel really good and is an amazing person.(Client)
39. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For being an amazing person and really looking after me, especially when I was very ill. (Client)
40. Staff nomination celebrating Success - For keeping in touch and being really supportive over the years (Client)
41. Email - The Judge was very complementary about the work done with 'M' and the hard work 'S' has put in. Can you please pass that to anyone you think appropriate as compliments are not frequently given in this job! (Professional)
42. Email - I just wanted to share as I am due to finish at Halton tomorrow, how supportive I have felt from my Practice Lead. Approachability and kindness are pivotal in our profession, but yet sadly is not innately in all. My own personal circumstance has shown how kind she is, and the compassion she has shown, that again is vital in our profession. Her approachability is a massive strength as a manager and I will be leaving Halton having had a positive management experience from her. She has had a wealth of experience, but will also allow her social workers to make decisions, and will trust in them decisions, but also challenging in a respectful manner when needed. She has been a wonderful manager, and had I not had to deal with my personal situation I would have been happy to continue to be managed by her. (Professional)
43. Card - We just wanted to say a massive thank you for everything you do for us and our babies, having someone who goes above and beyond makes our days (everyday) a little easier. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for everything, definitely need more people like you in this world. (Client)

3.4 Team around the Family

44. Form - my son was playing and enjoying himself all the time .The staff were amazing, it is very comfortable to know and see your kid been taken care of, he was feeling very confident laughing and enjoying himself a lot we could not thank you enough. (Client)
45. Form - I received lots of support from the staff who encouraged me to play and to look at other activities available. Lots of space for me to run around so I don't get overwhelmed, my parents were offered support from staff and were made to feel welcome . The session was non judge mental and help me and my sibling in a safe environment Thank you. (Client)
46. Form - Todays event has been absolutely amazing ,watching the children be able to play like any other child in a safe environment has been lovely ,staff have been fabulous and made sure the children have had fun, that the parents have been supported and the activity is safe the events that she arranges allows us to do things as a family. The children had lots of fun playing ,they were very happy today and loved their helpers who helped them have the most

fun .Thank you for arranging these events .It means a lot being able to spend quality time together. (Client)

47. Form - Great way to access activities that we wouldn't feel comfortable doing ourselves ,with a more understanding environment where we can take our time to access activities having staff to help is wonderful too. Thank you for everything you do, Its really helped with the easter holiday boredom. (Client)
48. Form - she is very accommodating and approachable. She is always at the end of the phone and answers any questions I am unsure of. She has been very efficient since she became involved and is always keen to gain mine and my sons views. She has been great since she came on board. I came out of the last child in need review feeling quite positive which is great she is genuinely interested in helping to make things better for us as a family. I cannot fault her, she is amazing. (Client)
49. Email - can I send a big thank you to your team for yesterday's support. Their presentation and participation throughout the afternoon was fantastic. There are so effective at painting the true picture of the many pulls our children and young people in Halton are facing today. (Professional)
50. Text - How weird, after speaking with you last night just been on a course and met them. They were brilliant as I am sure you are to, so informative and such a brilliant service you all offer. (Professional)
51. Form - It's been great to see other parents who get the journey we are on to swap ideas etc.
52. Form - This is super cool, I hope we get to come her again. (Client - child)
53. Form - This session has been fantastic for both boys. We are so grateful to the team for organising these events to make sure we have something SEN specific during the holidays where we feel comfortable and the activities suit. Thank you! (Client)
54. Form - both children really enjoyed it, finding stuff to do in half term is hard, we will use this again. (Client)
55. Form - Today has been fantastic, its given us something to look forward to as a family and the staff have been superb. Thank you for all you do for our beautiful little ones. (Client)
56. Form - Half terms are quite challenging with providing care around the clock, it's nice to have a place for kids to play without worry and where you can have a 15 minute break for coffee where there is another set of eyes. (Client)
57. Form - I felt heard, supported, accepted and welcome, I met another parent which helps to not feel so isolated. Thank you. (Client)
58. Email - I just wanted to say a massive thank you to you for helping to arrange our weekend at CAFT. We are so excited to go!!! I just wanted to say that....over the last year I have grown from a weed to a flower and it's thanks to you that I have, you have pushed my boundaries with my daughter in so many good ways, you've reminded me it's not a sad world having a child with disabilities, it's an amazing world for her!! And you have showed me this...my fairy godmother!! Thanks again for everything you do, a your team as well, you are all truly amazing!!! (Client)
59. Flowers & Card - Thanks for all your help we are sad to see you go. Take Care. (Client)

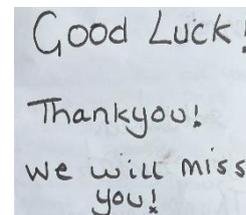


60. Email - Thank you so much for this morning. It was clear that it was really important to parents and there is a need for this kind of information to be shared and awareness to be raised. You delivered the session really well and I actually felt like I learned a lot too! We would love to try and organise further sessions in the future if possible. Many thanks. (Professional)



61. Card - Thank you for helping me because right now you don't feel like my worker, you feel like my best friend, you're like the best person ever. (Client)

62. Card - Thank you for all your help over the past year! We will be forever grateful. Good luck in your new job, thank you, we will miss you. (Client)



63. Letter - Thank you for all the support you've given my family over the past few months. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and being such a great support to me. Good luck in all you do in your future. Your brilliant at your job. (Client)

64. Email - You have been a fantastic support for this family and I am conscious that they are beginning to rely on you to support with the family issues that are not linking to drug or alcohol misuse. There's a lack of evidence of usage and you've completed an intensive amount of work with him around the risks etc. You've worked hard with him and his family and it's recognised, he has an established relationship with you and you are an asset. Thank you for all your support, I'd be in agreement with closure soon, you've done everything you can do within your role 😊 (Professional)

65. Email - I am just writing to thank you service. I referred myself via your service found on Halton Local Offer. I was contacted two days later by 'J' who was fantastic. I found her to be attentive, compassionate, knowledgeable and reliable. She contacted all the people she said she would, all relevant information she needed she sought by phone or on HBC computer. I was given information about who she had contacted, why and what should be happening next. I felt noticed and heard which is so important to me. Please pass on my thanks and appreciation. (Client)

66. Email - I want to put into words the enormous gratitude I feel towards you and the support you gave to my daughter and her two boys. When we needed a professional, caring and compassionate person you came into our lives. When we needed you, you were there. If you perform this miracle only once in your professional life then your life has been worthwhile. Thank you. (Client)

67. Verbal - Discussion had around previous support offered to 'M' by 'J'. Mum spoke highly of 'J' and the support he offered to 'M' and felt he had a positive impact as 'M's mental health has drastically improved and he has taken up Mai Tai and trains to compete (Client).

68. Email - Following the APM last week just wanted to say what a fantastic piece of work you've done with his mum. I know you had to deal with some very difficult topics regarding home conditions and parenting. She presented very differently at the APM as she did at the Initial Meeting when she was quite defensive. She said how she valued your support and how confident she feels maintaining the home conditions. Her school attendance has improved this academic year and is now 85%. There is still a way to go but together with your support Mum has established good routines and is thinking about/has started a college course and is enjoying it. Thank you for your support with this family and the obvious improvements that have taken place that can only have a positive impact for the children.(Professional)

69. Form - My depression has dramatically improved. The house is so much better, even my daughter says. Feels like the house is a lot safer now her attendance is loads better and she actually gets up and gets ready, you are just amazing. I feel confident now I come home and clean I have tea in the slow cooker. Thank you so much, you have been amazing. (Client)

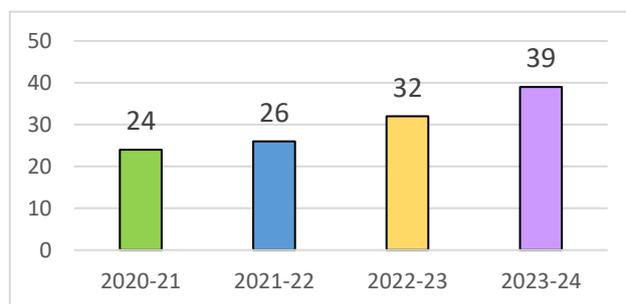
- 70. Card - What can we say about you?! Not enough paper but I'll what comes to mind instantly. A breath of fresh air. You are truly brilliant in every way . After all the things that have gone on, you never let us down. Always they got us all through some dark times and after 'D' being so tiny you were there again! helping always listening to me. The boys think you're funny and clever, one of the kindest people we've ever known. Your everything to us and will miss you so much. Thank you for being you. (Client)
- 71. Text - Coz I don't do emotional soppo crap to peoples face, I just wanted to say thank you for how much you go above and beyond and let you know I am really grateful, even when I am a wreck haha.If we knew each other in a different capacity I would have took you out for a drink to say thanks but a brew will have to do next week haha xx (Client)
- 72. Text - Do you know how hard it is to find someone he is comfortable talking to you're like gold dust 🍀 it took like 10 attempts to get him to talk to you and he's now on the waiting list for therapy
- 73. Form - he is happy and excited about the groups; he enjoys the routine and looks forward to them. He know all the staff and feels welcome I feel this helps me have some respite, I know my son is safe and where he is. (Client)
- 74. Text - I don't feel I could have got through this past few months without you. My sons adore you and your always there to support them too. I don't feel I would change anything about you or how you work with us as a family. The biggest different in general is YOU. You have a big positive impact on me, my boys and us as a family x' (Client)

3.5 Safeguarding Unit

- 75. Email - I just wanted to send an email after yesterday's conference regarding the administration and leadership of the conference. I need to compliment you, especially, the professional way the meeting is chaired and how sensitive you are to everybody in the room. The care and understanding you show mum is a great relief to her. I also appreciate the support as a newish DSL. I would also like to comment on the efficiency and administration of the minutes being received by the outside agencies. I am still waiting to receive some minutes and plans from other authorities' conferences but I have received all the information from Halton in an extremely timely manner. This really helps any agency with keeping their records up to date. I just wanted to stay thank you. (Professional)

4 Education, Inclusion & Provision Department

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4.1 Inclusion 0 - 25

- 76. This is just a email of Thanks. I understand the importance of your role and input, however just wanted to say thank you for finding the time to be there with us yesterday despite all you had in your working day and for all you continue to do in support of my daughter, honestly I really appreciate it and hopefully things will begin to move again soon in a better direction. Please also give my thanks to 'A' for her input yesterday and again for the work and support directed for my daughter, we have made a big emphasis on her achievement in her puzzle assessment, rather than what she was unable to do, such was she has told family she's very

good at logic 😊 maybe even better than Dad, which I found most amusing. 'A' had a special way of making the experience a positive one and again I'm most grateful.

77. Email - I have to say having only been in Halton for my second year, the SEND provision and support is incredible compared to Chester West and Cheshire. I cannot speak more highly of the support and provision we as a school have received. (Professional)
78. Email - I thought I would share some good news with you. You may remember 'A', our Y2 child who has real problems with his behaviour and we were looking at one point to move him to a specialist provision. Anyway, his mum managed to get his medication changed and he has been more or less well behaved since. But the good news is that he achieved Greater depth in his reading and maths, and the expected standard in writing at the end of KS1. I am so pleased with this, as with the support from yourself, we have truly been able to support 'A' and allow him to reach his potential! So thank you for everything you have done and your understanding with this case. (Professional)
79. Email - Thank you for all your work with the school that you have clearly supported them so well. Fantastic outcomes for the pupil too and great news the difference you have made, thank you.(Professional)
80. Email - I have just received from a parent of a child I worked with when I was an Assessment Coordinator in the SEN Assessment Team, really positive outcome for this young man because when I first started working with the family we couldn't get him through the door of any school! - Hope you don't mind me emailing you? but wanted to say thanks for all your help all those years back . 'J' smashed it , he actually went to College after Ashley School doing applied science he went on to win award for top student and made lots of lovely friends there. He's going to the university of Liverpool in September, he actually had 4 other really good offers but decided to stay closer to home and live in halls in Liverpool, he's doing Pharmacology 1 of only 30 places on the course worldwide he's got the equivalent of A*A*A in A level grades. None of this would of been possible if you hadn't helped us secure EHCP and a place in Ashley, forever grateful and we knew he had the potential just needed the right environment. Thank you. (Client)
81. Email - The support that my girl has received from both J and S has been amazing. These visits have given her so much confidence, which has continually grown with this support. This has massively helped her understand her needs, helping her with resources to help her with her learning, and get around as independent as possible. This support has also encouraged to be more confident in letting people know when she is struggling and seek support for adults when needed. Many thanks. (Client)
82. Email - I've got you a bottle of wine to say thank you for everything you've done with the lads! I know it's your job but honestly I really appreciate it and I know the lads love everything you do with them too. (Professional)
83. Email - Thank you so much, I really appreciate your help and advice which proved very useful in our visit to the zoo recently. She became overwhelmed with the crowds and smells, instead of rushing her through the least busiest route, I managed to find a quiet area to stop and take some time, she found some music and took time to decompress before moving on. Even a small change to what I usually do has helped massively, so thank you so much. (Client)
84. Email - She said she felt the EHCP was written really well for 'J' and went on to say it was one of the best she has seen so I said that's lovely to hear and that I would like to pass that on to you. I also read it (as I read all EHCPs before the meetings) and I said to her I also thought it was really well written as well. Always good to pass on any comments like this I think. Even when people think things are good they don't often say so it's good when people do. (Professional)

85. Email - I apologise for the delay in sending this email in to yourselves but I wanted to say a massive Thank you and every person within your team that has supported my daughter over the last 5 years since she became ill and encountered issues with her vision. We have had various medical people come and go over those years with various degrees of support but you guys have been the one constant and biggest support in getting her through her GCSEs/A levels and on to where she is today, she is now studying Modern Languages with Business Management at Birmingham University and doing well. The reports you and the team have produced and the conversations you have had with key people within the education set up have been a vital at every step of her education and have helped her achieve the amazing results she has to date. I honestly believe that without your help we'd have still been lost in the wilderness and not where we are today, we are so glad we got introduced to your team and as I say we are, and always will be eternally grateful for your help/support and guidance in a world we had no idea about. I know she has left your care officially now due to her age and moving to Birmingham but again without your interventions back in September with the Uni team we'd not have got things in place there or the help she needed/s to settle in to a new life away from home. I wish you and team all the very best for the future. You have changed her life for the better when others disappeared so once again - Thank you!! (Client)
86. Email - Thank you so much for letting us know, we looking forward to his next little adventure and hopefully see are little boy being happy, we can't thank you enough for everything you have done for him and put up with us, we really appreciate it, all your help and support will now get are little boy what he needs and deserve and that's down to you, we can't thank you enough. (Client)
87. Email - We have just read through the report we are so so proud of her she is doing so well. We will take on board what she needs to work on and do things to help her at home. She is speaking so much more and so much clearer can have more conversations with her and understand what she is saying and I feel she is understanding us a lot more too which is amazing. Thank you to you all, we both appreciate everything you are all doing to help her improve and grow! Thank You (Client)
88. Email - I have worked in Halton for over 16 years and have spent a large part of this time with SEND as a key part of my role across 3 different schools. There have been many high and lows of this work and different challenges particularly in more recent years. In the last few months I have felt a really positive shift that things are really working within SEND to support my school to be as inclusive as we strive to be. 'C' you are always a great source of quick advice and support and this is really appreciated (and not just SEND related)– the frustration of chasing someone for an urgent bit of advice has gone! I know that there are still challenges within the SEN service but 'S' has made a real positive difference and I think this should be acknowledged. I know I am not the only Head that can feel things moving forward positively since you came back to Halton. I look forward to continuing to work with you both for the benefit of the children here in Halton. (Professional)

4.2 Policy, Provision & Performance

89. Email - I'm utterly astounded this has been done so quick 😊 Thank you so much. (Professional)
90. Email - I just wanted to share some lovely feedback I took on the phone from a parent. It was for a year 11 student. Her mum called our team off her own back as she is quite concerned for her transition. She kindly spoke to her mum and reassured her, and asked for me to call her back, and when I did mum spoke really highly of her, asked me to thank her and also said that she was a credit to our team. I just wanted to share that. (Client)
91. Email - Thank you so much for your help and involvement in this process. I'm so thankful that we had your support throughout.(Client)

92. Email - Hi I'm just emailing to say a massive thank you to you and the team. I am so grateful for all the time and dedication that has been put in place to help my job journey thrive. Thank you for driving me to my interview also as now that I have the job it just makes me so happy. This has been a long journey but although it's still not fully over I just want to thank Careers and Connect for all of the help I have received! Means a lot to me! (Client)
93. Flowers - I recently received a bunch of flowers from a parent of a year 11 pupil with attendance issues, thanking me for making a difference to her daughter's life. It was on a home visit. (Client)
94. Email - You are an absolute star, thank you 😊. I have scanned the QR Code and clicked on the impact statement and you can fill it in from your phone 😊. Absolutely marvellous, thank you 😊 (Professional)
95. Email - I just wanted to send you a quick email to say thank you for what a wonderful job you are doing! One of our Headteachers sent me an email highlighting just how brilliant you are! Thank you for everything you do to support our children here in Halton! (Professional)
96. Email - As I mentioned I got your details from 'K' who is part of my team, who delivers our CFRS Prince's Trust Programme over in Halton. I oversee our Prince's Trust Team Programme for CFRS across Cheshire. Firstly, I wanted to say a huge thank you to yourself and colleagues within your department for the support you provide when liaising with 'K' to ensure he has the relevant information, EHCPs for young people that participate in the programme. Secondly, you guys in Halton really do seem to be on the ball with providing this information effectively. We are keen to replicate this in the other areas as best practice. (Professional).
97. Email - I am extremely pleased to advise you that you have been nominated and received a Silver KIT Award from Education Otherwise, for the support work that you continue to provide to those families who remove their children from school to educate them at home – so congratulations and well done! There are actually two Silver KIT Awards, one specifically for you, and one for the “Halton Team”. Only five silver awards were given out this year across Local Authorities from England, Scotland and Wales, so it's a real credit to you that you have received the award – well done! Thanks again for the work you do in this area of the Education Welfare Service's work, I know it is extremely demanding and more often than not very challenging, it is appreciated not only by the families and children/young people you support, but also by us as a senior managers. It means a lot as Education Otherwise is the most prominent EHE charity across the UK (I am aware that they do not give out any praise or awards to LA's willy nilly) and more so as the survey is completed independently by Halton's EHE families.(Professional)
98. Email - This is wonderful news, many congratulations. There is nothing like unsolicited praise from the families we work with and for you to be singled out in this way is special indeed. Thank you for what you do for the children and families of our Borough. (professional)
99. Email - There have been many, many people from multiple agencies involved in 'H's learning and care over the past 4 years or so. An interaction that our family will never, ever, forget, is the one that we have had with 'S' and I wanted to make sure that this is known. At the HTC, Runcorn and under 'S's direct, informed and compassionate leadership, our daughter has achieved a level of education above and beyond what could ever be expected of her, especially because of the profound problems with her mental, physical and neurological health. We noticed a marked difference in her learning achievements and all round engagement and well-being when 'S' took a lead role, we would like this to be recognised and celebrated. The learning environment became efficient in building a secure, consistent learning space where her needs were being met - she was seen and heard, always.

Commutation, between Wade Deacon, HTC and ourselves, dramatically improved and staff worked together to build a resilience in her that pushed her to want to live. She has applied to college and talks about her future career. We can never underestimate the grandeur of that statement in relation to a child who was battling every day with the will to end her own life, and being incredibly disappointed in herself that she couldn't carry it through. She became able to tell the staff members of any incidents which in turn enabled the process of her working towards overcoming her intrusive thought patterns and attending the centre and engaging in learning, even at her lowest points. I have no doubt whatsoever that 'S' played a huge part in keeping our daughter alive during her worst times. Not only that, but she continued her education, this is truly phenomenal, we are truly blessed to have been under 'S's guidance and to work closely with her to reap the benefits. 'S' is a true professional she really did get things done. To this end, I sincerely hope that children who struggle like 'H' can continue to benefit from 'S' empowering influence, management, education, care and compassion. We would like to officially thank 'S' and all the staff at the HTC for changing our daughters life and leading her to success. (Client)

100. Email - I just wanted to send you a quick email to acknowledge how amazing she is, i really struggled with the form for his school, she took a lot of time and effort to help me through it she is a true credit to her profession a genuinely lovely person. (Client)

101. Email - Thank you so much for all you are doing to help the children. (Client)

4.3 Education 0-19yrs

102. Email - Following visits from four of your staff, we feel very well supported and in the right place for the future. Please may I thank you for this support? He really boosted the morale of my SENDCO and wider staff yesterday. It was a really worthwhile process. They are all really in tune with my school staff and are so kind to our pupils. This was obvious to my colleagues, we love people who engage with our pupils. Our SEND pupils were delighted that 'someone special from the government' as they put it, came in to talk to them directly. It's very hard for children with special needs to feel valued and important but he made them feel good about themselves. Next week, she (EYFS) is going to meet our new children and families for September 2023 with over 23 new families joining our team. I am delighted that I will be able confidently say that their education and personal development learning will be of an excellent standard thanks to the hard work and dedication of my school and colleagues. However, this is an extended confidence due to your involvement. Our pupils are thriving because of your kindness and support for me, my school and their families. Please thank everyone for their hard work and support for our children. It's a very challenging job but together we are stronger than ever. (Professional)

103. Form - Found being I groups a lot more informative and allowed a lot of extra support and advice. Thanks as always, we would be lost without you all. (Professional)

104. Form - Early Year forum is really informative, great to meet other settings and all speak together. Good to hear how others work and great to share ideas. Having the guest speaker was a great touch, should do every time so we can be aware of different professionals. .You are a great team and always available. Thank you. (Professional)

105. Email - We are delighted that we have been able to successfully move the school in the right direction. We are looking forward to sharing the news with our children and parents. I wanted to add that I am thankful for the support and advice I have received from all of the LA team. (Professional)

106. Email - On behalf of the Secondary Head's please can I thank you for the timely response and subsequent communications, it is much appreciated and helps us focus on managing the impact of the strikes at such a busy time in Secondary schools. (Professional)

107. Email - I would like to pass my sincere thanks to you both as the course has been enlightening and a huge help and support to us. (Professional)
108. Email - I just wanted to drop you a quick email to thank you for the staff meeting last night, very thought provoking and successful in generating productive conversations around barriers and strategies moving forward. (Professional)
109. Email - Thank you so much for the two sessions of training. It was invaluable and I feel really equipped and informed to go and confidently get started. I can't emphasise enough how helpful it was; I feel quite empowered by it. Once again though, huge thank you! (Professional)
110. Just wanted to drop you a quick message. We had a safeguarding review (commissioned by the Trust) on Friday. part of the review the reviewer asked me to show him the materials I had used for staff CPD in September. Our reviewer stated that your resources you had shared were the best he had ever seen and of a very high standard. He was very impressed! (Just thought I'd pass along this to you).
111. Email - I would just like to inform you that we had our inspection and the over all Outcome was Good. Could you please thank, A, B and C who have supported us by providing in-house training and carried out the ITERS and ECERS assessments in the toddler room and pre-school room. Could you also thank the SEN support team who have helped staff by providing training and strategies for staff to support children with SEND needs. The inspector stated that the support provided to these children was one of the nursery's strengths. (Professional)
112. Email - I'd like to thank everyone too for all the help and support given to me and to us as a Setting, over the 23 years that I've been involved with the Pre-School, especially during the Pandemic. That was a very tricky time for all, but it was made easier with the support of the EY Team. Nothing was/is any trouble and I thank you all for that. (Professional)

4.4 Commissioning

113. Email - Thank you for taking the time to even think about this, it's really hard because I totally understand how busy you are. (Professional)
114. Email - My son, again, thoroughly enjoyed the holiday club over the Xmas period. He always feels comfortable and at ease at this provision as it enables him to meet other young people with similar difficulties that he faces. He always feels 100% included and he cannot wait to go again. I have never seen him so excited about a club before he started attending these sessions. The staff are always so welcoming to both my son and us and I have recommended these sessions to friends of ours who have children with SEN needs for their children to attend. (Client)



Complaints Annual Report Children's Social Care Services 2023 / 24



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1. Introduction

The report covers Children's Social Care Services for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 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. The Department for Education 'Getting the Best from Complaints - Social Care Complaints and Representations for Children, Young People and Others' 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 Place Planning, Policy and Provision Service, within the Education, Inclusion and 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 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.

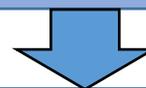


STAGE 2 - An external Independent Person is commissioned by Children's Services to further investigate the complaint. The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will aim to produce a report within 25 working days. However, if the case is complex, they can have a maximum of 65 working days in which 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.



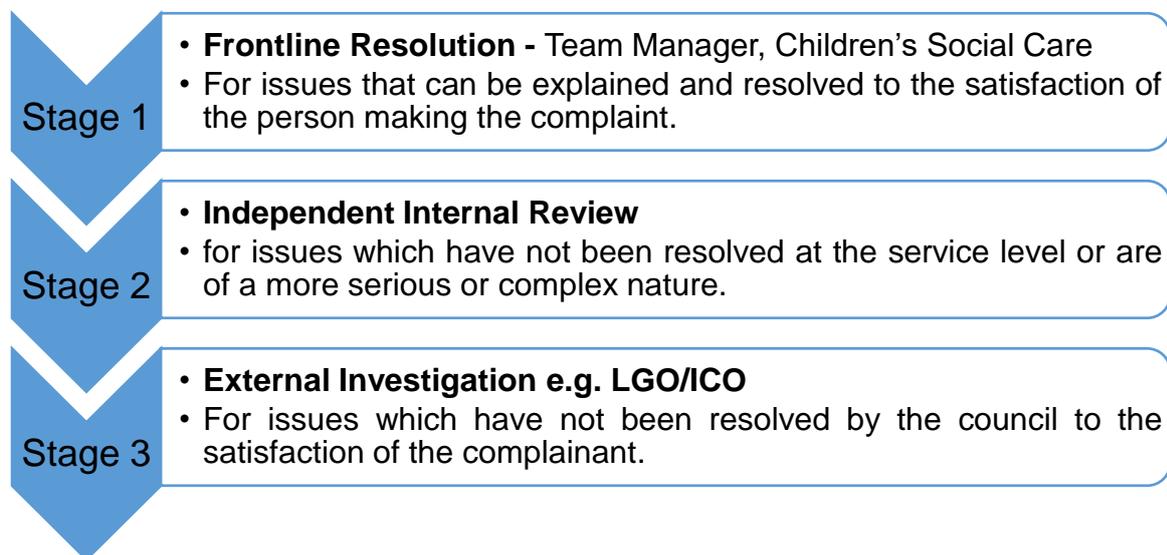
STAGE 3 -. The Complaints Review Panel is made up of three external people who will review the complaint, but they will not reinvestigate or consider new complaints. The complainant can attend the panel meeting if they choose to and can bring a friend or someone they can trust.



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 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. Children's Social Care Service

An Ofsted focused visit on the local authority's arrangements for children in need, including those who are subject to a child protection plan took place in October 2021. Following this outcome the Local Authority was required to have an Improvement Plan to address the issues with the progress scrutinised by the Children and Families Improvement Board.

In November 2022 Ofsted further undertook a focused visit on the local authority's arrangements for the 'front door'. Ofsted found that there was *'effective management oversight of information provides clear direction for social worker practice. Workers undertake detailed information-gathering activity which informs the next steps. As a result, children and families benefit from timely interventions and support which are proportionate to the presenting issues. Effective emergency duty social workers provide children with support and safety when risks escalate on an evening or weekend'*.

The improvement journey continues through the Improvement Board and also a programme of significant transformation that encompassed the Council as a whole 'Reimagine Halton' led by the Transformation Delivery Unit. Budget pressures also remain a feature.

During this reporting period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 there has been some instability in the service due to vacancies of some significant key senior management posts during this reporting period 2023-24. In October 2023 Zoe Fearon returned to Halton as the new Executive Director for Children's Services, followed by Katherine Appleton, Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help and Andrew Jones, Head of Service Child in Need and Child Protection. A new Head of Service for Children in Care and Care Leavers Jamie Pope was appointed, and a new Head of Service post created for EDT (Emergency Duty Team, iCART (integrated Contact and Referral Team) and (DAAT) Duty and Assessment which Sarah Ellison was successful in stepping up to. These appointments to key posts will offer stability to the department and the workforce, with new views, ideas and energy to drive forward a reinvigorated Improvement Plan.

In addition to the above, the Children in Care and Care Leavers service was reconfigured with a new post of Principal Manager for Care Leavers created as well as a number of new Personal Assistant posts. The Children in Care Council is being reinvigorated following the successful appointment of the Participation Officer and there was the launch of the enhanced Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Academy. There was also the launch of the family hubs in Halton, the co-location of health colleagues and bringing services together in one place for children and families supporting in the 1001 days early life agenda.

The number of Children in Need has fluctuated with 577 in March 2023 compared to 584 in March 2024, our highest peak was in June 2023 with 678 and our lowest in November 2023 at 463. Child Protection numbers fluctuated with March 2023 at 199 and March 2024 being the lowest month at 150, there was a peak in July 23 at 215. Children in Care numbers in March 2023 were 389 and have remained consistent with March 2024 at 383. The Number of Open Care Leavers who continue to be engaged with the Local Authority has increased again from 139 in March 2023 to 147 in March 2024, this accounts for 46% of the total 317 Care Leavers in Halton.

6. Key Messages up to here

Overall the number of complaints received is a small proportion in comparison to the number of children, young people and families accessing services.

Complaints and compliments are feedback received from our service users. Effective feedback, both positive and negative is very helpful, it highlights areas for development as well as strengths that can be used to improve services. They provide a chance to identify errors and to make sure the same mistakes are not repeated in the future

Often Children Social Care involvement with families is unwanted and so conflict can arise at the onset, it is recognised that Children's Social Care involvement is an emotive and worrying time for families and so managing their expectations and demands can be a challenge.

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.

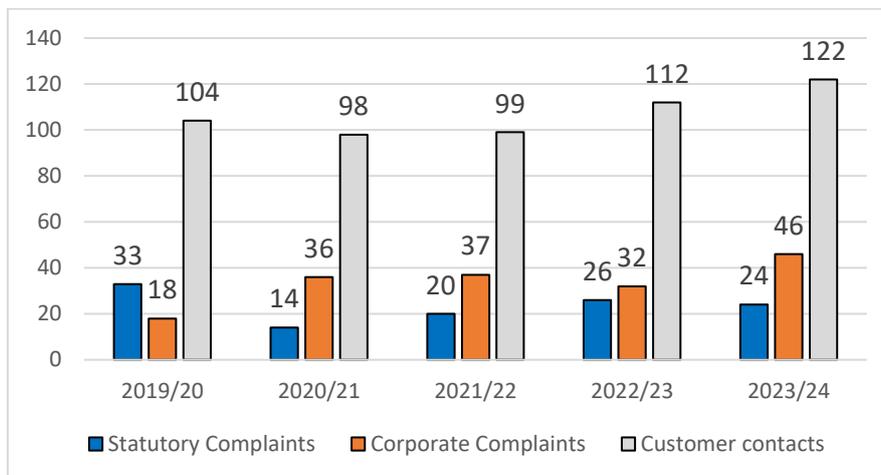
Detailed below is a highlight summary of complaints received during the 2023-24 period:

- 24 Statutory complaints recorded, 2 less than the previous year
- 1 Statutory Stage 2 investigations, no Stage 3 Review Panels
- 46 complaints managed under the Corporate process, an increase of 14
- 4 Corporate complaints reviewed internally at Stage 2
- Overall 14 more complaints than recorded in the previous year
- 2 complaints received from young people under 18 years of age via NYAS
- 3 enquires received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, no investigations were undertaken.



7. Customer feedback data

7.1 Number of complaints Children and Families Service



| | 2019/20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total Complaints | 51 | 50 | 57 | 58 | 70 |

As detailed above 2023/24 saw an increase in corporate complaints and customer contacts from the previous year, but a slight reduction in the number of statutory complaints.

The volume of complaints does not, in itself, indicate the quality of a council's performance. 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. 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. The important information however is the outcome, not necessarily the number received.

It continues to be the case that complainants will, thanks to technology, email lengthy and numerous correspondence, and unpicking these, examining the files, and composing responses, are, on occasions, comparable to a report rather than a letter thus taking a considerable amount of time to investigate and respond. As an example, a complaint may be categorised as 'service provision', the complainant states that the Social Worker is 'always' cancelling meetings and so records can be examined over a 12 month period with responses detailing meetings over that time frame.

Responses are done with the view that the complainant may refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and so the Principal Policy Officer offers a high degree of support, scrutiny and challenge to ensure that all issues raised are addressed.

7.2 The teams the complaints are made about

| | Statutory | Corporate | Historically it has always been the case that the greatest number of complaints is in the Children in Need and Child Protection (CIN & CP) Division. |
|---|-----------|-----------|--|
| Child in Need & Child Protection (CIN & CP) | 15 | 32 | |
| Children in Care & Care Leavers (CICCL) | 1 | 7 | |
| EDT, iCART & DAAT | 6 | 6 | |
| Disabled Children Service | 1 | 0 | |
| Fostering | 1 | 1 | |
| Total | 24 | 46 | |

The total number of complaints increased from 58 to 70, this increase has been seen in the number of corporate complaints for the CIN & CP service going from 21 last year to 32 this year. There was also an increase from 7 to 12 in the EDT, iCART & DAAT division and a drop from 12 to 8 with the CICCL service.

7.3 Who is contacting us and how

The statutory complaints procedure details who is allowed to access this procedure, 21 were parents, and 1 was a foster carer. National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) is the agency commissioned 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. NYAS supported 2 young people to make their complaint, this is the same number as last year.

Children's Services by the nature of work undertaken do interact with other family members. 6 Complaints in relation to their experience with the department were treated as Corporate Complaints.

As stated in chapter 3 & 4 of this report, complaints against the conduct of individual employees or about child protection including S47 enquiries and conferences as well as Section 7 and Section 37 court reports are not responded to under the statutory process, 38 complaints were made by parents and recorded as Corporate complaints.

The remaining 2 under the corporate process were from a foster carer and a care leaver.

1 Complaints received in relation to specific services for children with a disability.

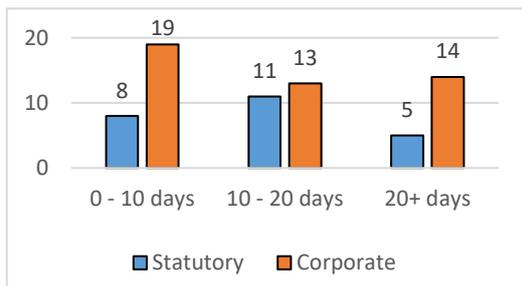
Halton continues to have a low ethnic minority, 1 complainant was recorded as any other mixed background, 3 as any other black background however this 3 is the same complainant making a number of complaints during differing times in this reporting period. The remainder were recorded as white British.

Due to the ease of access on mobile devices and the desire to have their own written record, e-mailing continues to be the preferred method to make a complaint (83%). Emails do give quick delivery however it raises expectations for immediate responses, they can also often be of significant length and contain numerous issues.

7.4 How quickly do we respond to complaints

In regards to statutory complaint timescales, there was an improvement from the previous year. In 2022-23 only 54% were responded to within 20 working days, in 2023-24 year it is 79%.

| Statutory | % within 10 days | | % within 20 days | % over 20 days | |
|-----------|------------------|--|------------------|----------------|------|
| 2023-24 | 33% | | 79% | 21% | 100% |
| 2022-23 | 23% | | 54% | 46% | 100% |
| 2021-22 | 35% | | 80% | 20% | 100% |
| 2020-21 | 50% | | 85% | 15% | 100% |
| 2019-20 | 30% | | 67% | 33% | 100% |



In terms of corporate complaint timescales it is the same picture, there was an improvement. 41% were completed within 10 working days up from 19% with an increase from, 56% to 70% for responses done within 20 working days.

There are a number of factors to consider in terms of why responses take over 10 working days, for example, staff may be in court or absent, there may be multiple issues requiring extensive examination of case files or there may be some mediation or negotiation to resolve the issue before responding. Even so the timescales are statutory requirement and these have not been met however, if a response does take longer the complainant is usually contacted to advise of the reason for the delay and the complainant can agree to this. It is the preference to complete a thorough investigation and response rather than rush to meet a timescale.

Responding to complaints quickly can demonstrate to the complainant that we are taking their concerns seriously, if it takes too long to investigate a complaint about delays in service provision or they are not being kept informed, then a delay in responding will only reinforce their view. To act quickly allows for a speedy correction where things may have gone wrong, to not do so can makes us culpable in allowing the fault to continue.

7.5 Stage 2 investigations

Only one Stage 2 investigation was undertaken, and this followed discussions with senior managers, where a decision was made to offer the complainant a Stage 2 under the statutory complaints procedure. No stage 1 investigation was completed. A lot of focus is put on getting the Stage 1 investigation right, this ultimately benefits the complainant as they get a thorough, considered investigation and explanation to the issues raised without having the stress or inconvenience of moving through the stages however, in this case, the independence that an externally commissioned investigator and independent person brings was felt necessary. There were 4 elements to the complaint, 1 was partly upheld.

There were 4 internal investigations completed under the corporate complaints procedure. 2 were partly upheld and 2 were not upheld, only one finding differed from the stage 1 where it changed from not upheld to partially upheld.

7.6 Stage 3 Review Panels

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

7.7 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 challenges to the content of the assessment and the outcome of it. In both of these we should ask the question 'did we do what we should have done in accordance to regulations, policy or procedure', by doing this we can identify if changes need to be made to ensure it does not happen again.

The third main category is misconduct of staff but the Complaints Procedures are not designed to deal with allegations of misconduct of staff, but they will be interwoven into the complaint as they are often linked to the decisions they have made or the service they have provided, 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. 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 2023-24;

- 24% were categorised as Assessment / Review process, this is comparable to the previous year when it was 27%
- 66% were categorised as service provision this has decreased from 73% in the previous year.
- 10% were categorised as being in relation to 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.

| Statutory and Corporate | Upheld | Not upheld | Partly upheld | Total |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------|---------------|-------|
| Assessment / Review Process | 0 | 12 | 5 | 17 |
| Service Provision | 7 | 30 | 9 | 46 |
| Staff | 1 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| Total | 8 | 47 | 15 | 70 |

Previous Year Comparison

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|----|----|----|
| 2022-2023 | 9 | 37 | 12 | 58 |
| 2021-2022 | 4 | 42 | 11 | 57 |
| 2020-2021 | 5 | 33 | 12 | 50 |

There were 21 complaints (30%) linked to cases in the Court arena this is 8 more than the previous year. 4 cases were partially upheld

- 2 related to poor communication with the family
- 1 case was subject to a non-compliance meeting due to delays in the process
- The fourth case had multiple issues, the element upheld was due to DAAT team arranging a meeting however, the case was transferred and the new Social Worker who could not accommodate this meeting due to prior diary commitments so it was cancelled, in addition to this a further meeting was also cancelled. This complainant was advised to go to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman who refused to investigate.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) can decide not to investigate when matters are in the Court area, 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, we provide a response to aid clarification for families who are going through an already worrying time. These matters are recorded under corporate complaints and at Stage 1 as there is no recourse to Stage 2 due to the legal proceedings.

Examining these complaints allows the reports submitted to court to be checked and accuracy confirmed, ultimately it forms part of the councils evidence and will include professional opinions of the Social Worker which is what the Court has requested. These professional opinions are usually where the disagreement arises resulting in the complaint not being upheld. In these instances they are advised to direct their concerns to their legal representative to be addressed in court.

At the time of making a complaint, 13 were related to children on a Child Protection Plan. 1 was upheld and 3 Partly upheld.

- 3 partly upheld involved multiple issues being raised with an element upheld. 2 of these related to families not being given copies of core group minutes and one in relation to core group meeting cancellation.
- Upheld – Due to the previous Social Workers leaving, a core group meeting had not occurred and so this needed to take place prior to the Child Protection Conference and so it was rearranged. Whilst the report was completed for the meeting to be held, the expectation for the Child Protection documentation was not made clear to the new Social Worker (i.e. 12.30pm on the third working day

before the conference). Because the report was not received by the Safeguarding Unit within the required timescale time this led to the meeting being rearranged again and the complainant being contacted at short notice, in consideration of statutory timescales and as it had been postponed once already it had to take place as soon as possible.

The following table, provides a summary/examples of those elements upheld or partly upheld.

| Issue complained about | | Remedy, comment |
|---|---------------|--|
| Core group meeting arranged by DAAT prior to SW allocation in CIN. SW could not accommodate meeting due to short notice, prior commitments, meeting cancelled/ rearranged. Further meeting also cancelled/ rearranged due to technical/connection difficulties. | Partly upheld | Whilst complaint received in this period the issue upheld related to Christmas and the beginning of January 2023. Apologies were offered. |
| Unhappy with comment recorded in the assessment by the SW that they were ' <i>very young parents</i> ' they were mid 20's. | Partly upheld | Apologies offered, copy of response on file. SW had left LA. Multiple other issues not upheld |
| Father was not informed of the change of Social Worker, or the case in general and was closed without his knowledge | Upheld | Apologies offered |
| Informed case to close but audit identified gaps in protector assessment so kept open, more work to be do. | Partly upheld | Met complainant, impacted on supervision of contact, new plan devised. Meeting cancelled Police investigation ongoing, they were not aware. |
| Content of assessment, delegated authority | Partly upheld | Independent assessor was asked to remove content at the time, apologies offered, learnings shared with team |
| Father was not informed of the change of Social Worker or kept updated | Upheld | Apologies offered |
| Child Protection Review meeting rearranged without any contact with parent no official notification/formal invite in writing | Upheld | Apologies, expected reports shared by 12.30pm on the third working day before the conference. Not shared within timescale, review meeting stepped down. Report was completed, new Social Worker not aware of this expectation. If dialogue had occurred need not have stepped down |
| Not informed SW change, then SW changed again, meeting cancelled so new SW could familiarise. | Upheld | Apologies |
| Not received copies of CIN Meetings. SW left at short notice without completing case recordings and minutes. | Upheld | Apologies |
| SW did not turn up for home visit previous visit overran, unrealistic arrangement for home visit at 6.30pm | Upheld | Apologies |
| Missed opportunities to communicate around the time of the transition plan. Communicating contact sessions. | Partly upheld | Apologies, court aware and directed the LA to attend a noncompliance hearing to provide further explanation for where directions had not been complied with. |

| | | |
|---|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Meeting cancelled, delay in CSW allocation, communication around visits, new SW allocated was on AL | Partly upheld | Apologies |
| Minutes of core groups not delivered, Admin identified sent to SW but SW not delivered | Partly upheld | Apologies, minutes provided |
| Delay in risk assessment completion, not challenged | Upheld | Apologies offered |
| Delay in father receiving a copy of the assessment | Partly upheld | Apologies offered, copy provided |
| SW shared info with child re relative without confirming accuracy | Upheld | Apologies offered |
| SW late for home visit, previous overran | Partly upheld | Apologies offered |
| Numerous comments re content of assessment, one partly upheld | Partly upheld | Apologies offered |
| SW did not respond to text messages left by YP | Partly upheld | Apologies offered |
| SW not responded to emails and texts | Upheld | Apologies offered |

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

| |
|---|
| Biased / discriminated in the other parties favour. |
| Disagreed with outcome of parenting assessment |
| Contact – cancelled/ children don't wish for contact |
| Social Worker visits nit taken place, they had |
| Disagreed with decision to enter proceedings |
| Social Worker is a liar |
| CPC was organised by other LA |
| Matters were previously addressed in court, decisions made by court. |
| Communication, responses to texts, call or emails, client expectations vs statutory duties. |

The world of Children's Social Care complaints is unique, families are often resistant to Children Social care involvement however, the statutory duty to safeguard requires them to be involved and so conflict can be there at the onset.

Complaints received disputing the need for Children's Social Care to be involved in carrying out assessments 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.

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, social workers cannot provide immediate responses to messages left.

Complaints about bias are often as a result of a parent disputing the Social Workers professional opinion and this usually occurs when the outcome does not lean in their favour. It is clarified that the Social Workers role is to represent the best wishes of the child, not either parent.

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.

7.8 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

3 enquiries were received during this reporting period, the LGSCO refused to investigate i.e. matters are in the Court arena and dissatisfaction should be raised in that forum.



7.9 Actions taken and learnings

Complaints are used by the Council as an opportunity to learn and improve, we do try to ensure that the same issues do not reoccur however 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 generally do not set out to get it wrong. No complaints were as a result of a deliberate deviation from a rule or procedure.

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 regularly shared by the Principal Policy Officer / Policy Team with the Directorate's Senior management team to cascade to appropriate staff'.

7.10 Complaints Training and Procedures

There has been no changes to complaint regulations, therefore no procedural changes. The Principal Policy Officer continues to work proactively alongside the workforce, this in turn enables the workforce to further develop their own complaint handling skills. Providing training has been challenging due to competing priorities within the Children's Social Care Service.

8. Compliments

Representations may not always be complaints; they might also be positive remarks or ideas that require a response from the local authority. Enquiries or comments about the availability, delivery or nature of a service which are not criticisms are likely to constitute representations. A separate report is compiled that records all the positive comments received and so this is a snapshot.

| Year | Total |
|-------|-------|
| 20-21 | 92 |
| 21-22 | 73 |
| 22-23 | 65 |
| 23-24 | 75 |

An increase in the amount of compliments and positive feedback recorded in this year.

A little appreciation is medicine for the soul, and can be contagious. 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.

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.

| | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| CIN | 44% | 26% | 12% | 16% |
| EID | - | - | - | 8% |
| CIC | 14% | 19% | 12% | 32% |
| TAF | 42% | 53% | 71% | 41% |
| SG | | 2% | 5% | 3% |

Historically EDT, iCART and DAAT (EID) were recorded under the division of CIN however, in the latter part of year it became a separate division.

Card - Thank you for helping me on my journey in life up to now, and all that you have done. You've comforted me when I cried, and laughed with me when we have had fun. You've made it extra special by making sure I'm safe, when we've been to contact you stayed with me in every place. I have loving Nanny, and she will always remind me of what you've done for me. In case that I may forget. Because of your empathy and caring nature and you fighting my cause, I could have ended up with those that might not give me a loving childhood. So thank you again for the protection, ensuring that I was safe. I'm now living with 'M' who will carry on loving me and give me an amazing life. Loving wishes and many hugs and kisses. (Child)



Email - Just want to say thank you so much for the time you've spent being my families social worker, I've never ever had a good experience with social services so it was very refreshing to meet someone like you who's involved in social, I just want to say I appreciate what you've done for us and I can't thank you enough for being a good social worker who genuinely listened to mine and my children's cares and needs, so thank you and we will miss you but I'm very happy to see the back of you hahahah, I wish you all the best and I hope the new job goes well for you, thank you x (Client)

Text - I'll never forget how above and beyond you've gone for my babies. Not just saying this because of the outcome but you're really one of the good ones, you take the time to listen, you actually care about my kids and their welfare and not just because it's your job to, I appreciate everything, even when I've been challenging at time, always make me find strength at the hardest of days, can't wait for the following months ahead to continue to working together to get the best from the Kids, thanks soooo much!Xxx (Client)

Email - I've just had a conversation with the Guardian for the children. She was very complimentary of the Social Workers Initial Evidence. Mentioned that it was very thorough, and gave a clear picture of what life is like for the children. (Professional)

Email - Thank you for sending the assessment over. I just want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Thank you for being understanding and being the reassuring voice I needed during the assessment process. You're a credit to the social services team and I'll always be grateful for how you dealt with our families difficulties. (Client)

Email - I strongly feel that I need to express my feelings and appreciation to you regarding the Social Worker. From the bottom of my broken heart, I cannot thank her enough. She is so compassionate, caring, thorough, understanding, professional, and approachable. She explains every detail/step in depth to enable us to understand and comprehend. This has been and continues to be the most difficult time of my life, and probably my son's. I am honoured to have her support and guidance on the journey. She always has my son's best interest at all times, and also mine. She is such an asset to Social Services. (Client)

Email - I am just writing to thank you service. I referred myself via your service found on Halton Local Offer. I was contacted two days later by 'J' who was fantastic. I found her to be attentive, compassionate, knowledgeable and reliable. She contacted all the people she said she would, all relevant information she needed she sought by phone or on HBC computer. I was given information about who she had contacted, why and what should be happening next. I felt noticed and heard which is so important to me. Please pass on my thanks and appreciation. (Client)



Email - Hiya mate its' P' just want to say a big thank you for everything you have done for my girl and are still doing I'm so proud of how she has turned her life around thanks again mate x (Client)



Text - I don't feel I could have got through this past few months without you. My sons adore you and your always there to support them too. I don't feel I would change anything about you or how you work with us as a family. The biggest different in general is YOU. You have a big positive impact on me, my boys and us as a family x' (Client)

Email - I want to put into words the enormous gratitude I feel towards you and the support you gave to my daughter and her two boys. When we needed a professional, caring and compassionate person you came into our lives. When we needed you, you were there. If you perform this miracle only once in your professional life then your life has been worthwhile. Thank you. (Client)

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Children, Young People's & Families Policy and Performance Board |
| DATE: | 11 November 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director, Children's Services |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children and Young People |
| SUBJECT: | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan Update |
| WARD(S) | All Wards |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To assure the board of the progress today against the targets set out in the Delivering Better Values (DBV) Grant.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 DBV is a Department for Education programme working to identify and implement local opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND across 54 LAs, and aid local systems (alongside existing local and other DfE programmes) in their objective of achieving financial sustainability. Halton was identified as eligible to apply for DBV grant funding and subsequently a grant application was submitted on the 20th December 2023. Halton requested £1m of grant funding, primarily to build resilience across all educational systems to support and include learners with Social, Emotional Mental Health Needs. The initiatives outlined in our bid are designed to allow schools and settings to support SEND children effectively, without necessarily having to request an Education Health and Care assessment, alleviating the demand for specialist placements, and reducing both the risk of out of borough placement and permanent exclusions. We were notified in March that our bid was successful and that we had been awarded the full £1m grant. This additional resource presents a significant opportunity to positively transform inclusive practices across Halton.

- 3.2 Work Stream 1- Behaviour Support- Thrive – Ahead (implementation phase)

In summary to date 72.8% of schools have engaged regarding the project with 57.1% of schools having booked some or all of their

Thrive training. The first induction trainings for Halton staff have now been delivered with 474 staff registrations. In addition we have also now brought on board the Educational Psychologist team who have purchased Thrive training and will be joining some of the Halton practitioner trainings so that they can support schools through their work. This is in addition to us also training both our EYFS Team and also our Specialist Teaching Team members. This Halton Officers training will ensure sustainability after DBV ceases.

- 3.3 Behaviour Support - Team teach – Ahead (implementation phase)
We are currently ahead in our roll out of Team Teach. All our Resource Bases have now been trained as well as a number of mainstream settings- 74 members of school staff have had Level 1 training and 10 Level 2. We also have more settings booked in before Christmas. We have now taken the decision to train 8 of our EP team (Educational Psychologist). This will give us the opportunity to be sustainable after DBV has finished. We had previously planned to give the trainers training to schools (via expression of interest previously). We also feel we will be able to suggest and deliver bespoke training for settings if the need arises from this change in approach. We have also secured a workshop for up to 50 places for November from Team Teach- this course is nearly full. This is designed to support schools who have only a few members of staff that need training.

Training Feedback from H/T Murdishaw Primary School:

Just wanted to let you know that we have had Gemma Neil from Victoria Road in training our staff the last 2 Wednesday nights with some de-escalation techniques, and her delivery, compassion to our staff and subject knowledge was outstanding! Thank you for making this training free to us. Very worthwhile and would recommend to all.

- 3.4 Behaviour Support Lead Practitioner – On Track (implementation phase)

Team around the School Model (TATS) now in place. This is in the form of a weekly professional meeting in which pupils at risk of exclusion are identified both by settings and other Halton LA data sets. The meeting is made up of EP, EWO, Specialist Teachers, Mental Health, Nursing, Locality Teams as well as Police, Youth Justice and Social Worker if applicable to the child. The newly appointed data analyst team members use the data to drive the meetings held.

- 3.5 Behaviour Support EBSNA Pathway – On Track (co-design phase)

EWO and EP Services are now engaged to work with EBSNA children and families. This is a joint approach from both SASOs (School Attendance Support Officers) and Assistant EPs. These children will be identified by a S19 or Education Inclusion Panel to

consider school referrals. This panel and governance has been agreed. With our data analyst now in post we are using the Vulnerable Learners groups (meets 6 weekly) to identify and monitor this cohort and report impact.

3.6 Behaviour Support HD Unit – On Track (co-design phase)

Proposal shared with Secondary headteachers, via Headteacher briefings and 1-1 meetings. Model and costings codesigned with schools and expressions of interest invited and received we are collating this feedback but the general response was positive. One secondary setting has been identified and planning meeting have been set to commence in October. In line with our agreed plans we are still aiming for late Autumn term implementation.

3.7 Inclusion Quality Mark – slightly behind (implementation phase)

After consultation with stakeholders we have moved away from design and create a Halton Quality Mark. It was understood from speaking to schools that they would rather have a nationally recognised mark. This will now be in the form of the IQM (Inclusion Quality Mark), the launch took place in September at our DBV 'Learning Lunch' for Resource base settings. Once the Resource Bases are on board we will look at phase two. This will involve these schools supporting and offering outreach to mainstream in the form of inclusion which over time will form the creation of the Halton Quality Mark.

3.8 Inclusion Toolkit/ SA Framework – On track (implementation)

This links to Workstream 1 - Team around the School Model (TATS) which is now in place. To support the weekly meetings, a range of documents including a toolkit is being procured. This is an open access bank of resources that will support schools. It also includes a directory of local service which can be accessed and contacts for lead practitioners in each field. This strand also feeds back into the new digital Local Offer which is being created as part of PAP 2 on the SEND Area Action Plan for Halton.

3.9 Inclusion Lead Practitioner - On track (implementation)

After the design phase, this has now started to be implemented in a number of ways. This has been closely linked to the training of Halton Staff in both Thrive Approach and the ability for our EP service to offer TEAM Teach training. The Specialist Teacher Service are leading of the inclusive practice for each of their specialist areas. Our Resource Bases are supporting mainstream settings with inclusive practices. This was co-designed and a framework set at our DBV 'Learning Lunch' event in September.

- 3.10 Headteacher Coach and Influence Model - On track (co-design phase)

Our Principal Educational Psychologist has consulted with Headteachers on the best approach to this. The outcome has been a hybrid bespoke approach in the form of both online and face to face – both group and one to one. We are utilising the existing cluster groups in the first instance to support Headteachers, followed by both in person and online meetings.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None identified.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Quarter 1 cost £326,240

Quarter 2 cost £42,940

Total Cost to date: £369,180

Income from the grant to date, £500,000.

It is hoped that the impact of the Delivering Better Value work will significantly impact on the request for Education Health and Care Plans, which if successful, could have a positive impact on both spend against the High Needs block and the SEND transport spend. It is not possible at this time to quantify what that impact could be.

- 5.2 Grant spending is on track and within budget.

- 5.3 DfE are releasing the next stage of funding

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

None identified.

- 6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

None identified.

- 6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

None identified.

- 6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

None identified.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Children and Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board |
| DATE: | 11 November 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director - Children's Services |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children and Young People |
| SUBJECT: | Halton's Virtual School Annual Report 2023-24 |
| WARD(S) | Borough Wide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the board with the Headteacher of the Virtual School's Annual Report 2023-24 on the educational outcomes and achievement for Halton's Children in Care, and the school's wider work across children's services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- i) Note the information provided; and**
- ii) 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 Children in Care.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Please see the attached report for the detailed data, analysis and summary of the work of Halton Virtual School during the academic year 2023-24.
- 3.2 The work of the Virtual School has continued throughout the academic year and the full annual report provides detailed analysis of how Halton's Children in Care have performed against each of the individual key performance indicators, as well as a summary of the Virtual School's progress towards its identified key priorities for the academic year 2023-24 and the priorities for the Virtual School in 2024-25.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Please see below regarding national policy changes that will have implications for the support provided through Halton Virtual School.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Halton Virtual School relies heavily on the use of Pupil Premium Plus funding from the Government to support the educational outcomes of Children in Care. This includes support provided through the Personal Education Plan, for the staffing required to carry out its duties to a high and effective standard, and the ability to commission specialist services such as psychological assessments, for example, as well as provide direct curriculum support for the children and young people. There is currently an agreement that this funding will remain in place until 2025 but that it will be reviewed to take into account other national budgetary changes and pressures. However, in recent years the remit of the Virtual School has only expanded and there is an expectation that this will continue.
- 5.2 Nevertheless, there is a major risk to the outcomes of our most vulnerable children if this funding ceases because Halton Virtual School will no longer be able to provide the high level and necessary educational support for our children in care. Since Halton's ILACS inspection in 2020, the Virtual School has added more capacity in order to keep delivering its very good work, so the grant funding has been used to meet this suggestion (details of the staffing structure are contained within the full annual report). If the grant funding used by the Virtual School ceases this will have a direct impact on its capacity to meet not only the statutory requirements but continue to deliver its Ofsted validated bespoke support model to Halton's children in care and our wider duties. Therefore, Council funding of at least the same level will need to be identified to mitigate against this.
- 5.3 Halton Virtual School continues to look to provide additional employment and training opportunities for Care Leavers through access to apprenticeships and work programmes. There needs to be a review of funding opportunities to support these and also creative opportunities both within the Council and within local businesses.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Research has demonstrated that issues related to the emotional health and well-being have a significant impact upon the educational outcomes for Children in Care. Timely and effective services are vital in providing emotional support for our young people to enable them to have positive engagement in their learning and achieve their potential.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Research has demonstrated that issues related to the emotional health

and well-being have a significant impact upon the educational outcomes for Children in Care. Timely and effective services are vital in providing emotional support for our young people to enable them to have positive engagement in their learning and achieve their potential.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The educational outcomes for children in care, care leavers, post looked after children and those with a social worker remain a key priority for the council.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Our most vulnerable children and young people will be able to make choices that mean that they can thrive and achieve. Children and young people will feel heard and have a positive experience of their time in education, they will be supported in realising their aspirations and feel supported to achieve. Young people will have positive experiences of growing up in Halton and be equipped for adult life.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Due to their lived experiences Children in Care can be at higher risk of child criminal and sexual exploitation, and episodes of missing from care or school. Research does indicate that these factors, along with poor school attendance, all have a negative impact upon educational outcomes for our children and young people in care. Therefore, all agencies need to provide proactive support in order to keep children in care safe.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 If the outcomes for our Halton Children in care do not improve, then there is a continued risk that they are more likely to become NEET and not become active and positive partners in their community. The expanded remit of the Virtual School is working with wider children's Services and partners to mitigate this risk and therefore a risk assessment is not required.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Children in Care and care experience young people continue to be vulnerable groups whose life experiences of trauma, neglect and abuse mean that they have not had the same start to life as other young people

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

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

None under the meaning of the Act.



HALTON'S VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Annual Report 2023-2024



Benjamin Holmes
Headteacher of the Virtual School
Joanne Lloyd
Interim Headteacher of the Virtual School

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Introduction

The statutory duties of the Headteacher of the Virtual School include the production of an annual report to inform key stakeholders about the work of the Virtual School over the course of the year. The following report is a summary of work undertaken and the achievements of the children whose education we oversee.

The Virtual School is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of Looked-After Children (LAC) and strategic oversight for Post Looked-After Children (PLAC) and Children with a Social Worker (CWSW). For Looked-After Children, this includes the oversight and management of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process and distribution of the Pupil Premium + funding. For PLAC and CWSW, the virtual school has a strategic role in offering support, challenge and training to remove barriers to learning and raise the profile of education as a priority in plans.

There have been a number of changes within the leadership of the Virtual School this year. The new Headteacher joined the team in August 2022, but since January 2024 they have also acted in the role of Acting Director for Education. Consequently, the Virtual School has appointed an interim Headteacher, Joanne Lloyd, who has managed the daily running of the school, along with strategic oversight.

Over this past academic year, we have focused on four key priorities, identified through the previous year's self-evaluation:

- To increase the number of Children in Care and Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training & widen participation whilst in care or as a care leaver.
- Develop an 'Engagement Hub' within the Virtual School
- Enhance our training offer and engagement with Social Care
- Develop a more rigorous and robust performance and accountability framework.

This report shares a summary of our progress against each of these objectives, as well as wider performance measures, and our areas of focus for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Further documentation relating to the work of the Virtual School (including our policies and guidance documents) can be found on our website <https://www.myvirtualschool.org/>

Staffing and Governance Structure of the Virtual School

As well as the leadership changes outlined previously, we successfully recruited a new Primary PEP Lead, Sarah Rawnsley, who joined the team from the 1st of September 2023. A new SCiE Officer also joined the team in July 2024.

Over the academic year, the Virtual School has worked alongside the corporate parenting board to establish the 'operational group', who now act as the governing body for the Virtual School. They receive termly performance reports, through which they hold the school to account, as well as identify ways in which the Corporate Parenting Board can strengthen their role as corporate parent.

Halton Virtual School structure 2023-2024

| Corporate Parenting Board | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Corporate Parenting Operational Group / Virtual School Governing Body | | | |
| Virtual School Senior Leadership Team | | | |
| Role | Name | Funding | Contract type |
| Headteacher of the Virtual School | Benjamin Holmes | Core funded | Permanent |
| Interim Headteacher | Joanne Lloyd | Pupil Premium Plus | Ongoing grant |
| Secondary and Post 16 PEP and Progress Team Leader | Peter McPartland | Pupil Premium Plus | Ongoing grant |
| Virtual School PEP and Wider Duties Team | | | |
| Early Years Education Support Worker (0.8) | Gemma Donaldson | Pupil Premium Plus | Ongoing grant |
| Primary PEP Co-ordinator | Sarah Rawnsley | Sec 31 SW Expansion | Ongoing grant |
| Secondary PEP Co-ordinator | Alys James | Sec 31 SW Expansion | Ongoing grant |
| KS4 and Post 16 Education and Employability Officer | Ian Wilson | Troubled Families grant | From Sept '24 ongoing grant |
| Post Looked After Support Worker and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children | David Bradshaw | Sec 31 Grant – PLAC / SW Expansion | Ongoing grant |
| School Age Education Support Worker | Min Ling Lee-Tai | Core funded | Permanent |
| Safeguarding Children in Education Officer | James Jordan | DSG Funded | Permanent |

As well as their 'core' roles outlined above, the Virtual School team provide consultative support and guidance to schools for Children with a Social Worker. This includes support for behaviour, attendance, mental health & wellbeing and SEND.

Through the expansion of duties, it has enabled the Virtual School to have much stronger engagement in multi-agency panels and boards across Halton. This includes:

- Halton Children and Young People's Safeguarding Partnership Executive Board and all Sub-Groups (Including the Safeguarding Practice Group and the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group)
- Halton SEND Strategic Partnership Board and 'The Journey' Sub-Group
- 'Team Around the School' Meetings for those at risk of suspension or extreme persistent absence
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Panel
- Membership on Halton's Primary and Secondary Headteachers Networks
- Membership on all National Association of Virtual School Headteacher's (NAVSH) NW Sub-Groups
- Halton's Children's Services Permanence Panel
- Halton's Children's Services Resource Panel
- Halton's Fostering Panel
- Contextual Safeguarding Operational Group

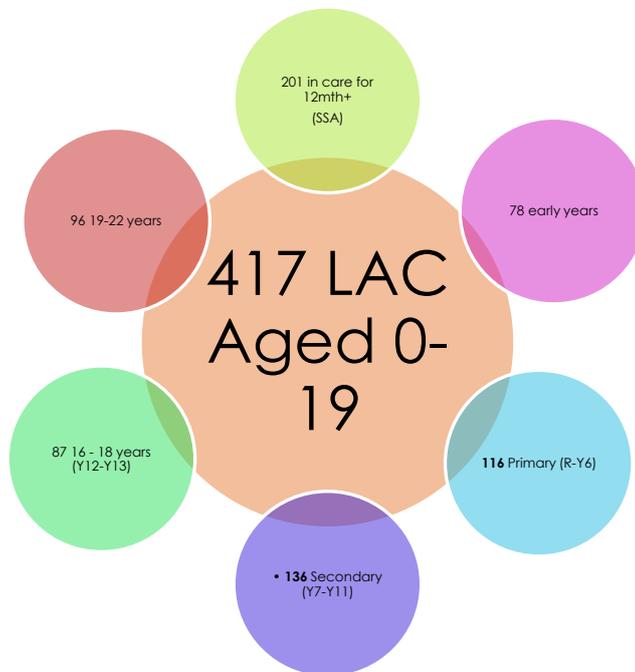
- Children’s Services Improvement Board
- Resource and Placement Panel
- NW 5 Boroughs Post-Looked After Network
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Panel

Our SCIE Officer also attends numerous panels including MARAC, Working Together Meetings for Early Help and as the chair of all DSL Networks and Workshops.

Our Cohort in 2023-2024

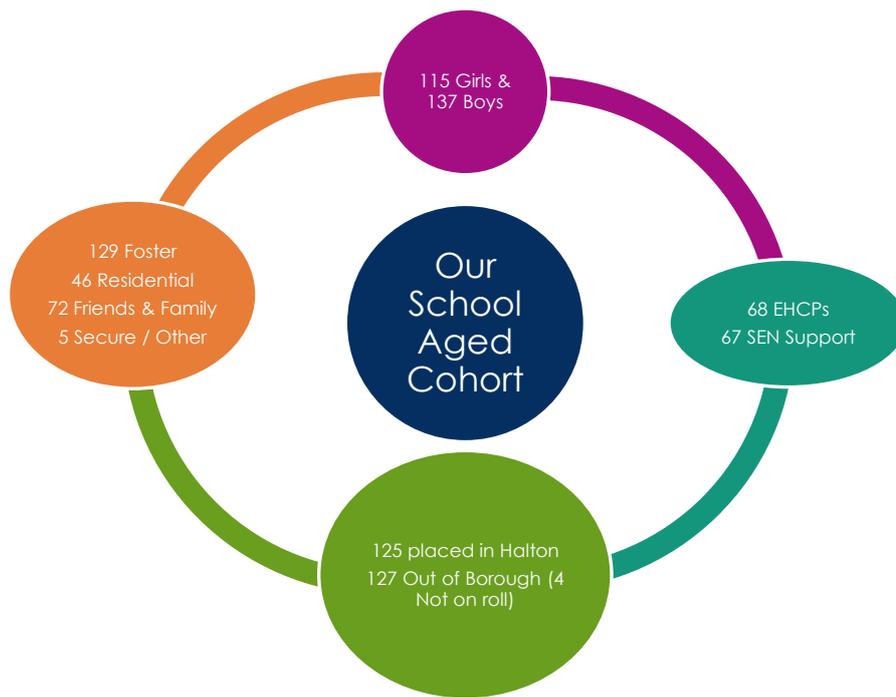
Due to the nature of our work, the cohort of children and young people whom we support is continually evolving as children enter care and also leave care.

Over the course of the academic year, our cohort of children and young people has included:



*Cumulated total for 23/24 academic year.

As of 31st August there were 351 children with an episode of care.



Placement moves.

During 2023-24 we continued to see a high number of CYP (Children and Young People) who experienced a placement move with 65 children and young people having 1 or more placement moves (up 9 from 2022-23).

Of these:

- 46 had 1 placement move (up from 40)
- 16 had 2 placement moves (up from 8)
- 3 had 3 placement moves (down from 6)
- 0 had 4 placement moves (down from 2)

Whenever there is a placement move, we will always work closely with Social Care and Education to ensure minimal disruption to education and challenge where we feel it would have a detrimental impact and also could impact upon them accessing their current education provision.

School moves

There were 18 children and young people who had a school move during the academic year 2023-2024 (down from 19 last year) outside of anticipated phase / key stage transfers.

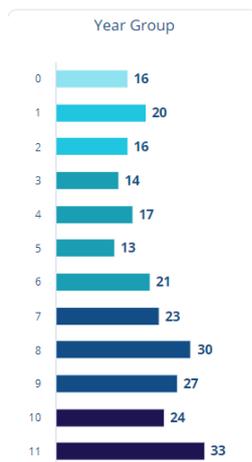
There were 10 young people who have had periods of time not on a school roll, up from 4 in the previous academic year. 7 of these children have an EHCP.

These are two areas in which we work tirelessly to ensure Children and Young People are able to remain on roll at their current school. However, we will also listen closely to their wishes and feelings

within PEP meetings and will consider all direct requests where children ask to move schools. This process has been strengthened following feedback and challenge from our Children in Care Council.

A school move will also be considered whenever a child’s school receives an Ofsted rating of Requires Improvement or Inadequate, although this does not mean a move will always be in the child’s best interests despite the grading.

To ensure that the Virtual School is involved in all decisions to move schools, we have improved the rigour of processes used within Social Care to alert us to potential school move requests, which has impacted upon greater alerting and early intervention and support being actioned by the school.



School Phase

The chart shows a breakdown of children in care by each national curriculum year group for 2023/24. There are clear growth areas in pre-school aged children and within secondary.

New into Care and Discharged from Care

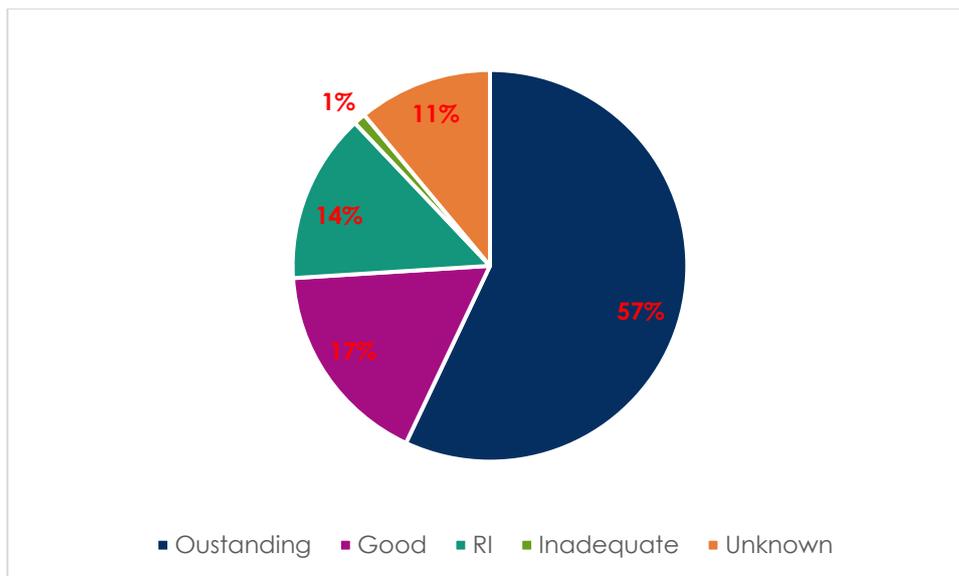
Understandably, our cohort is ever-changing as children come into care and are discharged.

This year, our numbers have decreased with 88 discharged and 44 children entering care.

Ofsted Ratings

The statutory guidance ‘Promoting the education of looked after children’ states that schools judged by Ofsted to be ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ should be prioritised for looked after children in need of a new school and that, unless there are exceptional, evidence-based reasons, looked after children should never be placed in a school judged to be ‘Inadequate’.

At the end of the academic year, 74% of Halton’s looked after children in Reception to Year 11 attended ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ schools which have a rating. This is in comparison to 75% at the end of 2022/3. The 11% ‘unknown’ are schools which have not yet received an Ofsted rating, such as schools who have recently opened or have converted to an academy. The majority of children who attend Requires Improvement or Inadequate schools were already attending these schools prior to entering care or before the school moved into this category and upon review it was deemed in the child’s best interests to remain at the school.



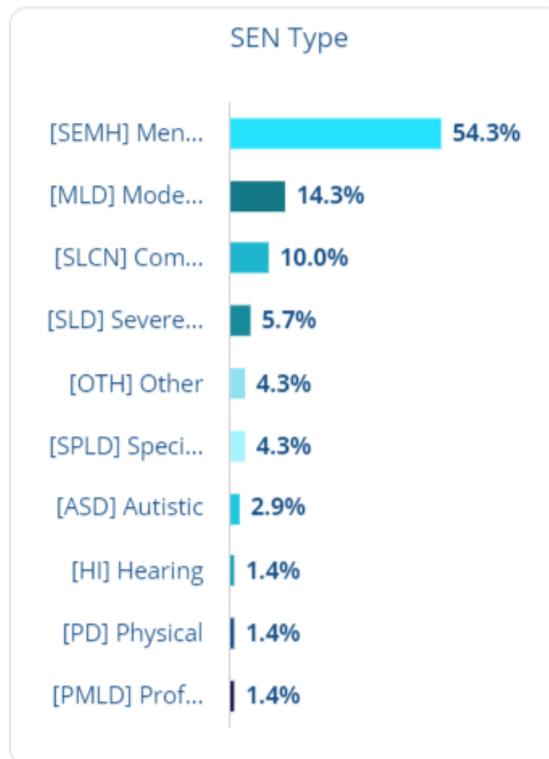
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children in care are significantly more likely to have additional needs than their non-care experienced peers, and are more likely to have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

As corporate parents, Halton SEND services and the Virtual School have agreed that we need to retain responsibility for our most vulnerable children in care who are living outside of Halton but not in a stable placement and are in need of a statutory assessment, whilst working in line with the 'Belonging Regulations'. In these circumstances the Virtual School commission the Educational Psychology (EP) Service to undertake the assessments and an SEN Caseworker is allocated to ensure the assessment is completed at least within the statutory timeframe.

This decision has been made to ensure that the assessment process is not disrupted should the placement breakdown and to minimise the number of local authorities involved in completing the assessment. For all other children placed outside of Halton in stable placements it is the resident authority that undertake the assessment as per the Belongings Regulations.

All EHCPs are reflected within the termly Personal Education Plans, but with 54% of current plans having Social, Emotional and Mental Health as the primary category of need this is reflected in the training offered to individual schools and through our training calendar (and use of EP time) to support schools in enabling our children to flourish and thrive.



Academic Outcomes in 2023-2024

Attainment and Progress

Whilst the Virtual School scrutinises and monitors the performance of all children in care to Halton, there is only a statutory requirement to nationally report on educational outcomes for those who have been in care for 12 months or more. The data within this section refers only to those children and young people who meet this statutory requirement.

Due to very small cohort numbers and the fluctuation in children coming into (and leaving) care, caution is needed in interpreting the educational outcomes for Halton children in care. Although the data may indicate differences between previous years the low numbers make it difficult when making comparisons or looking for generalisations across the cohorts as they are very specific to the needs to the individual children and young people.

Instead, through the PEP process we analyse the progress of each individual child and young person based upon their starting points and the targets set for their academic outcomes.

Early Years Foundation Stage

There were 11 young people in the EYFS cohort who had been in care for 12 months or more at the time of assessment.

Of these, 27% achieved a 'good level of development' (GLD).

Our Reception cohort continue to cause a concern. Throughout the year, this year group has had one of the highest attendance figures, there does not appear to be a trend in placement status and GLD. This year group will be a focus for the Virtual School for the 2024-25 academic year.

This year group was significantly impacted during the COVID19 pandemic, and a high level of support will be needed moving forward.

Out of the Reception cohort:

- 1 child had a school move.
- 3 children had 1 placement move.

| GLD | 2018-19 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 29% | 60% | 30% | 27% |

Year 1 Phonics

| Year 1 Phonics | 2018-19 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 62.5% | 33% | 57% | 50% |

Key Stage 1 Outcomes

This year the KS1 assessments were not statutory, therefore we cannot report on this data.

Key Stage 2 Outcomes

| Key Stage 2 Outcomes | 2018-19 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number in Cohort | 11 | 29 | 18 | 18 |
| Reading | 33% | 28% | 55% | 39% |
| Writing | 40% | 31% | 55% | 33% |
| GPS | 54% | 24% | 72% | 28% |
| Maths | 33% | 36% | 55% | 39% |
| Science | 54% | 28% | 61% | 44% |
| Combined in RWM | 33% | 28% | 44% | 28% |

Primary Outcomes Analysis

The Primary Outcomes data identifies that our children’s results at Key Stage 2 are in line with those in the earlier years. For example, this year’s end of KS2 cohort have sustained or improved their overall attainment compared to their Key Stage 1 outcomes in 2019, however, the cohort group in 2019 was significantly smaller than it is now. 72% of this year group have an EHCP or an identified area of SEND. 61% of the cohort were educated in borough. Individual pupil progress will continue to be measured through PEPS and to ensure even earlier identification of support through targeted plans.

Key Stage 4 Outcomes

| | 2018-19 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number in Cohort | 12 | 33 | 20 | 27 |
| 9 - 4 English | 8% | 42% | 15% | 15% |
| 9 – 4 Maths | 33% | 30% | 15% | 4% |
| 9 – 4 English & Maths | 8% | 24% | 0% | 4% |
| 9-5 English | 0% | 27% | 5% | 4% |
| 9-5 Maths | 0% | 9% | 0% | 0% |
| 9 – 5 English & Maths | 0% | 9% | 0% | 0% |

KS4 Analysis

This year’s results at the end of KS4 mirror those of the previous cohort.

- 38% of the cohort entered care during KS4.
- 24% of the cohort are also in receipt of an EHCP.
- 62% of the cohort had at least 1 social worker change in the last 12 months.
- 35% of the cohort had at least one placement change during Year 11.
- 18% of the cohort are UASC.
- 41% of the cohort attended out of borough settings

However, there are a number of individual success stories which reflect the work of the schools and Virtual School colleagues in supporting the academic progress of our young people. Due to the low results, we are continuing to strengthen the work in supporting our 16+ cohort in progressing into education, employment or training from September alongside colleagues within the Local Authorities 14-19 team and supporting with the completion of exam resits in the new academic year.

Progress of all Pupils

As well as outcomes, we closely monitor the progress made through the PEP process. Where progress slows or is not on-track based upon their starting points, we work with schools, carers and social workers to use Pupil Premium + in order to provide additional support.

| Summer Term 2023-24 | | | |
|---------------------|----------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Year | Total No | Number with Expected Progress | % Expected Progress |
| R | 15 | 10 | 67% |
| 1 | 20 | 16 | 80% |
| 2 | 16 | 13 | 81% |
| 3 | 14 | 11 | 79% |
| 4 | 18 | 14 | 78% |
| 5 | 13 | 13 | 100% |
| 6 | 21 | 21 | 100% |

| | | | |
|------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| R | 15 | 10 | 67% |
| KS1 | 36 | 29 | 81% |
| KS2 | 66 | 59 | 89% |
| TOT | 117 | 98 | 84% |
| KS1&2 | 102 | 88 | 86% |

| Summer Term 2023-24 | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Year | Total No | No Ex Pr | % Ex Pr |
| 7 | 22 | 16 | 73% |
| 8 | 30 | 23 | 77% |
| 9 | 28 | 13 | 46% |
| 10 | 23 | 15 | 65% |
| 11 | 33 | 13 | 39% |

| | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| KS3 | 78 | 52 | 67% |
| KS4 | 56 | 28 | 50% |
| TOT | 134 | 80 | 60% |

This data identifies that our cohort have made good or better progress overall in Key Stages 1 and 2 but this dips in EYFS and Key Stage 3 and 4, with our youngest and oldest cohorts. We will therefore feed this into our improvement plan for 2024-25 to improve the scrutiny and challenge for these year groups to ensure that progress increases in these year groups.

Attendance and Exclusions

Regular school attendance is a key part of giving any child the best possible start in life. However, it is highly likely that a child who comes into care has already missed some time in school, and for some this is a considerable amount. Therefore, it is vital that children in care are supported to attend regularly to mitigate against the impact of previously lost learning, in line with ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024’.

Halton’s Virtual School commission a company called ‘Welfare Call’ to monitor the attendance and exclusions of all Halton children in care regardless of where they are educated. This is done by daily contact with all schools and alternative providers to ensure that attendance is tracked and recorded appropriately and to comply with safeguarding procedures.

Whilst the DfE have determined below 90% attendance to constitute persistent absence, Halton Virtual School monitor both below 90% and 95% attendance, with the latter aspiration target being the benchmark for analysis.

Attendance 2023-24

| Average % attendance | Primary | Secondary | Overall |
|----------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Autumn | 97% | 81% | 88% |
| Spring | 97% | 78% | 87% |
| Summer | 98% | 74% | 84% |

Attendance of all children in care over the past 7 years

| | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 COVID | 2020-21 COVID | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|-----------|---------|---------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Primary | 97.1% | 96.2% | 87.5% | 93.3% | 95.3% | 97% | 97% |
| Secondary | 88.7% | 88.6% | 77.9% | 90% | 84.6 | 79% | 77% |
| Overall | 92.9% | 92.4% | 81.9% | 90.5% | 90% | 88% | 86% |

Where attendance is below 95%, this will need to be explored within the PEP and where a concern is raised (for example if there are unauthorised absences, or a deterioration in school attendance), then this should be reflected in the PEP targets and actions as an area of priority.

Exclusions

This academic year has seen the Virtual School have their first permanent exclusion. Overall there were 3 permanent exclusions for significant one off incidents. All three children have an EHCP and attended a specialist setting. National and regional colleagues have also seen an increase of permanent exclusions for Children in Care.

The Virtual School work closely with school leaders and offer training to all schools in Halton (as part of the expansion of our duties) to remind them of the additional anxieties and challenges that our cohort often face. This will be expanded further at our Autumn conference in September 2024 and throughout the next academic year as we offer additional trauma informed practice training.

Percentage of children in care receiving 1 or more suspension in 2023-24:

| | Autumn | Spring | Summer |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
| Primary | 0% | 1% | 3% |
| Secondary | 17% | 17% | 14% |
| Overall | 10% | 10% | 9% |

4 Primary child had 1 or more periods of fixed term exclusions:

- 75% were educated out of borough.
- 25% were in residential provision.
- 75% had an EHCP and / or were in specialist provision.
- Total days lost learning for Primary children was 9.

44 Secondary pupils had 1 or more periods of fixed term exclusions:

- 66% were educated out of borough.
- 53% were in residential provision.
- 58% had an EHCP and / or were in specialist provision.
- Total days lost learning for Secondary age young people was 243.5 days.

In comparison to previous years, there has been a significant increase in the number of children in care experiencing suspensions and particularly repeated exclusions. The Virtual School has focussed on raising awareness of the impact of trauma and neglect on children’s behaviours leading to more inclusive practice and the positive support provided through the individual child needs led model of Pupil Premium Plus. Targeted school level support will be provided in the next academic year, along with further training on attachment and trauma.

Virtual School Actions and Impact on Exclusions

- Provided support and advice to schools who were experiencing difficulties managing challenging behaviour.

- Established and attended multi-agency, weekly ‘Team Around the School’ meetings in all secondary schools for children and young people at risk of suspension. This year has seen the rollout to some primary schools, which the Virtual School have also attended.
- Provided tailored packages of support to high-risk pupils, including mentoring through Insight Mentoring Service.
- Provided attendance support through Pupil Premium Plus.
- Commissioned specialist assessments to support schools to meet the needs of complex children.
- Supported schools to undertake the graduated approach in relation to SEMH needs.
- Supported schools in applying for and securing an EHCP when appropriate.
- Provided ongoing advice to increase awareness and improve practice in meeting the needs of children with attachment difficulties.
- Worked with SEND colleagues to support identification of appropriate education placements.

Accessing Alternative provision

The Bridge School (Halton’s PRU) provide an Engagement Programme for Y10 and Y11 young people who require access to alternative provision. This alternative provision is quality assured by The Bridge School.

If a school purchases alternative provision placements for young people with providers who are not part of The Bridge School Engagement Programme, then it is the school’s responsibility to quality assure the provision.

Agreement must be gained from the Headteacher of the Virtual School prior to a young person in care being placed on alternative provision. This is to ensure that the provision will meet the educational needs of the young person and their long-term aspirations. Scrutiny of the outcomes of these young people is undertaken through the termly Personal Education Plan.

If the provision is via the Engagement Programme the Secondary PEP and Progress Coordinator liaises with The Bridge School to ascertain quality assurance outcomes.

| Number of CYP who accessed AP during 23/24 | Part Time | Full Time Partial Year | Full Time Whole Year |
|--|-----------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Primary | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Secondary | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall | 8 | 1 | 1 |

Post 16 Access to Education, Employment and Training

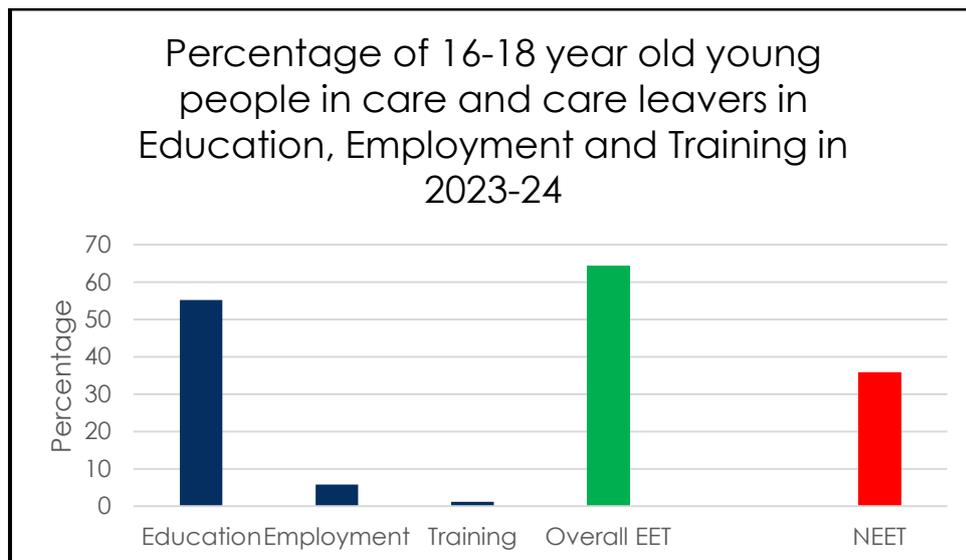
The Virtual School provide support and guidance for all young people in care or care leavers up to the age of 25 around access to Education, Employment and Training (EET), and provide advice and guidance for their social workers or PAs as appropriate.

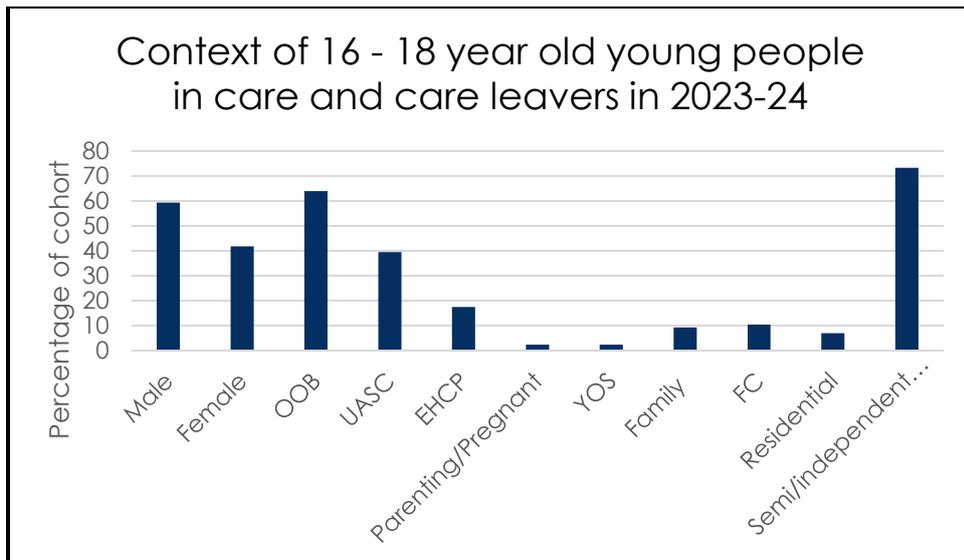
Halton’s ILACS inspection in May 2024 highlighted that the Virtual School required more capacity to further develop its good work, in particular around support for our Post 16 cohort. As a result, our KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer works to improve the engagement of Post 16 young people in care and care leavers in EET and to also ensure that they have access to direct support to explore a range of EET options and achieve good post 16 outcomes. This is through the use of our Post 16 PEP and NEET PEP (Not in Education, Employment or Training) process.

Monthly tracking is undertaken to ensure that there are early alerts for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET as well as those currently NEET. The direct work to re-engage this group, undertaken by the KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer, is to ensure that the views of the young person are heard and that any barriers are addressed when formulating a plan for re-engagement. This process is monitored through the NEET Panel, attended by relevant stakeholders.

Creating the right apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities and support remain a struggle for us in the current financial and political climate. However, the KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer is working closely with the Apprenticeship Hub to ensure that children in care and care leavers have access to high quality information regarding apprenticeships and also support to enable them to apply if they want to.

Outcomes for our 16–18-year-old young people in care





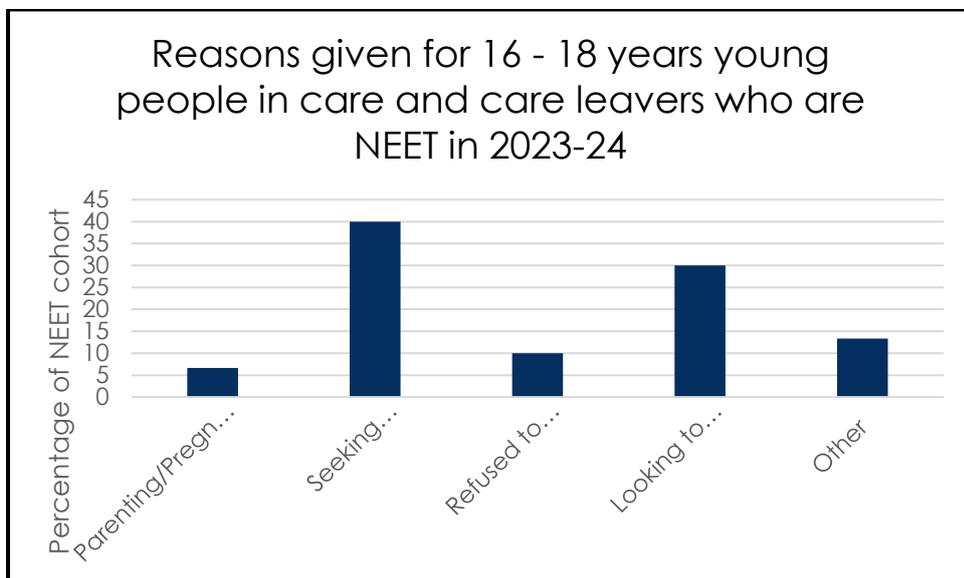
OOB = Out of Borough

UASC = Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child

EHCP = Education, Health and Care Plan

YOS = Youth Offending Service Involvement

FC = In Foster Care



The overall cohort is 87 young people of which 64% are in education, employment or training.

There are 31 young people who are not in education, employment or training within this cohort.

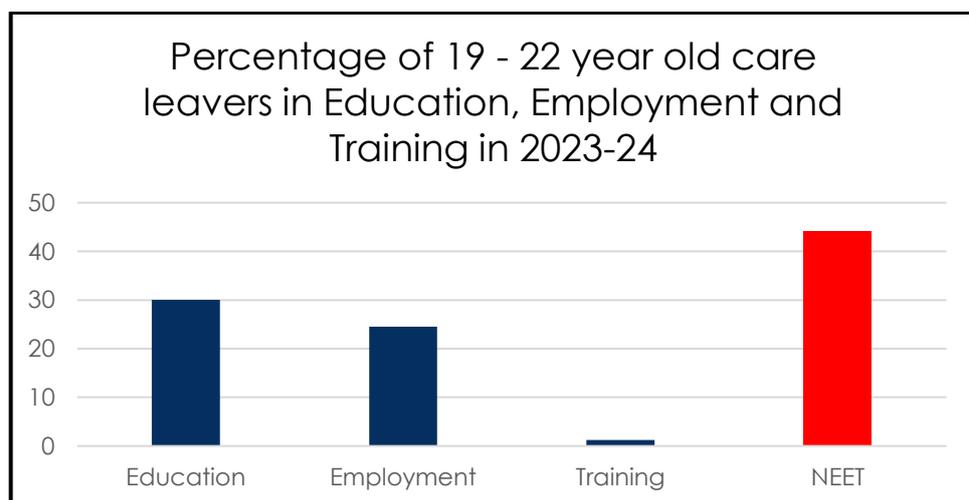
Halton Virtual School liaise with the authorities 14-19 Team referring to Career Connect for bespoke support back into EET via, 1:1 Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG), job search, applications and CV support.

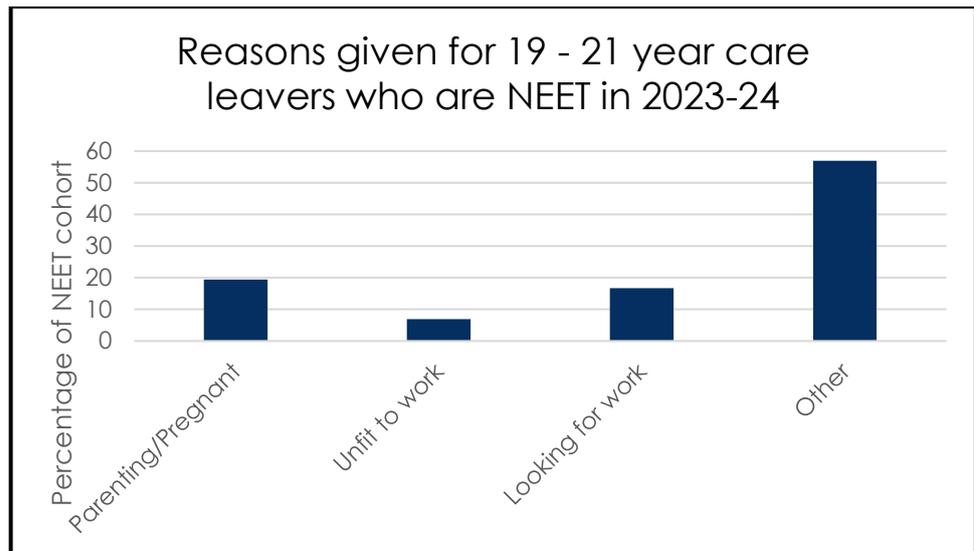
For the more vulnerable of the cohort, support and referrals can be tailored to include Disability Employment Advisers, Princes Trust Volunteers, Talent Match, Housing and Complex Youths.

Of those who refused to engage in education, employment or training, 19 live outside of Halton. There has been an increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who have very limited English and would therefore struggle accessing mainstream Further Education. For each of these young people, they have an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) support package in place, with a view to then enrolling them at college once their career aspirations are more fully understood.

During 2023-24 we have established the use of a NEET PEP alongside a NEET panel with our social care and Personal Advisor colleagues to provide further support, actions and accountability for engaging this group of Young People. These are completed by the KS4 & Post 16 Employability Officer for the Virtual School.

Outcomes for our 19- 22-year-old care leavers





Of these 163 young people, 56% are currently accessing education, employment or training (EET) however, there are 72 young people in this cohort who are not (NEET).

As a virtual school, for our Care Leaver NEET cohort, we offer signposting to local services such as Halton People into Jobs, Households into Work and Halton Adult Education Service as well as advice and guidance in supporting our Leaving Care cohort alongside our Personal Advisor colleagues. All data for this cohort is obtained through Eclipse on the care leaver report, the context of this cohort is not provided.

Personal Education Plans

The statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children' (February 2018) places a duty on Local Authorities to maintain a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for every child in care in an educational setting up to the end of the school year that s/he turns 18 (Year 13). On coming into care, a PEP must be initiated and completed no later than 20 working days (aspirational goal of within 10) so that it can inform the first statutory review (28 days) and then be reviewed termly from that point on.

For a PEP to be high quality and effective, the guidance states that it should be:

A 'living', evolving, comprehensive and enduring record of the child's experience, progress and achievement (academic and otherwise), and inform any discussion about education during statutory reviews of the child's wider care plan' (Para 23 pg. 15)

It is a process that should enable each child or young person to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential. It should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations and builds life chances.

The role of the Virtual School is to ensure that there are effective systems in place to ensure social workers, Designated Teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs

identified in that PEP; ensure that PEPs are up-to-date, effective and high quality and focus on educational outcomes; ensure that all children in care (aged 3 – 18), wherever they are placed, have such a PEP; undertake regular quality assurance of all PEPs.

The Virtual School track on a termly basis the number and quality of PEPs completed. This is then reported in our termly performance reports to our Governing Body.

Statutory Compliance and Quality Assurance

The PEP completion rate has remained consistently high in spite of the challenging circumstances throughout this year.

| | Autumn | Spring | Summer | Full Year |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Early Years | 100% | 95% | 100% | 98% |
| Primary | 100% | 94% | 98% | 97% |
| Secondary | 91% | 95% | 95% | 94% |
| Post 16 | 95% | 86% | 100% | 94% |
| Combined | 96% | 93% | 97% | 95% |
| New into Care in Timescale | 57% | 100% | 88% | 82% |

Quality Assurance

The Virtual School quality assure every PEP that is completed each term and provide feedback to schools around areas of improvement. Analysis has shown that in Post 16 and Secondary PEPs it is the SMART targets and impact of Pupil Premium Plus sections that continue to need improvement. For EYFS and school age PEPs, the quality of adults working with the child is lacking.

However, the overall percentage of PEPs that are rated as Good or better is increasing each year.

During 22/23 we implemented a new moderation process from Spring 2023 for PEPs to ensure consistency across schools, PEP co-ordinators and age ranges. This resulted in an increase in amber graded PEPs due to increased rigour, but training and support and been provided to respond to this, as well as providing high quality materials to Designated Teachers to support the completion of future PEPs. It is therefore anticipated that figures will continue to increase yet retaining our new higher standards in the quality of submissions. Following on from our moderation process in 2023, we have now embedded a multi-agency approach to ensure appropriate scrutiny and feedback on the Virtual School quality assurance process. In the next academic year, we will be working with neighbouring authorities to moderate a selection of PEPs throughout the year.

| Good or Better PEPS | Autumn | Spring | Summer | Full Year |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Early Years | 82% | 40% | 48% | 57% |
| Primary | 79% | 75% | 80% | 78% |
| Secondary | 62% | 53% | 49% | 55% |
| Post 16 | 92% | 77% | 83% | 84% |
| Combined | 75% | 67% | 67% | 70% |

Our PEP policy and supporting documents expand upon what 'makes an effective (green or gold) PEP.

Pupil Premium Plus and Wider Funding

This year, the total grant allocated for Halton was £695,750

51% (£356,972) was spent directly on the children and young people to improve their educational outcomes through distributed payments to schools and education provision.

| | 2021 - 22 | 2022- 23 | 2023-24 |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|---------|
| PEP Allocation | 27% | 33% | 44% |
| Direct YP Support | 19% | 14% | 7% |
| Training | 5% | 2% | 2% |
| Centrally Retained | 49% | 51% | 47% |

The centrally retained portion is for the attendance service the Virtual School commission, dedicated Education Psychology time (and the training they delivery), speech and language support (from 23/24), purchasing of Boxall Profile licences, and for staff within the Virtual School. It is important to note that this central allocation is vital to ensuring that we are able to track the educational outcomes and also provide support for both schools and children in care.

During the 24/25 academic year, we aim to benchmark the spending of PP+ in comparison to other LAs and Virtual Schools and develop greater measurement of IMPACT of spending, which will feed into the longer-term planning for the virtual school.

School's use the funding allocated through the PEPs to commission support themselves (including tuition, nurture and emotional literacy support, or 1:1 support and access to additional interventions), to enhance the curriculum, offer opportunities to nurture talents, or support them in their talents and academic interests.

Post Looked After Children

238 school age pupils known to be previously looked after are currently attending Halton schools. Over a quarter of this cohort are described as 'in the highest quartile of deprivation' with 38 having an EHCP.

Children and young people who have experienced early life trauma can continue to experience a range of challenges in school. We understand the long-term impact of trauma, and this informs the support and guidance we give to parents, carers and professionals who live and work with previously looked after children. The Virtual School's relationship with Together for Adoption (TFA) is strong and collaborative working is good. We have participated in half termly meeting sessions convened by TFA.

Additionally, Halton works very closely within a sub region of other Virtual Schools, to upskill staff and share good practice and resources. The quality of Halton Virtual School resources has been recognised and distributed throughout schools in the borough.

Improved knowledge and communication have led to an increase in adoptive parents contacting the Virtual School for a range of advice to reduce difficulties for their children at school, or to recommend school placements that might match their needs. Halton's Virtual School has delivered a training session for those parents who have already adopted, those in the process of being assessed or at the matching stage. Content includes the role of the Virtual School, potential difficulties previously looked after children can experience at key points such as school transition, why additional support is needed and how to access this. Our contribution to the effectiveness of the TFA is enhanced by a member of the Virtual School being a member of the adoption panel.

Areas of Celebration

- New flightpath support package for all children leaving care: including active communication with schools, carers and other services following care discharge. This will provide the backbone for an extended offer for Halton's children who were formerly in care and will be a pro-active vehicle to prevent potential crises occurring.
- Robust challenge and refinement of local adoption agency (Together for Adoption's) training calendar.
- Delivery of a 'coffee morning' surgery every two months for adoptive parents and SGO carers connected to Halton.
- Refinement and rolling out to schools of PEP style document for children formerly in care.
- In person visits to schools to meet Designated Teachers in order to raise the profile of the Children Formerly Looked After Offer / tangible support for Children with a Social Worker (CWSW).
- The Halton offer for previously looked after has also been redefined, and republished (online) with rudimentary policies written for both kinship and children with a social worker.
- Responding to requests for information and advice to parents and colleagues working in adoption services. Support is provided in relation to requests from the Admissions team to place previously looked after children (PLAC) in a suitable education setting.

Areas of Development and Targets for 2024 – 2025

- Launch and consolidation of the new 5 boroughs 'Post Looked After Holistic Offer' with a focus on post adoption support.
- Distribution of the new 5 boroughs Support Policy that sets out a clear, concise and professional remit whilst continuing to provide support to TFA and signpost their adoption offer.
- Training- Requisition providers and finance this ourselves as a collective group with training that is more specific to the Previously Looked After, Care Experienced cohort rather than just concentrating upon adoption. Delivery of joint cross authority training to be organised and facilitated by the Northwest Five Borough Partnership (Halton, Cheshire West, Wigan, Warrington, St. Helens).
- Continuation of the Care Experienced support group and offer of service with the new Halton digital family hub application.
- Develop the new kinship and children with a social worker professional and associated sharing of good practice.

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

The expansion of our role to offer strategic support for all children with a social worker has been a key focus for the Virtual School this year, with a member of the Virtual School team being the strategic lead on this area. There is now a better understanding of the role of education in Social Care. The audit tool is now embedded in CiN and CP plans, with education consistently being referenced to. The training offer from the Virtual School has expanded this year to ensure all professionals that work with our children and young people are invited to attend.

We have continued to play an active role in the 'Team Around the School' model for children at risk of exclusion within 100% of our secondary schools. We have also enhanced our presence on key multi-agency groups to support those at risk of exploitation.

We have launched the use of CPOMS Engage as a Virtual School to provide instant access to attendance data and enable us to provide immediate support and guidance to schools.

Our Safeguarding Children in Education Officer also provides active support to schools relating to escalations, case support and training for DSLs.

Our key focus for 2024/25 will be to develop a comprehensive and accurate tracking system of attendance using DfE and local data in order to provide regular updates to education and social care colleagues. This will then identify key areas of scrutiny, challenge and support to our most vulnerable cohorts. Further information can be found in the Virtual School Delivery Plan for 2024/25.

Training and Development

During 2023-24, the Virtual School delivered training and hosted network meetings to 275 delegates from across 105 Schools. This year, we also invited all social care and fostering colleagues to all of our training sessions.

Training and support were provided in relation to three key aims this year, to ensure we get our core business to the highest standard possible, especially following the increased expectations around what constitutes a 'good' PEP:

- New to the Role of Designated Teacher
- Multi-agency working
- Termly DT Network Meetings

Our next Virtual School Conference for Safeguarding Leads, Designated Teachers, Headteacher and Social Care takes place on 18th September 2024 with over 150 delegates expected to join us for what is sure to be a fantastic day's professional development!

Virtual School Team Training

This year, the Virtual School team have accessed CPD opportunities through AC Education. The Early Years Support Worker is now trained to deliver PEEP Training and 'Tots Talking' Speech and Language Programme. One team member has completed their NPQ Leading Behaviour and culture and the Interim Head is part way through the NPQH. Both NPQ qualifications have been funded directly from the DfE.

Additional learning and literacy support

Halton Virtual School provides a high level of 'outside the classroom' educational support for our children and young people in care.

The Virtual School coordinate additional one-to-one tuition for any Halton child in care who requests support with a subject, regardless of where they are educated or living. The tutors are always qualified teachers and subject specialists and provide regular tuition reports. Whilst our original 1:1 tuition offer has been face to face, we have responded to pupil voice and moved to provide online tuition where preferred.

In partnership with a local bookshop (The Curiosity Book shop) the Virtual School send an individualised book parcel to each identified child in their placement on a half termly basis. The children are identified through analysis of the PEP outcomes and also all Reception age children receive them. The parcels are tailored to the child's interests and their reading and writing levels. The aims of the book parcels are to encourage a love of reading at home; and improve reading ages and vocabulary development.

The Virtual School also has a yearly subscription to Storytime Magazine which is sent out each month to identified children in Key Stage 1 and when appropriate to some Key Stage 2 children. The magazines are brightly illustrated and have short stories. The aim of the magazines are to encourage a love of reading at home particularly for those who struggle accessing a book and to improve reading age and vocabulary development. 44 children have had the Storytime magazine this year.

The Virtual School website (www.myvirtualschool.org) has been enhanced and regularly updated with curriculum links particularly Maths and English and other subjects; resources to support learning at home; other activities to support carers in keeping children and young people engaged in their learning such as virtual tours of museums, cross curricular activities, coding projects, arts & craft ideas, fun ideas from famous authors etc. A new section with ideas and resources to support Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing has also added.

This year, we have also commissioned mentoring support for a number of our young people. Through Insight mentoring, we have also commissioned whole school staff training to all Secondary Schools in the borough. Feedback from the service includes, *‘It was amazing to have Nick with us on Tuesday. He shared his experiences with staff, really targeting their influence and place they have in a child in care’s life. Each staff member left feeling very touched by his words, encouraged to be that child’s champion and also the correct language to use in PEP’s. It was so beneficial to us all, so thank you.’* One of young people also commented, *‘The sessions are really helping me as it’s someone I can talk to that isn’t linked to all of this and gives me advice.’*

2023 – 2024 Virtual School Action Plan

A summary of our Action Plan for the previous academic year

| Objective | Action to reach objective | Progress | Strengths, Risks & RAG Rating |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1.0 To increase the number of EET & widen participation whilst in care or as a care leaver. | 1.1 Develop Traineeship model 1.2 Training & support for PA’s 1.3 Explore vocational offers 1.4 Protected characteristic 1.5 Widen apprenticeship and employment offer. 1.6 Ensure quality assurance of Alternative Provision is robust and in line with EIP division | <u>April 2024</u> 1.1 Traineeship Model renamed as CIC Pathway due to Govt ceasing Traineeships in July 2023. 1.2 Leaving Care PA’s informed via e-mails, team meetings and also at P16 NEET Panels. Placement Information shared with PA’s for them to explore with their caseloads as appropriate. 1.3 Vocational offers now expanded to include NHS Bridgewater Trust, Park Rangers and Adult Social Care. 1.4 Progression of adopting Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic, still on going. 1.5 Halton Virtual School continue to work with our local partners and stakeholders both academically and vocationally via Halton Employer Partnership (HEP) to develop opportunities for our cohort. | Positive progress in widening the offer across more directorates. Leaving Care Practice Lead explored what incentives/support can be offered to make this more feasible. Leaving Care Practice Lead offered payments for the one day for Care Leavers. We currently have 1 YP about to start on one of the placements. |
| | | <u>Aug 2024</u> 1.1 EET figures above 60% for both Yr 12 & 13, continued collaboration with 14-19 Team via exchange of updated information, eg, new into area and agreement on next steps and actions required for identified NEET YP’s. 1.2 Increased attendee’s at P16 NEET Panels, DWP, Halton People into Jobs, Health, to form a multi-agency panel to offer support from a wide range of agencies and 3 rd sector stakeholders. | <u>August 2024</u> 1.3 Collaborative work with local Training Provider resulting in 1 YP gaining FT employment via CIC Pathway. Lack of young people being able to take opportunities due to issues such as benefits and housing. |
| | | | <u>August 2024</u> 1.1 Reduced number of P16 places for September within Halton. 1.3 Lack of embedded Careers Information, Advice & Guidance |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| | | | (CIAG) for some of CIC/CL cohort leading to unrealistic aspirations. 1.4 Further progress needed with adopting Care Experience as a Protective Characteristic. |
| | 1.7 Continue to improve the completion rate and quality of PEPs within Post-16 sector | <p><u>April 2024</u></p> <p>Due to PMcP focussing on CwSW non-statutory duties, the lead person for this area has changed to JL. Aut & Spring data is below.</p> <p>Autumn completion overall – 96%</p> <p>Spring completion overall – 92%</p> <p>Autmn PEP QA overall good or better – 76%</p> <p>Spring PEP QA overall good or better – 67%</p> <p><u>August 2024</u></p> <p>Summer PEP completion rate 100%</p> <p>Summer PEP QA overall good or better – 83%</p> <p>QA Overall good or better for the academic year- 84%</p> | <p>Multi-agency PEP moderation has taken place in March 2024.</p> <p>Internal half termly moderation is now embedded in the team.</p> <p><u>August 2024</u></p> <p>Increased attendance, communication and cultivation of positive relationships with agencies by The Virtual School.</p> <p>Completion rate dropped in the Spring term. The Virtual School will continue to share PEP completion updates with social care teams to ensure dates are arranged in a timely manner.</p> |
| | 1.8 Stabilise team structure within Virtual School for Post-16 support with PEPs and Employability | <p><u>April 2024</u></p> <p>Due to the Virtual Head covering various other roles within the EIP, there are interim arrangements for a Deputy Head of the Virtual School to cover operational duties of the Virtual School. P16 PEPs are being monitored by the KS4 & P16 Education & Employability Office in the interim. The 2024-25 budget will be reviewed to ensure that this post is filled for the new academic year.</p> <p><u>August 2024</u></p> <p>Due to the Virtual Head continuing to cover the Director of Education role, interim arrangements for the Deputy Head to cover more of the strategic role of the Head Teacher have been in place since May 2024. The P16 cohort continue to be supported by the KS4 & P16 Education and Employability Officer. Finances have been explored to add additional capacity to the P16 offer, some of this additional capacity will be from a 14-19 team caseworker.</p> | <p>A high level of support is being provided to our P16 providers.</p> <p>Capacity continues to be a concern for the Virtual School, whilst these areas are being covered, this is only a short term option, however this has been addressed for the 2024-25 academic year.</p> |
| 2.0 Develop the social care role in education | 2.1 Build on established internal process to bring in social care, | <u>April 2024</u> | Increase in Initial PEP completion within timescales. |

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| | <p>fostering and education colleagues.</p> <p>2.2 Develop Virtual School induction for new social workers</p> <p>2.3 Termly training to focus on quality of PEPs and accountability of educational neglect.</p> | <p>Meeting with social worker academy due to take place in Summer term to discuss Virtual School induction packs for social workers.</p> <p>Termly 'new to DT role' sessions have taken place, alongside 1:1 individual school visits. Training offer is shared with all social care colleagues, with high attendance at the Virtual School conference. Weekly social worker clinics are now embedded in the CiN team to share good practice in education with social care colleagues.</p> <p><u>August 2024</u></p> <p>Work with Social Care Academy is ongoing. All training provided has had a high attendance by education. There has been some attendance by Social Care colleagues, however, this has varied by teams. Virtual School Induction pack for children and Social Care colleagues has been developed and will be launched in September 2024.</p> <p>Educational Neglect Strategy has been launched, which the SCiE Officer will continue to focus on with schools in the new academic year.</p> | <p>Communication between educational settings and the Virtual School continue to be good.</p> <p>Staff turnaround meant we have thought creatively around our induction model and how best to reach the audience – this will be developed and implemented for the Summer term.</p> |
| <p>3.0 Embed a high-quality Virtual School structure to ensure all statutory and non-statutory duties are fulfilled.</p> | <p>3.1 Re-structure of current Virtual School to include a focus on CSE, CWSW, attendance & exclusion, including direct work, SEN and Educational neglect</p> <p>3.2 Commission a Peer review</p> | <p><u>April 2024</u></p> <p>Due to the Virtual Head covering various other roles within the EIP, there are interim arrangements for a Deputy Head of the Virtual School to cover operational duties of the Virtual School. CWSW non-statutory duties are being managed by the Secondary PEP Coordinator, working closely with the SCiE Officer. The Interim Deputy Head continues to manage any SEN duties for CiC. Some direct work sessions have taken place, although the uptake for school age is currently low.</p> <p><u>August 2024</u></p> <p>Due to the Virtual Head continuing to cover the Director of Education role, interim arrangements for the Deputy Head to cover more of the strategic role of the Head Teacher have been in place since May 2024. CWSW non-statutory duties continue to be managed by the Secondary PEP Coordinator, additional operational capacity will be provided to this area in the new academic year. Current Interim Virtual Head is due to complete peer review training in Nov 2024.</p> | <p>Progress has been made in the non-statutory area, ensuring we are in line with neighbouring local authorities.</p> <p>Capacity continues to be a concern for the Virtual School, whilst these areas are being covered, this is only a short term option, however, this has been addressed for the 2024-25 academic year.</p> |
| <p>4.0 Develop a more rigorous and robust performance and accountability framework</p> | <p>4.1 Develop the use of Eclipse</p> <p>4.2 Develop and embed CPOMs</p> | <p><u>April 2024</u></p> <p>CPOMs is now embedded within the Virtual School team, however, there continues to be some barriers with the system, meaning that communication with settings is still via email.</p> | <p>Completed and embedded reporting is now in place.</p> |

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| | <p>4.3 Monthly PAMs & performance report to wider management teams</p> <p>4.4 Termly data analysis to provide challenge and support to social care and education colleagues.</p> <p>4.5 Develop and embed a governance board for the Virtual School</p> | <p>All communication is recorded on CPOMs by the Virtual School.</p> <p>Reports from Eclipse are being utilised with the CwSW non-statutory duties, this is an on-going piece of work due to the different systems used by education and social care. Termly performance monitoring reports and analysis is completed by the Interim Deputy Head and shared with leaders. Monthly reporting through the Aiming higher data is now embedded within the Virtual School.</p> <p><u>August 2024</u></p> <p>CPOMs is now embedded within the team. Barriers around school recording have now been rectified. Virtual School performance monitoring is now embedded, with a clear timetable of reporting. Reporting of CwSW non-statutory duties has now been identified and will be embedded in the termly reporting from Autumn 2024.</p> | |
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Our Plans for 2024-2025

A summary of our plans for this academic year can be found below. These are expanded within our delivery plan for the academic year, including timescales, success measures and identified actions.

To develop a Halton Virtual School Reading Strategy.

- Develop a Virtual School Reading survey to identify themes and trends in our schools, placements and to understand the views of our children
- Develop a training plan to raise educational outcomes in reading.
- Strengthen our Reading support offer.
- Develop the analysis of the data we collect around reading age and assessments.
- Close the attainment gap between Halton children in care and their non-care peers.

Develop the Virtual School College

- Strengthen and develop the NEET Panel to ensure Social Care colleagues have the skills to support our young people into education, training or employment.
- Halton to adopt Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic to ensure that all our Care Experienced cohort will not be discriminated against and will continue to be supported in all aspects of their lives with unfettered access to services including, housing, accommodation, health, education, training and employment.
- Increase capacity within The Virtual School to widen our current offer.
- Continue to improve the completion and quality of Post 16 PEPs and NEET PEPs
- Embed the formalised Virtual School offer of support for all Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) entering Halton’s care.

Raise attendance and reduce the number of exclusions for all Children in Care

- Strengthen training offer for all adults working with vulnerable children

- Develop the use of data to ensure that our analysis is robust and identifies trends early.
- Provide thorough weekly analysis of attendance of all school age looked after children.
- Relaunch Halton Virtual School attendance policy.
- Upskill social care colleagues in understanding and improving school attendance
- Complete a Peer review of PP+
- Develop commissioned services offer to meet need.

Enhance the Virtual School offer for Vulnerable groups, including Kinship, Children with a Social Worker, Post-Looked After & UASC cohort

- Support for those with SEND to get the right support when it is needed including access to our new S&L service and our educational psychologist.
- New flightpath support package for all children leaving care
- Refinement and rolling out to schools of PEP style document for children formerly in care.
- Continue to develop the Kinship and Children with a Social Worker offer
- Strengthen EAL offer

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| REPORT TO: | Children, Young People's & Families Policy and Performance Board |
| DATE: | 11 November 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director - Children's Services |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children & Young People |
| SUBJECT: | Changes to School Attendance Guidance |
| WARD(S) | All Wards |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines recent changes in school attendance policies following the release of the Department for Education's (DfE) *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance in August 2024. These measures are designed to promote regular attendance, enhance monitoring, and offer targeted support to pupils facing barriers. This report highlights the key changes, their implications, and local authorities responsibilities.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Daily Data Sharing and Monitoring

All state schools in England are now required to share daily attendance data with the DfE, local authorities, and academy trusts. This initiative aims to enable early identification of students at risk of persistent absenteeism. The shared data allows for more timely interventions by schools and local authorities to prevent long-term disengagement from education .

3.2 Enhanced Multi-Agency Collaboration

Schools, academy trusts, and local authorities are required to work together more systematically, sharing data and resources. Schools are now expected to appoint attendance champions within their leadership teams to drive attendance improvements and engage directly with families facing attendance barriers.

3.3 Increased Fines and Legal Interventions

The guidance enforces stricter penalties for unauthorised absences. Fines for parents have increased to £80 (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (if paid within 28 days) per parent per child. Local authorities are responsible for administering these fines, as well as working with schools to ensure compliance with attendance policies.

3.4 **Support for Pupils with Mental Health and SEND Needs**

Schools are now required to provide additional support for students struggling with mental health issues or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). However, the new guidance highlights that these challenges should not excuse prolonged absence, and regular attendance is still expected. Schools must inform social workers or relevant youth justice teams about unexplained absences, facilitating collaborative interventions with local services.

3.5 **Changes to Attendance Codes and Registers**

The new guidance introduces updated attendance codes to better categorise student absences:

- New Code K:** For education provided by a local authority, rather than the school.
- Restrictions on Code B:** Schools must ensure that off-site education meets safeguarding and educational standards.
- New Codes C1, C2, and Q:** These codes provide more precise tracking of exceptional circumstances and access issues.

Schools cannot retrospectively removing students from registers without a joint decision with local authorities, ensuring that students are not excluded prematurely from education systems .

3.6 **Role of Local Authorities**

- Monitoring Attendance Data:** Using the shared attendance data to intervene early with at-risk pupils.
- Collaboration with Schools:** Local authorities must offer free attendance support teams to schools, providing a named contact for addressing attendance challenges. They are also tasked with tracking attendance data and prioritising interventions for students at risk of persistent or severe absence, including those with a social worker or other vulnerabilities.
- Legal Enforcement:** Administering fines and ensuring compliance with attendance policies through legal measures, where necessary.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 All directly relevant policies have been updated with regard to new statutory responsibilities and guidance.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Income from fines must now be put back into LA attendance services to further support the delivery of statutory duties and wider services to improve attendance. This is to be monitored and tracked

throughout this academic year 24/25.

- 5.2 Income from fines and SLA to be analysed along with the costs to deliver the statutory attendance services in addition to the support for preventive work, this currently includes an Attendance Data Officer and 3 School Attendance Support Officers (temporary funded by PEIA until end March) these roles are in addition to the Education Welfare Officers.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Good school attendance improves academic achievement, fosters social and emotional development and prepares students for future success in adulthood.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Good school attendance improves academic achievement, fosters social and emotional development and prepares students for future success in adulthood.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Good school attendance improves academic achievement, fosters social and emotional development and prepares students for future success in adulthood.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Good school attendance improves academic achievement, fosters social and emotional development and prepares students for future success in adulthood.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Increasing numbers of EHE (Electively Home Educated) have led to a significant increase in the hours that are spent weekly undertaking the statutory duties related to EHE. Two EWOs are now linked to ensuring these duties are undertaken previously only 1 officer.

- 7.2 Currently the EWS (Education Welfare Service) offer an SLA to all schools to purchase additional hours. With increased new statutory duties capacity to sustain an SLA offer will need revisiting at in the new year (January 2025).

8.0 EQUILITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Medical needs and consideration for health impacting upon attendance. Collaborative efforts needed to ensure that education and health needs are balanced. Schools have a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 by providing reasonable adjustments and further guidance is in Supporting Pupil with Medical conditions (2014).

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None Identified

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

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| REPORT TO: | Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board |
| DATE: | 11 November 2024 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Executive Director - Children's Services |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children and Young People |
| SUBJECT: | School Performance Outcomes 2024 |
| WARD(S) | Boroughwide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Following the publication of validated school performance data on 24th October 2024, a presentation will be shared on the performance outcomes for schools across Halton at the end of EYFS and Key Stages 2, 4 and 5.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the outcomes presented are noted; and**
- 2) the Board determines actions following performance outcomes.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 A presentation will be given during the meeting to share the performance outcomes, following the publication of validated data prior to the meeting.
- 3.2 National Data for Key Stage 2 can be located here [Key stage 2 attainment, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)
- 3.3 Once published, Key Stage 4 data can be located here [Key stage 4 performance, Academic year 2022/23 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)
- 3.4 Individual School performance, once published for 2024, can be found here [Compare the performance of schools and colleges in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/compare-the-performance-of-schools-and-colleges-in-england)

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The performance outcomes will inform the delivery plans for the 2024-25 academic year, which will work towards the objectives within the Children and Young People Strategy 2024-27.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Budgetary decisions over 2024-2027 will be informed by the priorities identified within the performance outcomes, alongside the work within the DfE's Priority Education Investment Area programme.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The work in schools to improve performance outcomes, including removing barriers to learning, is informed by Halton's Children and Young Peoples Plan and includes all partners across the borough.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The best possible educational outcomes achieved by our children, the stronger the future work force for Halton

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The educational outcomes for our children and young people is influenced by the quality of education provided within each of our schools and reflects the key priorities within the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2024-2027.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The performance data takes into account all children and young people across the borough and the achievements made based upon their starting points.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Progress against each of the priorities identified within the presentation will be tracked and inform future reports to the Policy & Performance Board.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None raised.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None Identified.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.