

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

**DATE:** 1 November 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Children & Young People

**SUBJECT:** Children in Care Attainment and Attendance –  
2009-10

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To present the attainment and attendance analysis of Children in Care performance for the academic year 2009-2010

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- i) PPB accept the information provided within the report.
- ii) Children in Care performance and data be held and managed by the central teams

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Attainment and attendance data is currently collated and held by the Virtual School Head for Children in Care. The Directorate is to look at this as part of overall data collection.

3.2 However, an analysis of attainment and attendance of Children in Care is undertaken each academic year by the Virtual School Head. The attainment analysis looks at the following aspects of performance:

For each individual child, if the performance:

- Is in line with their potential as determined by Fisher Family Trust Grade D (FFT D) predictions
- If s/he has achieved 2 level progression across a key stage

For each key stage cohort:

- The attainment gap compared with the general Halton population
- The year on year trend for the attainment gap

3.3 The attendance analysis looks at:

- The overall Primary and Secondary attendance for Children in Care
- What percentage of Children in Care have missed more than 25 days school

### 3.4 ANALYSIS

3.4.1 Key stage 1 – there were no Children in Care for this academic year.

3.4.2 Key stage 2 – there were 11 children in this cohort:

	Reading	Writing	English	Maths	English + Maths
Achieved L4+	54.5%	36.4%	45.5%	36.4%	27.3%
Achieved L5+	27.3%	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%	9.1%
In line with FFT(D)			64%	64%	45.4%
Achieved 2L progression			64%	54.5%	54.5%

These results mean that Halton has not achieved the School & Local Authority Targets (SaLT) set by National Strategies for 2009-10 of 54% for English and Maths respectively. Based on real intelligence and analysis undertaken at the time, this was flagged up as an extremely challenging stretch target for this cohort.

3.4.3 For those children who did not achieve in line with their predictions or attain L4+, further detailed analysis has not highlighted any previously unidentified significant issues that could have impacted on their performance. Only one corresponding factor came to light for 3 children who did not achieve in line with their potential in either English or Maths - they were all placed with family members.

3.4.4 L4+ attainment for KS2 Children in Care (CIC) compared with that of all Halton children is as follows:

	English	Maths	English + Maths
CIC	45.4%	36.4%	27.3%
All Halton	82%	84%	77%
Gap	34.5	47.6	49.7

This does represent a widening gap from last year's performance and for the trend overall, however, each year's cohort numbers are very small and therefore not particularly statistically valid.

3.4.5 The following range of strategies have already been put in place to address the underachievement of the children identified above:

- Schools are being requested to allocate support to address any gaps in knowledge and to assist in removing barriers to learning.
- Direct work sessions focusing on literacy/numeracy skills are being delivered by the Education Support Service as appropriate

- 1:1 tuition is being delivered by subject specialists as identified through the Personal Education Plan and funded through the Personal Education Allowance.
- A holiday activity is being planned to target improving study skills and to reduce potential learning loss.

3.4.6 Key stage 4 – there were 20 young people in Care in the cohort:

	CIC	Halton	Gap
1A* - G	85%	98%	13
5A* - G	55%	94%	39
5A* - G EM	55%	93.4%	38.4
5A* - C	30%	82%	52
5A* - C EM	15%	50%	35
KS2 – KS4 2 level progression English* excluding Halton High as figure not available	25%	62%	37
KS2 – KS4 2 level progression Maths* excluding Halton High as figure not available	20%	55.7%	35.7

These results mean that Halton has not achieved the School & Local Authority Targets (SaLT) set by National Strategies for 2009-10 of 24% for 5A\* - C including English and Maths. Based on real intelligence and analysis undertaken at the time, this was flagged up as a challenging stretch target for this cohort, and the results were significantly impacted upon by the changing personal circumstances of some of the young people predicted to achieve the required results.

- 3.4.7 Comparison with last year's performance attainment has significantly improved on all indicators. In addition, the attainment gap compared with all Halton young people has also narrowed from last year.

The attainment trend for KS4 whilst viable, due to the small numbers, is also showing improvements.

- 3.4.8 70% young people in care achieved in line with their KS4 Fisher Family Trust (Grade D) predictions.

For those young people who did not achieve in line with their potential, further detailed analysis has shown that the major contributing factors were mental health issues, placement type/changes and attendance issues.

- 3.4.9 All young people who have recently left compulsory education are being monitored as part of the newly established Education Employment Training (EET) toolkit, and will be discussed within the EET Scrutiny Group. This will ensure that any barriers to continued engagement or potential NEET issues can be addressed as they

occur.

For young people in care currently within Key Stage 4 the following support strategies will be offered:

- 1:1 tuition by subject specialists funded by the Personal Education Allowance
- Holiday activities focused on developing study skills and exploring post 16 destinations.
- Through the Personal Education Plan, ensuring that each young person receives the appropriate support through school.
- Day to day attendance monitoring with a fast track referral to the Education Welfare Service to address developing issues.

#### 3.4.10 Attendance performance for CIC:

Primary	97%
Secondary	92.1
Missed 25+ days	10.84% (8 Secondary – 6 Y11, 1 Primary)

The main reason for non-attendance amongst the 8 secondary pupils was unauthorised absence; this was often in relation to placement issues or 'Missing from Care' episodes. For the Primary pupil the main reason for absence was illness.

10 young people had fixed term exclusions during the academic year, but there were no permanent exclusions.

#### 3.4.11 Attainment and attendance data analysis continues throughout each academic year:

- Attainment targets set by schools in each Personal Education Plan are monitored by the Virtual School Head and any issues addressed directly.
- Termly achievement progress reports are submitted by Designated Teachers for each Child in Care. Any stalling or erratic progress is then identified and addressed by the Virtual School Head.
- Daily attendance data is obtained and analysed to address any ongoing absence issues.

## 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### 4.1 Corporate Parenting Policy implications:

The educational outcomes for Children in Care in Halton must continue to remain a priority for all professionals in order to improve their overall life chances. Whilst progress is being made in narrowing the attainment gap, and strategies to increase attainment

and skill development are being put in place, more still needs to be done across all partner agencies and schools to bring the performance of Children in Care in line with their peers. This can only be achieved if there continues to be investment and high prioritisation within the Council, as corporate parent, and also within schools.

## 5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### 5.2 Financial implications:

Due to the recent changes within the Government funding arrangements of the Area Base Grant, and also the impending spending cuts, the Personal Education Allowance for Children in Care will be under threat from April 2011. This allowance is used to provide the specialist subject one to one tuition that young people are increasingly requesting, and also to support the skill based activity programme delivered by the Virtual School.

Without identification of funds from April 2011 onwards to replace the money from the Area Based Grant, there will be a negative impact upon the support provided by the Council as Corporate Parent to Children in Care and in discharging its statutory duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

### 5.3 Data Management implications:

A review of central attainment data collection and reporting systems needs to be undertaken to ensure that Children in Care are prioritised alongside and contained within the information provided by the Local Authority to Elected Members regarding the educational performance of children in Halton.

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

### 6.1 Children & Young People in Halton:

The educational performance of Children in Care remains a priority for Halton and current trends do indicate a general improvement. However, as the educational performance of the general population continues to improve the gap in attainment for Children in Care is not sufficiently being impacted upon. Sustainable funded support is required if this general trend of improvement is to continue and the educational gap closed.

### 6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

There are a number of strands of development around support for young people in Care and Care Leavers which are having a positive impact on the employability of this cohort of young people. The

increase in the number of young people in Care achieving 5 A\* - G GCSEs including English and Maths (poor performance being a potential predictor of NEET) is ensuring that the life chances outcomes of young people in Care and Care Leavers are improving.

### 6.3 A Healthy Halton

The activity programme delivered by the Virtual School, coupled with improvements in attainment and attendance are increasing the long term aspirations of children and young people in care. This in turn is improving their emotional resilience and self esteem, and will in the future enable them to make healthier lifestyle choices.

### 6.4 A Safer Halton

Placement stability and feeling safe are key factors in supporting the educational performance of Children in Care. Placement and educational decision making for Children in Care is closely linked and impact assessments are undertaken to ensure that stability is maintained wherever appropriate for each individual young person.

### 6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

As the numbers of care leavers who are NEET reduce, they will take an increasingly active role in supporting the urban renewal of Halton. This will only occur if there is continued support for their educational achievement, employment options and housing provided by the Council and its partners.

## 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Without the continued support to promote educational achievement provided by the Council as Corporate Parents, Children in Care will be disproportionately represented within all disadvantaged groups within society and Halton in particular.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Children and young people in care are among the most vulnerable children within Halton. As soon as a child enters the Care system they are able to access all the educational support provided by the Council as corporate parents, and also by schools through the role of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care, under the statutory guidance placed on Governing Bodies.