

**Halton  
Children &  
Young  
People's Plan  
2011-14**

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## Forewords

On behalf of Halton's Children's Trust I am pleased to present Halton's Children and Young People's Plan. We have made great progress recently, but we still have much to do and this plan will set out our ambitions for our children and young people. This plan is for all our children and young people in Halton, and importantly it focuses our thoughts and actions in areas where the Children's Trust believes we need to accelerate progress. This does not mean that those areas and services not directly identified in this plan are not equally important; on the contrary, in these areas we expect it to be 'business as usual' in continuing to improve outcomes in Halton.

This plan captures the changes that are taking place nationally as well as locally and will ensure that all partners within the Children's Trust can continue to work together to ensure that all children and young people in Halton can reach their full potential.

**Councillor John Swain**  
**Lead Member for Children's Services**  
**Chair, Children's Trust Board**

This plan sets out the priorities for children and young people in Halton, and how the Children's Trust Board will make sure that our families get the help and support that they need in order to do well. Parents, carers and young people can positively contribute to this through involvement with the Children's Trust via the Parent & Carer Forum and the Youth Cabinet. In this way, our voices can be heard and we can help shape future services so that they are meaningful and effective.

**Cleo Pollard**  
**Parent & Carer Forum Chair**  
**and Representative on**  
**Children's Trust Board**

As Strategic Director for Children & Enterprise in Halton, I am personally accountable for the successful implementation of both the Children and Young People's Plan and its commissioning priorities. Its contents reflect both the significant progress we have made to date; along with the areas we must improve further. It is optimistic, but challenging.

The Children and Young People's Plan comes at a time when we are moving into a new phase of planning and delivery of services with our partners. As a partnership for children we need to continue working as one 'organisation' to deliver the Children and Young People's Plan intended outcomes. Virtual as that organisation may be, its impact must be real, substantial and enduring, within the context of a changing national and local policy framework.

Whatever the national policy context, our focus is about improving outcomes for children, young people and their families locally. We have therefore developed and designed it with them; and is yet another example of how we can work together to common purpose. The partnership we have with the people we serve and the many services that support them is an inclusive one. I therefore have confidence that together we will meet the challenges the Children and Young People's Plan sets out for us.

**Gerald Meehan**  
**Strategic Director Children and Enterprise Directorate**  
**Chair Children's Trust Executive Group**

## **1. Executive Summary**

### **Halton Children's Trust's Vision for Children & Young People**

*Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, and ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future*

### **Children's Trust Partnership Priorities**

*Improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support.*

*Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning*

*Improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people by targeting services effectively*

### **Children's Trust Values**

Working together in creating a clear vision and ambition about what we want to do for our children and young people and how we are going to get there

Working together to create a sense of ownership in building a borough that our children and young people can be proud of

Working together to make sure we are accountable to the community by providing services and support, which reflect their lives and needs

Working together with integrity to make sure all children and young people in Halton receive and have access to the best we can offer

Working together to build an inclusive borough which values diversity and works hard to promote equality of access and opportunity

Working together in an honest and open manner, which appreciates different opinions and welcomes alternative perspectives on the path to finding a way forward

Working together in ways that demonstrate a professional respect for everybody involved in making a difference to the lives of children and young people in Halton

# Section One: Setting the Scene

## 2. What is a Children & Young People's Plan?

The Children & Young People's Plan is a joint, strategic, overarching plan for all partners within the Children's Trust and the services they provide for children and young people in Halton. The Children's Trust is a partnership of all stakeholders, including agencies and services from both the public and voluntary sectors, as well as representatives of parents, carers, children and young people. The Trust allows for work to be done in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people in Halton.

The Children & Young People's Plan describes how we will work in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people in Halton. It sets out the long term vision for improving their health and wellbeing and establishes the strategic priorities for the Trust until 2014. It supports the development of integrated and effective services to secure the outcomes for children and young people.

The Plan supports the process of joint planning for Children's Trust partners as they work together to agree clear targets and priorities for all their services to children and young people. It identifies the actions and activities needed to achieve them, and ways to ensure delivery.

This document has been developed following consultation and assessment of need, and is underpinned by detailed delivery and service plans for the Trust and individual partners within the Trust. The Plan provides a strategic framework within which partners can commission services in a co-ordinated way, using integrated process, practice and shared resource.

The Plan covers all services for children and young people aged 0-19, young people aged 20 and over leaving care and young people up to the age of 25 with disabilities or learning difficulties.

### 3. How does this Plan relate to other plans and strategies?

Halton Children's Trust brings together the organisations responsible for services for children, young people and families across the borough. Our Children and Young People's Plan sets out the key improvement priorities for the Trust, and describes how they will be achieved.

The Plan is informed by and is aligned with the information contained within the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) for Halton. The JSNA underpins the health-related elements of our needs analysis and will inform commissioning decisions around key areas for children's services, including:

- Obesity
- Teenage pregnancy
- Child and family poverty
- Vulnerable children and young people

The organisations within the Children's Trust are also part of the wider [Halton Strategic Partnership](#), the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Halton. This partnership brings together organisations that work for all citizens of Halton and includes public, private, community and voluntary organisations.

[Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy \(2011-2026\)](#) is the long-term strategy of the Halton Strategic Partnership. This aims to enhance the quality of life of local communities through actions to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area and its inhabitants. The Strategy contains five strategic priorities for Halton, these are:

- Healthy Halton
- Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton
- Safer Halton
- Children & Young People in Halton
- Environment & Regeneration in Halton

For the Children & Young People priority, this Children & Young People's Plan provides the detail of the issues, aims and objectives outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Underneath the Children & Young People's Plan sit plans and strategies that link closely to this Plan. These provide further detail within one of the following three categories:

- Single issue plans and strategies that apply to all Children's Trust partners, for example the [Children's Trust Integrated Workforce Strategy](#) and [National Treatment Plan](#).
- Operational plans that look at the remit and functions of Children's Trust groups, such as the [Children's Trust Business Plan](#)
- Individual plans and strategies developed by agencies within the Children's Trust for their own organisational activity. One example would be the [Youth Justice Plan for Halton](#) that details the work of the Halton & Warrington Youth Offending Team.

A diagram to illustrate this planning framework is set out below:

# HALTON CHILDREN'S TRUST PLANNING FRAMEWORK



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLES PLAN

Children's Integrated Workforce Strategy

Joint Commissioning Framework

Children's Trust Equality & Diversity Scheme

Children's Trust Business Plan

Children's Trust Sub Group Business Plans

Plans from Individual Children's Trust Partner Organisations

Overall Strategic Planning

Example Single Issue Children's Trust Strategies

Operational Planning

Organisational Activity

## 4. What is happening nationally?

The economic recession that began in 2008 has meant that for many families, businesses and organisations money has become much scarcer. For the Children's Trust it is more important than ever to target out resources on the things that really matter in order to make sure children and young people get the right help at the right time. We must ensure that the resources that we have available are targeted effectively on the greatest areas of need within Halton.

The Coalition Government, on coming into office in 2010, introduced a number of reforms that have and will have a significant impact on the way services are delivered. Some of these reforms have directly affected the Children's Trust and these changes in policy and legislation will have a bearing on how the Children's Trust will prioritise its services.

Under the previous Government, Children's Trusts became statutory following the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009. This statutory footing was revoked however by the Coalition Government reforms, effective from October 31<sup>st</sup> 2010 onwards. This directly affected Children's Trusts by:

- removing the duty on schools to co-operate through Children's Trusts
- removing the requirement on local authorities to set up Children's Trust Boards and the requirement on those Boards to prepare and publish a joint Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)
- revoking the regulations underpinning the CYPP and withdrawing the statutory guidance on Children's Trusts.

At the same time however, the Coalition Government reconfirmed its commitment to working in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people through locally agreed partnerships.

The reforms were discussed by partners within the Children's Trust in Halton and it became clear that there was a collective will from all partners to continue to work in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people in Halton, and for this work in partnership to remain within the existing Children's Trust – Halton's partnership for children and young people.

Despite the reforms removing any requirement to produce a Children & Young People's Plan, as part of the commitment to continue to work in partnership through the Children's Trust, there was universal agreement that a new Plan should be produced, taking into consideration the Coalition Government's reforms and the progress made in Halton, while also providing strategic direction for the next three years.

Research undertaken by EMIE in early 2011 showed that many areas nationally have made similar decisions on their Children's Trust and CYPP. This research found that 61% of Children's Trusts had announced their intention to continue within the new political framework, a further 25% appeared to be continuing but had not formally announced this, and only 14% were under review. EMIE also found similar support from Children's Trusts for publishing a Children & Young People's Plan for their Trust.



## 5. What is Halton like?

Halton is a largely urban area of 118,700 people (2009 population estimate). Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. The population of Halton has recently started to increase. This in part is due to a concerted effort to build new houses, as well as increased inward migration. The population is projected to grow to 122,900 in 2023, in line with national projected population growth.

The ethnic composition of Halton remains predominantly white, with 97.7% of the population falling into this category. This is significantly higher than found regionally or nationally, suggesting a relative lack of ethnic diversity in Halton. In terms of religion, Halton has a greater percentage of people of Christian faith and a lower percentage of Muslim faith and people with no religion compared to regional and national figures.

A breakdown of Halton's population shows that the borough has a higher proportion of children and young people aged 0-24 than commonly found across England and Wales. Over the next decade the numbers of 0-15 year olds is projected to grow at a faster rate than the population of Halton overall, leading to an increase in the proportion of the local population aged 0-24 by 2023.

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems associated with its neighbours on Merseyside. [The Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\)](#) for 2010 is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators and shows that overall, Halton is ranked 27th nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), which is third highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 9th highest in the North West. The IMD 2010 suggests that deprivation has stayed relatively level in the borough from since 2007. The Index shows that 25% of Halton's population live in the most deprived areas (i.e. the top 10% of Lower Super Output Areas) nationally. Two neighbourhoods in Halton fall in the top 1% most deprived super output areas nationally. Much has been done but clearly there is still much to do to narrow the gap between the least and most deprived parts of the Borough while at the same time improving overall prosperity for all.

The PCT Maternity Health Needs Assessment shows that Halton has higher deprivation and poorer health than England as a whole but there is considerable variation within the PCT. In particular, rates of smoking, alcohol use, obesity, domestic violence and infant mortality are higher than in other areas and rates of breastfeeding lower. The poor levels of health in the local population present a challenge to maternity services and health services in ensuring that these inequalities are not perpetuated in a new generation. Implementation of new care pathways (smoking in pregnancy, weight management, direct access and early access to services) will help to reduce these inequalities and are a priority for action.

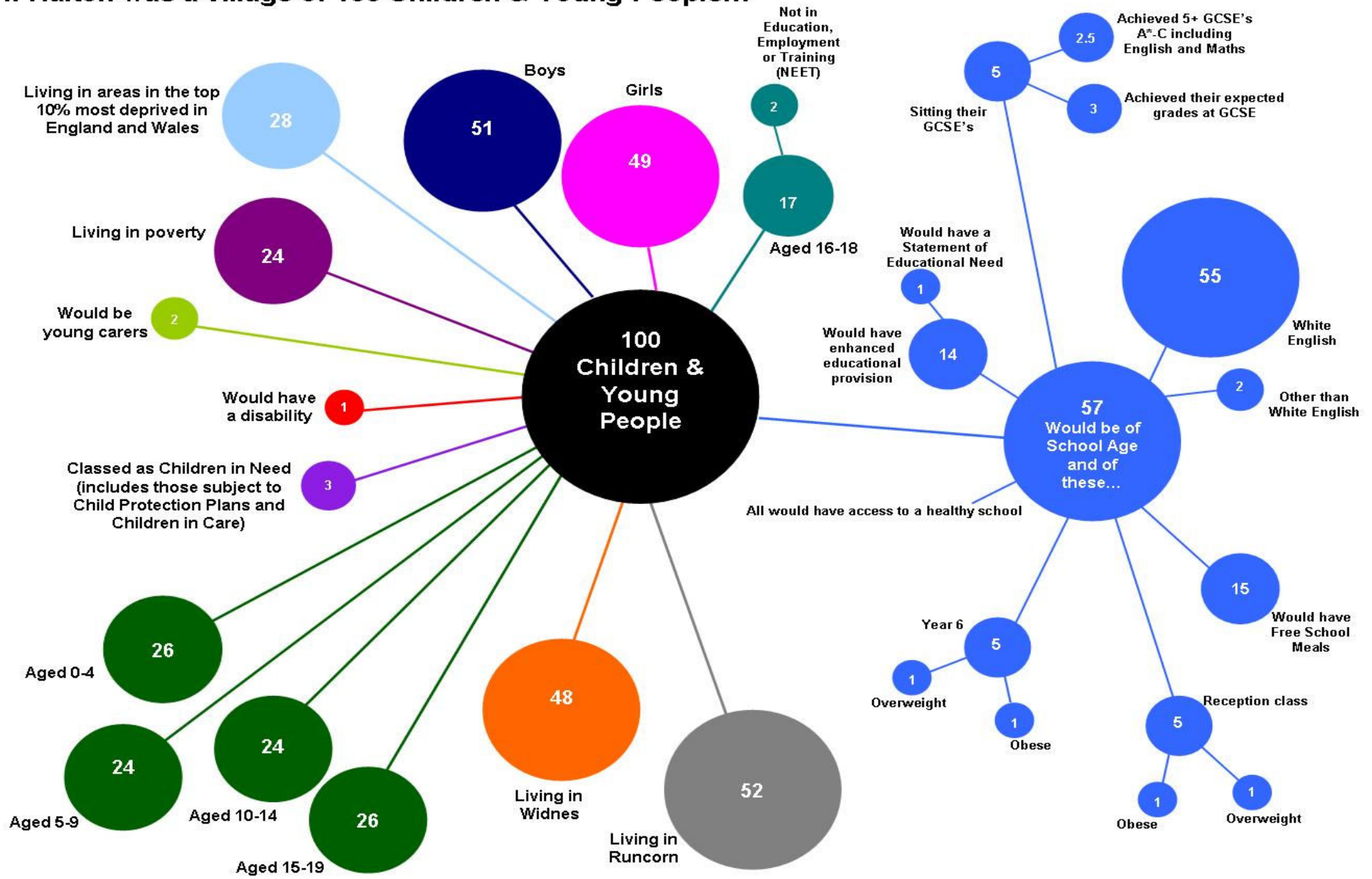
Research for Halton's [State of the Borough Report](#) tells us that Halton is:

- an area where over 70% of people are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- tackling deprivation, however it still remains one of the most deprived areas in the North West with unemployment rates higher than the North West and National rates
- an area where health issues are still evident with life expectancy lower than the North West and England averages

- an area with plenty of open space; 12 areas within Halton have been designated with Green Flag awards
- improving it's GCSE results and reducing the number of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- an area with a diverse and prospering economy, with increasing average incomes for residents, improvement in skills and with higher rates of employment in the manufacturing sector

Focusing more specifically on children and young people, if Halton is looked at in terms of being a village of 100 children and young people, the key statistics for the Borough are:

# If Halton was a village of 100 Children & Young People...



## 6. Consultation

People and communities within Halton should feel a sense of ownership over their local area. Part of this is giving the opportunity to help to shape the services that are provided for them and how they are delivered.

Consultation is one part of engaging with local communities to give people greater influence over decisions that affect them. It is about developing and maintaining open and effective relationships between public agencies and the communities they serve. This engagement helps us to make better decisions. Children, young people and their parents and carers should be involved in decision making on all levels when services for them are developed. Organisations should listen to and work in partnership with service users to create and develop the best ways for services to operate.

In the development of this Plan we have consulted with all stakeholders, including children and young people, parents and carers and also staff from all agencies that work with children, young people and their families. We looked at a number of key areas, including:

- Life in Halton
- Aspirations
- Health
- Education and learning
- Safety
- Involvement and engagement

The key trends that came out of this consultation are highlighted below. More detail on this consultation is available from [www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust) or by emailing [childrenstrust@halton.gov.uk](mailto:childrenstrust@halton.gov.uk)

	<b>Consultation with children and young people</b>	<b>Consultation with parents, carers and other stakeholders</b>
<b>Consultation statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages ranged from 4 – 19 and included a large cross-section of groups from across Halton.</li> <li>• The most common age range was 13 to 19,</li> <li>• 59% were female</li> <li>• Residency was equally split between Runcorn and Widnes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56% of respondents live within Halton,</li> <li>• 76% have children of their own</li> <li>• 70% work with children and young people in Halton.</li> </ul>
<b>Best things about Halton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to parks and open spaces</li> <li>• Youth clubs and after school clubs</li> <li>• Strong relationships with family and friends, <i>“I have lots of friends, I like being at home” (traveller, aged 5).</i></li> <li>• Swimming pools</li> <li>• Good shopping areas, particularly in Widnes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to parks and open spaces</li> <li>• Education provision</li> <li>• Groups and activities organised for younger children in particular in settings such as children’s centres</li> </ul>
<b>Worst things</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough groups and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough groups and</li> </ul>

<p><b>about Halton</b></p>	<p>organised activities for teenagers, (“nothing to do that we can afford” – care leaver)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter, graffiti and pollution</li> <li>• Crime – in particular vandalism, bullying, intimidation and violence, with alcohol consumption often seen as a contributing factor (“alcohol is a massive issue and the violence resulting from it” - looked after child)</li> </ul>	<p>organised activities for teenagers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of pollution</li> <li>• General safety</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health</b></p>	<p>Most young people feel that health services meet their needs but issues highlighted included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral/waiting times can be too long for accessing GP services</li> <li>• GP communication with children and young people could be better <i>“sometimes I can’t understand what they (Doctors) say” - Care leaver.</i></li> <li>• 75% of Young Carers had never been asked by their GP if they are a Young Carer.</li> <li>• Some young people had experienced difficulty in accessing a dentist.</li> <li>• Young people felt more publicity was needed to raise awareness of support and advice services on alcohol, sexual health and obesity.</li> </ul>	<p>Respondents felt that the Trust should look to focus more on providing emotional health support, perhaps through a support network of staff across agencies to offer help to children and their families when they need it.</p> <p>In addition, the need for education and awareness-raising on a range of health issues, including alcohol, drugs and physical fitness activities was highlighted.</p>
<p><b>Education &amp; Learning</b></p>	<p>Schools and colleges generally support young people to achieve what they want to, but this support can vary depending on the school or teacher, and the more specialist support that some young people require is not always available (<i>“college doesn’t suit the way I learn, they don’t adhere to learning styles” - YOT client</i>)</p> <p>Some pupils are seen to have more opportunities to contribute than others, and when individuals are asked for their views, responses do not always appear to be acted upon. (<i>“They asked us, but wasn’t</i></p>	<p>It was felt that Halton has good quality educational services, beginning with early years childcare. The focus therefore should be on ensuring the availability of apprenticeships for our young people when they finish school and ensuring that they have the right skills for these apprenticeships.</p>

	<p><i>sure whether they did anything about what we said” - Care Leaver.</i></p> <p><i>“Need to have the same rules and opportunities for everyone, not just particular pupils” – LAC).</i></p>	
<b>Safety</b>	<p>An equal split of young people feels safe and conversely unsafe in their community.</p> <p>The major causes of fear and anxiety are anti-social behaviour and groups congregating. Town centres and social housing estates are seen as the least safe areas. Having better street lighting and more police patrols would reduce young people’s concerns, as would more affordable bus fares to ensure young people could avoid walking in more isolated areas.</p>	<p>Transport was the main safety issue identified – ensuring that transport is safe, cheap and accessible to all across the Borough at all times of the day.</p> <p>In addition, a number of respondents highlighted the need to ensure there are more organised activities and areas for young people that are safe places for them to meet in groups away from the streets where they are perceived as causing a nuisance.</p>
<b>Involvement &amp; Engagement</b>	<p>Young people feel that the most effective ways of involving them and their peers are through group and individual discussions, including as part of wider community meetings.</p> <p>It was felt that more could be done to promote opportunities to take part in activities, learn new skills or gain qualifications.</p> <p>The main barriers to all having the same opportunities are seen to be cost and the location of activities.</p>	<p>The opportunities for involvement and engagement in Halton was seen as an area of strength, although some felt that more activities and groups could be provided for the 6-11 age range.</p> <p>The main obstacle to accessing activities is parent and carer awareness of when and where they activities are available.</p> <p>The new CRMZ facility was seen as providing a great opportunity for a central hub for activities and educational classes for all young people to be organised from.</p>

The consultation highlighted a correlation in the responses provided in both parts of the consultation in terms of what are felt to be the best and worst things about living in Halton.

As an additional part of the children and young people consultation, we asked what their aspirations are for themselves. Responses tended to focus on having a good job, gaining a high level of skills and being financially secure.

When asked if you would want to change anything about your life, younger children and young people generally felt they were happy and would not change anything. In contrast, Care Leavers tended to highlight a need for more stability and security within their home lives, and to have more involvement in decisions made about them.

For our children and young people, this consultation told us that the most important issues for them are:

- having more things to do, places to go and activities to engage in;
- having access to better health services for issues such as sexual health, drugs and alcohol abuse;
- More job/training opportunities and support to encourage young people to reach their potential;
- Reducing crime and in particular the fear of crime

### **TellUs 4 Survey 2009**

The fourth TellUs Survey conducted in autumn 2009 was a national survey that gathered the views of children and young people in school years 6, 8 and 10 on their life, school and local area. The results of this survey for children and young people in Halton told us that:

- **Alcohol** - 51% had tried it at some point in their life, while 43% had never tried it
- **Sport** – 50% had taken part in a sports club or class in the last 4 weeks
- **Bullying** – 24% were worried about being bullied
- **Safety** – 80% felt very or quite safe in the area that they live
- **Public Transport** – 21% use regularly, 46% sometimes use, while 33% never use
- **Parks and Play areas** – 52% thought their local parks and play areas were very or fairly good
- **University/Higher Education** – 60% thought they would go on to University/Higher Education

The top three things highlighted to make their lives better were:

- More places to go to spend time with friends
- More interesting school lessons
- More help to plan their future

## 7. Review of progress against promises

The last Children & Young People's Plan 2009-11 contained 14 promises that we aimed to achieve within the lifespan of the Plan. This section outlines what has been achieved against each promise.

<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will make sure that our actions and decisions are guided by a single set of arrangements so we are more accountable to our communities and enable children, young people and their families to receive the support and services they need when they need it.</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Children's Trust is now guided by an agreed Business Plan and work is co-ordinated between different groups within the Children's Trust structures, as appropriate for each level of the structures.</li> <li>• The Parent &amp; Carers Forum feeds directly into the Children's Trust Board through the chair to ensure two-way communication.</li> <li>• Young people's groups, such as Youth Cabinet, are regularly consulted and have two-way communication with the Children's Trust.</li> <li>• Team around the Family is enabling the Children's Trust to realign support and services to ensure children, young people and their families get the right help when it is needed.</li> </ul>
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will continue to prioritise safeguarding as an essential part of everything we do in order to continue to embed the values and goals of ensuring that safeguarding is everybody's business</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Children's Trust sees safeguarding as a key priority that is taken into consideration within all of its work.</li> <li>• The Children's Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB) are closely aligned and provide challenge and scrutiny to the work of each other. This relationship is now defined through a Joint Protocol.</li> <li>• The work done to prioritise safeguarding as everyone's business across the Children's Trust and this was reflected in the successful 2011 Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children.</li> </ul>
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will develop a Children's Trust Resource Strategy</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on the Children's Trust Resource Strategy is now part of the developing Team around the Family model for Halton</li> </ul>
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will support our workforce to be the best they can be by offering opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in supporting our ambition to make a significant difference to children and young people</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Children's Trust Integrated Workforce Strategy 2011-14 is in place and the action plan rolled out for the next three years.</li> </ul>
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will produce a Children's Trust Equality and Diversity Strategy</b>
<b>What has</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Children's Trust Equality &amp; Diversity Scheme has been published</li> </ul>



<b>been achieved</b>	that takes into consideration the implications of the Equality Act 2010.
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will develop a Children's Trust Commissioning Strategy for Halton</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Children's Trust Joint Commissioning Framework 2010-12 has been developed and joint commissioning is now a key strategic priority for the Children's Trust.</li> </ul>
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>The Children's Trust will continue the strong partnership with Third Sector organisations to develop services for enterprising behaviour and entrepreneurial work and will continue to ensure Third Sector involvement in planning and delivery services</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Third Sector is now known as the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). Representatives continue to sit on each group within the Children's Trust and the VCS Forum reports directly to the Children's Trust Board.</li> <li>• Links with the sector were strengthened through the establishment of a Lead Engagement Officer post</li> <li>• The VCS will be key partners within future joint commissioning activities.</li> </ul>
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will establish a range of secure, safe, stable and permanent accommodation, which young people leaving our care can move into, and stay for as long as they need it</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Children in Care Placement Strategy has been developed and endorsed addressing the accommodation needs of our care leavers.</li> <li>• Over the past two years, 9 units of accommodation have been developed for care leavers in association with the private sector and local Registered Social Landlords. This has given young people some choice of location within the borough and allows them to develop their independence skills with the support of a range of professionals, including social workers, support workers, personal advisors and partner agencies.</li> <li>• In addition, more units of accommodation will be developed in the forthcoming year and those already in place will be subject to review.</li> </ul>
<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will actively seek resolution to young people's concerns about transport across the borough by setting up a Young Persons Travel Forum to enable the voice of young people to be heard by those planning and providing transport for young people across Halton</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through working closely with the Halton Youth Cabinet, a Young People's Travel Forum has been established.</li> <li>• The Forum has developed links with local transport services and providers, in particular local bus companies, and is helping to develop actions that can be implemented to ease the travel concerns of young people in Halton.</li> <li>• The Children's Trust and the Young People's Travel Forum have been involved in the development of the new Local Transport Plan for Halton (LTP3) to ensure it fully takes into consideration young people's views.</li> </ul>

<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will introduce locality working across the borough in April 2010.</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The roll out of locality working, now known as Team around the Family, began in April 2010 and is continuing to be embedded across Halton. Two teams have been established, one for Runcorn, one for Widnes, to directly meet the needs of children and families where additional needs have been identified that are below the statutory social work/child protection threshold. Team around the Family, within early help and support, is now a key strategic priority for the Trust as set out within this Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will review and expand the use of CAF as a key mechanism in supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Common Assessment Framework in Halton is now a key strand of the Team around the Family model. The CAF process has been reviewed and the learning utilised to improve the process for children, young people and their families who are in receipt of a CAF, and also for professionals undertaking the CAF.</li> </ul>

<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>We will work hard across organisational and professional boundaries to make sure disabled children and young people live in barrier free environments and communities</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There has been an increase in the number of children with severe and complex needs attending mainstream schools. This follows the success of Halton's retained specialist services in building both resilience and capacity within our mainstream schools. This has partly been accomplished through Action Plus Enhanced Provision, in conjunction with the private and voluntary sectors, enabling more children and young people with complex needs to access mainstream provision without the delay of waiting for a Statement.</li> <li>A new communications strategy for disabled children and young people is in place, supporting the dedicated website and bi-monthly newsletter. The logo and branding found on these is crucial for our disabled children and young people in giving a sense of identity.</li> <li>A Building Bridges handbook specifically for families of disabled young people in Halton is now distributed to every family in Halton with a disabled young person. The number of registered disabled carers in Halton has significantly risen since the Carer's Centre has become part of the Prince's Trust</li> <li>The official Aiming High Charter Mark is now used by our disabled children and young people to score and review their experiences with agencies and services in Halton.</li> <li>There has been a significant increase in the number of disabled children accessing short breaks services through the success of Halton's Aiming High for Disabled Children programme.</li> <li>Disabled young people and their families have increased access to community facilities such as parks and children's centres through the provision of specialist resources e.g. hoists and sensory equipment.</li> <li>Inclusion training accredited through National Children's Bureau has been provided for 100 staff working with disabled children in Halton</li> </ul>

	to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to ensure that they are fully included in community activities.
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<b>What we set out to do</b>	<p><b>We will develop a Children’s Trust Business Plan within which a range of protocols will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clarify and define the relationship between the Children’s Trust Board and Halton Safeguarding Children Board</b></li> <li>• <b>Clarify and define how conflicts between Children’s Trust partners will be addressed</b></li> </ul>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relationship between the Children’s Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children Board is defined by a Joint Protocol that has been in place since 2010.</li> <li>• The Children’s Trust Business Plan sets out how any conflicts between partners should be addressed.</li> </ul>

<b>What we set out to do</b>	<b>Each Service Delivery Partnership will develop and implement a business plan</b>
<b>What has been achieved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each Service Delivery Partnership, the sub groups of the Children’s Trust between 2009 and 2011, worked to a business plan and similar plans are now in place for each new priority for the Children’s Trust.</li> </ul>

## **8. Celebration of Success**

The development of a new Plan gives us the opportunity to highlight some examples of the successes of the Children's Trust as a partnership since 2009.

### **Safeguarding & Looked After Children Inspection**

In preparation for Halton's announced multi agency Ofsted inspection that was due between June 2009 and 2012, in line with all other local authority areas, a working group was set up in 2009 to begin the planning needed to ensure a successful inspection.

Halton's inspection took place in February 2011. As with all other areas, Halton had two weeks to prepare following the initial announcement. The report following Halton's rigorous inspection showed the success of the planning and preparations by all partners - Halton was graded as 'Outstanding' or 'Good' against all 22 criteria for both Safeguarding and Looked After Children. This highlights the robust systems in place locally and the strength of partnership working across Halton in terms of safeguarding.

### **Young People's Travel Forum**

Halton Youth Cabinet has been instrumental in establishing a Young People's Travel Forum. The group have worked on researching, consulting and documenting the views of their peers on transport issues, and identifying areas for improvement within an action plan. A key issue for the Forum has been local bus transport, and this has been taken forward with local bus companies through consultation workshops with senior managers to identify achievable and mutually beneficial ways to resolve some of the issues that the Forum have raised following research. As a result, an identification system for young people under 16 who have difficulty in proving their age has been adopted, to reduce the number of under 16 year olds charged full fare for bus journeys. This is directly attributed to the transport campaign of the Travel Forum, which has been delivered in an organised and professional manner, and enabled young people in Halton to have their say.

The Forum is part of a wider young people's shadow group that is supporting the implementation of the Local Transport Plan for Halton (LTP3) and have also worked with Transport policy staff to identify practical and sustainable projects that can be funded from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, and have been supporting young people in the Liverpool area to have a greater say in the development of Transport within their area.

### **Halton Playbuilder Programme**

During the past two years Halton has radically increased and improved outdoor play opportunities for our children and young people through Halton's Playbuilder Programme. This investment has resulted in the creation of nine exciting and challenging new play areas and the transformation of five existing facilities.

All sites have proven popular with local children and families and considerable positive feedback has been received. This was reflected in the results of the TellUs 4 survey, which demonstrated a 9.7% increase in the levels of satisfaction with parks and play areas in Halton (one of the highest increases in the Country).

The Playbuilder programme positively reflects Halton's partnership approach and the value placed on play provision – investment from the Government and within Halton was matched with external investment from Big Lottery Fund, Environment Group – WREN, local social housing providers and the PCT.

The Playbuilder programme has transformed the range and quality of Halton's outdoor play provision, ensuring all of the Borough's children and young people have access to attractive, safe and challenging play opportunities

### **Central RMZ (CRMZ)**

CRMZ is Halton's new £3 million state-of-the-art youth hub. The hub enjoyed a Hollywood-style opening with more than 150 people attending, from agencies such as the Canal Boat Project and Barnardo's, as well as young people from local youth centres.

CRMZ is situated in the art deco former Kingsway Health Centre in Widnes, and was built as part of Myplace - a Government-funded initiative to deliver world class youth facilities driven by young people, their views and needs. The young design team who led the project provided tours around the building during its opening showing how the old meets the new, to create a dynamic building with all the facilities young people want.

The hub offers many facilities including a common room and café area, a training kitchen, IT suite, creative arts facility, new multi-purpose hall, recording studios, a chill out space and floodlit outdoor areas. CRMZ features include internet facilities, space for advice and support on issues relevant to young people's needs, such as teen health, employment and training.

Opening times for CRMZ are determined by what local young people want and include evenings, weekends and school/college holidays.

### **UK Youth Parliament Annual Sitting 2010**

Adan Pass, a member of Halton's Youth Cabinet, attended the annual sitting of the UK Youth Parliament in Belfast on behalf of the Cabinet. Young people from across the United Kingdom came together to discuss campaigns and to participate in the further shaping of their manifestos. This opportunity proved to be of great benefit, both individually for Adan, and also for him to share young people's experiences in Halton and to have the ability to use such experiences to influence government policy.

*Adan says "Overall it was an utterly amazing weekend, I was given the chance to mix and meet people who I would have never had the opportunity to meet in everyday life. It was an amazing opportunity and I have made friends there that I will keep for life."*

*"I attended the Transport campaign group which is a real barrier to young people in Halton. The group was very effective and I was able to exchange many ideas and find out issues and solutions from around the UK. As part of the weekend we visited Stormont to have a look around the Irish houses of parliament. Also one of the guest speakers was John Bercow, we asked him questions and listened to his inspirational views about UKYP."*

### **Health Improvement Team Healthy Schools Programme**

Halton's Healthy Schools Programme continues to make a significant difference to the health and achievement of children in Halton. The programme aims to create healthy and happy children and young people who, as a result, do better in learning and in life through:

- Support children and young people in developing healthy behaviour
- Helping to raise pupil achievement
- Helping to reduce health inequalities
- Helping promote social inclusion

The programme involves the whole school community from pupils, parents, governors and school staff and provides support, training, resources and guidance for all schools in Halton. In order for schools to be recognised as a healthy school, they must meet national criteria using a whole school approach across four themes including personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, healthy eating, physical activity and emotional health and well-being (EHWB). All schools in Halton have achieved National Healthy Schools Status and annually audit their practice to evidence the foundations for health and well-being is being maintained.

### **Aiming High for Disabled Children**

Over the past three years, Halton's Aiming High for Disabled Children project has gone from strength to strength in its objective to pave the way towards greater inclusion and broadening horizons for disabled children and their families.

By the end of 2010, the target of having 360 local children accessing Short Breaks had been exceeded. These Short Breaks have taken various forms, from half-day picnics and visits to popular leisure venues, to themed residential trips, to social and networking events for the whole family.

Aiming High has worked with Halton Play Council over the last two years to deliver a range of year-round open access play opportunities for the Borough's children and young people. This partnership work has ensured access for all through a range of measures to break down barriers, including improved assessments, better training and 1-1 support, to ensure all schemes are accessible to all.

One of the highlights of 2010 was a trip of a lifetime for 14 young people from Ashley School to Shanghai, supported by Aiming High, to attend the 2010 World Expo. The lucky 14 were chosen by Everton Football Club to be their ambassadors at the Expo, and to join the campaign for sporting opportunities for disabled people across the globe.

The group jetted off to China for 10 action-packed days, which they spent sharing their coaching skills with international crowds of visitors at the Expo, playing sit-down volleyball with the gold medal-winning Chinese Paralympics team, visiting the circus, and learning Tai Chi in a Shaolin temple.

One of the young people who took part in the trip said: "It was an amazing experience and a once in a lifetime opportunity that we would never have had without Aiming High."

### **Healthy Business Enterprise Project – National Health Award**

Pupils from St Basil's Primary fought off competition from over 600 schools to claim a national healthy living award. The project, developed in partnership with the Health Improvement Team, asked pupils to create a product or service to promote health within the school community. With financial support and guidance from the local co-operative committee and Primary Care Trust, pupils secured funding to get their businesses and ideas up and running. A healthy lifestyle market day allowed pupils to sell their products. Fruit flans, relaxing music CDs, plant growing packs, puzzle sheets, fruit jellies, wrist bands, water bottles and calendars were among their wide range of products on offer. Pupils attended a prestigious ceremony at Downing Street to collect the award.

### **Halton Youth Service**

Vulnerable young people are proactively targeted and supported to access Youth Service provision throughout Halton. They, along with their peers, decide their needs led

programmes from the youth work curriculum; how project budgets are spent; and are supported to reflect and celebrate their achievements.

Halton Youth Service supports young people to have a voice locally and nationally, by being active partners in recruitment & selection; inspectors of services; being part of community action groups; school councils; local and regional youth forums; elected youth cabinet and member and deputy member of UK Youth Parliament.

In 2010 -2011 over 600 opportunities for young people to volunteer their time were created and supported, and young people gave up over 4000 hours to support others in their communities.

One example of the opportunities offered is for young people to participate in accredited training to volunteer as a Peer Educator. The training provides young people with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to informally educate other young people. The training includes how to work with groups, how people learn, communication and team work skills; plus the particular subject they are focusing on such as sexual health; alcohol; homophobia, disability awareness or money skills.

Danielle aged 15, a Money Skills Peer Educator, who has been involved with Halton Youth Service for over 3 years, said "I never knew how to look after my money before, I didn't give it a thought. After doing the money skills course I'm thinking more carefully about what I spend and I'm keen to share the activities with other young people to get them thinking about money a bit more."

The peer education project continues to be a success. Young people respond positively to the peer educators and welcome their informal methods of delivering informative information and advice on many issues.

### **Halton Youth Bank**

Halton Youth Bank was formed in August 2006 as a vehicle for young people to administer substantial funding of Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital funds which was used to increase the number of *'places to go, and things to do'* for young people in Halton. Young people have full ownership of this initiative, with a panel supported by Halton Youth Service providing training, group work skills and working with the young people on a weekly basis to ensure the smooth running of the project. The Youth Bank have been responsible for awarding in excess of over £750,000 to their peers.

### **Virtual Roomz (VRMZ)**

VRMZ is a mobile outreach service that provides advocacy for disaffected young people in Halton where this support is most needed around issues such as alcohol, safety and to make positive choices. The service works in partnership with street-based teams provided in conjunction with Young Addaction. These teams provide the initial, crucial, engagement with disaffected young people in their locality. Once engaged, the advocacy support through VRMZ can be offered to each young person.

The approach aims to tackle anti-social behaviour and youth offending. Initial analysis of Constabulary data for anti-social behaviour in the areas covered by both the street-based teams and VRMZ has shown an encouraging 18% reduction in the number of cases recorded in these areas.

### **Contrasting youth cultures**

Young people from the Canal Boat Adventure Project raised European funding to enable them to compare issues relating to youth culture in Halton and Marzahn-Hellersdorf, Halton's twin town in East Berlin. Ten young people from Kids und Co worked alongside ten Nessie Club members discussing youth unemployment, life styles and social inclusion in Europe and in Britain. Cheshire Police supported this initiative by providing an insight into policing, drug issues and community safety. A visit to CRMZ and a canal boat exploration of Halton provided the young Europeans with a "snapshot" of the borough: their feedback comments confirmed that individuals were surprised by the rural nature of parts of Halton. The most significant differences appear to have been Halton's emphasis on early prevention and diversion into positive activities and youth volunteering.

### **Bereavement Support and Counselling**

The tragic death of a young woman in Halton had a negative impact on a group of young women from the Canal Boat Adventure Project's Nessie Club. This led to several participating in bereavement support and counselling. Over the next three months there was evidence that individually and collectively, these young women's fears and worries about community safety and violent crime were becoming disproportionate to reality. Following an intensive process of support and counselling, these young women confirmed that they had developed more confidence, resilience and understanding and they were able to move on in terms of grieving for the young woman.

### **Reduction in NEET figures**

The numbers of young people in Halton aged 16-18 not in education, employment or training (NEET) have traditionally been high compared to the number found in our statistical neighbours. Numbers have been falling in recent years however. At the end of January 2011, the three month average figure was 9.3%, equating to 341 young people, compared with 10.3%, or 393 young people for the same three month period ending January 2010. This improvement has come through effective partnership working through the Children Trust, led by Schools, Riverside College, Greater Merseyside Connexions, Job Centre Plus and Halton Borough Council, to develop a number of initiatives including council apprentice schemes, flexible college provision and positive partnerships with Job Centre Plus.

### **Health Improvement Team Fit 4 Life Programme**

Fit 4 Life is a fun programme of activities and education, aimed at 7-13 year olds, helping children, young people and their families to exercise regularly and eat a nutritionally balanced diet. Families, over a 6 week period, for 2 hours per week, have the opportunity to engage in a range of healthy eating and physical activity sessions. Since Fit 4 Life was launched in September 2010, 17 families (36 individuals) have completed the programme and achieved fantastic outcomes. All of the children involved showed positive outcomes in one or more of the following areas: - increased fitness; reduction in body mass index; reduction in waist circumference; increased self esteem; as well as showing an increased knowledge in healthy eating. The programme has now expanded, with 4-week lifestyle programmes now being delivered within schools.

### **Increase in Level 2 and Level 3 Achievement by age 19**

Department for Education 2010 data showed significant improvement in performance at both Level 2 (achieving 5+ A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent) and Level 3 (achieving 4 AS-Level/2 A-Levels at Grade E or equivalent) by age 19. These improvements have exceeded expectations and indicate that the action plans implemented by the multi agency 14-19 Strategic Partnership are focused on the right actions to bring real improvements.



At Level 2, 74.8% of Halton learners achieved a qualification by age 19, a 7.6% increase on 2009, the largest annual increase recorded anywhere nationally. This level of improvement has been achieved whilst continuing to reduce the inequality gap, including between those eligible and not eligible for Free School Meals, which was reduced by 2%. Further growth in Level 2 attainment will be achieved for 2011, with 78% of the cohort having already secured a Level 2 qualification.

At Level 3, 42.3% of Halton learners in 2010 achieved a qualification by age 19, an 8.4% increase compared to 2009, which is the second highest level of increase recorded nationally. Again, it is expected that there will be a further increase in the rate of Level 3 achievement when 2011 data is released.

### **Warrington Road Youth Club**

A group of young people from the Warrington Road Youth Club in Widnes won two awards in 2010 for their artwork. The youngsters' entry won them the Visual Art category in the inaugural Halton Cultivate Awards, shortly after also taking first place in Pink Box, an innovative arts project encouraging young people across the North West to find out more about the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. The group won the prizes for a collage illustrating diversity, acceptance, celebration and LGBT celebrities.

### **Halton & Warrington Youth Offending Team**

The Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Team (YOT) received the highest outcome possible at its last inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in 2009. Only minimal improvements were required in the three areas under scrutiny, with the scoring as follows:

- Safeguarding – **score 85%**
- Risk of reoffending – **score 77%**
- Risk of harm to others-public protection – **score 80%**

In addition the numbers of young people in Halton coming into the system for the first time has reduced from 245 in 2007/8 to 174 in 2009, a reduction of 29%. This is testament to the efforts of the YOT and other partners in preventive activity.

### **Health Improvement Team Passport 2 Health**

Passport 2 Health is a free training course for adults working with children and young people aged 5-19. Attendees learn key messages to give to children and young people to encourage healthier lifestyle choices around food and physical activity. In order to reach as many children and young people as possible, the Health Improvement Team invite people who work with children and young people to be trained to deliver key health messages within their existing role. By incorporating the key health messages regarding food and physical activity into their existing roles they have ensured these key health messages will be continually passed on.

33,403 children and young people received key health messages relating to both healthy eating and physical activity between September 2010 and April 2011.

## Section Two: Vision & Partnership Priorities

### 9. Halton's Vision for Children & Young People

We have a wealth of information on what it is like to be a young person living in Halton and what is important to our children and young people. Based on this knowledge, the Children's Trust has agreed the following vision for all children and young people in Halton that is the guiding principle for this Plan.

***Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, and ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future***

#### Partnership Priorities

Through consultation with partners from within the Children's Trust, as well as with stakeholders as outlined in Section One, three overarching priorities for the Trust from April 2011 onwards have been agreed. They are:

***Improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support.***

***Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning***

***Improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people by targeting services effectively***

In addition, safeguarding is an intrinsic part of each priority, and must be considered within the work of each area and will be scrutinised by the [Halton Safeguarding Children Board](#).

The focus for the Children's Trust is on improving outcomes for our children and young people through these three key priorities, which although separate, are interrelated and this is reflected within the Children's Trust structures and in the linkages highlighted within this Plan.

This interrelationship between the Trust's priorities is shown, for example, by its [performance management framework \(PMF\)](#), outlined in Section Three. Improvements to outcomes experienced by our children and young people within each priority will be brought by improving performance against overarching indicators that cut across all three priorities. These indicators are framed within the PMF against the ambitions that we as a Trust had in place for the last Children & Young People's Plan, and which remain relevant when looking at performance. These are:

- Children and Young People are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy
- Every Young Person is successful when they leave school
- Children and young people do well, wherever they live, and whatever their needs
- Children and young people will feel safe at home, in school and in their communities.

## 10. Integrated Governance

These priorities have shaped the new structures for the Children's Trust. These structures facilitate all relevant stakeholders coming together at each level of the Trust to ensure that through challenge, support and accountability we work in partnership to bring improved outcomes within each priority over the next three years.

The Children's Trust Board meets quarterly and brings together senior representatives from all partners that work with children, young people and their families locally to agree a common strategy to improve children's wellbeing and to ensure that partners work to this agreed strategy, the Children & Young People's Plan. The Children's Trust partnership, in various forms, has been in place for a number of years, allowing strong and sustainable relationships to develop with robust strategic planning arrangements for improving outcomes for our children and young people at the centre. The Children's Trust Executive Group focuses on the business functions of the Trust and drives the work of the Trust. This group meets every six weeks. Progress against each Children's Trust priority is reported at each meeting of the Trust Board and Executive Group and in turn relevant information is taken from these groups to the sub groups by representatives of the sub groups to ensure two-way communication throughout the structures.

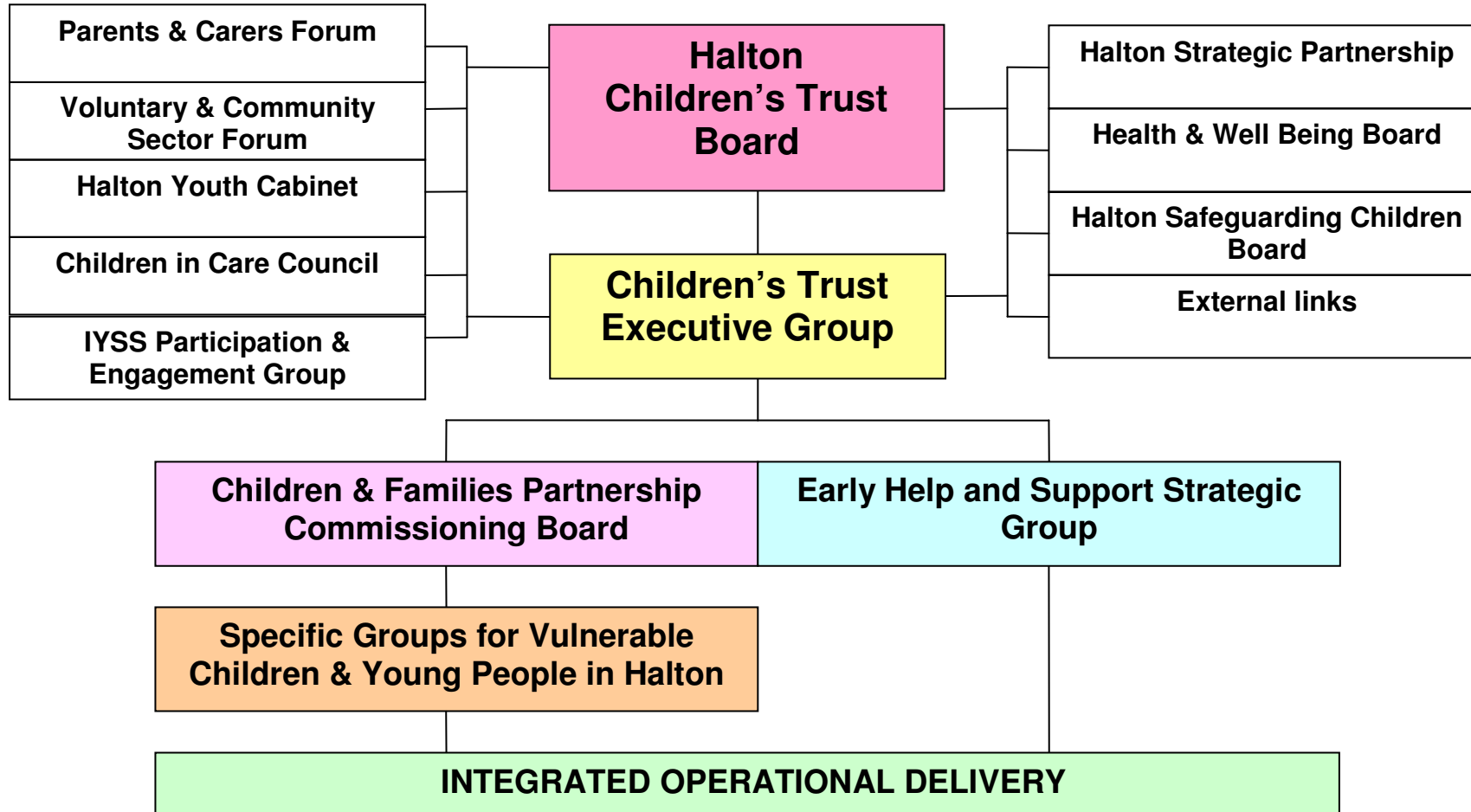
For our joint commissioning and early help and support priorities, strategic sub groups of the Children's Trust are in place that focus specifically on the ongoing work within their respective priority. For our vulnerable groups, specific groups are already established that coordinate work to support for our vulnerable groups and so the Children's Trust has agreed to continue with these existing structures for the priority. To ensure robust reporting within through to the Children's Trust Board and Executive Group, each of these groups for vulnerable children and young people will provide updates of progress and performance to the Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board, the strategic sub group for our joint commissioning priority. In turn, these updates will be received by the Trust Board and Executive Group at each meeting. This will avoid the duplication that would be created by adding an unnecessary additional sub group within the structures.

Each priority has its own specific [business plan](#) detailing the aims and objectives in order to bring the most improvement to outcomes for our children and young people. The nature of the priorities of the Children's Trust mean that the work in order to meet any one priority will naturally involve joint working across the priorities and we encourage and embrace this as a partnership to bring improved outcomes across the priorities.

These structures provide the platform and opportunity for challenge, to ensure that the services and support provided for children, young people and families meets their needs most appropriately and at the right stage. The structures provide a direct route to and from the Children's Trust for both communication and scrutiny for other key multi agency partnership boards, such as the Halton Safeguarding Children's Board, Halton Strategic Partnership Board and the emerging Health & Well Being Board, as well as for key stakeholder groups for children and young people, parents and carers and from our Voluntary and Community Sector.

More detail on the governance arrangements for the Children's Trust can be found in the [Children's Trust Business Plan](#).

## Halton Children's Trust – Halton's Partnership for Children



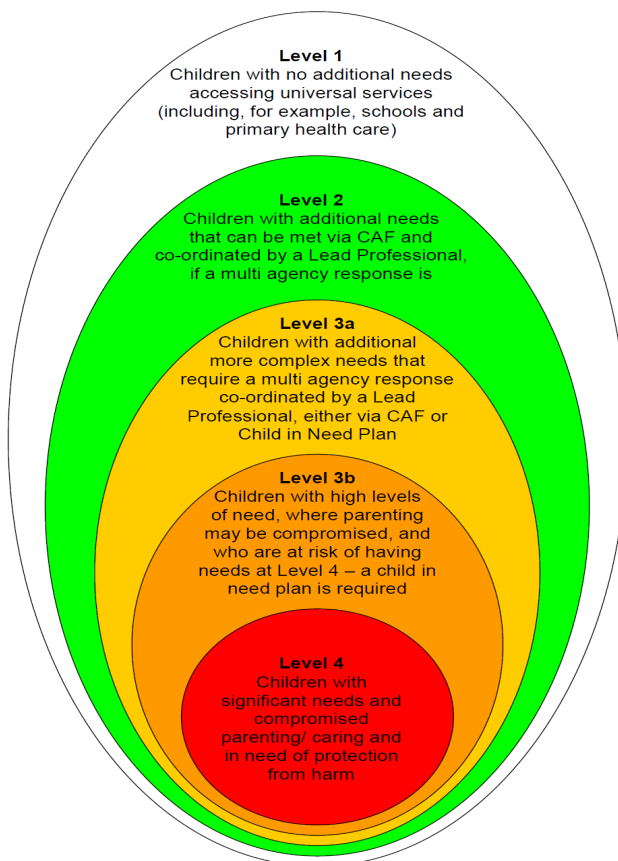
## 11. Halton Levels of Need

Halton's Levels of Need for Children and Young People provides a framework for professionals in Halton to meet the needs of all our children and young people, from those with no additional needs through to our most vulnerable with the most significant needs.

The priorities for the Children's Trust as set out in this Plan are set against this framework, to ensure that we improve outcomes for all children, young people and families in Halton but with particular focus on those in need of additional support, at whichever level of the framework and for whatever amount of time is appropriate for each family.

The Children Act 2004 placed a duty on all agencies to work together to ensure the safety and well being of all children. Our aim is to ensure that those children who have additional and more complex needs are not only identified at an earlier stage, but they receive services, which enables them to have their needs met across the five outcomes.

The framework works across four levels as follows:



**Level 1** – Children and young people whose needs are being met through universal services available to all

**Level 2** – Any additional needs that have been identified that can be met through a CAF or discussions within or across agencies.

**Level 3a** – More complex needs have been identified that require a co-ordinated multi agency approach that can be facilitated by the Integrated Working Support Team.

**Level 3b** – Higher levels of need which require contact to be made with Children's Social Care

**Level 4** – Children and young people identified as being in need of immediate protection

In essence, the work of the Children's Trust in Halton focuses on Levels 1 – 3a of the framework. Levels 3b and 4 are the remit of the Halton Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB). The two work closely together to ensure a smooth transition between each level and this relationship is outlined in the [Children's Trust/HSCB Joint working protocol](#) (see background documents).

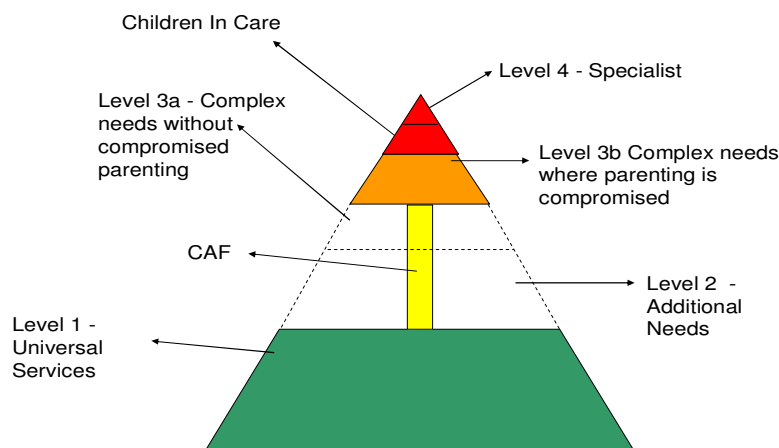
## 12. Team around the Family

As multi agency working in Halton has developed, the Children's Trust has adapted the way in which it works with families who are at Levels 2 and 3a of the Levels of Need Framework, in order to prevent their needs increasing to a level that requires more specialist help and support.

Team around the Family is the new Halton Children's Trust service and approach to early help and support. In terms of services, it has reshaped what is now provided across Halton through Children's Centres and Family Support. As an approach, it looks to intervene early to prevent issues escalating to a point where higher level, more specialist intervention is required.

Looked at in terms of Halton's Levels of Need Framework, Team around the Family ensures that fewer cases reach the 'specialist' end of the continuum, at Levels 3b and 4. Instead, where appropriate, children, young people and their families will receive the additional services that they need more quickly, before these needs escalate beyond Levels 2 and 3a.

This will tackle the discrepancy that research has shown exists at Level 2 in terms of numbers of children and young people with additional needs that are receiving these services, as shown by the diagram below.



The diagram shows the relative numbers of children and young people in Halton who are receiving services at each Level of the Levels of Need Framework. Most need only the Level 1 universal services that they are entitled to and this large proportion of children and young people are depicted in green. At each Level there should be progressively fewer children and young people receiving that level of support, giving a 'pyramid' effect. The diagram shows that this is the case at each level, apart from Levels 2 and 3a – research has shown that the numbers of children and young people who are at this stage of the continuum, receiving Level 2 and 3a additional services are significantly lower than should be the case.

By amending the way we work in Halton in line with the principles of Team around the Family, more children, young people and their families who need the additional support at Levels 2 and 3a will receive and access the appropriate services at this stage, and fewer will reach the specialist services at the top of the pyramid. The approach aims to remove any barriers to the appropriate services being made available and accessible to those who

need them. By reducing the flow of cases reaching Levels 3b and 4, it should free up more resources that can be made available to provide further support at Levels 2 and 3a.

In the past, services and support have often stopped by agencies straightaway once needs are met. Through Team around the Family, measures have been put in place to allow this support to be gradually phased out at the appropriate rate and timeframe for each individual case. This means that children, young people and their families who have been receiving support at the higher tiers can gradually have this support reduced until they reach the point when they are able and ready to again receive just their universal service entitlement.

Team around the Family services in Halton are coordinated through two Integrated Working Support Teams (IWST), one based in and covering Runcorn; the other performing similar functions for Widnes. IWST coordinates consultations with professionals working with families and helps to ensure that these professionals can access the services that appear most appropriate to that family's needs. This is achieved through a consultation model. The consultation that is recorded can be used as a service request to a wide range of public sector and voluntary service providers. Where the consultation suggests that a more complex problem or a wider set of agencies need to be involved, the IWST supports professionals to initiate and carry out a Common Assessment Framework intervention. More information on IWST, an integrated process for early help and support, can be found in Section Three.

Team around the Family has allowed for the development and implementation of structures and service configuration that allow for smooth transitions between lower level interventions and statutory interventions managed by Social Care. From a client's perspective the aim is for the whole process and provision of services to feel seamless.

Work to continue to establish and embed Team around the Family in Halton within the Levels of Need Framework is within the remit of the Early Help and Support Strategic Group of the Children's Trust. This Group will lead on ensuring that the following three priorities of the Integrated Children's Workforce Strategy are taken for across all agencies within the Children's Trust:

- Recruitment & Retention
- Training, Learning & Development
- Induction

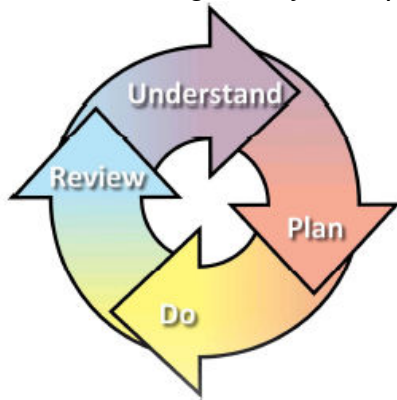
More information on Team around the Family, Halton's Levels of Need Framework and the Business Plan for the Early Help and Support Strategic Group is available from the Children's Trust website ([www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust)).

### 13. Joint Commissioning

Joint commissioning is the process whereby partners who have responsibility for specifying, securing and monitoring services work together to make joint decisions about the needs of their population, and how they should be met.

We want to ensure that as a Children’s Trust we commission services jointly to meet local needs and priorities wherever possible, particularly around early help and support, and also for our vulnerable children and young people.

Commissioning is a cyclical process of activities reflecting four key stages:



- **Understand** - population needs assessment and resource identification
- **Plan** - aligning resources to meet needs; filling gaps between needs and services
- **Do** - developing or purchasing services
- **Review** - monitoring performance and evaluating outcomes.

By focusing on joint commissioning as a priority for the Children’s Trust, it will facilitate partner commitment to bringing all joint commissioning decisions for approval through the Trust. Once approved, each agency within the Trust is responsible for implementing the implications of the decision within their own agency if appropriate, after a process where they are fully involved from the beginning.

The existing Joint Commissioning Unit collaboration between the Children & Young People’s Directorate of Halton BC and Children, Families and Maternity Commissioning PCT, has been extended to include all relevant partners in an overall Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board for the Children’s Trust.

The Board will take forward the Children’s Trust’s Joint Commissioning Framework. This includes five commissioning priorities that closely relate to the Children’s Trust’s overall priorities. For these five commissioning priorities, resources within the Children’s Trust will be combined to tackle these issues. These are:

- Behaviour
- Breastfeeding
- Alcohol
- Team around the Family
- Transition of Care Leavers, Children in Care and Special Educational Needs

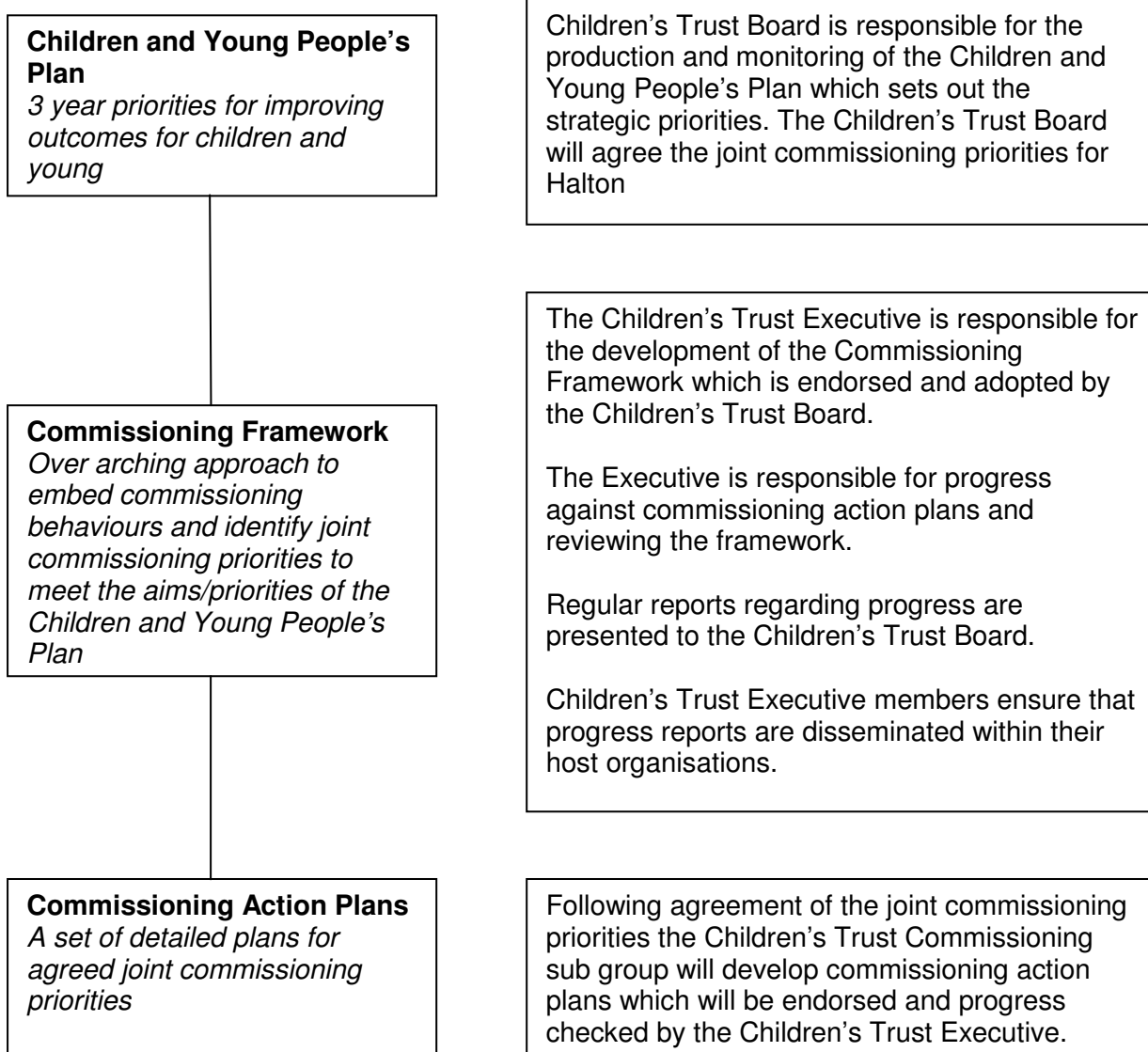
In order to meet our objectives around these commissioning priorities, the Trust has adopted the following principles for commissioning:

- We will ensure that positive outcomes for children and young people are at the heart of the strategic planning and commissioning process
- We will ensure that children, young people, families and carers actively participate in our decisions about commissioning services at all stages of the commissioning cycle



- We will consult all relevant organisations, in advance of commissioning new services
- We will ensure that decisions are based on a robust needs assessment
- We will undertake more effective market management and identify and understand the contribution of all relevant providers to delivering positive outcomes for children and young people
- We will direct resources to meet our priorities, particularly in areas of significant need, and especially in relation to vulnerable groups and gaps in provision
- We will ensure that tendering and procurement processes are transparent and fair
- We will promote sustainability with our providers to enable longer term planning
- We will use feedback from children, young people, families and partners to encourage innovation in the commissioning process and to achieve best practice
- We will monitor, evaluate and review our services rigorously and proportionately to ensure high quality outcomes and to reflect changes in demographic trends
- We will de-commission existing services where they do not deliver value for money or positive outcomes for our children and young people and work together to avoid duplication

Using these principles, the process for joint commissioning through the Children’s Trust can be shown as follows:



Joint commissioning links closely to the other priorities for the Children's Trust, but also with other key areas of focus for the Trust such as participation – ensuring that we provide the opportunity for our children, young people and their families to participate in the process that leads to commissioning decisions. Therefore, work around participation and engagement within the Trust will feed directly into this priority of the Trust to reinforce the importance of participation to all partners within the work of the Children's Trust.

The Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board will have responsibility for driving forward work on four elements of the Children's Trust's Integrated Workforce Strategy across all agencies of the Trust. These are:

- Workforce Planning and Forecasting
- Leadership & Management
- Managing Change
- Equality & Diversity

In addition, the Commissioning Board will work closely with other boards and groups within the Children's Trust in Halton to ensure that all work is complementary in order to meet the Children's Trust priorities. Work to improve outcomes for our vulnerable children and young people will be channelled directly through the Board, while close links will be maintained with the Early Help and Support Strategic Group.

The Joint Commissioning Framework and Business Plan for the Children & Families Commissioning Board are available from the Halton Children's Trust website ([www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust))

## 14. Vulnerable Children & Young People

Vulnerable children and young people are those who are likely to have additional needs (Level 2 or above in the Levels of Need Framework), and experience poorer outcomes if these needs are not met. Prioritising services for our vulnerable children and young people has always been an area of focus for the Trust, to ensure that our most vulnerable children and young people are given the additional support that they need to achieve their full potential. Strategic and operational groups are in place within the Children's Trust to ensure that we work in partnership to meet the needs of our vulnerable groups.

The term 'vulnerable' is a broad one and a significant proportion of children and young people population in Halton could be described as 'vulnerable' at any given time. There are different reasons why a child or young person could be seen as 'vulnerable' – this may be due to particular characteristics or due to circumstances, which may be temporary or more long-term. Therefore the vulnerable children and young people cohort is never static, any child can become vulnerable or no longer vulnerable as their circumstances change.

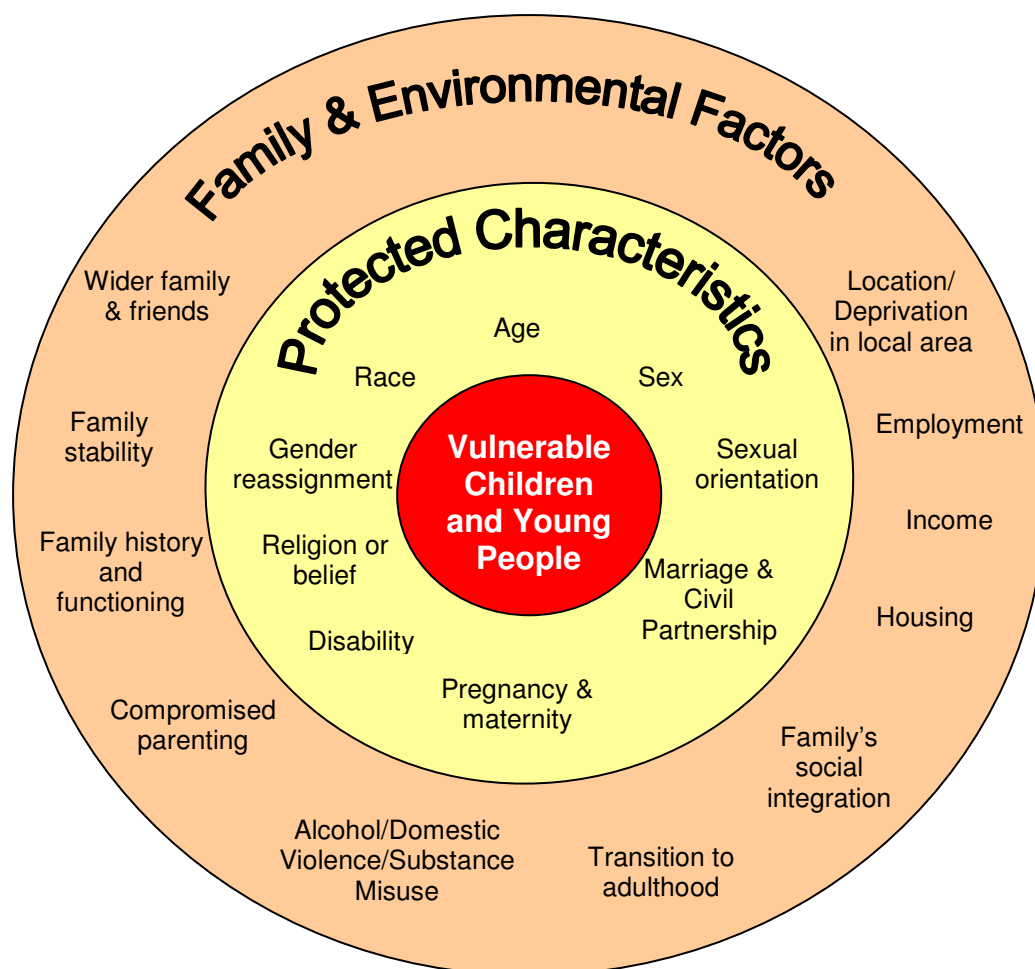
Characteristics that might make a young person vulnerable could include the following:

- (a) Age
- (b) Disability
- (c) Gender reassignment
- (d) Marriage and civil partnership
- (e) Pregnancy and maternity
- (f) Race
- (g) Religion or belief
- (h) Sex
- (i) Sexual orientation

These are the nine protected characteristics contained within the Equality Act 2010. The Children's Trust works to ensure that all children and young people have the equality of opportunity whether or not they share any of these protected characteristics. Some of these characteristics are more common than others among children and young people in Halton across the full 0-19 age range but all are taken into consideration by the Children's Trust to ensure no child or young person is adversely affected by any characteristic.

Equally, for some children and young people in Halton, the opportunity to reach their full potential can be affected by circumstance. These circumstances are often beyond their control and could be short-term or more permanent. Circumstances that might make a child or young person vulnerable could relate to personal issues, but also could be caused by issues for other members of a child or young person's family that compromises parenting capability, or changes to family structures or settings. The Index of Multiple Deprivation information outlined in Section One shows that a child or young person could also be affected by the geography of where they live. In the past children and young people from least deprived areas of Halton have been more likely to reach their potential. Differing circumstances can make a significant difference to the outcomes for our children and young people and so as a Children's Trust we are working in partnership in order to reduce these effects caused by circumstance.

The diagram below illustrates the differing elements of vulnerability that could affect a child or young person at any stage of their development.



The sharing of any of these characteristics or circumstances does not automatically mean a young person will experience poorer outcomes but statistically is more likely to. For vulnerable children and young people in Halton, the Team around the Family model for early help and support is focused on providing the necessary support before problems escalate towards specialist services. For the Children's Trust, supporting children and young people who may be vulnerable because of characteristics or circumstance is a key priority to try to ensure that all children and young people enjoy the same outcomes.

By focusing on vulnerable children and young people, we can remove barriers that have in the past stopped some from reaching their full potential and provide equality of opportunity for all our children and young people.

## Section Three: Integrated Processes

*In order to improve how we deliver our services for children and young people, as a Children's Trust partnership we have joined up processes in a number of key areas. This section describes these areas and the processes that we have in place in Halton.*

### 15. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a broad term for promoting the welfare of children who might have specialist or complex needs. It can be defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Child protection is one element of safeguarding. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

Safeguarding children and young people, and supporting and preparing them through to adulthood has always been central to the planning and provision of services in Halton. The safeguarding of our children and young people in Halton is seen as everyone's business within the Children's Trust. This has been the clear message given to all partners and our communities since the creation of the Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) in 2006. The impact of safeguarding is a key consideration within each priority of the Children's Trust.

The HSCB has a very clear vision that places safeguarding at the centre of the Borough's overall commitment to supporting and valuing the community it serves. The Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. It carries out a range of activities to safeguard children and young people in Halton, aged between 0-19 and its role includes:

- Developing initiatives to reduce harm to children
- Developing monitoring and reviewing inter-agency Safeguarding Children procedures
- Scrutinising information related to safeguarding children
- Ensuring that training is provided and promoted
- Increasing professional and public awareness of the safeguarding agenda
- Enquire into cases of abuse and neglect where a child has died or suffered serious harm and to review important issues arising from such enquiries

Partners have embraced safeguarding and successfully embedded processes to ensure we have robust safeguarding procedures in Halton across all agencies. This has been validated by a number of external inspections. For example, in 2008, Ofsted rated Safeguarding in Halton as 'Outstanding', while the [2011 Children's Safeguarding and](#)

[Looked After Children Inspection](#) judged Halton to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' against each of 22 criteria – giving Halton one of the best results nationally.

The HSCB provides effective strategic leadership on safeguarding for all children and young people in Halton, through a framework of scrutiny, quality assurance and training. A multi agency safeguarding unit strengthens multi agency working within the Children's Trust by identifying issues and themes that impact on the delivery of frontline practice.

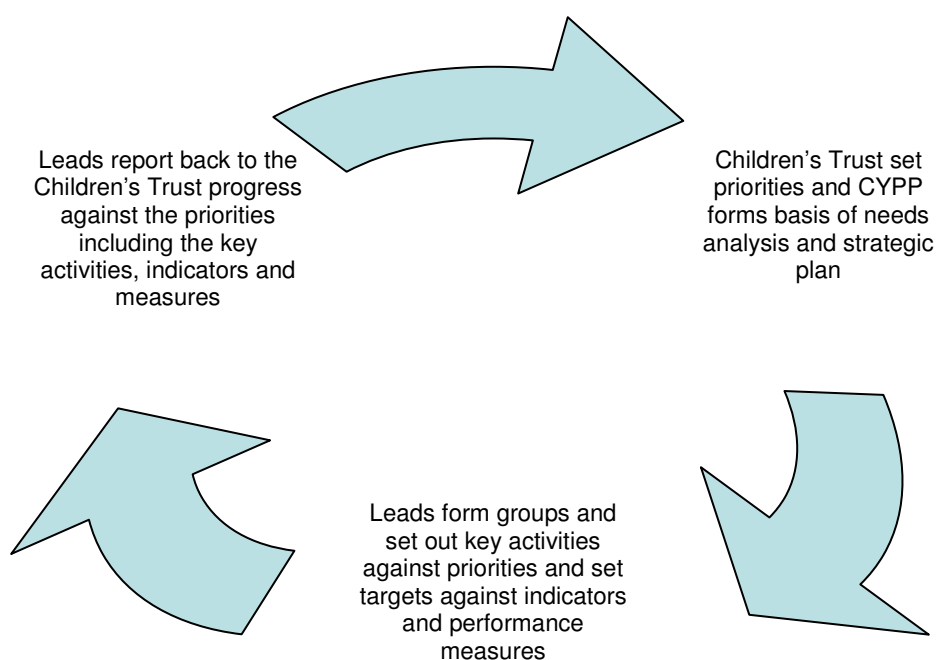
The relationship between the HSCB, which is a statutory body, and the Children's Trust and how they interact with each other has been formalised by a joint protocol informed by the latest 'Working Together' guidance. This has again brought closer working and ensured that two-way challenge and commitment is entrenched within all work. Senior representatives from key agencies attend both the Children's Trust and HSCB and this again strengthens the working relationship between the two and ensures crossover within all aspects of safeguarding.

The Children's Trust and HSCB, work closely within the Halton Levels of Need Framework to ensure each takes the lead at the appropriate level within the Framework and duplication is avoided.

## 16. Performance

The Ofsted Inspection of Children's Safeguarding & Looked After Children in Halton in February 2011 recognised the performance management and quality assurance arrangements in place at all levels from front line practice to strategic levels as 'outstanding'. The report commended the robust performance management arrangements in place for both the Children's Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children Board.

Performance within the Trust is managed through the Children's Trust Performance Management Framework (PMF) to systematically report against identified priorities on a regular basis. In essence, the PMF follows the following cycle:



The PMF uses the principles of Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) to ensure the intelligent use of performance data alongside consultation and feedback information and the knowledge and experience of front line staff.

The PMF splits performance management into population accountability, which focuses on conditions of well-being for all children and young people in Halton and performance accountability, which relates to the impact of services. The Children's Trust has responsibility for population accountability as it is recognised that to impact on these high level outcomes a range of partners will need to be involved.

The Children's Trust's strategic priorities have been agreed with population accountability in mind, focusing on how we can improve the well-being of our children and young people by:

- Commissioning on a multi agency basis against the greatest needs identified for our children and young people
- Focusing our activity in particular on our vulnerable children and young people
- Ensuring that the right support is available for those with additional needs at the earliest stage and targeting resources to the specific needs of different areas of the borough.

The established reporting mechanisms utilising the PMF have been amended and refined to take into account these new priorities for the Trust. Reporting of performance will continue to follow the cycle established by the PMF to meet the ambitions for the Trust set out in the last Children & Young People's Plan, but these ambitions have been re-focused to concentrate on how well we are doing in relation to the new priorities for the Children's Trust.

These ambitions that were set out in the last Plan are:

- Children and Young People are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy
- Every Young Person is successful when they leave school
- Children and young people do well, wherever they live, and whatever their needs
- Children and young people will feel safe at home, in school and in their communities.

Within each priority, the PMF provides a range of relevant indicators, with long-term trends to give evidence to show whether the services we are providing collectively are bringing improved outcomes. These indicators are supported by relevant performance measures that are monitored on a quarterly basis.

This, together with the story behind the indicators, which provides rich qualitative information, provides the basis for developing our services and support, to meet the needs of our children and young people.

This information is received at each meeting of the Children's Trust Executive Group to allow for the overall monitoring of each priority, show where efforts should be focused to ensure we meet each priority during the lifespan of this Plan, and will also inform decisions made on what should be the new priorities for the Trust in the future.

In addition, thematic qualitative information is to be produced quarterly to provide evidence of improved outcomes, providing the "so what" factor, in particular where performance

indicators are unable to provide this information. This will enable the Trust to challenge improvement further and identify and address gaps in service in order to continue the improvement cycle.

The PMF and latest performance information for each Children's Trust priority can be accessed through the following link ([www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust))

## **17. Integrated Working Support Teams**

Integrated Working Support Teams (IWST) for Runcorn and Widnes have been established as part the development of the Team around the Family model for early help and support in Halton.

IWST is the Children's Trust approach to providing support through a form of brokerage across all agencies. The Teams give a single point of entry contact for all enquiries that are not Child in Need or Child Protection issues, including parenting support. By providing a single point of entry, families are prioritised across Halton according to need and consistency is achieved regarding the length of time between assessment and allocation of services. IWST provides tiered, seamless support to professionals working with a family that is appropriate to the nature of the issue. Each team incorporates a multi agency group of professionals and a number of commissioned services sit directly within the IWST structures.

The Disabled Children's Service sits within this model, providing the first point of entry for professionals and carers of disabled children who may need information, advice and/or support, including short breaks and advocacy. There are clear pathways into the service, as well as a pathway into Social Care when statutory services are necessary.

The services available from the IWST Teams include:

- Support to complete the Common Assessment Framework
- Support to Chair multi agency meetings
- Support to identify appropriate Lead Professional
- Support to parents
- Support for disabled children, young people and their families
- Support to enhance existing agency plans
- Liaison with Children's Social Care Teams
- Signposting to multi agency training opportunities
- Consultation, signposting and advice on appropriate route to support
- Think Family Forum to support Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – this Forum has provided support for Lead Professionals involved in CAFs but also provides a multi agency forum for the quality assurance of completed CAFs
- Link to Children's Centre and Family engagement teams



## 18. Equality & Diversity

The Children's Trust aims to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued, and as a partnership we are committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective.

To support this, the Children's Trust has in place an [Equality & Diversity Scheme](#) that takes into account the implications and additional duties of the Equality Act 2010. It sets out a long term process for identifying and integrating improvements as to how this Trust promotes equality and supports diversity through its work with children and young people.

The Scheme includes the following vision on equality and diversity that all partners in Halton have committed to:

The Children's Trust is determined to deliver its vision of a better future for Halton's people. We are committed to equality for everyone regardless of age, sex, caring responsibilities, race, religion, sexuality, or disability. We are leaders of the community and will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment for any reason. There is a commitment to equity and social justice from all partners.

The Children's Trust Equality & Diversity Scheme is available from the Halton Children's Trust website ([www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust))

## 19. Transition to Adulthood

The transition between being a young person to being an adult is a time of great change and opportunity for all young people, but it can also present challenges, particularly for young people who have social and health care needs arising from sensory and physical disabilities, long-term conditions, learning disabilities or mental health problems.

As part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme, a national Transition Support Programme has been introduced to improve support for disabled young people in their transition to adulthood, and sets out five focus areas for improving support at transition in local areas:

- Participation of disabled young people and their families
- Effectiveness of personalised approaches
- Joint assessments processes within children's trusts and adult services
- Realistic post 16 opportunities for living life
- Strategic multi agency working

In Halton, through work in partnership between Adult Services and Children's Trust partners including NHS Halton & St Helens and Halton Borough Council, a [Halton Multi Agency Transition Strategy 2010-2013](#) has been developed. This gives examples of how these focus areas are being put into practice, including:

- Effective engagement with and participation from disabled young people and also their families;
- Effectiveness of personalised approaches including person centred planning, use of individual budgets and direct payments;

- Joint assessment processes within Children’s Trust services, including schools and with adult social care;
- Realistic post 16 opportunities for living life and to help reduce the numbers of disabled young people who are not in education, employment or training;
- Strategic partnership working including commissioning, to ensure that all agencies are fully engaged in providing transition support. In addition ensuring that other AHDC activity and universal offers, like the youth strategy, take into account the needs of disabled young people at transition.

The Children’s Trust is working to support all young people in their transition to adulthood by helping young people to develop choices that are right for them, to realise their full potential, and participate fully in the wider community.

## 20. Workforce Development

Workforce development is fundamental to improving outcomes for our children and young people. Through the [Children’s Trust Integrated Workforce Strategy](#), we will ensure that children, young people and their families in Halton receive the best quality service provided by a competent, skilled and professional workforce.

The Strategy provides the tools to equip the Children’s Trust workforce with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to ensure that the strategic priorities set out in this Children & Young People’s Plan can be achieved. It aims to create an excellent world class workforce for children, young people and their families in Halton. In order to achieve this, seven key workforce strategic objectives have been agreed and each has been integrated into the work programmes of the Children’s Trust sub groups. This will ensure that all work to meet these workforce objectives is fully integrated into the work of the Trust. Meeting these strategic objectives will help us towards achieving our Children’s Trust priorities.

These objectives and the sub group that they are aligned to are as follows:

1. **Workforce Planning and Forecasting** – Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board
2. **Recruitment & Retention** – Early Help and Support Strategic Group
3. **Training, Learning & Development** – Early Help and Support Strategic Group
4. **Leadership & Management** – Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board
5. **Managing Change** – Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board
6. **Equality & Diversity** – Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board
7. **Induction** – Early Help and Support Strategic Group

Within the Integrated Workforce Strategy, the Children’s Trust has collectively agreed six commitments to its children’s workforce in Halton. They are:

- We are a one Children’s Workforce which advocates effective strong partnership working
- We recognise that our workforce is an asset which we nurture through recruitment and retention and continued professional development
- We listen and respect the unique worth of every person/individual
- We encourage all people to fulfil their potential by providing opportunities for satisfying and rewarding careers

- We enable empowerment to be embraced and advocated throughout the Children's Trust
- We promote creativity and innovation at every opportunity

In these challenging times workforce investment and creating opportunities will become more important than ever in helping us to achieve a more dynamic, knowledgeable and skilled workforce for the future; thereby ensuring that the lives of children, young people and families in Halton improve and remain at the centre of everything we do.

The Integrated Children's Workforce Strategy is available from the Halton Children's Trust website ([www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust))

## **21. Participation**

Participation is about involving children, young people and their parents/carers in decision making on all levels. It is not just seeking views and opinions to help decide the next course of action (consultation). Being listened to and validated as an individual person is a fundamental human right.

By participation we mean adults working in partnership with children and young people and valuing their views and encouraging them to:

- become more active participants in the life of their school and community,
- participate in creating, building and improving services to make them more responsive to their needs and those of the wider community,
- make a difference in their schools, neighbourhoods and communities
- contribute to a cohesive community,
- learn from an early age to balance their rights as individuals with their responsibilities as citizens,
- develop, through the way they are involved, the knowledge, understanding and skills they will need in adult life.

There are a number of levels of participation, from tokenistic involvement in a small part of the decision making process, to full participation and engagement and leading in every aspect from the initiation of the process.

In Halton we have had and continue to have examples of involving children, young people and their parents/carers across the full range of these levels. Through working together in partnership within the Children's Trust to meet the priorities within this Plan we aim to make sure that more and more of the participation opportunities for our children, young people and their parents and carers are within every aspect of the process.

For effective participation to happen organisations must listen to and work in partnership with service users to create and develop the best opportunities for services to develop to best meet the needs of children and young people. It is everyone's responsibility to promote and support children, young people and their parents'/carers' participation in decision making.

When children and young people are actively involved in the processes of decision making they feel more motivated, more engaged and more valued; and when they are not this can then lead to apathy, disillusionment, disengagement, exclusion and isolation. The

experience of participation teaches children and young people citizenship skills such as listening, negotiating, recognising and valuing diversity and accepting difference.

Participation is about service providers and service users working in partnership to create the best possible opportunities within the aims of a project or service. Involving children and young people in decision making and problem solving will develop and improve the services already existing across the Borough. Halton already has young people's democratic processes embedded, with vibrant Area Youth Forums, young peoples' action groups, elected Youth Cabinet and an elected Member and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament.

Participation is about creating a culture of agencies responding to, involving, communicating with and informing those who use the service they provide. We have a number of examples of our children and young people fully participating and leading on making the decisions that affect them, such as within the Youth Bank and the Youth Cabinet, but we need to ensure we provide these opportunities to participate within each of our priorities, to help ensure we do improve outcomes for our children and young people.

[The Children's Trust Participation Strategy](#) is based on the seven strands of the Hear by Right Standards, and as a Trust all partners need to provide support to all organisations and services to ensure that they meet these participation Standards.

The Strategy is based on four principles:

1. Clear and visible commitment to involving children and young people with a route map of how to make it happen.
2. Children and young people's involvement is valued
3. Children and young people have equality of opportunity to be involved
4. Children and young people's participation and involvement is continually evaluated and reviewed

This Participation Strategy has been agreed through to 2015 and is available on the Children's Trust website ([www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust)). Work on participation within the Children's Trust structures is led by the Consultation, Participation & Engagement Group that feeds directly into the Joint Commissioning Group.

## **22. Child and Family Poverty**

In Halton, data from 2008 reveals that just under 26.4% of children live in poverty. This equates to 6,550 children and young people. Of these, 5,520 children live in out of work families and 1,030 live in households classified as in-work. This underlines that whilst being in work reduces the incidence of poverty it doesn't guarantee that children will be lifted out of poverty, particularly when there is only one working adult in the household.

Although there has been some success in tackling child and family poverty, meeting the challenge of eradicating poverty requires additional effort from all partners to prioritise child and family poverty to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and their families.

In response to the Child Poverty Act 2010, Halton has worked alongside its partners in the Liverpool City Region to develop a Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment and has also developed its own specific multi agency [Child and Family Poverty Strategy for Halton](#).

Whilst poverty can be measured by income, it is a much broader issue. Therefore, in developing the Child and Family Poverty Strategy, Halton has adopted the European Union's working definition of poverty. This defines poverty as:

***“Persons, families and groups of persons, whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State to which they belong.”***

Under this definition, poverty is seen as having three aspects, these being:

- Income poverty
- Service poverty (difficulty in accessing and benefiting from quality services e.g. housing, health, education and leisure)
- Participation poverty (affecting the ability to
  - participate in the community
  - engage in social activities
  - have a negative impact on experience of education and training and
  - affect transition to independence).

To recognise the broadness of the issue of poverty, in Halton it is known as child and family poverty, rather than the more traditional 'child poverty'.

Halton's Child & Family Poverty Strategy has been developed by a wide cross-section of partners and stakeholders in Halton, including housing, welfare, employment and skills, transport and health, as well as stakeholders within the Children's Trust.

Research for the Needs Assessment, as well as consultation done during the development of the Strategy has indicated that the key underlying causes of child and family poverty in Halton are:

- Low family aspirations
- A cycle of intergenerational benefit dependency

Based on these causes, the key priorities in order to tackle child and family poverty in Halton have been agreed as:

- Cultural challenge and raising aspirations
- Early Help and Support
- Whole family approach
- Providing a single point of access to support services

These priorities link closely to the priorities that have been agreed by the Children's Trust. One measure used by the Children's Trust to look at poverty and disadvantage is to measure the performance and outcomes for those young people who access free school meals. Often this cohort of young people do not perform as well as a whole but the Children's Trust is working to reduce this gap for young people in this cohort to ensure those who receive free school meals do not suffer any disadvantage.

A multi agency working group will take forward work around the Strategy by meeting these priorities within through an agreed action plan. The Strategy is available from the Halton Children's Trust website ([www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/childrenstrust))

## 23. New set of promises

- **Consultation** – We will engage with our children, young people and families around all issues that affect them, in ways that meet their needs and ensure their views are heard and communicate back how their involvement has been acted upon.
- **Participation** – We will endeavour to support throughout Halton active children, young people and parent / carer action groups in schools and within the community, supported by partners who provide a network of children, young people and parent / carer voice. This will ensure there is effective two way communication to shape services through, for example social networking sites, action groups, inclusive interview and commissioning panels, community events and drama and arts activities
- **Workforce development** - We will, in these challenging times, continue to invest in our workforce at every opportunity to help us to achieve a more dynamic, knowledgeable and skilled workforce for the future.
- **Safeguarding** – We will look to ensure all aspects of equality and diversity are captured in the reporting processes within the Children’s Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children Board.
- **Safeguarding** – We will seek to further encourage and support children and young people's participation in informing and challenging the work of the Children's Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children Board.
- **Vulnerable groups** – We will intervene at the right time to prevent problems for our vulnerable children and young people from developing and where problems are already present we will deliver timely interventions to prevent these getting worse.
- **Independent advocacy** – We will ensure that independent advocacy is in place for all vulnerable groups, and in particular children in care, children with disabilities and complex needs to ensure full involvement in decision making for all our children and young people.
- **Child & Family Poverty** – We will work to improve the life chances of children and families living in poverty by actively supporting the implementation of the Halton Child & Family Poverty Strategy and encourage our partners to contribute towards the delivery of the key objectives in the Child & Family Poverty Action Plan.
- **Equality & Diversity** – We will recognise and celebrate the diversity of our children and young people as well as aspects of commonality.
- **Performance** – We will scrutinise and challenge all agencies working with Children, Young People and their families to improve outcomes using robust performance management.
- **Early Help and Support** – We will endeavour to meet the needs of children, young people and their families as early as possible using local services that are sensitive to all issues.
- **Early Help and Support** – We will ensure that children, young people and their families can access the additional and specialist services they require through the same initial point of access.
- **Joint Commissioning** – We will ensure that our Children’s Trust priorities and the wishes of our communities are at the heart of all joint commissioning decisions
- **Play** – We will support all children and young people to be able to participate in and enjoy play in their local area.