



Early Help Strategy & Local Offer

April 2013 to March 2015

HALTON'S EARLY HELP OFFER

Foreword from Councillor Ged Philbin, Chair of Halton Children's Trust

I am delighted to introduce Halton's Early Help Strategy and local offer.

Since Professor Eileen Munro's final report regarding the child protection system, there has been increased emphasis placed on the importance of early help. Early help was identified as one of the eight key principles of an effective child protection system as it minimises the period of adverse experiences and improves outcomes for children.

Reviews undertaken by Dame Clare Tickell, Graham Allen MP and Rt Hon Frank Field MP also highlighted the belief in the importance of providing effective early help services to families. There are clear messages on this:

- (i) Preventative services will do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services
- (ii) Coordination of services is important to maximise efficiency
- (iii) Within preventative services, there needs to be good mechanisms for helping people identify those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm from abuse or neglect and who need referral to children's social care (Munro)

This is why one of Halton Children's Trust's priorities is "to improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support." The Trust's model of early help is 'Team Around the Family' and it has progressed well over the last two years, developing a strong early help offer across the Borough.

The Early Help and Support Strategic Group drives forward the Trusts' work on early help within a framework of agreed aims, values and principles, all of which partners have agreed and signed up. This is a key achievement in itself as it highlights the commitment to effective early help across the Trust.

Given the progress made over the last two years, I am pleased to present and endorse Halton's 'Early Help Offer'. This document sets out our strategy regarding early help; what we will offer to families in need of support and how we will work together as a Trust to deliver our offer. I am confident that this strategy will ensure a robust offer of early help to families in Halton.

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1. INTRODUCTION - TEAM AROUND THE FAMILY

- 1.1 National reviews undertaken by Professor Eileen Munro (2010), Graham Allen (January and June 2011), Dame Clare Tickell (2010) and the Rt Honourable Frank Field (2010) all highlight the importance of early help and support. A number of key issues emerged from these:
- (i) That strong early help services can help prevent needs escalating within families
 - (ii) That success within early help depends significantly on needs being identified and help deployed within the first five years of a child's life
 - (iii) That early help services need to be integrated and coordinated at both strategic and operational level
 - (iv) That families benefit more from preventative, rather than reactive services, which is cost effective both for families and partners.
- 1.2 In 2010 Halton formally established its own early help model, known as Team Around the Family (TAF). Taking learning from a previous pilot, the model developed further across the Borough, building also on the messages from these reviews.
- 1.3 Halton Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust fully embraced the principles, and early help and support is a priority for both Boards. There is a clear recognition from all partners that early identification of need and effective, well-coordinated services will help those families with additional needs in the Borough.
- 1.4 This strategy presents Halton's 'early help offer' to families. It sets out our shared values and principles; our aims and objectives; and how partners work together to help families with additional needs.
- 1.5 It recognises the valued input from partners across the continuum of need, from universal, right through to more specialist services. It makes clear what we will offer to families and the action plan highlights priority areas over the next two years regarding early help.
- 1.6 Lastly, the strategy recognises how early help is inextricably linked to Halton's health and wellbeing agenda, universal services and early years provision. One of the Health and Well-Being Board's key priorities is 0-5 year old development. Therefore, this strategy should be read in conjunction with **Halton's Health and Well-Being Strategy 2012 – 2015** and, in particular, the **0-5 Year Old Development Action Plan**. The strategy should also be read in conjunction with [The Healthy Child Programme \(DOH 2009\)](#); the [Health Visitor Implementation Plan 2011-2015](#); and the Principles of the [Early Years Framework \(2012\)](#).

2. STRATEGIC VISION, PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Halton Children and Young People's Plan (2011-14) highlights the Trust's overall vision:
- 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.*

- 2.2 One of the Trust's key priorities is *to improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support.*
- 2.3 This vision is underpinned by a number of early help principles and objectives agreed by partners. These are monitored via the early help sub group of the Children's Trust:
- i. All agencies working with children and families in Halton are committed to early help and support
 - ii. The overall objective of early help is to address families' unmet needs to the point where these can best be met by universal services.
 - iii. All agencies are committed to identifying families' needs in a holistic manner, on the basis that the needs of the children, parents and carers in a family are inextricably linked, therefore a 'Think Family' approach to the assessment of needs will have a positive impact upon all individuals within the whole family.
 - iv. Families are central to defining and addressing the problems that they face and they are key partners in the process. The voice of the child should be sought at all stages with due reference to the child's age, developmental stage and levels of understanding
 - v. At first point of contact all agencies are committed to responding to the needs of families whether that need falls within their immediate area of professional expertise or not.
 - vi. This is manifested by a commitment from agencies to support their frontline staff taking a lead in meeting families' needs and where appropriate acting as a lead professional. Each agency is willing to contribute to multiagency processes once families requiring early intervention/early help are identified either by their own or another agency.
 - vii. The Integrated Working Support Team will co-ordinate support allocated work from partner agencies
 - viii. Where the support needed involves two or more agencies the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will usually provide the planning and review mechanism for this work. Where additional support for the CAF process is required it will be provided by the Integrated Working Support Team.
- 2.4 In order to achieve these objectives all partners take responsibility for fostering a shared inter-agency culture that values:
- The identification and offer of early help and support opportunities for families
 - The contributions of all professional staff, volunteers and family members
 - Positive challenge and holding each other to account for outcomes for families
 - Working to overcome systemic barriers to achieving better outcomes.
 - Facilitating time for shared learning/ reflection opportunities and ensuring that what we do is based on good evidence.
- 2.5 There is recognition that in order to be able to intervene early, services need to be available to identify needs and support families across the levels of need.
- 2.6 Halton's offer is inclusive – it is for all children, all parents and carers. It is framework for all partners to ensure that their services and strategies are integrated within a combined early help offer for Halton.

3. DEFINITION, LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT AND EVOLVING LANDSCAPE

- 3.1 Halton Children's Trust defines early help as:
"Providing the right help for families as soon as needs arise, to help prevent needs increasing. Early help is the recognition of the value of universal provision, through to enhanced, multi-agency support, dependent on the level of need. 'Early' is defined as predominantly early in the child's life, with a particular focus on pre-birth to three years. However, early help is a process that can occur at any point in a child or young person's life, i.e. help whenever a need arises."
- 3.2 Early help is not a statutory requirement, although the benefits of preventative services are more widely acknowledged and are highlighted in key publications.
- 3.3 However, there is a range of legislation and policy developments regarding safeguarding, child health and early years that strengthens the need to prioritise early help. Seeing these in their entirety reinforces partners' responsibilities.
- 3.3.1 The [Childcare Act 2006](#) and the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#): Duties on local authorities now include working with partners to ensure integrated early years provision, to ensure sufficient provision of children's centres, and to secure sufficient childcare.
- 3.3.2 [Education and Inspection Act 2006](#): This underpin early years services
- 3.3.3 [The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011](#): These places a duty on local Authorities to provide short breaks of disabled children to enable them to continue to care for their disabled child. Short breaks are a form of early help
- 3.3.4 The [Children Act 1989](#) and [Children Act 2004](#): These make clear organisations' responsibilities regarding child protection and safeguarding, including the role of the Safeguarding Children Board in its oversight of safeguarding practice and policy and process.
- 3.3.5 Principles from the [Early Years Framework](#) (2012): These underpin all early years practice and also inform Halton's early help agenda. There are a number of key objectives:
- i. To provide the best start in life for all children, promoting social mobility so that children are able to fulfil their potential, regardless of their family income or background
 - ii. To encourage and enable parental employment in order to reduce the negative outcomes that are so strongly associated with growing up in poverty.
 - iii. To reduce inequalities by focusing on children most at risk of poor outcomes because of deprivation and disadvantage.
 - iv. To deliver integrated early childhood services in ways that provide a seamless experience for parents and children, that meet their individual needs and make a real difference to the life chances of all children.
 - v. To ensure every child at the age of 5 is developing well in their personal, social and emotional skills; and is also a confident, capable learner, with most children achieving well in early reading, writing and problem solving.

- 3.3.6 [Healthy Child Programme](#): This is the early intervention and prevention public health programme for pre-school children and their families. This is offered universally to all families and enables families in need of additional support to be supported who at risk of not achieving their potential. Delivery of the programme is key to improving the health and well-being of children.
- 3.3.7 [The Health Visitor implementation plan 2011- 2015: A Call to Action](#): This more recent development strengthens the role of Health Visitors within the Healthy Child Programme. With a focus on early help and support, a universal service is available to all families, with additional tailored support for those who need it, when they need it. The plan includes a new universal ‘Family Offer’ with a range of contacts between Health Visitor and the family being available, the first one being an ante-natal contact.
- 3.3.8 **Halton Health and Well-Being Strategy**: One of the Health and Well-Being Board’s priorities is 0-5 year old development. There are five critical factors that influence child development during the early years:
- i. **A child’s health**- a child’s physical development and behaviour are strongly influenced by their parent’s health and behaviour
 - ii. **Good maternal health**- this is significantly associated with children’s outcomes, especially social, behavioural and emotional development
 - iii. **Quality parenting and parent-child relationship**- children clearly do better if they enjoy a close and positive relationship with their parents
 - iv. **Learning activities**- home learning, especially reading and playing, are key predictors of future development and readiness for school
 - v. **High quality early education**- early years’ achievement is crucial; children in the lowest 20% of attainment at 5yrs are six times more likely to be in the lowest 20% by 10yrs (Families in Foundation Years, DfE 2011).
- 3.4 The 0-5 year old Development Action Plan expands on these areas and details how, across all partners, we will address the developmental needs of under-fives in the Borough. Led by the Children’s Consultant in Public Health, the action plan highlights what we need to focus on and what we need to do to address this priority. Its forms a fundamental component to the success of this strategy and has the full commitment of Trust members as well as the Health and Well-Being Board itself.
- 3.5 Halton’s strategy is a strong foundation for the Children’s Trust to respond to this wide and evolving policy and legislative landscape, as well as adhering to its principles and meeting its objectives.

4. HALTON’S CONTEXT

- 4.1 Halton is a largely urban area of 125,700 people (2011 Census 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 129,300 in 2021, in line with national projected population growth.
- 4.2 Breaking down Halton’s population by age 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 a further increase in the proportion of the local population aged 0-24 by 2023. Currently, 20% of the Halton population is aged 0-15 (24,900 people). Over the next ten years, the 0-15 population is projected to increase by 10%. As part of the 2013/14 grant settlement the Government reduced Halton's Early Intervention Grant in order to fund additional provision for two year olds via the Dedicated Schools Grant, however, sufficient funding will still be available to deliver the Early Help Strategy.

- 4.3 Halton's 0-4 population is currently 8,400 and is expected to stay fairly static over the next decade.
- 4.4 The May 2012 census reported 1,355 4 year olds and 1,467 5 year olds in our maintained schools. The January 2012 census reported 1,555 3 year olds accessing their Free Entitlement.

Child and Family Poverty

- 4.5 In Halton, data from 2008 reveals that just below 26.4% of children aged 0-16 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 does not guarantee that children will be lifted out of poverty, particularly when there is only one working adult in the household.

5. ACHIEVING SUCCESS- IMPLEMENTING HALTON'S EARLY HELP STRATEGY

The principles and objectives highlighted lead to four cross-cutting themes and areas of work required to implement the strategy. These are:

5.1 Theme 1: Recognising the value and impact of Universal provision

The Trust recognises and values that the provision of high quality, local universal services is essential to make the strategy a success. Additional needs arise within families where some type of help and support is needed for them to continue functioning and feel able to cope. Very often these brief interventions come via universal services, for example, schools, nurseries, health centres and GP surgeries. Voluntary and community groups are also invaluable here, providing important community-based support to families. The significance and potential impact of universal provision should not be underestimated and the principle is that families should be supported via universal services wherever possible. All partners need a sound knowledge and understanding of what's available locally, how it is used and the benefits they can bring. To maximise success, quality services need to be available from locations that families are happy to attend; and any gaps in services need to be fed into the commissioning processes.

5.2 Theme 2: Adopting a proactive multi-agency approach to families with additional needs- with a focus on pre-birth to five years

Sometimes universal services cannot meet a family's needs and further support is required. Clear transition processes are needed to make sure families can access extra help when required. However, for different reasons, some families find it difficult to access support when they need it, which increases the risk of needs escalating. For these families a proactive multi-agency approach could be beneficial. Quality information sharing systems and data analysis can help inform partners of those

families in greatest need; this knowledge can help us deal with issues, both at community and individual family level, as well as inform effective service planning.

A particular focus here has to be on those children aged 0-5 years old. As research highlights, the sooner help is provided the better chance of preventing a child having longer term additional needs. Therefore, as a Trust, a key to success is proactively identifying those families in greatest need, with a particular emphasis on pre-birth and pre-school children. This means that key to Halton's success are those agencies whose services focus primarily on pre-birth to 5 year olds:

- Midwifery
- Health Visiting
- Early Years Services
- Children's Centres
- Other universal services, for example, speech and language, health improvement
- Family Support/ Intensive Family Support

Halton also remains committed to helping all children in a preventative way, irrespective of age. A child could experience difficulties at an older age, due to a number of different factors, for example bereavement, family breakdown; or their parent(s) may have drug/ alcohol and/or mental health issues that manifest themselves at a later stage. Some children could be young carers as a result of these family circumstances and therefore early identification of issues can help support the child and the whole family. The strategy is equally important here and it means working closely with all Trust partners, including those from adult-led services:

- Adult mental health
- Drug and alcohol services
- GPs
- Primary and secondary schools
- Attendance and inclusion services
- Other universal services available for the whole family, for example, adult learning, weight management programmes etc.
- Voluntary and community groups, including parent/ carer groups

All these services are critical to Halton's Early Help Offer. Success is dependent on a range of formal bodies working collaboratively to help progress the strategy, in particular:

- The Children's Trust (including the Early Help and Support sub-group and Commissioning Partnership Board)
- The Clinical Commissioning Group
- The Health and Well-Being Board
- The Carers Strategic Group
- Children and Young People Voluntary Sector Partnership
- Halton Family Voice (parent and carer forum)

- Primary and Secondary Schools Head Teachers' Forums
- National Commissioning Board
- Youth Offending Board

5.3 Theme 3: Ensuring an integrated approach within the Trust when helping families

The Trust agrees that improving outcomes for those families with additional needs cannot be achieved without a meaningful, integrated approach between partners. This means ensuring there is no 'wrong front door' for families to access help; that IT/communication systems enhance practice; that pathways to services are clear with no unnecessary delay due to organisational issues; and that commissioning priorities reflect local need and ensure no duplication across the Trust. Ownership throughout the Trust, from statutory services to commissioned and voluntary/ community groups, can help create a culture of 'assistance' between partners as opposed to passing on and referring elsewhere.

5.4 Theme 4: Raising practice standards and ensuring consistency throughout the Trust

An understanding of the Trust's vision and values regarding early help can help create the culture of 'early help' not early referral'. It is about the right help at the right time for families, with no duplication or delay, and prevention of escalation. Wherever possible, families should be supported via one assessment process, with specialist assessments being undertaken when necessary and in the family's interests. Quality early help services and strong partnerships will help families and enable children to succeed. Clear performance frameworks and governance arrangements via the Safeguarding Board and Children's Trust will ensure all partners are held to account from senior managers at strategic level to frontline practitioners. At practice level one common induction programme across the Trust will help up-skill colleagues and embed these practice principles.

- 5.5 These four themes reflect all partners' roles and responsibilities within the strategy and are essential for Halton's Early Help Offer to be a success. There is a cross-cutting action plan based on these themes in [appendix 1](#) of this document.
- 5.6 In addition to these there is also a range of strategic priorities that Trust partners have committed to delivering as part of the Halton's Offer. These are highlighted in [appendix 2](#) of this document where there is a definition of each provision and clear statement of what each service will deliver.
- 5.7 Appendix 2 does not include every provision across the Borough. The emphasis here is on those services whose involvement centres on a child's early years development. It reflects the Trust's priority on pre-birth to five years, with an even narrower focus on pre-birth to three years.
- 5.8 The contribution of all other agencies is fully recognised, especially as a 'think family' approach is required when helping any family. The Trust is also committed to helping any family, irrespective of the child's age. However, if early help really is going to have an impact on families' lives it is essential that the focus is on this age group.
- 5.9 In line with previously mentioned legislation, the strategy recognises the importance of the stakeholder's voice in decision making processes. Halton's early help offer will aim to remain relevant, effective and sustainable through the participation and feedback of parents, carers, children and young people.

- 5.10 Graham Allen's report- **Early Intervention, the Next Steps** (January 2011) highlighted the huge social benefits of intervening early, for example "improvements in behaviour, reduction in violent crime, higher educational attainment, better employment opportunities and more responsible parenting." It also noted that by not intervening early, bigger problems can be created later on, especially regarding the financial cost of more specialist services. A reactive approach is more expensive to all partners with less likelihood that the problems can be resolved.
- 5.11 Halton's strategy recognises the additional financial value of early help. The aim is to deal with a problem as soon as it is identified, rather than waiting for them to become more acute and families then requiring more costly, and intrusive, interventions. Allen stated that the "economic benefits of early intervention are clear, and consistently demonstrate good returns on investment." The strategy emphasises the need to offer support at an early stage as intervening at a later stage is more costly.

6. SAFEGUARDING ACROSS THE TRUST

- 6.1 Under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 organisations have a duty to "ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children." This applies to the Local Authority; NHS bodies (commissioners and providers); and early years/ child care providers. Partners must also comply with additional legislation relevant to their respective organisations.
- 6.2 Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HCSB) has the collective responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and to ensure the effectiveness of that work in Halton. Early help is one of the Board's priorities; whilst the Board will monitor overall progress of the Halton's Early Help Offer, its overarching priority is making sure that practices, systems and processes are safe.

7. MONITORING THE STRATEGY

- 7.1 Halton Children's Trust has overall responsibility for the outcomes of all children, including those with additional needs. As a result, progress made regarding Halton's early help offer will be monitored via regular reporting to the Trust via the strategy's action plan. This will be led by the strategic leads for each respective service areas who will each report to their own organisations and collectively to the Early Help and Support Strategic Group.
- 7.2 The success of the strategy and progress on the action plan will also be subject to scrutiny via Halton's parent and carer groups. The parent engagement officer will play a role here, making sure that parent carers are up to date with developments.

The implementation plan and delivery statements regarding Halton's Early Help Offer are in appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

APPENDIX 1: HALTON'S EARLY HELP OFFER - CROSS-CUTTING ACTION PLAN

1. Recognising the value and impact of universal provision

Objective	Action	By Whom	Outcome measure	Timescale	Progress
To ensure that all Trust practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of what provision is available at universal level and how it can be accessed.	<p>Clear communication pathways across Trust regarding services available</p> <p>Up to date information at Individual organisational level</p> <p>Trust events for all frontline staff to enhance information sharing</p>	All Trust partners	<p>Number of Trust events held that contribute to information sharing</p> <p>Evidence of marketing/ promotion of services</p> <p>Uptake of services from families</p>	April to July 2014	<p>Children's Trust event held March 2012 for frontline staff regarding early help model.</p> <p>Workshops held Nov/ Dec 2012 regarding proposed new levels of need</p>
<p>To deliver a range of universal services , using a community-led approach, ie from venues that families feel comfortable with and choose to attend</p> <p>That these services reach those families in greatest need</p>	<p>Establish any gaps in services across the Trust</p> <p>Examine local data/ patterns of service delivery to enable creative thinking flexible solutions to accessing barriers</p> <p>Redesign services around families' needs, involving families/children in the process</p>	Early help/ Early years strategic group	<p>Number of families accessing support services across the Trust</p> <p>% increase in families attending from the lowest super output areas and from the identified most vulnerable groups</p> <p>Evidence of parental and child involvement in service redesign</p>	Review September 2013	Community Development Workers based in GP/ Health Centres to work jointly identifying families in need

2. Adopting a proactive multi-agency approach to families in greatest need- particular focus on pre-birth to five years

Objective	Action	By Whom	Outcome measure	Timescale	Progress
To ensure families with additional needs are identified as soon as needs arise; that they are assessed holistically via a coordinated approach to help prevent needs escalating, without duplication across the Trust	<p>Multi-agency training delivery</p> <p>Develop a more holistic way to assess whole families' needs</p> <p>Promote holistic assessments across Trust</p> <p>On-going commitment from partners to participate fully in case discussions and agree actions in the best interests of families</p> <p>Agree information sharing protocols</p>	All Trust Partners	<p>Number of holistic assessments across the Borough and % increase</p> <p>% holistic assessments involving families from the lower super output areas and those identified vulnerable groups</p> <p>Range of lead professionals across the Trust</p> <p>% increase of families open to social care who have had a holistic in place prior to escalation</p>	March 2014 (performance reviews every quarter)	Whole family assessment being considered within levels of need working group. Any new proposals to be brought to EHaS group for further discussion
To ensure practitioners are aware of, and engage families with children aged 0-5yrs (including pregnant mothers) as early as possible, to provide timely support as appropriate	<p>Proactive support by professionals</p> <p>Review and improve communication channels and systems between agencies</p>	All Trust partners	<p>% holistic assessments involving children pre-birth to 5 yrs</p> <p>% increase of families with 0-5yr olds who have had a holistic assessment in place prior to escalation to social care (27% as of Nov 2012)</p>	March 2014 (performance reviews every quarter)	Number of CAFs being captured via PMF and reported to the Trust. Numbers continue to rise

3. Ensuring an integrated approach within the Children's Trust when helping families

Objective	Action	By Whom	Outcome measures	Timescale	Progress
<p>To ensure early help services have integrated processes, from commissioning through to service delivery.</p> <p>To ensure families benefit from clear and consistent pathways- that there is no 'wrong front door'; no duplication and a smooth transition to more specialist services when necessary</p>	<p>Devise and implement one single assessment framework that focuses on whole families' needs</p> <p>Identify performance measures once commissioning targets have been agreed.</p> <p>Review early help structures, especially around IWST so partners are fully involved in decision-making from the outset</p>	<p>Levels of need working group</p> <p>Trust partners</p> <p>Performance colleagues</p>	<p>Revised assessment framework for early help where multi-agency planning is needed</p> <p>Clearly defined performance measures for commissioned services that reflect early help priorities</p> <p>Early help model with seamless processes and pathways</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<p>Review of IWST has helped develop multi-agency case discussion meetings and led to joint decision-making on cases. This needs to be further reviewed and formalised with agreement of the Trust</p>
<p>To ensure all professionals are clear on their roles/ responsibilities regarding early help</p>	<p>Involve Trust partners in CAF audits and training</p> <p>Attendance at multi-agency meetings via IWST that consider early help cases</p>	<p>Senior Manager Safeguarding Unit</p> <p>All Trust partners</p>	<p>Attendance at multi-agency meetings</p> <p>Formalisation of multi-agency meetings</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>CAF audits planned for 2013 with attendance from Trust partners agreed. Audit reports presented to Children's Trust and Safeguarding Board</p>

4. Raising practice standards and ensuring consistency throughout the Children's Trust

Objective	Action	By Whom	Outcome measures	Timescale	Progress
To ensure early help services are of the highest quality; that clear performance frameworks operate across the Trust; and that safe practice is maintained across the Trust	<p>Set up system where CAF Audits ensure meaningful input from families re early help</p> <p>Internal organisational audits</p> <p>Clear remit for HSCB regarding early help- with particular emphasis on interface between early help and CSC</p>	<p>Senior Managers and frontline staff- all Trust partners</p> <p>IWST Managers</p> <p>Senior Manager, Safeguarding Unit</p>	<p>Number of families that take part in CAF closure process or other processes</p> <p>Clear targets regarding early help with lines of accountability across the Trust</p> <p>Reporting to the Safeguarding Board regarding early help effectiveness, in particular the number and quality of cases that escalate and de-escalate to/from social care</p>	Immediately and on-going	<p>CAF closure system established</p> <p>Multi-agency audits established and continuing to develop</p> <p>Remit of HSCB agreed regarding the</p>
To ensure consistent practice and common culture across the Trust regarding early help- accountability from all, a culture of 'assistance' between partners rather than 'passing on' elsewhere	<p>Involvement across the Trust in the induction programme</p> <p>Workshops to help understanding Halton's new Levels of Need</p> <p>Monitor progress of EHaS business plan/ action plan</p>	All Trust Partners	<p>Number of Trust colleagues taking part in Trust induction programme</p> <p>Number of information sharing events held across the Trust and number of Trust colleagues attending early help training and relevant multi-agency events</p> <p>Range of partners across the Trust acting as Lead Professional LP</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>(Review June 2013 and Dec 2013)</p>	<p>One Trust event held so far for frontline staff, coordinated and facilitated by the Trust.</p> <p>Consultation workshops held re proposed new levels of need framework</p> <p>On-going review of EHaS business and action plan</p>

APPENDIX 2: QUALITY EARLY YEARS ENVIRONMENTS & CHILD CARE PROVISION

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Early Years Provision

Background:

Providing a quality learning environment is crucial to supporting children's learning and development. As research shows providing a safe, secure, high quality Early Years environment leads to "better intellectual and social/behavioural development for children" (EPPE Project, 2004) and has "also been proven to reduce the number of children at risk of SEN" (SEN Green Paper, 2011).

The Revised Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DFE, 2012, p.2) sets out the statutory standards that all early years providers must meet "to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe."



This is achieved by providing:

- quality and consistent provision in Early Years settings
- planned learning and development opportunities around children's interests and needs
- close partnership working
- equality of opportunity for all.

Halton is committed to improving outcomes for all children and supporting vulnerable children and families through providing quality Early Years provision, supported by targeted multi agency services. In order to deliver upon this, it is essential that we support and continue to up skill the Early Years workforce. Skilled practitioners in Halton provide quality environments and learning opportunities, so that all children become equipped with skills and knowledge to support lifelong learning and maximise their potential.

Our aims:

- All Early Years children in Halton are able to access inclusive, high quality Early Years Provision and Child Care.
- All Early Years Child Care Provision is supported and valued so that the environment and opportunities lead to improved outcomes for children
- Early Years workforce is committed to reflection; self-evaluation and continuing Professional Development.
- Early Years children and their families are supported by universal and targeted services
- Children in Halton EY provision are happy, safe, secure and make good progress.

We will:

- Carry out quality assurance audits and support schools and settings to develop quality environments

- Provide consultant support to model practice and provide training and advice , around statutory responsibilities; Early Years curriculum; child development; SEN; the graduated approach; inclusive practice
- Develop clear pathways with multi agency services, so that practitioners can sign post to relevant health and social care services in order to fully support a child's needs.
- Provide access to universal, targeted and specialist services
- Ensure the work force is highly qualified and engage in continuing professional development and self-reflection
- Audit and monitor children's learning and achievement, so that training and support is targeted.
- Aim to improve quality by building cluster networks; working groups; coaching and sharing good practice.
- Identify and support vulnerable children and their families, improving opportunities and a commitment to lifelong learning
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.



Impact:

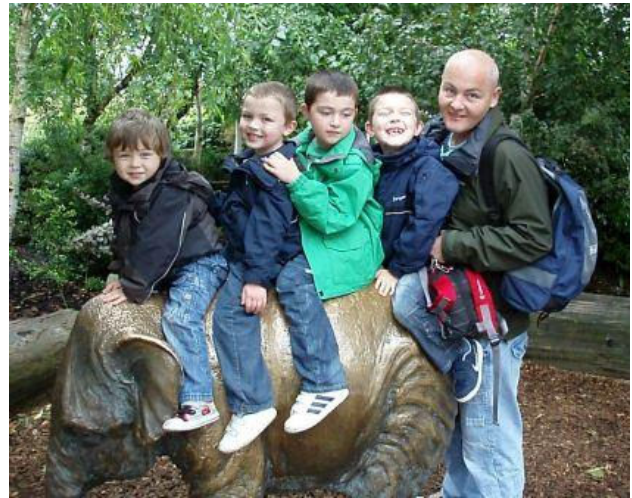
- All children will access high quality Early Years provision in line with their free entitlement and or family need
- Children will make significant progress across all areas of learning, in line with their potential
- The Early Years workforce will be skilled and reflective ,building capacity and sustainable improvement
- Children and families' needs will be supported by seamless multi agency working
- Early intervention and help will be timely , meeting children's needs effectively
- Increase in the number of Early Years provision gaining good or outstanding Ofsted ratings
- High scores obtained in a range of quality assurance audits such as ITERS (Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales) / ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales) / SACERS (School Age Children Environmental Rating Scales) etc
- Improvements in FSP profile data , including evidence of raised attainment and narrowing the gap of vulnerable groups
- Established cluster networks and working parties will build on continuing improvements
- Audits will inform training needs and support, leading to improvements in environments; practice; achievement and progress.

Halton Family Voice

Background:

In 2005 a proposal was made to establish a Halton-wide Parent and Carer Forum as a response to the requirement for the local authority to ensure that the parent's voice is embedded into all plans for services to children, young people and families.

In November 2011 a new Parents and Carers Lead Engagement Coordinator was appointed. Since this time there has been a drive to increase the membership of the forum and implement a structure which allows all parents and carers to be heard through a wide variety of methods. As part of this the Parent & Carer Forum is now known as Halton Family Voice.



Our aims:

- To increase parent/carers participants in Halton Family Voice, ensuring a wide representative of parents/carers in Halton.
- To collect and report the view and feedback from parents/carers in Halton.
- To create opportunities for parents/carers to participate in decision making processes.
- To communicate and distribute information about opportunities and services for families in Halton.
- To act as a critical friend to The Children's Trust and sub groups around decision making and current services.

We will:

- Offer parent/carers opportunities for training around confidence building allowing parents to engage in formal decision making processes.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to support distribution of information and feedback.
- Signpost families to wider support provision.
- Continually visit community parent/carers groups to increase the wider engagement of parent/carers.
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes / Impact

- Effective participation will enable and actively encourage parents/carers to collaborate as equal stakeholders in the process from the planning stage through to evaluation.
- Parents/carers to feel valued and listened to
- More parents/ carers to use and engage with services as they have been influenced by parents/carers

- Working with stakeholders helps anticipate future problems. In the long run, involving stakeholders should save time, money and problems.
- Parent/carer stakeholders working collaboratively with professionals, will mean policies, services and provision will be more relevant, more effective and more sustainable (Lansdown, 2011).

Links to relevant documents

- [Children Act \(2004\)](#)
- [Department for Children, Schools and Families \(2010\) *Children's Trusts*.](#)
- [Halton Borough Council, Stakeholder involvement toolkit.](#)
- Lansdown, G. (2011) Global: A Framework for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation. A preparatory draft for piloting by Save the Children, together with UNICEF, Plan and World Vision.



Ensuring Sufficiency & Sustainability



Background:

The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on all local authorities in England to secure sufficient Early Years and Childcare provision to meet the needs of working parents in their area. This provision is to enable parents to take-up or remain in work and includes education and training to help them obtain work. This is supported by research that: *“Children growing up in households connected to the labour market are likely to have a better understanding of the link between educational attainment and its consequences in later life.” HM Treasury et al. 2004*

Additionally the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) research demonstrates that participation in high quality Early Years provision improves a child’s longer-term educational attainment.

To ensure sufficiency of Early Years and Childcare provision requires an in-depth understanding of the local childcare market and the factors that determine supply and demand. There is a clear economic imperative for supporting existing Early Years and Childcare providers to remain open even if this involves a short-term subsidy, because the cost of creating new provision is prohibitive.

To ensure the sustainability of Early Years and Childcare provision requires the local authority to have a clear understanding of all of the factors that impact negatively on the finances of the provider, and have measures in place that minimise the effect of these factors.

Our aims:

- To regularly monitor the local Early Years and Childcare market to ensure that sufficient quality provision exists for all children and parents and any gaps in provision are addressed.
- To raise the profile of the crucial role that the private and voluntary Early Years and Childcare sector play in delivering sufficient quality provision
- To provide support to Early Years and Childcare providers to ensure that they remain sustainable, to ensure local sufficiency
- To ensure that the impact of decisions relating to school accommodation issues take into consideration the impact on co-located Early Years and Childcare providers to safeguard the local authority’s sufficient provision.
- To ensure that the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) contributes to sustainability
- To ensure that Early Years and Childcare provision is affordable

We will:

- Carry-out an annual assessment of the supply of and demand for all types of Early Years and Childcare provision
- Encourage existing and new providers to develop provision to meet any unmet demand
- Offer all necessary support and assistance to new and existing providers to enable them to deliver high quality, sustainable provision
- Raise awareness and support access to all free early years entitlements
- Offer advice and support to all Early Years and Childcare providers to ensure
- Offer advice and support to all Early Years and Childcare providers to ensure that all relevant requirements regarding regulations and standards are met
- Establish a panel that will consider the impact on Early Years and Childcare provision of local authority proposals
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

**Outcomes / Impacts:**

- Sufficiency of all types of high quality Early Years and Childcare provision to meet the needs of all children and parents
- A safe Early Years and Childcare sector
- A sustainable Early Years and Childcare sector
- An affordable Early Years and Childcare sector

Links to reference documents:

[Early Years Outcomes Duty Childcare Act 2006](#)

[Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[Post legislative assessments of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Childcare Act 2006 and Children and Adoption Act 2006 \(December 2011\)](#)

[Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012](#)

[Childcare Act 2006](#)

Halton Children's Centres

Background:

A Sure Start Children's Centre is defined in the Childcare Act 2006 as a place or a group of places:

- which is managed by or on behalf of the local authority to secure that early childhood services are made available in an integrated way;
- through which early childhood services are made available – either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere; and
- at which activities for young children are provided.

Early childhood services are defined as:

- early years provision (early education and childcare)
- social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents
- health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents
- training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents
- information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.



Our Aims:

Our overall aim is to fulfil the 'Core purpose' of Children's Centres, which is to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on families in greatest need of support, in order to reduce inequalities in:

- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills; and
- child and family health and life chances

We will:

- Make available a range universal early years services in the local area and help ensure access to quality affordable early years education and childcare.
- Ensure those families in greatest need are identified and can access early help services and activities
- Provide the services from Children's Centres and other venues that families feel comfortable attending, for example, community venues, home based outreach provision
- Through partner and commissioning arrangements provide help and support to families at the earliest opportunity.
- Share expertise with early years settings

- Meet all the standards set within statutory frameworks, comply with all Ofsted requirements and strive to ensure all our Centres are judged at least 'good' during inspection.
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes:

We will ensure that early help is embedded into the ethos of all work with children and families. Through our partnership and commissioning arrangements we will aim to:

- support the % gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFSP
- Support the % reduction of children who are obese in reception
- Support the % increase of infants breastfed at 6 to 8 weeks
- Support the % reduction in hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children
- Support the decrease of children aged 0 to 4 years living in households dependent on workless benefits



Inclusion and support for those with additional needs

Background:

Inclusion is about all learners and is about taking action to remove barriers to participation and learning. Inclusion also involves eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

We follow the five fundamental principles within the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice to support inclusive education. These principles are:

- A child with special educational needs should have his or her needs met
- The special educational needs of children will normally be met in mainstream schools or settings
- The views of the child should be sought and taken into account
- Parents/Carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education
- Children with special educational needs should be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education, including an appropriate curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum.



Our aim is that:

All schools and settings are committed to providing equal opportunities for all children regardless of race, culture, religion, language, gender or ability.

Practitioners develop the understanding of the importance of each child being seen as an individual.

We will:

- Work with practitioners to support them in the early identification of the needs of individual children
- Support schools and settings in the design and delivery of intervention packages as appropriate to meet the individual needs of each child
- Ensure that schools and settings feel confident, supported and resourced to provide an inclusive culture to meet the needs of all children, and that they know how to access enhanced provision for children if required
- Support schools and settings in their work with parents and carers, working with partners to ensure support is appropriate and offered in a timely way
- Use of the CAF process or other holistic assessments to support children with multiple family needs and support practitioners in its application
- Offer 'Early Support' to families with children with complex needs
- Support schools and settings in their audit of their learning environment and make changes to resources and teaching to ensure that children with SEN and disabilities are able to access all learning opportunities

- provide professional development activities that enhance the knowledge and skills of the early years workforce around additional educational needs, equality and diversity
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.



Outcomes:

- All providers have embedded inclusion within their practice
- Children have access to resources, books and displays that will value the differing needs of all children and reflect a positive image of the world in which they live
- Early years settings support children to become confident and active learners.
- All children have a sense of belonging, feel respected and valued
- Children with SEN and disabilities in early years settings are given access to all learning opportunities
- All children make progress appropriate to their stage of development

Halton Short Break Services

Background:

In 2011 additional government funding enabled Halton to build on existing services and further develop leisure activities for disabled children. They provided families with a break so they could do things they might not usually be able to whilst caring for their disabled child. The Short Breaks Regulations 2011 later placed these services on a statutory footing.

Halton's vision for Short Breaks is:

"Halton's vision is to extend the quantity and quality of Short Breaks to ensure disabled children and their families have a choice of services, increased access to inclusive services and opportunities towards independence. We will continue to develop engagement with families and young people towards the provision of flexible and responsive services that are child and family focused and led."



Our aims:

- To provide quality and effective short breaks for disabled children and their families
- To work to the principle that families of disabled children want to provide the best care and chances for their children to feel safe, be healthy and happy
- To provide services that will help families lead as ordinary lives as possible

We will:

- Produce an annual Short Breaks Statement that provides information for families about what support/ services are on offer and how to access them
- Provide services that enable families of disabled children to have access to, and an improved quality of live, within their communities.
- Provide choices for disabled children and their families to help them make decisions that can best improve their daily lives.
- Listen to the views of disabled children and families so we can continue to improve the quality of their lives.
- Work in partnership with disabled children and families to ensure they are fully involved in the development of support services.
- Support disabled young people to become more independent through a smooth transition into adulthood.
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Impact/ Outcomes

- A range of quality services support the whole family and improve quality of life

- Families accessing appropriate support based on assessed need and that helps prevent escalation of need wherever possible.

Integrated Working Support Team (IWST)

Background:

IWST aims to support professionals in the borough to identify and meet the needs of local families, utilising and modelling early intervention and integrated working to enhance outcomes.

This service is part of Halton's model of early help - Team Around the Family. It follows the principles outlined within the IWST statement of purpose: These include:



- Children and young people who have unmet needs requiring non statutory intervention will be addressed through Children's Trust partners
- All Children's Trust professionals will have the opportunity to become proficient in recognising the impact of Early Help
- Children, family and young people's needs will be co-ordinated by the use of the Common Assessment Framework
- Professionals will access Early Help support and advice through a single point of entry
- Children, young people and families whose needs travel through Halton's Level of Need framework will access support in a timely manner
- Families will experience a smooth transition between statutory and non-statutory services.

Our aim is:

To support all Professionals within Halton's Children's Trust who work with children, young people and families by enabling them to respond to unmet needs that cannot be met by their service alone.

We will:

- Offer all children's Trust professionals the opportunity to consult on identified unmet needs that their service cannot support alone
- Deliver training on Early Help principles and the CAF process
- Support professionals to implement and follow CAF processes effectively
- Resolve issues within the CAF process through development of the Early Help panel
- Facilitate multi agency discussion and Early Help response to identified needs through the Police Children and Vulnerable Adult reports
- Support Lead Professionals by offering Social work advice and assessment if needs are escalating
- Work closely with Children's Social Care in signposting to non- statutory support following CSC intervention

- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes:

- Professionals will become confident in identifying need at an early stage and be competent in the CAF process
- Families will receive support in a timely manner preventing escalation to statutory services
- Integrated working practices will become developed and enhanced
- Families will experience a smooth transition between statutory and non- statutory services
- Issues regarding CAF processes will be resolved swiftly
- Through implementing support at an early stage children will be supported in achieving positive outcomes



Early Help Family Work Service

Background:

Built from the foundations of the family support function within Halton's first Sure Start Children Centres, the Family Work Service has evolved in response to the growing need for a 'Team Around the Family' approach to support children with additional needs. Our service has a particular focus on early years and supporting those families in greatest need, living in Halton's communities.



Our Aims:

- To work in partnership with families where additional / enhanced needs have been identified
- To build on family strengths, removing barriers to progress and enabling families to fully access on-going support from universal services
- To deliver services utilising a holistic, integrated approach
- To work with families as soon as additional needs have become apparent to prevent escalation of unmet need warranting statutory / specialist intervention
- To work with partner agencies to ensure the most appropriate support plan is available to local families with enhanced needs

We Will:

- Alongside partners, undertake assessments and develop plans (Pre CAF & CAF) that can be used in conjunction with existing assessments where necessary (for example Attendance Planning Meetings, Children's Social Care)
- Undertake specific work with families identified as in greatest need, with a focus on prevention
- Deliver outreach support via home visits and the use of local, community based venues and resources.
- Utilise Children Centre, PVI and 2 year funded nursery settings to promote the inclusion of vulnerable 2 and 3 year olds within safe, stimulating, age-appropriate provision
- Support families as their needs reduce from requiring Social Care intervention
- Enable swift and easy access to personalised parenting support which may incorporate individualised 1:1 work, evidence-based group delivery and / or nurture-based support sessions to explore and reflect upon parents experience of being parented from their own childhood
- Be alert to the prospect of hidden harm for those in households where a parent's level of consistent care for their child may be compromised
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Impact / Outcomes:

- Families experience consistency when involved in assessment processes
- 'Referrals' from and to partner agencies is reduced so families benefit from seamless transition within the continuum of support
- Prompt access to advice / intervention from Children's Social Care where safeguarding concerns are identified
- Access to safety equipment and advice required within the home
- Enable families to help resolve their own difficulties and access services independently
- Children, parents and prospective parents are supported to reduce inequalities in child development, school readiness, parenting skills, health and life chances –consistent with our Children Centres' core purpose



Intensive Family Work Service (IFWS)

Background:

The Intensive Family Work Service was established following a redesign of Halton Borough Council's Team Around the Family model of early help in April 2012. This supported the delivery of early help and support - one of Halton's strategic priorities - to children and families.



The team is now a larger group of experienced staff, skilled in working with some of the most difficult to engage families. Their work is very much preventative, albeit at the highest point on Halton's levels of need.

Following the launch of the Government's 'Troubled Families' programme, the IFWS has extended its role to deliver Halton's 'Inspiring Families' project. This aims to improve the lives of those families in greatest need, ie who provide the greatest challenges in the community and are perhaps the hardest to engage. The team will include colleagues from other services including Education, YOT and Police with partners such as Housing and Youth Service joining as members of the extended team for the family according to their individual needs.

Our Aims

- To provide intensive proactive support to those families in greatest need
- To improve the life chances of children living in families with multiple problems
- To support families to deal the difficult issues affecting their lives and others, and encourage them to make positive changes
- To make a positive impact on communities by reducing the level of crime and anti-social behaviour of families who live in their neighbourhood

We will

- Alongside partner agencies, undertake holistic family assessments to establish the needs of each individual and the whole family unit.
- Implement coordinated support plans that aim to meet the needs of all family members
- Access additional, more specialist support services that enhance existing assessments where necessary
- Provide intensive support/ intervention with each family member
- Make extensive efforts to encourage family members to engage with services
- Challenge families whose behaviour affects others and advise them on strategies to enable them to make positive changes in their lives
- Support families to access services that will assist them to function better and lead more fulfilling lives
- Work in partnership with all agencies to provide robust consistent support to enable families to deal with the issues that affect their family functioning

- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Impact/ Outcomes

- Improvement in family functioning leading to a reduction in criminality, anti-social behaviour and homelessness
- Improvement in educational attainment of young people and the employment prospects for those of working age.
- Improvement in the relationships within families, with their peers and the wider community
- Reduction in risk of family breakdown and number of young people coming into care.
- Improvement in the physical, mental and emotional health of family members.
- Reduction in the use of drugs and alcohol.
- Families will establish community networks which they can use instead of professional networks to assist them to manage difficult situations in future.
- Family members will have opportunities to participate in community activities.



Midwifery Services

Background:

Our service is the only midwifery service within a Community Trust in the North West and this unique position facilitates the service to work within the primary care team and the multidisciplinary partners within the borough.



As well as providing clinical care during antenatal, home birth and the postnatal period the midwifery service also provides a pre-conceptual service. Support and information is provided through groups such as our award winning 'Earlybird', which provides an information giving session for every woman once pregnancy has been confirmed. This ensures early access to promote a healthy lifestyle and informed choice.

Parent education sessions for women, fathers and grandparents groups ensure the health and wellbeing message is being shared with all the family. Our aqua-natal sessions promote exercise for a healthy pregnancy. The role of the midwife working in the community setting is integral to the public health of the woman and her baby and has an effect on the on-going health of the whole family.

Our Aims:

- To provide pre-conceptual care and advice to women hoping to become pregnant.
- To provide holistic, accessible and equitable care to pregnant women in Halton in a non-judgemental caring environment by competent confident practitioners.
- To enable access to the midwifery service by all pregnant women whether self-referred or referred by the GP.
- To ensure women are supplied with up to date verbal and written research based information at their first contact with the service in order that they may make informed decisions about their care.
- To continue to care for women throughout their pregnancy and postnatal care.
- To provide a home birth service within the borough.
- To liaise with and refer to the multidisciplinary team when additional care or services are required by the mother/baby/family.

We will:

- Work in partnership with the multidisciplinary team across the primary and secondary care settings to ensure a seamless service for mothers, babies and families.
- Identify women through risk assessment who may be in need of additional services/support and signpost them to the relevant facilities.
- Continue to provide support and education services antenatally to women, their partners and the wider family (grandparents).
- Maintain the provision of specialist midwives within the service.
- Maintain our links with the children's trust and wider partners.

- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes/Impact:

- Healthy mothers, babies and families.
- Early detection in the antenatal period of any physical and/or emotional problems that may affect the mother, baby and family.
- Established care pathways with partners to ensure early intervention and prevention of escalation.
- Increased breastfeeding rates within the borough.
- Decreased smoking rates.
- Reduction in obesity rates.

Links to relevant documents:

- [Midwives Rules. NMC 2012.](#)
- [Midwifery 2020: Delivering Expectations. Department of Health 2012](#)
- [Toward Safer Childbirth. Royal College of Obstetricians 2007.](#)
- [Healthy Child Programme. Pregnancy and the first five years of life. Department of Health 2009.](#)



Halton Health Visiting Service

Background:

Effective high quality preventive health care in childhood is the foundation to a healthy society, as the early years lay the foundation of health and wellbeing in late years.

Halton's Healthy Child Programme (HCP) is the early intervention and prevention public health programme offered to local children and their families. The HCP offers every family a programme of screening tests, immunisations, developmental reviews and information and guidance to support parenting and Healthy Choices – all services that children and families need to receive if they are to achieve their optimum health and wellbeing.

The HCP's universal reach provides an invaluable opportunity to identify families that are in need of additional support and children who are at risk of poor outcomes.



Our aims:

- To work with partners to deliver a Universal Healthy Child Programme from Pregnancy to 5 years of age.
- To work with local communities to enable them to provide for themselves, and to ensure families know about the services available.
- To provide evidence based care packages to those families with additional needs – intervening early to prevent difficulties developing or worsening.
- To contribute to high intensity multi agency care packages led by specialist services, for families where there are safeguarding / child protection concerns.

We will:

- Work in partnership with other agencies to strengthen support for families
- Identify families in need of additional support through the Universal New Family offer.
- Identify children who are at risk or poor outcomes.
- Sign post families to wider support provision.
- Make appropriate referrals to specialist services.
- Ensure that contact with the family routinely involves and supports fathers.
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes / Impact

- Strong parent-child attachment and positive parenting resulting in better social and emotional wellbeing among children

- Care that helps to keep children healthy and safe.
- Early detection and action to address developmental delay, abnormality and ill health
- Early recognition and treatment of growth disorders.
- Healthy eating and increased activity, leading to a reduction in obesity.
- Prevention of some serious communicable diseases
- Increased rates of initiation and continuation of breast feeding.
- Improved readiness for school.



Links to relevant documents

[Health Visitor Implementation Plan 2011 – 15 A Call to Action \(Department of Health 2011\).](#)

[Healthy Child Programme: Pregnancy and the first five years of life. \(Department of Health 2009\)](#)

[National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. \(Department of Health 2004\)](#)

Halton Health Improvement Team

Background:

Working within Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust, the Health Improvement Team offers a range of local and tailored services to help improve the health and wellbeing of those living in Halton. The team takes a multi-disciplinary approach working with local clinicians and health and social care colleagues. We have a record of delivering innovative, evidence based and measurable interventions.



Health Improvement for Early Years

The Health Improvement Team is involved in a range of work that helps our young children and families have the best possible start in life. Early Years incorporates a variety of services to promote the health and wellbeing of families, Early Year's settings and professionals. Services include weaning sessions, healthy lifestyle sessions, the Healthy Early Years award, Healthy Early Years Food award and Baby Welcome award. All of the services have an overarching aim of helping parents and communities build better lives for themselves and their children.

Our Aims:

- Early years children and their families are supported by health improvement team universal and targeted preventative programmes.
- To ensure that all Health Improvement Team programmes are easily accessible and delivered according to community needs.

We will:

- Ensure that a successful Halton Healthy Early Years Status (HHEYS) has been developed and implemented in order for Early Year's settings to demonstrate a commitment to the health and wellbeing of children, families, staff and the wider community. All settings working towards the award will have achieved the Healthy Early Years Food Award and have been accredited with the Baby Welcome Award.
- Support the established HHEYS Steering group which will provide the opportunity for partners, settings and volunteers to build stronger more established working relationships to promote a collaborative approach to health and wellbeing in Early Year's settings
- Work with over 200 families in Halton through weaning sessions which include key health messages, cooking demonstrations and support in order to equip them to make informed decisions regarding weaning choices.
- Make available a range of accessible early years healthy lifestyle programmes in the local area with programmes tailored to families' needs, such as Early Years Fit4Life.
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes/Impacts

- Children and families have access to range of health improvement preventative programmes
- Programmes are accessible to families re venues, times etc
- Children and their families will be supported by a seamless partnership approach
- Parents/carers are supported with weaning/healthy lifestyle advise

Health Improvement for children and young people

The Health Improvement Team offers a wide range of programmes for children and young people such as:

- Targeted and universal weight management/healthy lifestyle programmes for children, young people and families. The Fit 4 Life programme consists of 4 or 6 week programmes covering fun physical activity sessions and healthy eating education.
- The Healthy Schools programme has 100% involvement from schools in Halton and offers a wide range of support to schools on healthy lifestyles.



Our Aims:

- Children, young people and their families are supported by health improvement team universal and targeted preventative programmes.
- To ensure that all Health Improvement Team programmes are easily accessible and delivered according to community needs.
- To work with local schools on a range of healthy lifestyle programmes

We will:

- Ensure that all programmes are developed and reviewed by children, young people, parents/carers and professionals in order to create an effective programme for all.
- Provide resources for children, young people and parents/carers that have been developed in partnership and are used during sessions to support learning.
- As parents play a significant role in supporting their children's health, parental engagement has been established and forms a significant part of the programmes.
- Ensure increased knowledge and/or fitness is achieved by the majority of participants.
- Ensure that the introduction of a structured staff competency process, staff training and regular quality checks have been made to ensure a quality standard of delivery throughout the programmes.
- Work closely with schools to deliver a range of activities to suit every schools need and tailor programmes accordingly.

Outcomes/Impacts

- Children, young people and their families have access to range of health improvement preventative programmes
- Programmes are accessible to families re venues, times etc.

- Children and their families will be supported by a seamless partnership approach service.
- Parents/carers are supported with weaning/healthy lifestyle advice

Halton School Nursing Service

Background:

Lifestyles and habits established during childhood, adolescence and young adulthood influence a person's health throughout their life. Failure to meet the health needs of children and young people stores up problems for the future.

The School Nurse universal offer builds on the Health visiting programme for 0-5s, thus providing the opportunity for synergy between the public health input initiated within early years and provision for school-aged children.



The Healthy Child Programme sets out the good practice evidenced based framework for prevention and early intervention services for children and young people aged 5–19 offered universally to local children and their families.

The Healthy Child Programme offers every family a universal programme of screening tests, immunisations, health reviews and information and guidance to support parenting and Healthy Choices – all services that children and families need to receive if they are to achieve their optimum health and wellbeing.

Our aims:

- To work with partners to deliver the Universal Healthy Child Programme from 5-19 years old
- To work with local communities to enable them to provide for themselves and to ensure families know about the services available.
- To provide evidence based care packages to those families with additional needs – intervening early to prevent difficulties developing or worsening.
- To contribute to high intensity multi agency care packages led by specialist services, for families where there are safeguarding / child protection concerns.
- To involve children and young people in the development of the school nurse service.

We will:

- Work in partnership with other agencies to strengthen support for families
- Identify families in need of additional support through the Universal School Nursing model
- Identify children who are at risk of poor outcomes.
- Sign post families to wider support provision.
- Make appropriate referrals to specialist services

- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in Section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes / Impact

Improved:

- readiness for school;
- population vaccination cover;
- Emotional wellbeing of looked after children

Contribute to reduced:

- School absences;
- Tooth decay in children aged 5;
- Excess weight in 4-5 and 10-11;
- Hospital admissions due to unintentional or deliberate injuries
- Under 18 conception rates;
- Chlamydia in 15-24 year olds;
- Smoking prevalence in 15 year olds;
- Alcohol and drug misuse.



Links to relevant documents

- [Maximising the Contribution of the School Nursing team. Vision and Call to Action. \(Department of Health 2012\)](#)
- [Healthy Child Programme: From 5-19years old \(Department of Health 2009\)](#)
- [A public health outcomes framework for England 2012](#)
- [National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. \(Department of Health 2004\)](#)

Paediatric Speech & Language Therapy Service

Background:

Since Sept 2007, the SLT Service has undertaken service modernisation, in line with the Every Child Matters agenda, in order that families in Halton can access a continuum of SLT services; universal, targeted, specialist. Lead clinicians are identified for key clinical groups to ensure that SLT service pathways reflect the current evidence base.

Further service development is on-going in response to national guidance, The Bercow Report, the Healthy Child Programme, Transforming Community services, alongside other health colleagues in Halton, and within available resources.



Service activity reflects priorities in Halton's Children and Young People's Plan and support the delivery of the Children's Centre core offer locally.

Working parties ensure on-going collaboration with Health / Education colleagues to implement current children's services guidance e.g. Lamb report.

Our aims:

For every child and young person in Halton to have the communication skills that enable them to achieve their educational, emotional and social potential.

The Paediatric SLT Service will provide a continuum of services that offers choice to children, young people and their families. The service will aim to be equitable and timely with a strong emphasis on early identification and intervention. The service will be committed to partnerships with parents and other multi-agency colleagues. Central to working will be supporting and developing the knowledge and skills of the wider children's workforce around speech, language and communication.

We will:

- Provide equitable, timely, accessible and appropriate assessment and treatment of those children presenting with Speech, Language, Communication (SLC) or feeding and swallowing difficulties (specialist level service).
- Provide training and advice to parents and local Health/Education colleagues to support development of children's speech, language, communication and feeding skills and identify children at risk early (specialist and targeted level service)
- Provide targeted services that increase capacity within the children's workforce so that:
- the risk of preventable communication/feeding difficulties (due to deprivation) can be reduced

- Children with less specific communication/feeding difficulties (that do not require specialist intervention) can be supported effectively within their familiar environments (i.e. home/school).
- Provide health promotion activities and training to local Health/Education colleagues and parents to enhance good models of communication/feeding behaviour with young children (Universal level service).
- Provide efficient/cost effective support for a large proportion of the population.
- Provide coordinated support for vulnerable children/young people with SLCN and their families through integrated working.
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in Section 2 of the strategy.



Outcomes / Impact

The Service will contribute to:

- a) Be Healthy – improve social and emotional development, reduce risk of mental health problems
- b) Enjoy and Achieve – contribute to improvements in educational attainment
- c) Make a Positive Contribution – improve employability, reduce risk of offending/anti-social behaviour

Links to relevant documents

- Early Support Guidance DfE 2012
- [Allen report 2011](#)
- [Think Family Guidance DCSF](#)
- [Grasping the nettle C4EO 2010](#)
- [ICAN Cost to the Nation 2006](#)

Integrated Behaviour Support Team (IBST)

Background:

IBST was set up in September 2009, to support children with additional needs and their families when their behaviour was difficult. Early assessment and intervention can reduce the development of intense complex behaviours and limit the likelihood of these behaviours becoming entrenched.

IBST offers a service to children aged 0-19 with additional needs: learning disability. There is an acknowledgement that children under the age of 5 may not have a diagnosis, and support can be given to children under going assessment via Woodview Child Development Centre. Children who meet the referral criteria are offered a screening appointment during which, a care plan is developed to identify the needs of the child and ensure effective support is provided by the relevant service.



Aims of the service:

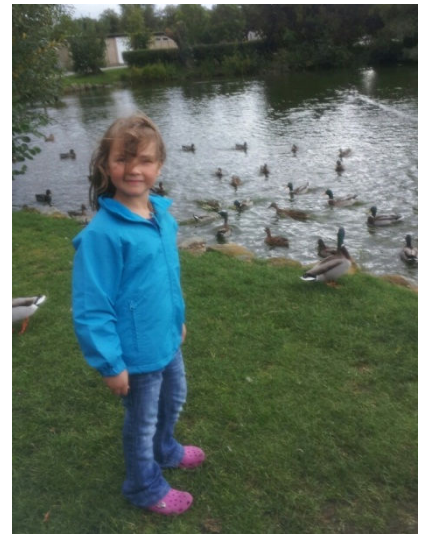
- To work with all agencies to provide support for children with additional needs aged 0-19.
- To work within the local community to provide an accessible service for all children and their families who access the service.
- To provide evidence based care and support to children and their families within the service.
- To provide behavioural assessments and consultations to children, their families and professionals.
- To develop positive support strategies, support to families to implement strategies and review effectiveness of same.

We will;

- Offer specific specialist support to children and their families who have difficulty sleeping.
- Provide Stepping Stones Parenting Groups throughout the year.
- Participate and contribute to multi-agency assessments.
- Offer a consultation service for professionals working with children whose behaviour is difficult to manage.
- Offer training to professionals on an ad hoc basis in relation to Sleep and Managing Difficult Behaviour.
- Participate in the assessment of children on the ASD Pathway: Pre School and School Age.
- Adhere to the early help principles and objectives agreed by the Trust, as highlighted in Section 2 of the strategy.

Outcomes/Impact

- Positive parent-child relationships, which will increase the emotional wellbeing of parents and their children.
- Development of positive social relationships with children and their peers to improve their resilience.
- Early detection and intervention to prevent the development of complex behaviours.
- Increase the knowledge of universal services supporting children and their families, thus increasing their ability to support families where children have difficult behaviours.
- Reduce the number of children receiving medication: i.e. Melatonin.
- Improve family's resilience.



Relevant documents:

- [Triple P reduces problem behaviour in children and improves parents' wellbeing and parenting skills. Nowak, C. & Heinrichs, N. \(2008\). A comprehensive meta-analysis of Triple P - Positive Parenting Program using hierarchical linear modelling: Effectiveness and moderating variables. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 11, 114-144.](#)
- [Sleep Matters: The Impact of Sleep on Health and Well Being. Mental Health Foundation 2011.](#)
- [National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. Department of Health 2004.](#)
- [Valuing People Now: a new strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century: A White Paper. Department of Health 2009](#)

APPENDIX 3: ABOUT HALTON CHILDREN'S TRUST

Halton Children's Trust is a partnership of public and voluntary sector organisations working together to meet the needs of children and families. The Children's Trust exists to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Halton because we believe that this can be done more effectively by all agencies and organisations working together.

The Early Help Strategy has been endorsed by all Children's Trust partner agencies, as listed below:

- NHS Halton & St Helens
- Bridgewater Community Health Care Trust
- Halton Clinical Commissioning Group
- Public Health
- 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- St Helens and Knowsley NHS Trust
- Halton Borough Council Children and Enterprise Directorate
- Halton Safeguarding Children Board
- Cheshire, Warrington and Halton Youth Offending Service
- Cheshire Constabulary
- Jobcentre Plus
- Children & Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum
- Halton Family Voice
- National Careers Service
- Halton Housing Trust
- Halton Association of Secondary Head teachers
- Halton Association of Primary Head teachers
- Riverside College
- Cheshire Fire & Rescue