

**ANNUAL REPORT
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2013 – MARCH 2014**



Cllr. Mark
Dennett
Chairman
Children &
Young People
PPB

“I always like to start by looking back over the previous twelve months. During the year we reviewed our current Children and Young People Plan, which was coming to an end and set out our vision for the next three years. This vision highlighted the need to provide services to families and young people in a holistic way to meet the needs of all our young people and make sure that we have the right support services for our most vulnerable. The Board also continued to scrutinise our support for our children in care and families who come into contact with the social care system, ensuring that the systems and support are in place to protect our young people. In fact it was noted that Halton was once again one of only two authorities in the North West to meet both of the governments targets for adoption.

Children missing from home or care and also children in danger of sexual exploitation was also a focus of the Board this year. We want to make sure that there is a multi-agency and multi-authority approach to respond to what is becoming a more complex issue.

This year, as with the last few years, our children and young people have continued to improve in their educational attainment. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our students who did so well, and also thank the parents, carers and teachers who supported them in achieving these fantastic results. The results show Halton’s continued commitment to drive up standards and improve the opportunities available to all of our young people as they move into adulthood.

Looking back I think it has been a good and varied eight year for the board and I would like to thank all of the members of the board, as well as all of the officers involved for their continued support and contribution.

Finally, I would like to conclude this report by thanking all of the officers and members (of all parties) involved in all of the ‘additional duties’ that take place to make sure that the children and young people receive that best care and support. Duties such as being a school governor with all of the responsibilities that that entails, statutory inspections of our care homes (Regulation 33) or of our social worker teams (Climbié visits), membership of the Local Safeguarding Board, the Adoptions Panel, the Children and Young

People's Trust, to name but a few of the 'extra duties' that both members and officers perform to support and improve the lives of the children and young people of our Borough."

Councillor Mark Dennett

Chairman, Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2013/14 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors M. Dennett (Chairman) Cllr Horabin (Vice Chairman), E. Cargill, Cassidy, Fraser, P Hignett, K Loftus, Logan, C Plumpton Walsh, Woolfall and Co-optee Miss E. Lawler.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the work of the Council (and its partner agencies within Children's Trust Arrangements) in seeking: to ensure that children and young people in Halton have the best possible start in life and opportunities to fulfil their potential and succeed; and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year, and set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during the year.

Annual Review of the Children and Young People Plan 2011-2014 and Children and Young People Plan 2014-2017

The annual review of the Halton Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 was considered. The Board also reviewed the Children and Young People Plan that had been developed for 2014-2017. It endorsed the Trust vision that:

"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"

and supported the three key Children's Trust Priorities for the next three years:

- *Working together to deliver services in a joined up way to make sure children and their families get the right help at the right time (Early Help and Support)*
- *Working together to plan and fund outcome focused services for children and families, that deliver high quality services that are value for money (Integrated Commissioning)*

- *Working together to focus services towards the needs of our most vulnerable children, young people and families to 'close the gap' by improving health, education, social and cultural outcomes.*

Halton Family Voice

The Board explored the role of Halton Family Voice looking at its membership, how parents and carers can get involved the key work it undertakes, examples of good practice and its plans for the future.

Children in Need, Child Protection, Children in Care

Over the last twelve months there has been particular focus on Children in Need, Child Protection, Children in Care both in Halton and Children in Care of other Local Authorities as well as Care Leavers. The Board has discussed the increasing number of contact and referrals as well as the new single system for contact and referrals. The increasing number, age and profile of children in care, along with the reasons children come into care and the arrangements in place for notification and support for children in care in Halton from other Local Authorities. The Board has also considered social work capacity and case loads. The outcome of the Peer Practice Review undertaken in July 2013 was discussed and shared with the Board.

Children Missing from Home, Missing from Care and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The Board were updated on the structures and reporting mechanisms put in place for children missing from home and care. This outlined the pan Cheshire approach and the links between the Merseyside and Cheshire Police. Members were advised that each Local Authority LSCB had approved the arrangements for addressing CSE through the Pan Cheshire Strategic Group.

Children in Care Pledge

The Board received a report on the revised Children in Care Pledge which they fully endorsed.

Adoption Scorecard

Despite the challenging thresholds Halton continued to meet both thresholds in the adoption scorecard and was one of only five North West Authorities to do so.

Learning and Achievement Strategy

The Board considered the Strategy for Learning and Achievement, Halton's approach to building sustainable school improvement within the context of school to school support.

Review of Alternative Provision

The Board supported the review of Alternative Provision through a multi agency approach. Through the review it is aimed to provide a consistent route to alternative provision with clear entry and exit routes, create a menu of full time and part time provision, ensure there is a robust good quality assurance framework and robust data.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14

The Board decided that during the municipal year (2013/14) it would carry out a Topic reviews examining the following area:

- Children's emotional health and wellbeing; and
- how we can further develop the effectiveness of Independent Living Skills

Service Plans

This year the Board continued to take significant steps forward in the way it engaged with the service planning process. The PPB Members were consulted and identified issues and activities they hoped could be prioritised in the service plans.

Members regularly considered matters relating to Safeguarding in particular in the work of the Halton Children's Trust and Safeguarding Children's Board. Members also received reports on complaints and the compliments services had received and the learning from these. Reports were also received on Inspiring Families providing the progress to date and a number of case studies as well as a report on the number of schools converting to academy status and the financial and policy implications.

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work, please contact Ann McIntyre on 0151 511 7332 ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk