

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

**DATE:** 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People

**PORTFOLIO:** Children & Young People

**SUBJECT:** Halton Local Area SEND Strategy 2021-25

**WARDS:** Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To advise the board on the recently approved local area SEND Strategy for 2021-2025 (see appendix 1).

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

2.1 Members are asked to consider the presentation and raise any questions they may have on the SEND strategy and its implementation.

2.2 Member request annual progress updates on the delivery of the SEND strategy to ensure that leaders remain informed and able to enquire and intervene as deemed necessary.

### **3.0 SUMMARY**

3.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2015 set out the statutory requirements and practice required from local areas to meet the needs of children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

3.2 The SEND Code of Practice requires statutory bodies in local areas to work together to meet the education, health and care needs of children and young people with SEND. The Halton SEND Strategy for 2021-25 therefore will be a joint strategy under the governance of the Halton Health and Wellbeing board and Children's Trust and it is not the sole responsibility of Halton Borough Council to deliver.

3.3 The Halton SEND Strategy for 2021-25 has been co-produced in partnership with other statutory bodies from education and health including schools, and the CCG, as well as parent carer and young people's representatives.

3.4 Across the Halton local area the responsibility for improving the outcomes, life chances, services and provision in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) sits with the SEND Strategic Partnership. The partnership will own and oversee the area's SEND Strategy to ensure that the outcomes are improving and objectives from the strategy are being met. The Strategic Partnership is currently focussed on the development of the performance management tools and delivery action plans to enable this to happen in a realistic but ambitious way.

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

##### **4.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

The purpose of the 2021-2025 Halton SEND Strategy is to improve outcomes for, and the lived experience of, children and young people with SEND and their families. Currently children recognised as having a special educational needs and/or disability make up over 17% of the areas school age population therefore the strategy will make a significant contribution towards ensuring that Halton's children and young people have the best possible start in life.

##### **4.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Young people with SEND and Learning difficulties are disproportionately likely to be NEET or unemployed. Elements of the strategy are aimed at improving employability and skills for these young people leading to meaningful employment.

##### **4.3 A Healthy Halton**

Children and young people with SEND are disproportionately likely to be overweight, lack opportunities to access healthy lifestyles and leisure activities and die young. Improving health outcomes for these children and young people is a core objective of SEND Strategic Priority 3: Preparation for Adulthood.

##### **4.4 A Safer Halton**

None.

##### **4.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

## **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 Without a coherent and joined up strategic approach to meeting the needs and improving the life outcomes and lived experience of children and young people and their families it will be considerably more challenging for the local area to meet its statutory and morale duties.
- 5.2 Individual objectives within the strategy will in some cases contain projects that may require separate risk analysis. Where this is the case these will be overseen by the SEND Strategic Partnership.

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 Individual objectives within the strategy will in some cases contain projects that require separate and individual equality impact analysis and assessment as part of good practice. Where this is the case these will be overseen by the SEND Strategic Partnership.

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

None



# SEND Strategy 2021-2025

## Introduction

**Halton is committed to ensuring inclusive education, health and social activities of children and young people aged 0-25 years.**

We expect that all services will work to enable all children and young people to develop, learn, participate and achieve their best possible outcomes.

Children's human rights are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to protect children and young people's rights around participation in society/their local community; protection from discrimination and exploitation; and provision covering their welfare e.g. education, healthcare etc. The UNCRC also says that **all adults** must do what is best for children and young people – this means that **we all** have a role to play to ensure that these rights are honoured.

The UNCRC says that all children and young people have rights and should be supported to:

- live, develop, be well informed, included and can make their own choices;
- be enabled to flourish and thrive for who they are as people as they grow up;
- be heard, have their views respected and participate in society as anybody else;
- have equal access, opportunities, be safe and not be discriminated against.

## Vision

In Halton, the rights within the UNCRC will be at the heart of our practice.

Halton SEND Strategic Partnership believes that **every** child and young person has a right to thrive, flourish and lead an ordinary life. This should be without being labelled or restricted, no matter what their disability or ability.

We want every child and young person to:

- feel safe; valued; included and connected;
- be given opportunities to be active and for physical and mental health;
- be empowered to make choices that shape their lives with appropriate supportive relationships.

## Principles

**This Strategy sets out the plans we will put in place over the next five years**, so that we can drive forwards our vision, priorities, outcomes and performance indicators to improve our practice.

To do this, we will need to:

- have improved our culture, ethos and practice with better processes and communication for working better together;
- ensure that children, young people and families have access to the right support, at the right time and at the right level to meet their needs;
- pave the way for children and young people as they grow up to thrive and flourish in their future life;
- offer **inclusive** education or learning opportunities in an appropriate setting serving their needs.

## What do we mean by inclusive?

Inclusion is like the golden thread that has a direct influence on all aspects of children, young people and families' lives.

### Attending

- ✚ Able to learn/train within environments which best meet their needs;
- ✚ Engaged in the life of their local community with groups/organisations/services that have inclusive culture and values.

### Included

- ✚ Voices are heard and they are involved in decisions about things in their life;
- ✚ Opportunity to participate and engage as fully as possible in all aspects of their life;
- ✚ Enabled and supported to participate in learning/training.

### Achieving

- ✚ Able to achieve their full potential;
- ✚ Have access to a developmentally appropriate curriculum or training/learning that is tailored to meet their needs.

### Supported

- ✚ Their life is benefitted by the ethos, culture, teaching practices and relationships provided through groups, organisations, services and education settings;
- ✚ They are supported to overcome set-backs and barriers in their life.

## Our Priorities

We believe the following priorities will help us to drive the work of Halton Children's Trust to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

### Working Better Together

By working better together needs are identified early and met at the right time, by services that are fully inclusive in practice and processes.

### Preparing for Adulthood

We will maximise young people's ability to thrive, be independent and reach their goals for adult life.

### Empowerment (Communication and Co-production)

Professionals will work positively with children, young people and families to provide them with access to the information they need to build provision and services together.

### Inclusive Education for CYP with SEND

Children and young people can fulfil their potential supported by educational settings.

## Our Key Outcomes

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority: Working Better Together</b></p> <p><b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families will have to repeat themselves less often “tell it once”.</li> <li>• Support will have been identified earlier for children and young people to have the “right support, at the right time and at the right level” which changes to meet their needed as they grow up.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority: Preparing for Adulthood</b></p> <p><b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b></p> <p>Young people will tell us they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel healthy and feel safe</li> <li>• Have job and control of their money</li> <li>• Feel valued, included, active and involved</li> <li>• Have a choice of housing</li> <li>• Have friends and a social life</li> <li>• Have intimate relationships</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority: Empowerment</b> (Communication and Co-production)</p> <p><b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, young people and families tell us they feel in control, well supported and able to influence the system of support for their child/young person.</li> <li>• Children, young people and families tell us that they feel respected and that their voice is heard by services.</li> <li>• Feedback from children, young people and families regularly sought and acted upon.</li> <li>• Children, young people and families tell us that we have provide them with easily accessible, jargon-free information that we have developed and produced together.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority: Inclusive Education for CYP with SEND</b></p> <p><b>How will we know we have achieved it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils’ progress and achievement will be in line with their peers compared to statistical neighbours and national benchmarks.</li> <li>• More pupils with EHCPs educated within mainstream schools, with fewer pupils educated outside the Borough.</li> </ul>

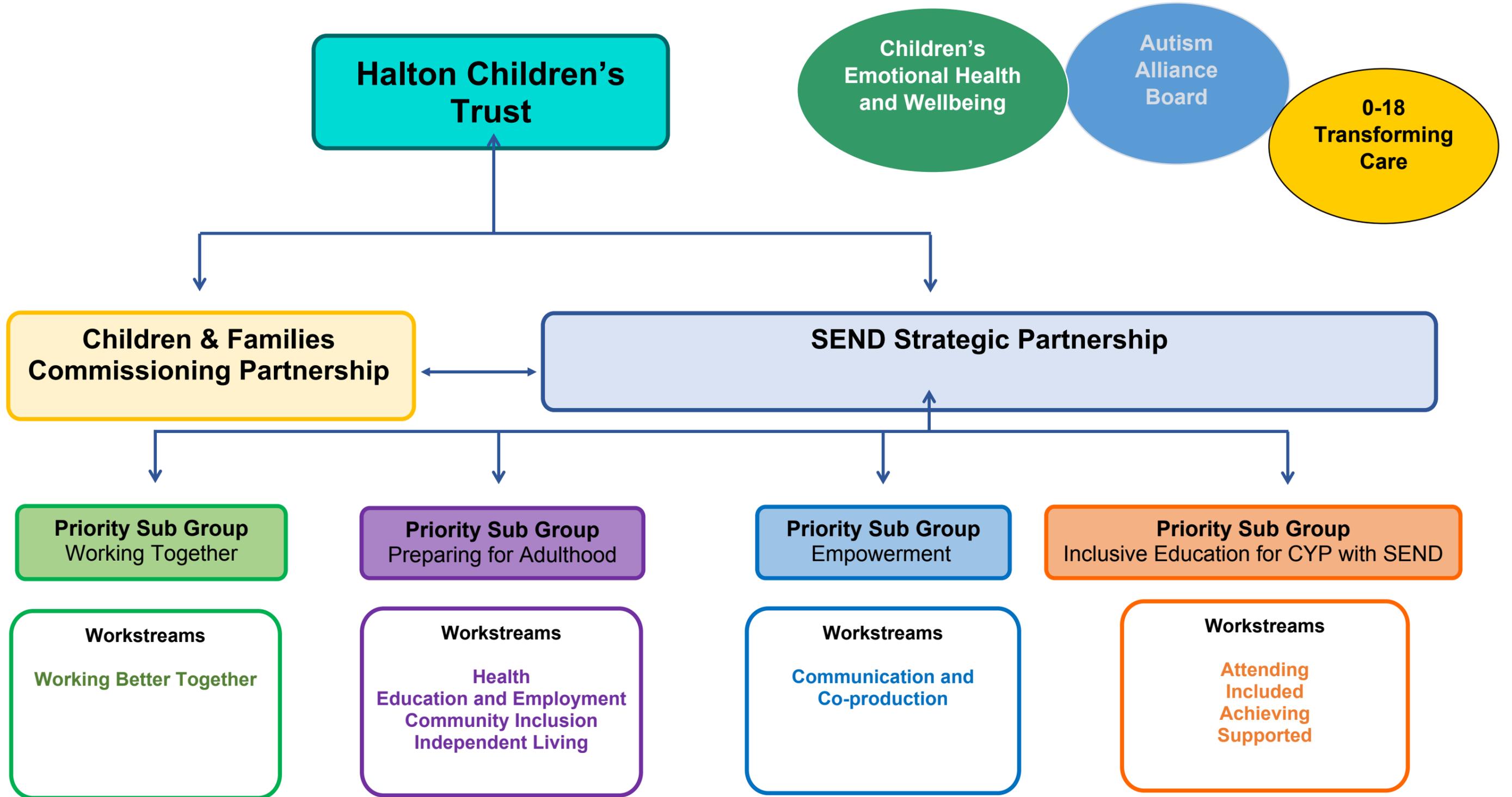
## Who will be accountable for delivering this Strategy?

The SEND Strategic Partnership is responsible for leading this strategy and accountable to Halton Children’s Trust for delivery and achievement of the priorities and outcomes over the next five years.

Priority Groups will sit underneath the SEND Strategic Partnership and will develop action plans to drive forwards the work within each priority which will outline the objectives, actions, timescales and a clear set of performance indicators that will be used to review and monitor progress.

The need to establish improved feedback mechanisms from children, young people and families is a key element in being able to accurately measure the success of this Strategy.

# SEND Strategy Governance 2021-2025



## Working Better Together Priority

By working better together needs are identified early and met at the right time, by services that are fully inclusive in practice and processes.

### Working together, we will:

- Develop and monitor a set of creative and challenging outcomes measures to improve collective understanding about where we currently are in Halton delivering SEND services.
- Review and improve the health pathways to reduce delays in diagnosis and ensure appropriate post-diagnostic support is available.
- Improve awareness and use of learning disability annual health checks at 14 years+ and hospital passports with GPs and families to better support and meet the needs of young people.
- Review, revise and further embed the SEND Joint Commissioning Framework to ensure services provided are good quality, accessible, inclusive and support children and young peoples' right to lead a diverse and flourishing life.
- Improve person centred practices and information sharing systems/protocols between education, health and social care services/partners to deliver a Halton "tell it once" approach so that families can avoid having to repeatedly provide the same information and enables more timely assessments for children and young people.
- Support children and young people's access to education/learning by implementing integrated arrangements for specialist equipment (through Halton's Specialist Equipment Policy).
- Identify earlier the support needed by children and young people, so the "right support, at the right time and at the right level" is available and reviewed/monitored to address any changes needed as they grow up.
- Ensure timely and appropriate access to additional support funding for early years settings and that the referral routes and processes are well understood.

## Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Priority

We will maximise young people's ability to thrive, be independent and reach their goals for adult life.

**Note:** These objectives flow from actions already taken through the PfA 'vision' or work to do that was identified as part of the existing PfA action plan.

Health	Education and Employment	Community Inclusion	Independent Living
<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve awareness and equip children, young people and families to be empowered, confident and capable to make decisions about their life and manage their own health needs.</li> <li>• Improve communication links between professionals and families, provide clear information for families relating to services.</li> <li>• Provide better health transition processes and support to meet the needs of children and young people to access schools/settings is effectively sourced and delivered e.g. post-diagnosis support, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy.</li> <li>• Promote and encourage children, young people and families around leading a healthy lifestyle. This includes physical, emotional and mental health.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a clear education pathway that includes a range and flexibility of Key Stage 4 and 5 provision.</li> <li>• Have in a place a clear pathway to employment that provides a wide range of opportunities through education that includes work experience, supported employment, and further development of supported internships and supported apprenticeships that lead to paid work and a career.</li> <li>• Improving awareness and better planning for seamless transition to their next phase of education and employment.</li> <li>• Raise awareness about positive inclusion to support increased opportunities for young people with SEND for employment with local employers.</li> <li>• Improve the timing, delivery, communication and support within educational settings for children and young people to access specialist careers support, advice and guidance to ensure they have a good transition to education, employment and training.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a SEND friendly Borough with inclusive communities by working together with the business and voluntary sector communities to improve social inclusion for young people with SEND.</li> <li>• Strengthen the support provided to children and young people to develop the skills they need as they grow up e.g. increase their independence, travel training, involvement in their local community, employability and future aspirations.</li> <li>• Ensure that children and young people have access to robust information, advice, support and guidance that meets their needs which enables seamless transitions e.g. between schools/settings, services and children to adults.</li> <li>• Support, nurture and encourage children and young people to develop their circle of friends and relationships with others as they grow up.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that professionals understand the needs of children and young people, so they can access person centred support/services which help focus their strengths and links with social and community networks.</li> <li>• Increase the use of assistive technology and equipment to support independence.</li> <li>• Ensure that vulnerable young people including those with SEND have access to universal and targeted youth services, support that recognises their vulnerability to exploitation and improves their education of areas such as, illegal substances, social media, healthy relationships etc</li> <li>• Ensure Halton Housing Strategy reflects the needs of young people with SEND for sufficient provision of appropriate accommodation and care to support independent living, ensuring that we are planning for their future need.</li> <li>• Providing support to carers to ensure they can continue in their role, whilst accessing education, employment and leisure services.</li> <li>• Improve person centred processes including better information sharing systems between education, health and social care services/partners.</li> </ul>

## Empowerment Priority (Communication and Co-production)

Professionals will work positively with families and provide them with access to the information they need to build provision and services together.

### Working together, we will:

- Develop a Co-production Charter with children, young people and parents/carers to set out our commitments and the value of parent/carer, child and young person's voice. The charter will have **accountability** at its heart and be supported by a programme of workforce development across the system.
- Ensure that children, young people and their parents/carers are made aware of their right to access easy-read, jargon free, impartial information, advice and support.
- Ensure high quality, accessible communication and support is available to children, young people and their parents/carers through regular updates and information sharing via the Local Offer, Halton SENDIASS, Halton SEND Carer Forum (HSCF), SEND Strategic Partnership etc.
- Further develop and maintain a co-produced accessible, accurate and comprehensive Local Offer.
- Develop regular feedback processes for parents/carers, children and young people to understand how well we are doing and to inform improvements as needed.
- Maximise transparency of decisions, improve communication and accessibility of all our processes.
- Celebrate the achievements of our children and young people.
- Strengthen and widen our engagement in working better together with children, young people and their parents/carers.
- Increase the wider shared understanding of what we mean by 'independence' to enable young people to take measured risks e.g. increase the use of independent travel training.
- Co-produce a workforce development toolkit that supports an inclusive culture, high standards and the fulfilment of everyone's potential.
- Ensure children and young people no longer feel: "Young people who have disabilities believe that there is a 'them and us' divide among their peers in Halton. They are appreciative of the initiatives which leaders support but want to see more being done at a strategic level" (quote taken from Local Area SEND Inspection 2017).

## Inclusive Education for CYP with SEND Priority

Children and young people can fulfil their potential supported by inclusive schools/settings.

Attending	Included	Achieving	Supported
<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to inclusive mainstream provision for children and young people with SEND by better enabling schools to provide support.</li> <li>• Develop a SEND Sufficiency Strategy to ensure that Halton has sufficient, appropriate education provision to meet the needs of children and young people in the Borough.</li> <li>• Improve attendance rates for children and young people in schools, by developing a clear understanding of non-attendance and ensuring that a full time offer is available to all.</li> <li>• Improve schools' confidence and understanding to deliver provision to children and young people with SEND, in order to increase access to mainstream education of children and young people with EHCPs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster and support schools and settings to have nurturing and enabling environments to ensure that the individual needs of children and young people are well met and that they are fully included.</li> <li>• Ensure that inclusion funding for early years settings is accessible, timely and supports inclusion.</li> <li>• Have clear, easily understood processes and improved access to the required support for example, equipment, personal budgets etc.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain a range of outreach services to support children and young people to remain in mainstream education.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the progress and attainment rates for children and young people at SEN Support and with EHCPs across all key stages.</li> <li>• Ensure that a rigorous system is in place and monitored in order to track the achievement of pupils at a local area level across all educational provision.</li> <li>• Ensure the Graduated Approach is used more effectively by schools/settings to improve inclusive practices, earlier identification and intervention for children and young people at SEN Support level.</li> <li>• Ensure that an alternative provision offer that meets the needs of Halton's children and young people is developed (Sufficiency Strategy).</li> <li>• Ensure that every child has access to a developmentally appropriate and varied curriculum tailored to meet their needs.</li> <li>• Improve support within schools/settings for children and young people to access specialist careers support, advice and guidance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working together we will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide high quality individual support plans and EHCPs with clear and appropriate outcomes.</li> <li>• Improve the multi-agency engagement by all partners within the EHCP assessment and review process to ensure that assessed needs are based on a multi-agency approach/advice for education, health and social care support required by the child/young person to achieve positive outcomes.</li> <li>• Maintain a range of training and support for parents and siblings that is accessible, well communicated.</li> <li>• Ensure health and care needs assessments are undertaken as part of the EHC process to make plans more holistic.</li> <li>• Ensure that the EHCP assessment and review process is clear, transparent, used, monitored and well understood across all agencies, partners and in particular with young people and families.</li> <li>• Increase the access and availability of personal budgets.</li> <li>• Provide better details of pathways to emotional health and well-being support for children and young people, which considers the specific needs of children and young people with SEND.</li> <li>• Provide good wraparound pre, post and no support by appropriately trained staff for children, young people and their families. Ensuring that young people are supported to understand their own diagnosis.</li> </ul>