



Adult Social Care Annual Report 2021/22



Foreword

During 2021/2022 there were many challenges nationally as the country emerged from the peak COVID-19 pandemic response. These challenges were felt locally, within every one of our communities, as the legacy of the pandemic became more evident. Some of the most vulnerable people in our society, whom Halton Adult Social Care supports, had been disproportionately affected by the restrictions on movement and contact necessary to keep people as safe as possible during uncertain times. Whilst social care teams worked throughout the peak pandemic response, often in innovative and flexible ways to continue to provide essential care and support, a return to more normal ways of delivering services and increased social contact were welcomed not only by the people we serve, but also by the teams of people who deliver those services.

Many opportunities were identified as a result of responding to the pandemic that shaped services during 2021/22. Adult social care in Halton has made the most of this learning, from establishing the Halton Integrated Care and Frailty Service, to re-examining how we make best use of community resources in the delivery of social care. Building back after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted was the focus and that shall continue in forthcoming years.

I hope that you find this Adult Social Care Annual Report informative and that it gives you a flavour of the breadth of work that is going on in Halton.

Councillor Joan Lowe

Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

What does social care in Halton look like?

Halton Borough Council's Adults Directorate is responsible for assessing the needs of adults with care and support needs in-line with Local Authority duties of the Care Act 2014. Under the Care Act, local authorities have responsibility to understand what services are likely to be needed in the future and make sure that people who live in their areas:

- Receive services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious, or delay the impact of their needs.
- Can get the information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support.
- Make decisions about how they want their needs to be met and

be involved in preparing their care and support plan.

- Have a range of provision of high quality, appropriate services to choose from.

Social care in Halton is made up of a number of services offering a wide range of interventions to best meet the diverse needs of our communities. Adult social care works closely with a number of partners including health, education, housing providers and voluntary and community organisations to signpost and connect people to the help these organisations can provide in their neighbourhoods. A brief summary of the council's key adult social care services can be found below.

Care Management

Registered Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, and other care staff work with individuals and families to help people maintain a good quality of life. Through connecting people to support in their communities, or arranging appropriate social care support as a result of frailty, illness, disability or mental health condition, people's needs can be met in a holistic way.

Mental Health

Services offer prevention, identification of mental ill health, early intervention and access to support, treatments and recovery. Working closely with local partners such as health, education and employers, our mental health teams look to improve the determinants of poor mental health, creating a place-based approach to improving mental wellbeing.

In House Care Homes

The Council has a portfolio of four residential care/nursing homes and an intermediate care home. In our care homes people with a disability, health condition or long-term support need because of frailty, receive 24-hour care and support.

Halton Intermediate Care and Frailty Service (HICaFS)

Integrated with health, this service supports the hospital discharge process and reablement of patients after a hospital stay. It also supports people through social care, occupational therapy and nursing where they can be cared for at home, avoiding unnecessary hospital admission or re-admission.

Independent Living Services (ILS)

ILS Services helps people maintain their dignity and independence to remain living in their own home. The Housing Solutions Service helps people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness under the Council's statutory duties. The Halton Integrated Safeguarding Unit works with services, providers and the public to ensure that people are safeguarded against abuse and neglect.

Community Services

This service area aims to help people live a fulfilling life, retain their independence, learn new skills and avoid social isolation through undertaking meaningful activities that they choose. The service offers a wide range of opportunities for people with health conditions, learning or physical disability to engage in voluntary work, training and social activities.

Halton adult social care - building back after the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From spring 2021 people in England saw COVID-19 restrictions start to lift and the government's implementation of their roadmap offered a route back to a more normal way of life.

This meant that the most vulnerable people within our communities were able to have greater freedoms to resume valuable contact with friends, families and the services that they rely on, in more familiar ways. Direct care services were able to make steps to 'reopening' more fully, increasing their capacity to pre-COVID-19 levels.

However, the impact of the pandemic restrictions during the previous year were far reaching for people who access adult social care services, with the post-COVID-19 pandemic legacy becoming more evident. Counteracting the impact of increased social isolation

and the effect that had on not only mental wellbeing, but exacerbating some physical conditions, working to resume the breadth of social care services and having an eye to future demands were the focus during 2021/22.

As the UK emerged from the peak pandemic response there was opportunity for adult social care in Halton to reflect on the working practices and service developments that were put in place to manage the sudden increase in demand, in extraordinary circumstances, and take learning to shape the future of services. Some examples where the learning from the pandemic response has shaped Halton's adult social care during 2021/22 are explored later in this report.

The direction of adult social care during 2021/22

Adult social care in Halton operates in a landscape that is directed not only by Government policy, but also the local priorities agreed by Halton Borough Council. The social care priorities for

2021/22, identified by the Halton Health Policy and Performance Board, are shown below with a summary of progress achieved during that time frame.

Priority	Progress made during 2021/22
Sustainability of the Care Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Transforming Domiciliary Care Programme worked to implement a model for domiciliary care that delivered clear outcomes for service users promoting independence, wellbeing, and value for money. ✓ Managing the demand for care by improving the interface between in-house reablement care and domiciliary care, including a shared care record and embedding a robust Multi-Disciplinary Team approach to care provision. ✓ Work was progressed to develop a recruitment strategy to ensure the demand for care can be met. ✓ Partnership work was ongoing with NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (now the Integrated Care Board) and care home providers to ensure continued improvement of the health and wellbeing of people who live in care homes. ✓ A dedicated Care Home Development Project Group continued its work to enable stakeholders to work collaboratively to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share best practice and resources via sector-led improvements; • Deliver dignified, quality, outstanding care within residential and community settings; • Be proactive and identify early warnings of potential reductions in quality; • Provide value for money and sustainability; and • Provide seamless transfers of care to and from hospital.
Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implementation of the Halton Carers Strategy delivery plan. ✓ Checklist/leaflets developed to support carers with navigating the benefits system, registering a death and situations when the caring role ends. ✓ Carers Centre held a number of Dementia awareness-raising sessions. ✓ Publicity to aid the recognition of carers on Carers Rights Day on 25th November 2021 took place. ✓ Opportunities for young carers continue to be developed, and during/following COVID activities over Zoom have been very popular including yoga, learning to cook and mental health awareness sessions. ✓ Following feedback after the pandemic, work was begun on the viability of introducing Carer ID cards, to support carers and the people they care for having easier access to services and places within the borough.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work commenced to integrate Adult Social Care within a primary care-based hub-working model across the borough. ✓ Development of the Halton Immediate Care and Frailty Service

<p>Integration of the Health and Social Care</p>	<p>(HICaFS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ongoing work to further develop our Place-Based Partnerships, as part of the move towards Integrated Care Systems. Place-based partnerships will lead the detailed design and delivery of integrated services across their localities and neighbourhoods. The partnerships will involve the NHS, local councils, community and voluntary organisations, local residents, people who use services, their carers and representatives and other community partners. In Halton our place based partnership is called ‘One Halton’.
<p>Strength based approaches to care management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Care Management took a shift from a ‘Needs’ and ‘Deficit’ model to a more ‘Strengths’ and ‘Assets’ based approach, promoting personalisation of care. ✓ Work was undertaken with a Professor of Manchester Metropolitan University, who has championed strengths based approaches at six pilot sites in the North West. The learning from the pilot sites will inform the approach taken by Halton as the project progresses.
<p>Homelessness and Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As we emerged from the pandemic the focus shifted to providing a ‘move-on pathway’ for people to obtain accommodation beyond the Government’s ‘everyone in’ approach adopted during the peak pandemic response. ✓ Implementation of the Rough Sleeping Strategy reduce the impact of rough sleeping through prevention and local solutions. The strategy and associated delivery plan set out the local picture and how Halton plans to provide specialist support for vulnerable people at risk of rough sleeping or who are sleeping rough.

The changing face of Adult Social Care – Major reform announcements made by Government.

Faced with unprecedented challenges of increasing demand and complexity of needs, along with moving through the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, social care services strived to continue to deliver the highest possible standards of care. The impact of COVID-19 on people’s health and wellbeing has been far-reaching, and for some, will have long-term implications. Therefore, services will

need to think differently and respond in different ways going forward to manage changing demands and capacity whilst meeting diverse needs and delivering quality, personalised care and support. The publication of the long-awaited suite of adult social care reform white papers, and introduction of the Health and Care Bill during 2021/22, set out the Government’s vision for how the sector might achieve this.

Preparing for change – Adult social care delivery

In December 2021, the Government published its White Paper for reforming the **delivery** of Adult Social Care ([People at the Heart of Care](#)) which sets out a 10-year vision and includes three key objectives:

- People have choice, control, and support to live independent lives
- People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support

- People find adult social care fair and accessible

The objectives would be achieved through the proposed reforms shown in the summary below. Further detail about each of the reforms is available from the Department of Health and Social Care's [Transforming Social Care website](#)

Social Care Workforce

- A new professional development plan for the social care workforce to improve care quality, make the profession an attractive career, and provide more mental health and wellbeing resources.

Innovation & Technology

- Digitisation of social care, making the most of technology to support people to live independently and improve their quality of care.
- Support for local authorities to launch innovative new ways of delivering care in the community, improving the choice of care available to individuals.

Information & Advice

- The Government will work with Local Authorities to evaluate new ways to help make it easier for people to navigate their local adult social care system.
- The Government will identify effective ways for local authorities to support people with autism and learning difficulties into employment.

Empowering unpaid Carers

- Change in services to support unpaid carers, recognise their contribution and focus on their health and wellbeing.

Right care, right place, right time

- A commitment to connect housing with health and care and drive the stock of new supported housing.
- Fund a new service to make minor repairs and changes in people's homes, to help people remain independent and safe.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Duties

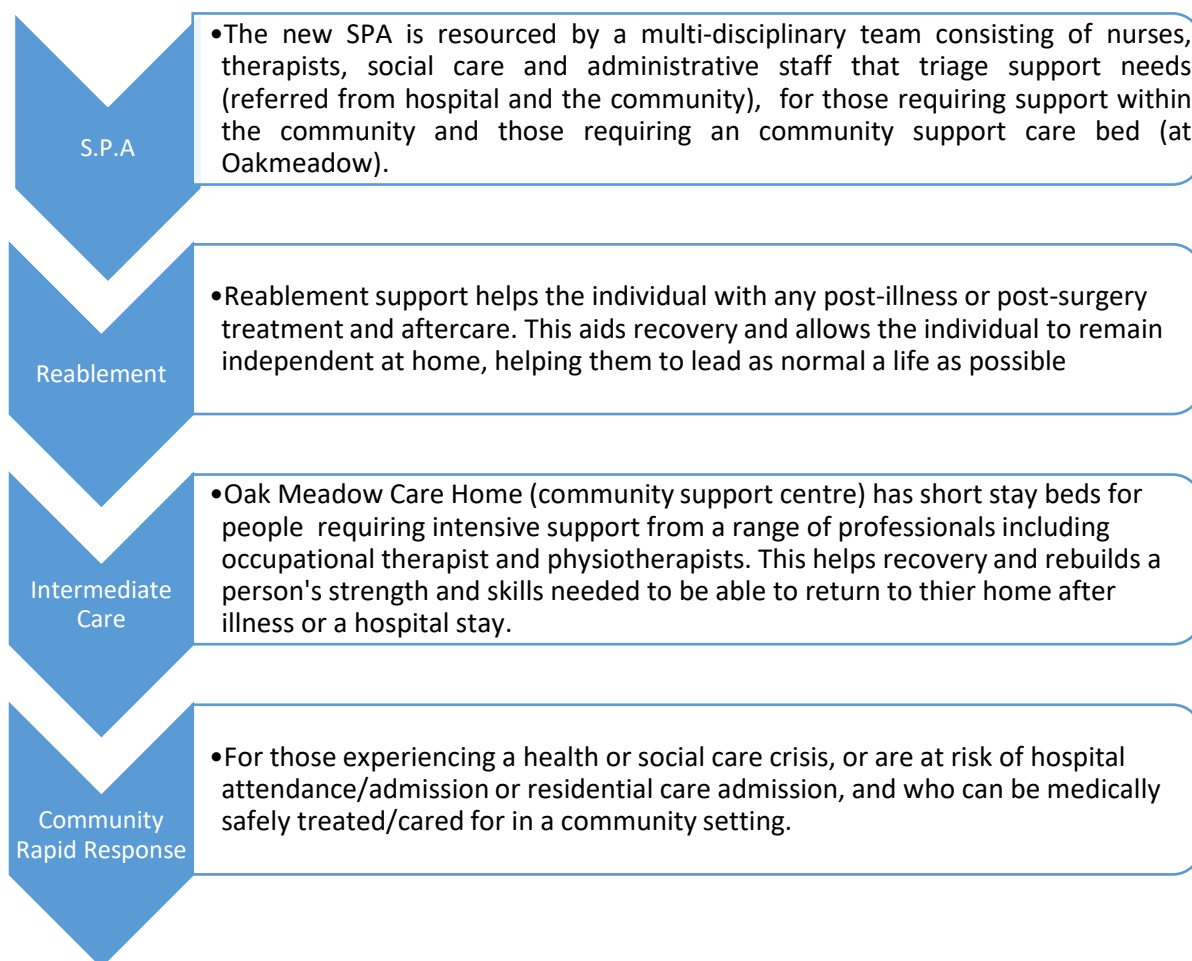
- A new duty on CQC to review how Local Authorities deliver certain adult social care functions.
- A duty for CQC to review how partners are working together within the areas of an Integrated Care Board.

Responding to capacity and demand through integrated working – The launch of the new Halton Integrated Care and Frailty Service (HICaFS)

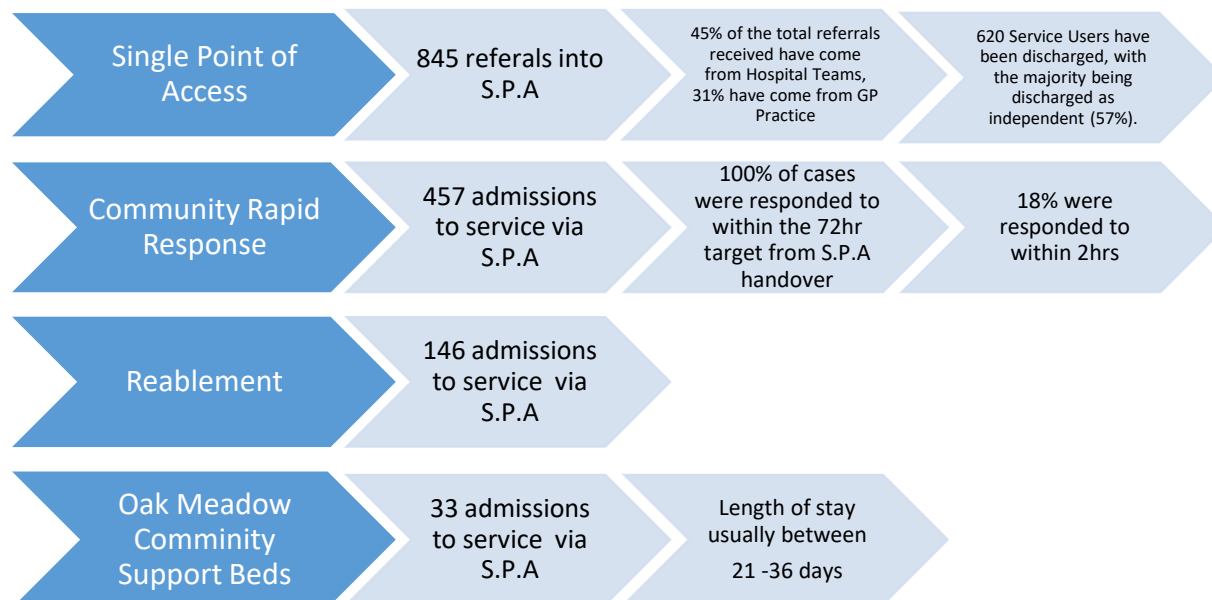
The local health and social care system took learning gathered in response to managing the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and identified new ways of working to manage capacity and demand, whilst maintaining quality of care and positive service user experience. The launch of the Halton Integrated Care and Frailty Service in December 2021 is an example of this, and replaced the services previously provided separately in Halton by the Rapid Access Rehabilitation Service, the Capacity & Demand Team and the Halton Integrated Frailty Service.

By bringing together the functions of each of the services, and developing a new single point of access (SPA), HICaFS ensures the seamless, safe management of referrals for people requiring Adult Community Services, potentially preventing hospital admission, supporting early discharge from hospital, promoting independence and coordinating care closer to home for those needing rehabilitation after a hospital stay or illness.

HICaFS is made up of the 4 service elements, shown below:



This approach supports the integration of health and care services to improve the experience of people in need of health and social care support. Whilst the service is relatively new, and outcome data is not yet available, initial outputs from the service launch in December 2021 up until the end of March 2022 show:



Halton adult social care and direct care services – service developments emerging from the pandemic response

Social Work Care Management

Strengths and assets - During 2021/22 the move towards strengths and asset based approaches to social care, in-line with recommendations from the Chief Social Worker in England, that was initiated pre COVID-19, was restarted. Strengths and asset based approaches focus on individuals’ strengths and not on their ‘deficits’. Personal strengths can include skills and abilities developed through work, hobbies or life experiences and assets might include a person’s access to family, social and community networks. Adult social care, working closely with a Professor of Manchester Metropolitan University,

who wrote the ‘Strengths Based Handbook’ endorsed by the Chief Social Worker for England, undertook work with Halton to assist a review our local processes and how we can integrate the strengths and assets based approach to achieve the best outcomes for people who use our services.

Digital technology in social care - In responding to the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, social care has had to change the way that it interacts with people who use the service, particularly when face to face contact was restricted. Making best use of digital technologies supported the strengths and assets approach by tapping into people’s skills gained through

increased use of digital technology though the COVID-19 pandemic (with social care practitioners always mindful that use of technology should not replace essential social contact).

Using digital technologies has helped:

- ✓ Social Workers meet professional standards and improve access to learning and development opportunities through E-learning, for example.
- ✓ Promotes flexible involvement between social care practitioners and people using services that can often better meet people's needs. For example providing information in digital format or enabling people to connect with services available their community in a timelier manner.
- ✓ Connect people and offer choice though signposting to services and engaging with services on line at a time and location convenient to them.
- ✓ Promoting well established telecare (such as Life Line) to assist people at risk of falls through frailty or disability.

Social Care Health Check - Every year a 'Social Work Health Check' is undertaken nationally by the Local Government Association. It aims to assess how areas are performing against the [Standards for Employers of Social Workers](#). Organisations (mostly local authorities) are able to invite their social work staff to complete an online survey that asked social workers about the eight standards. Responses were translated into an average score. Halton ranked **20th nationally** (out of 147) and **6th regionally** (out of 23) as a good social work employer, according

to the overall average score, Last year, Halton ranked 24th nationally and 5th regionally. Halton's highest rated standard was standard 1 – *strong and clear social work framework* and the lowest rated standard was standard 6 – *continuing professional development (CPD)*. This mirrors the national picture. Halton participates in this annual survey as just one of the ways to help keep a check on how supported the workforce feel and it can help identify how to further support workforce, which in turn helps the provision of quality social care in Halton.

Some of the comments captured in the survey about why people work in social work in Halton are shared here:

The ethos we work with and the person centered work we complete

My team work really well together to support each other with workload, the reality is if there was a bigger team we would all be under less pressure. We are all currently working above capacity.

I feel my organisation are supportive and there is always someone whether that be a manager or colleague alike, that I could go to for support.

Halton Borough Council In House Care Homes

Halton Borough Council have a portfolio of 1 residential care home, 3 nursing homes with specialist nursing care and for people living with dementia and 1 community support centre.

Key developments as the homes emerged from the pandemic included:

- ✓ Reducing the COVID-19 social isolation within the homes, reopening communal areas and lifting visiting restrictions in a measured way to protect residents and staff.
- ✓ Restarting community engagement activities with community partners such as the Council's Age Well team.
- ✓ Maintaining infection control practices for care homes in light of the continuing threat of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.
- ✓ Supporting the delivery of the NHS COVID-19 booster / Flu

programme for residents and colleagues.

- ✓ Delivering ongoing support for staff mental and physical wellbeing.
- ✓ Continuing to work with education partners to support the introduction of apprentices and students placements in the homes.
- ✓ Working with partners to review and embed enhanced training opportunities across the care homes. Initiated new ways of supporting care home nurses to continually develop their skills and expertise, through the procurement of a web based learning tool.
- ✓ Putting in place plans to implement enhanced nursing care provision across the sector.
- ✓ Refurbishment plans in development for the care homes commencing 2023

Day Services

In Halton, Day Services make up part of the council's Community Services and come under the remit of the Adult Social Care. Day Services ensure that people aged 18 and over with a learning disability, or complex support needs, are supported to maintain control over their lives and remain independent for as long as possible. This approach supports the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the person, and their families/carers, through retaining or developing skills and meaningful, occupational experience in their life.

Day services offers people experiences and training in:

- Retail
- Hospitality & Catering
- Small scale agriculture and animal care
- Artisan Ale production
- Hairdressing
- Arts and crafts

Here, one of the day services staff provides an insight into how working though COVID-19 impacted the service, and how returning to pre pandemic operations has benefited the people who use the service:

'Whilst reopening day services has had its challenges and everyone has had to adjust to a new way of working, the pandemic has forced us to evaluate the delivery of the Day Services, leading to some creative and innovative changes.

Through 'lockdown', initiatives such as regular welfare calls, shopping runs, a COVID-19 testing clinic and garden visits designed to support Parents, Carers, volunteers and people who attend the service, it was apparent how the health crisis had increased fear and anxiety for everyone - and just how essential the Day Service had been pre-pandemic in improving the quality of life for those involved.

These lines of communication with people who use our services enabled us to respond quickly to their needs when reopening their much valued Day Services. A person who uses day services has commented:

..."I was sick (of being) at home... there was no- one to speak to: I was lost without that call ... I am so, so glad to get back at Murdishaw. I just love seeing my friends again"... (AW)

We were all forced to adapt to new routines during lockdown, for which many of the people we support was unsettling and traumatic. Day Services' steadfastly supportive and reassuring approach through the transition back has meant that we have been able to assuredly increase the numbers of places for people whilst keeping them, their Carers, families and staff at the lowest possible risk of infection.

Evaluating the Day Service provision and recognising how certain activities can add a social value to the wider community has

led us to forge new partnerships, post COVID-19.

The emergent community focused activities such as the Community Pantry, are helping to enrich the lives of the people we support: providing the opportunity to develop new skills and promoting social integration within their own communities by providing those communities with an invaluable service.'

In addition, Day services also manages the Halton Shared Lives Service which provides care for people who need support due to age, illness or disability. The service provides day care and short breaks to enable people to live an ordinary life in the community.

Shared Lives Carers use their own home as a base. The person being cared for shares in the family life of the Carer, including their wider network of family and friends in the community. Carers provide company and meaningful activities in a comfortable and safe environment. The aim is to promote independence and choice and to improve the health and well-being of the person being cared for.

Shared Lives Carers are self-employed and are paid according to hours worked and the number of people being cared for. Generous tax allowances mean that Carers don't pay income tax on their earnings.

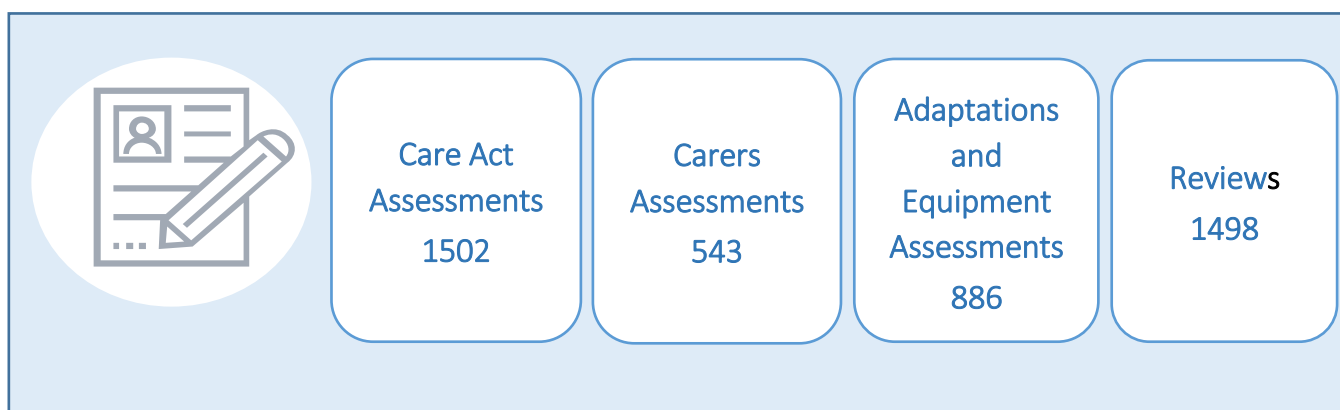
For further information, contact Shared Lives – 0151 511 6677 (Monday- Friday 8am – 6pm). Join our team of Carers. It could be the most rewarding thing you'll ever do!

Key figures

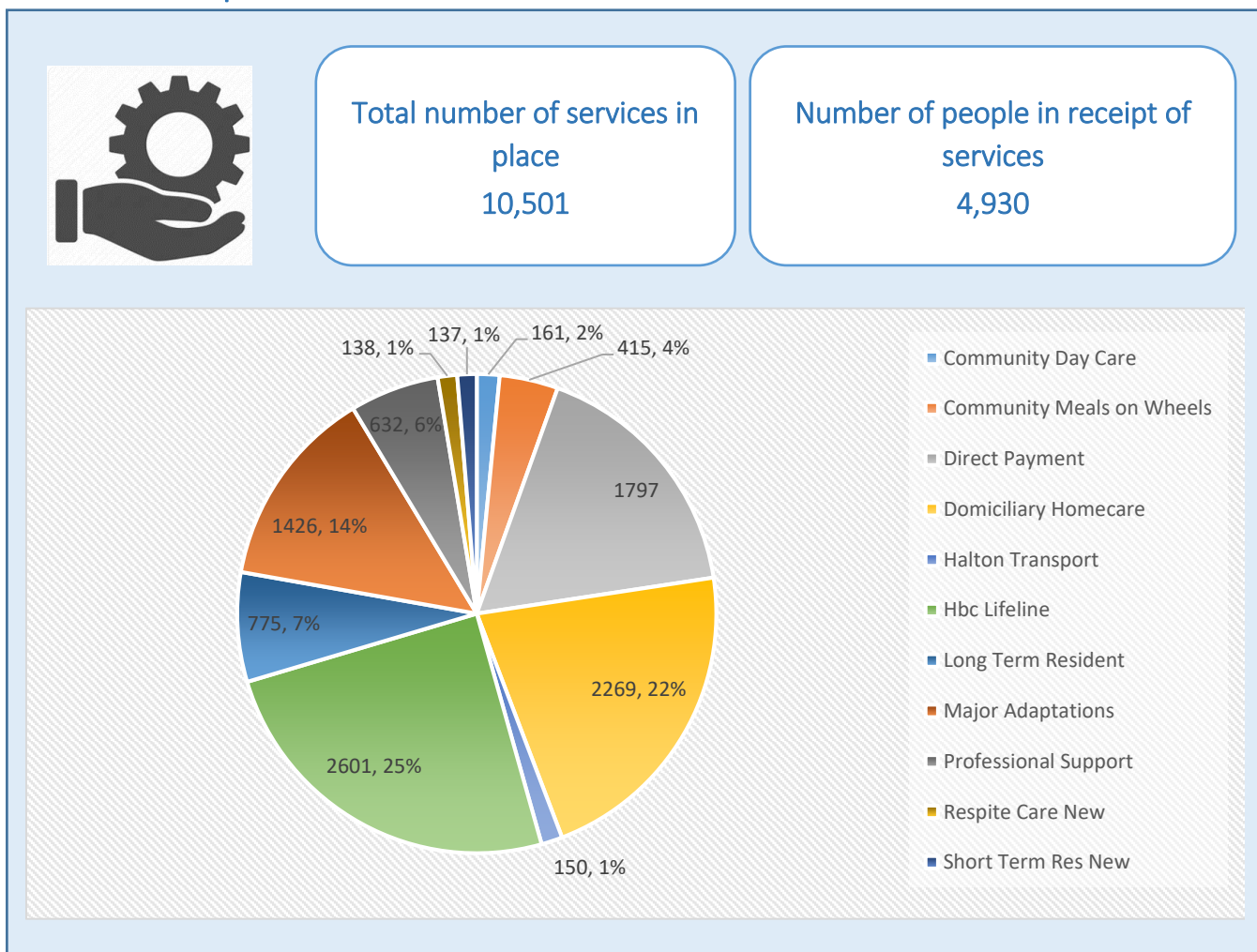
Collecting and analysing data helps adult social care services in Halton to monitor capacity within the services, changes in demand for services, provides evidence to direct service

developments and helps allocate resources across the range of interventions we offer. Below are some key figures to illustrate the work of social care in Halton during 2021/22.

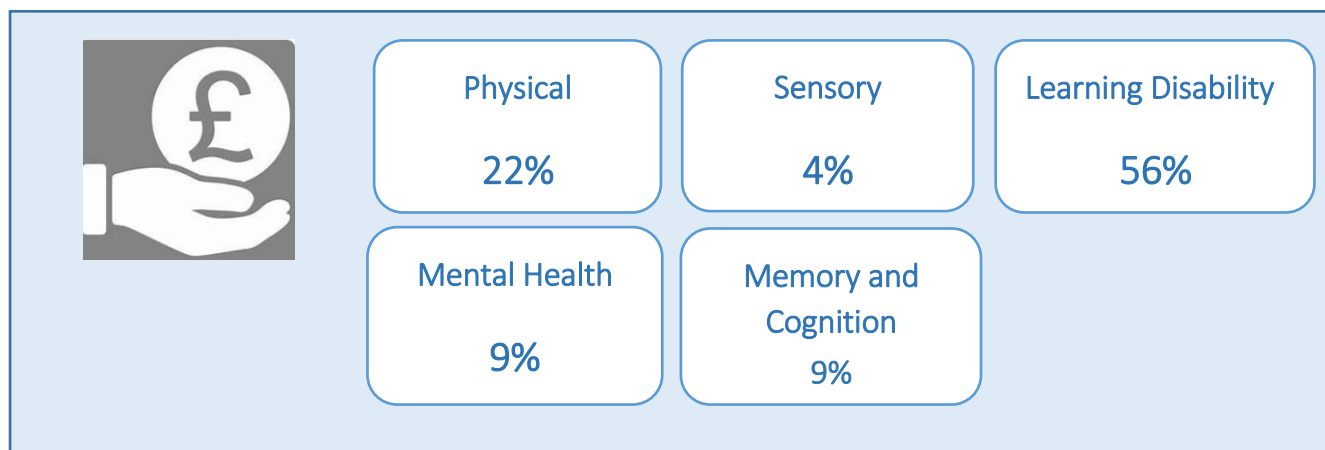
Assessments



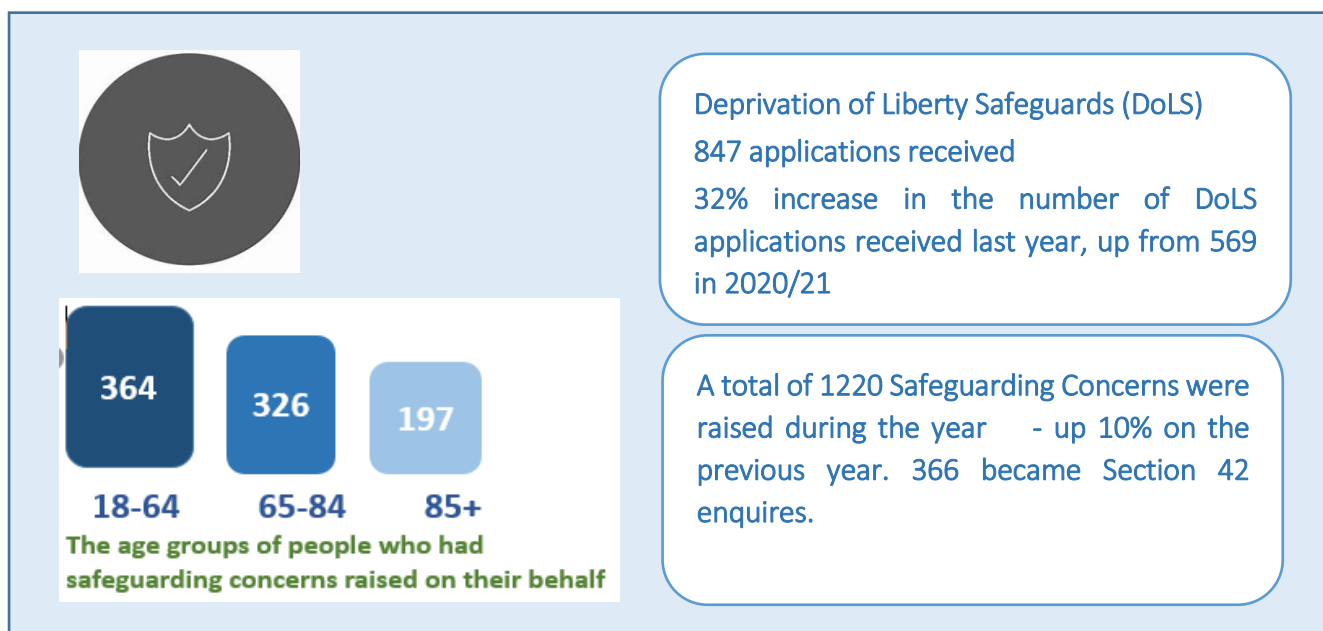
Services in place



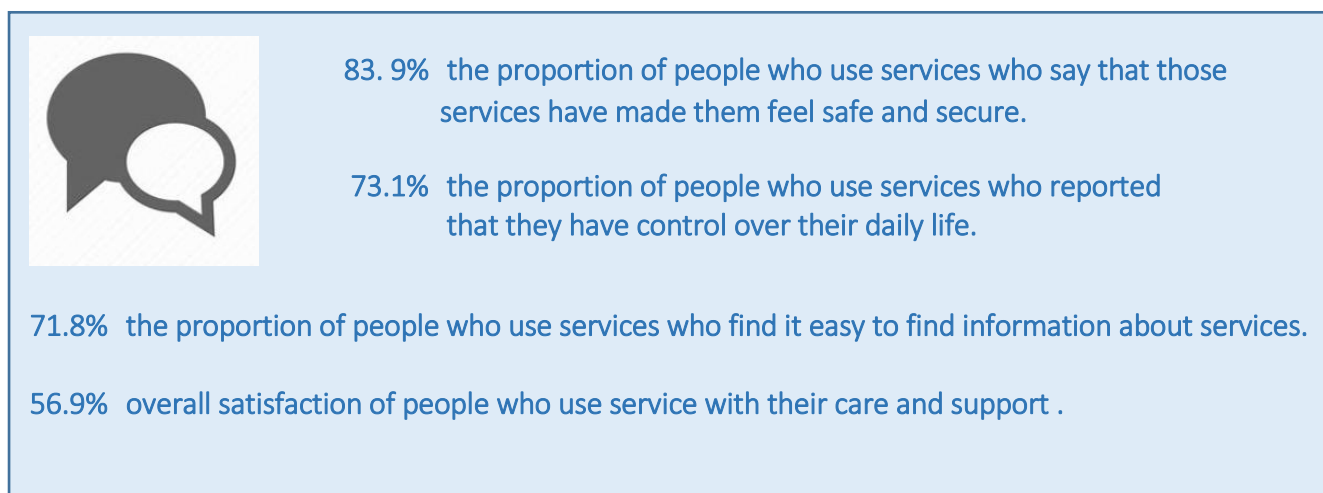
Percentage of funding allocation by support need



Safeguarding



Adult Social Care Survey Results



Summary details of adult social care complaints

A total of 34 complaints were received in 2021/22, which is a slight increase on the 31 received in the previous year.

During 2021/22, of the 34

Complaints:

- 8 were upheld
- 13 were partially upheld
- 11 were not upheld
- 1 was still being investigated
- 1 complaint was withdrawn

Care setting that the complaints related to:

- 0 Day Care
- 16 Home Care (Domiciliary)
- 12 Residential / Nursing Care
- 0 Shared Lives
- 2 Supported Living
- 4 Other

All complaints are allocated to appropriate team managers by the council's Adult Social Care Customer Care Team. The council is obliged to provide a response within the 20 days, however, where complaints are complex and require further in-depth investigation, the complainant is notified if an extended period is needed.

Completion

- 14 within 20 days
- 5 within 30 days
- 3 within 40 days
- 9 over 40 days
- 3 were ongoing

Freedom of Information (FOIs) requests made to Adult Social Care

The number of FOIs received relating to adult social care dropped in 2021/22 to 109, from 125 the previous year. The table below shows the teams to which the FIO relates to:

Team	2021/22
Care Management	20
Commissioning	43
Independent Living	9
Intermediate & Urgent Care	1
Housing Solutions	19
Mental Health (exc. Housing Solutions)	4
Policy, Performance & Customer Care	3
Finance	1
Quality Assurance Team	0
Complex needs	0
Telehealth	0
Safeguarding	4
PBSS	0

Community	0
Cross cutting	5
Total	109

The table below shows where the request for information came from:

Requester	2021/22
Business	25
Charity	8
Media	16
Public	48
Trade Union	0
Other inc MP, NHS and student.	12
Total	109

Talk to us

If you would like further information about any aspect of this report

Please contact ssdcustomercare@halton.gov.uk or telephone Halton Borough Council's contact centre on 0303 333 4300 and ask for Adult Social Care Policy, Performance and Customer Care Team.

If you would like to speak to someone about having an assessment for social care

Please ring our dedicated Social Care telephone line, or call into one of our Halton Direct Link 'one-stop shops' and speak directly to one of our staff. Website: www.halton.gov.uk / Telephone: 0151 907 8306 (Halton Adult Social Care 24 hours).

Ever considered a career in care?

There are many diverse and rewarding roles and professions in the care sector. If you would like to know more visit the '[Think Care Careers](#)' website or see Halton Borough Council's [vacancy page](#) on our website for current opportunities.