

REPORT TO: Children, Young People & Families PPB

DATE: 9th September 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Children's Services

PORTFOLIO: Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Supporting Families Update

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update of the Supporting Families Programme

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 **The report be noted**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Department for Education Update

3.2 The programme from April 2024 has transferred to the Department Of Education from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) . This move forms part of the government's ambitious set of reforms to drive improvement in the way they support families and protect children, as set out in the Implementation Strategy for children's social care reform, Stable Homes, Built on Love. The transfer of Supporting Families to DfE will enable the Education Secretary to deliver a coordinated, whole system of support for children and families, as well as ensuring services are sustainable for local government. The programme's model of stepping beyond single policy agendas to drive local integration and whole family support will be key for the reforms around Family Help.

3.3 As yet the Department of Education has not confirmed if the supporting families programme will continue so as it stands the programme will therefore end on 31st March 2025.

3.4 The redevise Supporting Families Outcomes Framework sets out ten headline outcomes. Below these outcomes sit descriptors of the family needs that make up the eligibility criteria for the Supporting Families programme, as well as suggested data sources for identifying families with these needs.

3.5 Each family must demonstrate a minimum of three eligibility criteria or family needs as set out in the national Supporting Families Outcomes Framework.

The framework also includes predetermined outcomes that must be achieved with all families before a successful family outcome is submitted. The 10 headline outcomes are:

- Getting a good education
- Good early years development
- Improved mental and physical health
- Promoting recovery and reducing harm from substance use
- Improved family relationships
- Children safe from abuse and exploitation
- Crime prevention and tackling crime
- Safe from domestic abuse
- Secure housing
- Financial stability

Safe from Domestic Abuse

Family Need	Data Source	Outcome	Evidence
Family affected by domestic abuse or inter-personal violence and abuse - historic, recent, current or at risk (victim)	Police data Notification via Operation Encompass (for affected children) Information from practitioner assessments, contacts and referrals, including self-referral	Domestic abuse has stopped Victim has a clear safety plan in place and knows how to seek help, victim feels safe at home AND Victim has received (or is receiving) appropriate support	No incidents of domestic abuse in the month prior to closure, and no referral into services for 6 months following closure AND (at least one of the below) Victim engaged with local multi-agency partnership arrangements Practitioner or self-assessment (e.g., DASH / reduction in risk tool)
Adult in the family is a perpetrator of domestic abuse	Police data Notification via Operation Encompass (for affected children) Information from practitioner assessments, contacts and referrals, including self-referral	Domestic abuse has stopped AND Perpetrator understands crime, and impact on the victim(s) (including children), and is engaging with perpetrator support	No incidents of domestic abuse in the month prior to closure, and no referral into services for 6 months following closure AND (at least one of the below) Where available, perpetrator engaged with specialist programmes Perpetrator engaged with local multi-agency partnership arrangements Practitioner or self-assessment (e.g., DASH / reduction in risk tool)
Child currently or historically affected by domestic abuse	Police data Notification via Operation Encompass (for affected children) Information from practitioner assessments, contacts and referrals, including self-referral	Domestic abuse has stopped Child feels safe at home AND Child has received appropriate support	No incidents of domestic abuse in the month prior to closure, and no referral into services for 6 months following closure AND (at least one of the below) Child engaged with specialist/ therapeutic support

3.6 A refreshed Early Help System guide has been published in March 2025 following collaboration with local authorities and other government departments. It's a self-assessment tool to support discussion, reflection and action planning against key areas that influence the effectiveness of Early Help. It aims to provide a framework for local workshops, partnership conversations and strategic planning and to support prioritisation around Early Help.

3.7 Halton Position

3.8 For Halton, the practice commitment is still the same, supporting vulnerable families via whole family support from a lead professional where families are experiencing multiple complex problems. The partnership will continue to identify families in need of extra help, target services more effectively and track family level outcomes over the long term.

3.9 Halton's had previously submitted an Early Help system guide in 2022 at this time the self-assessment score was a 2 within the data model section. Given this benchmark Halton could only pick descriptors from the data section of the guide. These descriptors were around case management systems, having better ways to analyse our information to use data to commission services to in line with the supporting families programme. Work that was delivered during 2022 this included work with the eclipse team to ensure that all individual indicators and outcomes at an indicator level are embed from notification/ assessments to closure. Working with HBC IT to develop of a data warehouse to assist with data matching. We also recruited an additional data tracking officer to ensure capacity with the additional requirements on data collection and quality assurance. We also reviewed data to support commissioning decisions using the funds from the Supporting Families programme to commission services around domestic abuse, parenting support, and benefit and debt advice.

3.10 Halton in July 2023 submitted an new Early Help system guide which fed back on the progress of 2022 priorities and confirmed Halton's 2023 priorities which were:

- **Family engagement: We have well established mechanisms to gather and act on feedback from families and engage people with lived experience in service design, governance, and quality assurance.** A mature area has a range of methods to collect feedback from families (all children, young people, parents, carers and significant others) including but not limited to:
 - From families during and following support given as part of a Family Plan reflecting whole family working principles. This feedback relates to the work of all parts of the Early Help System.
 - From families who have not accessed support e.g. families who have been offered help and refused, those who needed help and weren't able to get it, and those who have needs but haven't come to the attention of services.
 - From families from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This feedback is used as learning to support changes in how the whole system works together.
- **Access to support: We have evidence that families say they know how to navigate local services and how to get help.** A mature area has digital solutions such as a service directory, social media and also roles such as community connectors and service access points which provide accessible

opportunities for families to understand and access the support available. Each solution should take an approach which ensures there is 'no wrong door' for families accessing support.

- **We have a model of place-based or hub-based working in the community with a common footprint. Partners are integrated either virtually or physically in e.g. family or community hubs. The model helps underpin the principles of whole family working.** In a mature area families are able to easily identify where to go for help in their local community, when they make contact they experience a welcoming response where 'asking for help' is seen as normal. The response will enable the needs of the whole family to be explored and the family are helped to seamlessly access all the help they need, including a Lead Practitioner if needed. Where hubs exist they are a fundamental and fully integrated part of the Early Help System. The local offer is responsive to the diverse needs within the local community and is proactive in removing barriers to access to enable inclusion for all.

3.11 Halton has just undertaken a partnership session to work with managers and practitioners on what we have achieved so far with real examples so interventions to show the difference it has made. The session also looked forward at what was needed and how we would deliver on this in line with the priorities in the new Early Help Strategy also taking into account the family hub model. This information has been used to complete the early help guide for 2024 which was submitted on 1st July 2024. It has been agreed that Halton will use the same descriptors from 2023 for the next 12 months to continue to support and embed the work of family hubs.

3.12 **Performance**

3.13 Halton has achieved targets set by the DLUHC across all phases of the programme, achieving 100% year on year since the start of the programme, enabling the Local Authority to maximise on the income available. The annual report published in Spring 2021 highlighted of the 140 areas that recorded PBR only 19% (27 areas) achieved 100% PBR of which Halton was one.

3.14 The Halton Supporting Families team continue to be supported by our internal audit team with selected audit days to dip sample 10% of the families that we highlighted have achieved successful outcomes in order to claim PBR. Halton has successfully achieved 100% PBR for 23/24 with an income of £283,200.

3.15 The national Supporting Families team will continue to conduct assurance visits to make sure that all areas are adhering to and progressing against the programme sign up conditions. Halton was visited by the Department of Education in July 2024 and feedback was positive.

3.16 **Financial Position**

- 3.17 Halton's funding agreement gives an indicative funding amount each year as a 'core' element to support the resourcing of the programme plus an 'target' for each year of the families that we can claim successful outcomes for under a payment by results (PBR) scheme, each successful outcomes relates to £800 per family PBR payment. The numbers for 24/25- 438 families, making a potential income of £301,600.
- 3.18 Due to the success of the programme in Halton with agreement from Management Team the PBR funds have been 'ring fenced' and the reserves rolled over to support key elements in line with the ethos of the programme. The funding has been mapped until March 2026 using the reserves not taking into account PBR payments for 24/25.
- 3.19 The funding is currently being used for:
- Support staff TF co-ordinator, 3 data officers, (0.5 is being used to support family hub work, 0.5 to support domestic abuse duty and relevant funds are used for these elements), 1.4 performance officers (one on secondment from police, one on maternity leave)
 - HBC 1 Parenting post and 0.5 of a parenting officer post (0.5 match funded with DWP funds for reducing parental conflict)
 - HBC 2 FTE Drug & Alcohol Family workers
 - Supply costs for training Power Bi domestic abuse Gateway, DASH training
 - Risk Resilience Project for vulnerable young people
 - Work to support the digital offer for family hubs including SEND.
- 3.20 **Commissioned Services**
- Children Missing from Home and Care- Tri Party Cheshire arrangement until June 2025. Funds are allocated for a service provision until 2026.
 - 12 month Contextual Safeguarding pilot
 - 12 month pilot for 2 community support worker posts for family network meetings.
 - Top up funding to support Family Hub work for Dads Matter and Parents in Mind.
 - Children's Domestic Abuse Service until May 2025 with option to extend to May 2026 (in line with new DA duty - Supporting Families funds are allocated for the extension)
 - Adult perpetrator provision until March 2025 (in line with new DA duty)
 - Early help employment, benefit advice service until March 2025
- 3.21 Due to the complexity of the identification of families as we as the volume, at this stage for this first time Halton is looking unlikely that we will achieve 100% PBR for this final year.
- 3.22 **Case study**
- 3.23 There is a Widnes family that consists of Mum, stepdad, 16yr old girl, 14yr old boy, 5yr old boy living in a Halton Housing property (HHT). The family

had previously been open to social care a number of years ago due to family breakdown. The family were highlighted through the different data criteria of the programme around ASB, education issues and the 16yr old missing from home incidents. The family information was passed for the locality team in order for a MAP to be completed to have that holistic approach to identify the needs of the whole family. The family engaged positively and welcomed the additional support to help address key issues. Outcomes that were achieved:

- CAB support around debt management
- 16yr old 1-2-1 work around missing and life skills. Reduction in missing incidents. Improved attendance
- 14yr old worked with YOS divert programme. Reduction in ASB. Improved attendance
- 5yr old in Nurturing programme at school with 1-2-1 support
- Stepdad was referred by HHT Customers into Employment
- 69% reduction in calls for service to the Police over a three-month period -estimated cost savings of £64K
- 87.5% reduction in Missing from home -estimated costs saving £7K
- 79% reduction in ASB incidents and arrests- estimated cost saving of £55k (using police national costs)

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Supporting families programme will have policy implications for the future implementation and delivery of services. These implications will need to be evidenced within individual action plans where necessary.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Supporting Families Programme funding is subject to Halton Borough Council's continued participation in the programme and commitment to the sign-up conditions. The sign-up conditions set out the expectations for achieving successful family outcomes; essential resourcing of the programme; commitment to use the Early Help System Guide (EHSG) to help integrate and transform local public services to embed whole family working and re-balance the system; to commit sufficient development and analytical resource to the programme; and to deliver the required milestones for increasing data maturity.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The programme will support people to access relevant services to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

The programme is integrated with employment and learning based initiatives, this includes a Supporting Families employment advisor for DWP.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

The Supporting Families programme is intended to address crucial factors for children and young people in challenging circumstances not meeting their potential.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

The programme provides support to vulnerable young people and families to assist them to access appropriate service provision within their local communities. This links to satisfaction with services and overall perception of the area in which people live.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The change in the new Supporting Families criteria from September 2023 will make it a challenge for local authorities to identify and claim payment by results for successful outcomes.

7.2 The LA needs to consider the position of the Supporting Families programme as part of the early help offer so that we can continue to embed the necessary changes to recording and evidence the impact not just families but the progress of the programme.

7.3 Securing the commitments of partners is a key issue particularly around the use of data. We need to quickly implement this as a key part of the Early Help partnership

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The Supporting Families programme will not impact upon any equality and diversity issues as all relevant protected characteristics would be unaffected by the programme.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None are applicable.

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

10.1 **'None under the meaning of the Act.'**