

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

DATE: 8th September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Children's Services

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People & Families

WARD(S) All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Halton's SEND Improvement Programme submitted to OFSTED following the Local Area Partnership SEND Inspection and to provide and update on progress and performance against the five priority areas.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Programme be accepted as the mechanism by which Elected Members can monitor and scrutinise progress going forward.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The CQC and Ofsted conducted an area SEND inspection of Halton's Local Area Partnership between 20th – 24th November 2023. The report published on 26th January 2024 found there to be widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently.
- 3.2 The report stated that a monitoring inspection will be conducted within approximately 18 months. Local area partnership SEND monitoring inspections paused due to a shift in inspection strategy, with a move towards full inspections for all schools and a focus on simplifying the inspection process. We are currently within the window for our monitoring inspection visit. The next full reinspection will be within approximately three years.
- 3.3 As a result of the inspection outcome, His Majesty's Chief Inspector required the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND) to address the identified areas for priority action (SEND Improvement Plan).
- 3.4 Progress against the improvement plan is overseen by the Strategic SEND Improvement Board. The Board is independently chaired by Joanne Siddle, Joanne Siddle - Strategic Director Children and

Education (DCS) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and attended by the Department for Education and NHS England. The Board meets on a monthly basis.

- 3.5 An improved approach to progress and performance monitoring was presented to the Board on 6th August 2025 and endorsed. This is intended to present an overview of the five priority areas, give assurance regarding the management of risk and provide a detailed multi-agency response to escalation reporting as required.
- 3.6 The SEND Improvement Plan includes a 'BRAG' rating outlining the progress status of each of the areas for improvement as well as a 'BRAG' rating to measure impact. This will help evaluate and determine if the improvement activities are improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- 3.7 In addition to monitoring through Ofsted and CQQ monitoring visits, the Department for Education monitor the progress against the action plan through 6-monthly Stocktakes, the next Stocktake scheduled for 11th December 2025.
- 3.8 Progress against the improvement plan is overseen by the Strategic SEND Improvement Board and the Improvement Board for Services to Children and will continue to be reported upon to Children, Young People & Families Policy and Performance Board at regular intervals.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Areas for improvement will inform policy and service development within Education, Inclusion & Provision.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Budgetary decisions throughout the improvement journey will be informed by the priorities identified within the SEND improvement plan. Internal financial tracking will track spend and the impact this is having on the outcomes for children, young people and families.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The improvement plan was co-produced with colleagues from education, health, social care and Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Keeping our children local to Halton and improving their educational outcomes will build stronger communities, create better employment opportunities that will support talent within Halton to remain in Halton.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Ofsted CQC inspection findings ‘widespread and/or systemic failings’ has a direct and indirect effect on the lives of both current and future children and families in Halton.

As set out in our Children & Young People’s Partnership Plan our ambition is for Halton’s children, young people and families to be truly outstanding. The SEND improvement plan supports this ambition with commitment of the Board to ensure it contributes to positive opportunities and effective help being available at the right time – enabling children and their families to make the choices that mean they can thrive and achieve. Where children and families do need to access services, those services will be responsive, high quality and focus on self-reliance.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The SEND improvement plan considers the support, services and opportunities within the borough for vulnerable children and young people with SEND and their families.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

There are no specific implications for the environment arising from this report.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

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quality and focus on self-reliance.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no new risk implications identified emerging from the recommendations in this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues identified emerging from the recommendations in this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific implications for the environment arising from this report.

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

10.1 None.