

**REPORT TO:** Health and Social Care Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 23 September 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Debbie O'Connor – Head of Service – Care Management

**PORTFOLIO:** Health and Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Adults Directorate progress towards the Care 2030 vision

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To give an overview of the Adults Directorate's activity which directly impacts on the priority themes identified in the NW ADASS Care 2030 Strategy.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 2.1 That SMT note the range and breadth of activity taking place which impacts on our journey towards 'Care 2030', and;
- 2.2 SMT approve the report to be further taken to the Health and Social Care Policy and Performance Board.

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**3.1 Care 2030 Strategy**

- 3.1.1 The NW ADASS 'Care 2030 Strategy' was published in 2021, setting out a 10-year outlook for achieving change and creating a long term vision for Adult Social Care across the region. The Strategy recognised that demand for social care continues to grow and this is set against substantial financial challenges for local government. It suggested that current ways of working were unsustainable and in some cases no longer desirable.
- 3.1.2 It invited Local Authorities across the region to move away from reinforcing and protecting what we do and called for the sector to rethink, redesign and reorientate. In order to do this, the Strategy gave three priority workstreams, with associated programme boards formed within the NW ADASS structure. These three priorities focus on:

- **Future Models** – “we will develop new ways of supporting people so that they can live the life they want in their community”
- **Future Markets** – “we will create a diverse and high-quality market for social care which is ethical, builds community wealth and offers greater choice”
- **Future Workforce** – “we will develop a high-quality and caring workforce so that people will be supported and cared for in the right way by brilliant and caring people”

3.1.3 A fourth programme board was formed within the organisation to look at **Sector Led Improvement**, asserting that: “we will take collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole,” and working towards making best practice practicable and scalable.

3.1.4 Since publication of the Strategy, and sector recovery from the pandemic, NW ADASS have formed thematic working groups, bringing together service leads from across the region and aimed at exploring, creating and capturing innovative practice. These further feed in to the priority boards and from this a range of materials and resources have been produced for local implementation of different ways of working. Halton has been part of this and has achieved progress against each of the priority areas. The following section of this report outlines some key developments within Halton over the past two years. NB. This list of developments is by no means exhaustive.

## 3.2 **Halton’s progress towards Care 2030**

### 3.2.1 1. Future Models

One of the key elements of supporting people within their own community revolves around them having the right housing, which meets their current and future needs. Halton Borough Council, at the corporate level, has been working with consultants, arc4, to devise a borough-wide **Housing Strategy**. The work has involved looking at an extensive housing needs survey and analysis and the resulting draft strategy is current being scrutinised. The Housing Strategy has a strong focus on **specialist housing needs**, from supported living to older people’s accommodation.

3.2.2 The restructure of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) centres on the notion of ‘neighbourhoods’. The Council are working closely with the ICB ensure this **place-based focus** is achieved and that services within local communities are accessible and tailor to local needs. **Joint working** with the ICB extends past pooled budgets and active collaboration through the One Halton partnership, its respective

boards and strategy plans. Specific activity, working jointly with the ICB includes the continued focus on care homes, through the **Care Home Development Group**, emphasizing their place at the heart of our communities.

- 3.2.3 Work across the community involves engagement with a board spectrum of community services and intensive engagement with the voluntary sector. The Adults Directorate **strategic commissioning** with **voluntary sector partners** reinforces its commitment to a diverse array of service access points across the community to meet different needs.
- 3.2.4 New ways of supporting people have been explored, and an extensive programme of training took place in 2023 with Helen Sanderson Associates, renowned for developing approaches to personalisation. The training looked at **strengths-based working**, enabling the Adult Directorate to rethink its Care Act assessment paperwork and processes.
- 3.2.5 Further to this, Care Management teams have reconfigured to make their 'front-door' services more accessible and give greater choice and flexibility to the way people are supported. As the first port of call for residents with additional needs the **Prevention and Wellbeing Service** replaces the Initial Assessment Team. The re-focus has been implemented successfully and a greater number of initial contacts have resulted in signposting and referral back into community based provision to meet their individual needs.
- 3.2.6 Emphasis on prevention has additionally been embedded into the directorate's practice through the development of a **Prevention Strategy**. The strategy is intended to help people manage their own health and wellbeing so that they can retain their independence for longer. It pinpoints a wide range of services and organisations that make up both a universal community support offer as well as more specialist services.
- 3.2.7 Coupled with the emphasis on prevention, an adult social care **Waiting Well** pathway has been devised to triage needs where services have waiting lists. This has meant that those who are most vulnerable can receive timely and responsive services.
- 3.2.8 In working more closely with people across the community the directorate has re-invigorated its approach to coproduction. Subsequent to the work undertaken to develop the **One Halton Coproduction Charter** in 2023, the Adults Directorate has been working closely with people with lived experience from across the borough to gain their view and input into a range of projects. Notably, the Direct Payments team have worked with Care Management to form a **Personal Assistants (PA) Forum**, with steer from an expert by experience who uses PA support. Also, two workshop events took

place in February of this year to gain feed-in from experts by experience towards devising a new **Learning Disability Strategy** for the directorate. In July, experts by experience who've worked with us on other projects were invited to join the newly formed **Coproduction Advisory Group**, which will now take forward additional coproduction activity.

- 3.2.9 The Council-wide **Transformation programme** has a project team looking specifically at adults services. Recent activity has included participation through coproduction on work stream developments, including looking at **specialist and supported housing**. There has also been a series of pilots to introduce **digital technology** into care provision, and opportunities are now being rolled out further.

3.2.10           2. Future Markets

The directorate's **Market Position Statement** and **Commissioning Strategy** were both updated in 2023 and run to 2026. Between them, they recognise the pressure points, opportunities and future direction of travel for the borough in relation to future markets. Substantial progress has been made in our commissioning of **Domiciliary Care** (also known as care at home) with a new framework tender process having taken place last year. The directorate now has additional care options available to residents and new contracted providers have received a thorough induction earlier this year and are being supported through the Quality Assurance team.

- 3.2.11 In further development of new and enhanced market options, the commissioning team have devised processes to make more effective use of the **Liverpool City Region Flexible Purchasing System**, particularly in relation to **supported living**. This has given opportunity for providers who are new to the borough to enter the market, offering greater choice and control to service users.

- 3.2.12 **Transition**, from children's to adults services, is overseen by a dedicated team within the care management structure of the Directorate. Having a clear process and pathway for achieving transition supports wider market stability as it forms part of the commissioning cycles of planning and evaluating future needs. The Transition Service works to a **Transition Protocol** document which establishes eligibility together with process and procedure for progressing cases into the team. These Protocols are currently being reviewed to ensure that they are meeting needs and have a strong fit with service provision.

- 3.2.13 The Directorate has a responsive Quality Assurance team who work with commissioned providers in a supportive, developmental and evaluation capacity. The team has a robust set of quality measures

which were updated in 2024 into a **Quality Assurance Framework** policy covering care homes, domiciliary care and supported living. This document sets out high quality standards and expectations, as well as giving clear guidance on how this is determined.

3.1.14 The **Halton Intermediate Care and Frailty Service (HICaFS)** was formulated shortly following the pandemic to look at how we manage urgent response services, hospital discharge and bedded and community intermediate care. As a joint health and social care service with a single point of access, the service has gone from strength to strength and embeds the ethos of '**Home First**' as the best place to retain or regain personal independence. Market impact can be demonstrated through 2023/24 figures, which showed that 67% of those people supported were subsequently discharged from the service as independent, whilst only 1% of individuals were admitted into a long-term care home.

3.1.15 A further example of effective systems working can be seen through the operations of the **Halton Safeguarding Adults Board**. The multi-agency approach has, amongst other achievements, successfully implemented the **Making Safeguarding Personal**, with 93% of people during 2023/4 having achieved or partly achieved their desired outcomes from the approach.

### 3.2.16 3. Future Workforce

Workforce pressures continue to be one of the most important considerations across the sector, and Halton is not immune to this. The Adults Directorate has been involved with regional initiatives to recruit and retain staff into the sector, including some prominent campaigns through NW ADASS.

3.2.17 On a local level the Directorate is currently in consultation with the national organisation Skills for Health towards devising a borough-wide **Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy**. This strategy will examine current challenges, strengths and opportunities to set out a comprehensive 5-year plan. It will be underpinned by the priorities in **Halton Corporate Plan 2024-2029** as well as aligned to specific Directorate requirements and quality standards. The Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy is due to be published this autumn.

3.2.18 Supporting our partners and providers with ongoing workforce needs, particularly during and following the pandemic, has been an ongoing core to the Directorate's strategic plans. The recent impact of the increase in **National Living Wage**, together with changes to the way **National Insurance** is paid, has seen the cost of care rising. Our annual **Fee Setting** consultation processes for 2025/26 resulted in increases across the board. In consideration of overall Council finances, this demonstrates our unwavering recognition to meeting workforce challenges and commitment to Adult Social Care

as a people-led sector.

- 3.2.19 Workforce learning and development standards are sector-led and contractual bound within the Directorate's commissioning process. To assure standards in safeguarding the **Halton Safeguarding Adults Board** continue to invest in an annual **training programme** open to partners and professionals across the borough.
- 3.2.20 Recruitment and retention into in-house services to the Adults Directorate remains a priority and **market enhancements** have been agreed for the retention of **qualified social workers**, to match the offer in the Children's Directorate. Our commitment to **Grow our Own** qualified workforce involves offering an extensive **Social Work Development Programme**, from pre-qualified to post-qualified development opportunities, including successful delivery of the **Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)** programme and training and maintenance of sufficient capacity for the Council's **Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP)** duties. Alongside this the Directorate is exploring other **Advanced Apprenticeship** qualifications to aid the **progression and retention of talent**.
- 3.2.21 The Corporate **Values Framework** is well communicated across the Directorate and this reflect in the recent **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** rating of **Good**.
- 3.2.22 Directorate-wide communication and engagement is embedded into the **Adult Social Care Communications & Engagement Framework**, that looks at internal standards and expectations. This document was reviewed and updated in May of this year. In-house mechanisms used to achieve the framework include a quarterly **Adult Social Care Newsletter** and quarterly **Service Development Events**.
- 3.2.23 The Director of Care Management, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, has been instrumental in taking forward some of the Council's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** initiatives alongside corporate Human Resources. Alongside supporting staff EDI groups focussing on **Disability and Neurodiversity, LGBTQIA+ and Race Equality issues**, the Director has been pivotal in establishing a recent **Reverse Mentoring Scheme**, where senior leaders have learned from more junior members of staff. The Reverse Mentoring Scheme has resulted in some effective learning and enabled senior leaders to think in a more inclusive way.
- 3.2.24 The Directorate recognises the importance and value of the informal **Carers**. Support for unpaid carers help us to sustain community-based care for longer, and for those with care needs to remain as independent as possible. The Directorate received funding during

2024, through the Governments **Accelerated Reform Fund** issued to a regional consortium. Halton took the decision to direct this funding into the **Halton Carers Centre** to support and enhance their successful programmes of work. An increased emphasis on carers has been made on the Council's public facing webpages offering **Support for Carers** has seen the addition of a **Carers Information Booklet** in addition to some carers assessment and support videos aimed at breaking down barriers to carer contact.

3.2.26

The progress Halton has made towards the Care 2030 priorities and vision have been communicated across networks as part of sector-led improvement sharing. Halton will continue to work alongside NW ADASS to meet the objectives of transforming the sector.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The activities and initiatives in this report relate to a number of policy, procedure and strategy documents, including planned reviews. The service development team work with operational teams on a rolling programme to ensure the policy library is kept up-to-date.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 While finances are not the focus of this report, some of the activity cited ties to transformation and efficiency within the Council and services which are more closely aligned to known population need are generally set to save money in the long-term.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES** ([click here for list of priorities](#))

##### 6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

The report covers a range of Adult Social Care services, interventions and activity, all aimed at meeting this priority.

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

Workforce is identified as important consideration in achieving Adult Social Care outcomes. Adult Social Care is a key contributor to the economy.

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

The care and support provided through Adult Social Care services has a wider impact on family units as a whole.

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

The Directorate continues to forecast and plan towards identified needs, working closely with Public Health to understand and tackle health inequalities.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified

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

Community presence and engagement is identified within the report as adding value to how the Directorate design and deliver services.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Continued budget constraints may tighten the remit of the Directorate to statutory provision only. The early intervention and preventative activity currently undertaken play a key role in keeping people well for longer.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The Directorate continues to seek to engage with those who are seldom seen. The emphasis on community supports reaching people where they live.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’