

REPORT TO: Halton Health and Wellbeing Board

DATE: 14th January 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Public Health

PORTFOLIO: Public Health

SUBJECT: Childhood accidents

WARD(S) All Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide members of the Health and Wellbeing Board with childhood accident data and to share details of work being done by Halton Borough Council public health team to prevent accidents in children and young people and to raise awareness of the opportunities for further collaboration with partners.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board members consider their organisations role in accident prevention and opportunities

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Unintentional injuries (accidents) are one of the main causes of premature death and illness for children in England. Every year in England, 60 children under the age of five die from injuries in and around the home, which is one in twelve of all deaths of children aged one to four.

3.2 There are 450,000 visits to A&E departments and 40,000 emergency hospital admissions in England each year because of accidents at home among under-fives.

3.3 There is also a strong link between child injuries and social deprivation - children from the most disadvantaged families are far more likely to be killed or seriously injured due to accidents. And children from the most deprived areas have hospital admission rates 40% higher than children from the least deprived areas ([RCPCH 2025](#)).

3.4 Most nonintentional injuries are preventable through individual, local or national action. Aside from causing injury and mortality there are

also cost implications for the NHS, local authorities and families from accidental injury.

3.5 In 2023/24 there were 23,925 A&E attendances for injuries in children and young people under the age of 18 in Halton, of these 9,605 were for children aged four and under. This has decreased for all children and young people aged 0 to 17 and for children aged 0 to 4 in the past two years.

3.6 The attached report shows a breakdown of the number of accidents that occur for children and young people in different age categories, and the impact that accidents have on A&E attendance and rates of hospital admissions. It also breaks down the type of the injuries resulting in children attending and being admitted to hospital, with the cause of these injuries. Both the type and cause of injuries vary between age groups, with younger children being more likely to have burns and poisoning, and older children having sports injuries and road traffic injuries. All age groups have head injuries and falls. More males attend A&E due to injuries than females in all age groups, for example fifteen percent of males aged 15-24 are admitted to hospital due to injuries, in contrast with 5% of females.

3.7 **Prevention of accidents**

The main causes of preventable accidents are as a result of:

- Choking, suffocation and strangulation,
- Falls
- Poisoning
- Burns and Scalds
- Drowning
- Fire
- Roads

Preventing accidental injury in children is a communal responsibility, achieved through collective action across health, social care, education and employment. Police and fire also deliver safety awareness campaigns. The council plays an important role in accident prevention through measures such as road safety, trading standards maintaining product safety and education teaching children and young people to swim. Public health commission the 0-19 service through which health visitors visit every new baby and their family in their homes and discuss home safety measures, practical parenting support and demonstrate safe sleep and car seats, these messages are also delivered through midwifery. Accident prevention work is also supported by the staff in family hubs. This report will focus on the work of the public health commissioned HELPs programme.

3.8 **What is Halton HELPs Service?**

Halton HELPs (Home Equipment for Little Peoples Safety) offers advice and subsidised home safety equipment plus free home

safety equipment, for qualifying families helping to make homes safer and reduce the risk of common childhood accidents. The service sits within Halton Borough Councils (HBC) Early Help and Intervention Team in the Children's Services Directorate .

3.9 **Referral pathway**

Professional's working with families in Halton e.g. Health Visitor, Midwife, Early Years Worker and Social Worker complete a HELPS referral form within the home. The form has a list of questions which the professional completes with the family member to assess which safety measures are needed for their home.

Equipment Provision

3.10 423 items of free equipment have been distributed to families following a professional referral between April 2025 to Nov 2025
Equipment can also be purchased from five outlets around Halton (3x in Runcorn and 2x in Widnes) for families registered with a family hub.
93 items of home safety equipment have been purchased between April 2025 to November 2025

Child Safety Matters

3.11 Halton HELPS hosts multi-agency events during National Child Safety Week. Additionally, Information sharing events attended from April 2025

- Four large activities during the summer holidays; focus being on RoSPA's Take action today put them away. i.e. Not decanting laundry products, ensuring harmful products are kept high up locked away and stay in the original containers which are child proofed, this includes vaping liquid.
- Water Safety Awareness event in Widnes; focus on home safety, Hot tubs, also beach and pool safety, the bright neon colour of swimwear can offer high contrast and are easily seen underwater helping lifeguards/parents see the child in water.
- Family Hub Activities Baby and toddler sessions; Safety information themed in relation to the topic of the play activity i.e. road safety. Car seat/seat belt information shared.
- Terrific twos Family Hub activity; All accident prevention information shared including demonstrations/visual information on the precautions around button batteries
- School Coffee Mornings within Halton Schools and Nurseries, All accident prevention information shared. Interacting with adults & children, including at pre-school open evenings
- Attend Baby shower events monthly along with other professionals including: Health Visitors, midwifery, Halton Health Improvement Team, Halton Infant feeding team, Speech & language services, Dads Matters, Parenting Team

offering valuable information for keeping your babies and young children safe.

- Halloween /bonfire open day events. Themed safety advice shared. Costumes ensuring flame retardant and looking for the EU mark, fire code safety.
- Christmas themed events; Advice and information on safer sleep, Shop Smart and stay safe advice, watching out for cheap copies of popular toys, ensure all toys meet UK safety standards and toys are purchased from reputable suppliers.
- Monthly first aid Session's. Accident prevention information packs given out to attendees.
- Family Hub Free First Aid Sessions. Halton HELPS currently run monthly 2hrs Millie's Trust /Family Hub Free First Aid Sessions. The sessions have proved very popular and are very well attended by both Mums, Dads and Grandparents. 104 individuals have attended the past 7 first aid sessions, each sessions has a 15-person capacity.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Continued consideration should be afforded to the potential impacts of HBC policies on child accident rates across a range of policy areas, including housing development, highways, parks and open spaces, children's services, and public health.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Accidental injury causes short term illness, long term disability and even death. There is a cost to the health and social care system associated with the treatment and care needed as a result of accidental injuries.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The prevention of unintentional injuries is an essential component of improving health, wellbeing and maintaining wellbeing for every age group.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Unintentional injuries result in workforce absence for sick leave, careers leave and can result in long term disabilities which may impact an individual's employment opportunities.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Safeguarding children and young people, keeping them safe and protecting them from harm is the right of every child, and an ambition of Halton's Children and Young people's plan 2024-27.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

There is an inequality in the impact of accidental injury, with 40% higher hospital admission rates in areas of high levels of deprivation. Creating environments that are safe, both at home and in the wider community is important to help to reduce inequalities, and maximise children and young people's life chances.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

A reduction in childhood serious accidents contributes to a low carbon future by reduce the need for parents and carers travelling to access health appointments/ accident/ urgent care

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

As above, all children and young people have the right to grow up in a safe community, protected from harm and realising their potential life chances.

6.7 Resilient and Reliable Organisation

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1

There is a risk to the populations health of there being insufficient robust measures to minimise the harm from accidents. This report has been provided for information only, to outline the current levels of accidents in children in Halton, and some of the programmes in place to address this. There is no proposed change that would result in any additional risks.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1

Evidence suggests that there is an association with lower income groups and a higher risk of accidental injury, and as such services should be targeted at these populations. There is also ethnic variation in the occurrence of childhood unintentional injuries, including falls and road traffic injuries. The risk of injury is lower in non-white groups ([Cezard et al 2020](#), [Gallagher et al 2025](#)). This difference is independent of other factors such as socioeconomic

status, alcohol consumption and parenting styles, although all of these are important in the risk of accidents. Services should be mindful of cultural differences in the delivery of accident prevention work and data collection, to fully understand the high risk populations in Halton.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified

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

None under the meaning of the Act.