

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 April 2026

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Adult Services

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care / Health and Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Health and Social Care Policy and
Performance Board Scrutiny Topic Group 2025
– Mental Health

WARD(S) All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To introduce the final report for the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Topic Group for 2025 and confirm the chosen topic for the 2026 scrutiny review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The report be noted;
- 2) Members ratify the action plan for implementation.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Scrutiny Topic Review – Mental Health

3.1.1 Scrutiny Topic Reviews are conducted annually by Policy and Performance Boards (PPB) and the Health and Social Care PPB identified for 2025/6 that they wishes to scrutinise Mental Health services across the borough. As a result the Topic Group was formed and a topic brief was agreed in the June 2025 PPB meeting.

3.1.2 A key focus of the Scrutiny Topic Review was to examine the services delivered by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust has been commissioned in Halton or the past few years following the of departure of 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust from the region.

3.1.3 The first meeting of the Scrutiny Topic Group was in August. It was intended that it would start in July, however speakers for the meetings could not be secured.

3.1.4 The Scrutiny Topic Group meetings therefore took place between August and November, with the final draft being agreed at the final meeting of the Group on 4th December, and then being signed off by

the PPB on 10 February 2026. The agreed final report is given at Appendix One.

- 3.1.5 Councillor Eddie Dourley chaired the Scrutiny Topic Group and Members were asked to attend as part of an open invitation across the duration of the scheduled sessions.
- 3.1.6 Activity during the Scrutiny Topic Review revolved around presentations being brought to Members from different areas of service, in order for them to build a full picture of mental health responses across the borough.
- 3.1.7 Further to this Members additionally conducted two site visits during the Review, one to the SPACE Café in Runcorn and the other to The Brooker Centre. Both visits have comprehensive write-ups in the final report.
- 3.1.8 The Board agreed 14 recommendations in its November meeting, following the final presentation. This has been written up into an action plan, for which a small task and finish group will be formed with representation from the Council, the Integrated Care Board and Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- 3.1.9 The subject of Mental Health covered a wide range of areas and vast amount of information. As such, it's not been possible to give all aspects of performance and related data within the report. Instead the presentations given are incorporated into the report appendices. The report covers the discussions and contributions shared at the Topic Group meetings.
- 3.1.10 The main body of the report gives an overview narrative of services, and key points pulled out of discussions by the Topic Group as broken down by the following headings:
 - Social Care duties under the Mental Health Act 2007
 - Community-based responses and primary care services
 - Crisis response, including suicide prevention
 - Secondary care, including bed-based services
 - Specialist care services
 - Children and Young People's services
- 3.1.11 This is tied together with an introduction and conclusion, along with the usual sections to include in the Topic Review report – Purpose of the report, Membership of the Topic Group, etc.
- 3.1.12 Executive Board are requested to review the report for final sign off, and to give support for implementation of the action plan. In particular, please note that the recommendation that outlines mandatory e-learning on suicide awareness has been found to involve potential costs. As such training provision internal to Halton

3.2 Borough Council is to be explored in the first instance. This is further set out in section 5.1 of this report – Financial Implications.

3.2.1 **Scrutiny Topic for 2026**

At the Health and Social Care PPB meeting on Tuesday 10th February 2026 the Scrutiny Topic Review for 2026/27 was considered and Members. Three options were deliberated and Members have chosen to look at:

3.2.2 Ageing Well – Public Health lead on a programme of activity and intervention to support people in later life across the borough. During 2025 they re-modelled their intervention approach to develop the ‘Stronger for Longer’ programme, offering up to 12-weeks of support for those aged 55 and over, to access their community and improve both their mental and physical wellbeing.

3.2.3 Following agreement on a Scrutiny Topic Review theme a Topic Brief will be formulated, in discussion with the Review Chair. This will further be presented and ratified by the Board prior to the Topic Group being formed.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The recommendations from the 2025 Scrutiny Review involve activity that needs to be undertaken by the Council, through the Integrated Care Board, and by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust. As such, a small task and finish group will be formed to ensure all action are being taken forward.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Initially, there were thoughts to be no financial implications for the recommendations to be implemented. However, in order to monitor the Zero Suicide Alliance Suicide Awareness as a mandated e-learning module for all staff it would require us to purchase the sharable content for our e-learning platform. This would cost of £7,200 for a three year license.

As a first port of call, and as mentioned against the recommendation, the Council has an internal training offer around suicide awareness. As such, we will look to further explore this method of delivery prior to considering this costed option.

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

All reports must include all of these headings with details of any implications for the Council's priorities. If there are none state 'None'

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The Scrutiny Topic Review report aims to look at areas of provision and access points for mental health services across the borough, with the intension of supporting population wellbeing.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The Scrutiny Topic Review report identified a number of partner organisations involved in the delivery of mental health services, and emphasizes their key role in preventing and delaying the need for greater intervention.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

There is a specific focus Children and Young People' mental health needs in the report and the services on offer to meet this need.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The report identifies the need to be vigilant of different minority groups and cultural requirements in the delivery of mental health services.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Community and voluntary organisations are highlighted as playing a pivotal role in keeping people well across the borough.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The report identifies the needs to reach different groups and

communities within the borough. Actions aligned to the recommendations around this are incumbent on Mersey Care and respective partners.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.