

# Public Document Pack



## Safer Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 10 September 2019 at 6.30 p.m.  
Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R', positioned above a grey rectangular stamp.

**Chief Executive**

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor Dave Thompson (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Sandra Baker	Labour
Councillor Ellen Cargill	Labour
Councillor Eddie Dourley	Labour
Councillor Valerie Hill	Labour
Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones	Labour
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Geoffrey Logan	Labour
Councillor Margaret Ratcliffe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Geoff Zygadlo	Labour

*Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or e-mail [gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk](mailto:gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk) for further information.*

*The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 19 November 2019*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	
<b>2. MINUTES</b>	<b>1 - 4</b>
<b>3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)</b>	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
<b>4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>	<b>5 - 7</b>
<b>DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES</b>	
<b>5. MULTI AGENCY INITIATIVES TO TACKLE KNIFE CRIME</b>	<b>8 - 11</b>
<b>6. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE IN HALTON</b>	<b>12 - 18</b>
<b>7. FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS SERVICE</b>	<b>19 - 26</b>

***In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.***

**SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 11 June 2019 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Thompson (Chair), N. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Baker, E. Cargill, Dourley, V. Hill, P. Lloyd Jones, K. Loftus, Logan, Ratcliffe and Zygadlo

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, C. Patino, A. Bailey and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: One member of the press and PC Tetlow, Cheshire Police

**ITEM DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

		<i>Action</i>
SAF1	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	
	At the start of the meeting, the Chair welcomed Cllr Ratcliffe as a new Board Member.	
	In addition, the Chair provided an update on the proposals the Police and Crime Commissioner had brought forward for community safety funding arrangements. The Chair indicated that the Chief Executive had written to the Commissioner expressing the concerns of the Halton Community Safety Partnership.	
SAF2	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2019 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF3	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	It was reported that no questions had been received.	
SAF4	SSP MINUTES	
	The minutes from the previous Safer Halton	

Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were presented to the Board for information

SAF5 PETITION CONCERNING ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AT UPTON ROCKS PARK

The Board considered a report which advised on a petition that was submitted by a resident of Ascot Gardens, Widnes in April 2019. The petition requested that action to be taken around the anti-social behaviour that residents were experiencing in Upton Rocks Park and was signed by 67 residents of Ascot Gardens.

It was noted that the petitioners made reference to a recent meeting that had taken place between representatives of the Council, the Police and local residents. Discussions had taken place at that meeting about efforts that were being made to deter and prevent the anti-social behaviour in the area and the petition presented details of the type of experiences local residents had witnessed.

Members were advised on action that had or would be undertaken by the Council and its partners in order to ensure that such incidents were avoided in the future. The Ward Members were aware of the issues involved and had been working with the residents and police to address the issue identified by the petitioners.

The Board discussed incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in other areas and were advised that in order for appropriate action to be taken residents needed to report such behaviour and keep a record of such incidents.

RESOLVED: The petition be noted.

SAF6 COMMUNITY SAFETY VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT SERVICE

The Board received a presentation on the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Victim and Witness Service from Andrew Bailey, ASB Victim and Witness Support Officer/NRP Coordinator. The Service was part of the work of the Safer Halton Partnership Community Safety Team and was designed to deliver independent and confidential support to residents aged over 10 years who were experiencing nuisance and/or anti-social behaviour in Halton.

The presentation provided an outline of the Service milestones achieved, types of nuisance behaviour and the level of support to those who were experiencing it, support plans and the future scope of the service and its continued development.

Members noted that the Service had provided support to a thousand victims and their families and in 2009 had received acclaim for best practice in Parliament.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

#### SAF7 CRUCIAL CREW PROJECT UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the Crucial Crew programme available to all year 5 pupils from Halton schools. On average 1600 students attended the programme and learned safety messages delivered by various department's from Halton Borough Council, Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue. The programme took place over a two week period in February/March each year.

During the programme the children were involved in seven scenarios provided by partners from Halton Borough Council's Road Safety Team, experts in travel / personal safety, Health Improvement Team, Fire Service, Police, School Health Nursing Team and Safeguarding Children's Board. The safety scenes taught young people about the recovery position, online safety, arson and stop drop and roll, road safety, hidden sugars in foods and mindfulness, amongst other important issues.

Funding initially came from Halton Safeguarding Board, Safer Halton Partnership, Halton Unison and Crimebeat, which enabled the event to take place and was organised by Halton Borough Council's Road Safety Team. However, because of reducing resources, it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep this valuable work going. The cost of transport to the Stadium for all the schools who wished to take part was funded by Crucial Crew.

Members were advised that a new facility was now available in Lymm called Safety Central. Safety Central is a state-of-the-art safety and life skills education centre. It was the first centre of its kind in the country, blending an operational fire station and training facility with a unique visitor experience. As part of this centre, Safety Quest was a

one-day experience where all Halton pupils would learn so many different safety messages.

Cheshire Fire Authority, the elected body which was accountable, was funding the running costs of Safety Central, enabling Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington schools to visit for free. Schools would need to arrange transport to and from the centre. Members of the Board were invited to contact PC Tetlow to arrange a visit to the Centre.

The Board discussed the opportunities the Partnership could explore to identify funding for the transport cost so that all year 5 children could attend over a 5 week period during the year.

RESOLVED: That Officers investigate the funding possibilities to cover the cost of transport for Halton Primary Schools to attend Safety Central and a further report be brought back to the Board.

SAF8 ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Safer Policy and Performance Board, 2018/19. The Board met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out and the recommendations throughout the Municipal Year April 2018 to March 2019.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be noted.

*Meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Safer Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

**SUBJECT:** Public Question Time

**WARD(s):** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-
- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
  - (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
  - (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
  - (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
  - (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
    - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
    - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
    - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or

- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Safer Policy and Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Community Safety
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Multi Agency initiatives to tackle Knife Crime
<b>WARDS:</b>	Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Chair has invited our key partners to the meeting so that they can update the board on the positive work that they are doing in partnership with the Police and Council to make Halton safer.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) **the report be noted; and**
- 2) **the Board consider the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Following recent events in Runcorn, Widnes and other trends that are emerging across the Country with regard to knife crime and violence against the person by young people, Halton has established a multi-agency response to what is clearly becoming a significant concern for our communities. That multi agency response involves senior representatives from all key partners. It is Chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Community Safety Portfolio Holder, Cllr Dave Cargill.
- 3.2 The purpose of this response is to help us have a better understanding of the current picture in Halton in respect of knife crime and violence against the person, especially that being perpetrated by young people.

It will also help to inform you of what the Police, the Council and other partners are doing to tackle this issue and provide community, reassurance, as well as to exploring what others are doing elsewhere in addressing similar issues by reviewing best practice nationally.

A key part of this work is to identify what the community and community representatives can do individually and collectively to help tackle this issue.

3.3 A number of key actions have emerged as a priority for this work, namely

- To develop a structured approach
- To address the apparent current culture that carrying a weapon is acceptable
- To educate and raise awareness that carrying a weapon is not acceptable
- To educate and raise awareness about staying safe
- To develop a programme of measures to deliver a long term and sustainable approach
- To engage with the community to develop a solution and our organisations need to offer support.

3.4 Programmes in Schools/College

#### Work in schools and Riverside College

This work is focused on age appropriate resources available to schools and colleges.

Some examples of ongoing work

- Training and support tools being delivered in schools and for other providers supporting vulnerable groups such as NEET, PRU etc
- Materials on U Tube
- Dept for Education has circulated a Tool Kit on knife crime to all schools
- Presentation to next Halton Association of Secondary Head Teachers on knife crime
- Looking at work being done in Sefton to share good practice
- Seeking to ensure teachers are well trained and comfortable delivering the knife crime message
- Engaging with Children's Trust
- Engaging with Children and Young People's (CYP) Council

Ewan Jogo, the current Halton Youth Parliament Member, is assisting to provide a CYP perspective which is extremely valuable.

Ewan is also a member of the British Council Select Committee on knife crime

### 3.5 Community Programmes / Engagement

#### Community Groups

Continuing engagement with the community continues to be positive, especially “Live Your Life – Drop The Knife” – who have continued to be very active and receptive to advice and guidance.

They have looked at re-badging as “Trust Our Youth” and have recently done so positive work at Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy.

Further, listening, engagement and empowerment helping develop community resistance and improve intelligence.

The Youth Zone at Shopping City on Thursday and Friday nights is proving popular and has been well attended.

Addaction and Police colleagues are supporting this work.

### 3.6 Social Media/Web Sites/Messages

The Strategic Director for Enterprise, Community and Resources is continuing to coordinate our individual and collective messages to ensure consistency. We need to ensure the messages recognise the different media and social media channels used by adults and CYP to achieve maximum exposure and coverage.

### 3.7 Other Initiatives

Further knife sweeps have taken place Runcorn and Widnes resulting in a reduction in knife crime in Halton.

“Everton in the Community” are currently working in Halton bringing with them many years of experience

All licensing venues across Halton continue to work with Police and Licensing colleagues in respect of the licensing and use of their premises.

Addaction are undertaking outreach work across the areas, including at various hotspot locations, plus relaunching of “Know and See the Signs”.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 None**

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1 None**

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the health, safety and well-being of young people.

**6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

**None**

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

**None**

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

**None**

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

**None**

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

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**REPORT TO:** Safer Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 10 September 2019

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Communities and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Community Safety

**SUBJECT:** Alcohol and Substance Misuse in Halton

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

**1.1 To update the board on the work carried out to tackle Alcohol and Substance Misuse across the partnership in the Borough**

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) The Board consider the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.

### 3.0 PROGRESS AGAINST RELATED LAA TARGETS

Halton is showing good progress with regards to specialist treatment services for adults. Whilst the number of adults entering hospital for alcohol related conditions is increasing nationally, treatment outcomes for those engaged in local services continue to perform better than the regional and national averages.

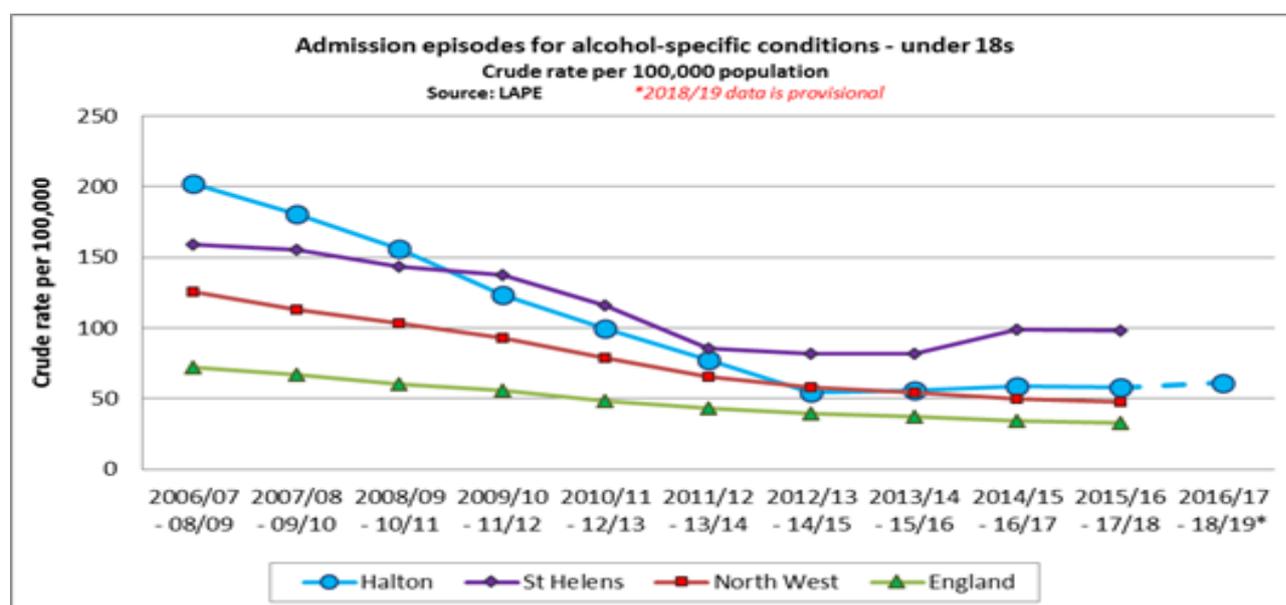
Ref	Description	Actual 2017/18	Target 2018/ 19	Year 2018/19		Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PH LI 07 (SCS HH 1)	Admission to hospital episodes for alcohol-related conditions (narrow) (Rate per 100,000 population)	830.2	836.0	862.7 (2018/19)			The provisional 2018/19 data suggests that the admission rate has increased from 2017/18. However, the data is currently provisional.

PH LI 07b	Individuals re-presenting to drug services within 6 months of discharge (reduction)	4.2% (2017/18)	Below NW average	9.1% (2018/19)	✓	↑	Re-presentations within 6 months (according to the NDTMS website) are lower compared to the national (10.1%) and North West (10.6%) averages. The Halton percentage has also increased from the same period the previous year (4.2%).
PH LI 07a	% of successful completions (drugs) as proportion of all treatment (18+) (Increase)	21.7% (2017/18)	Above NW average	17.0% (2018/19)	✓	↓	Successful completions (according to the NDTMS website) show good progress and are higher compared to the national (14.1%) and North West (14.6%) averages. However, the Halton percentage has decreased from the same period the previous year (21.7%).

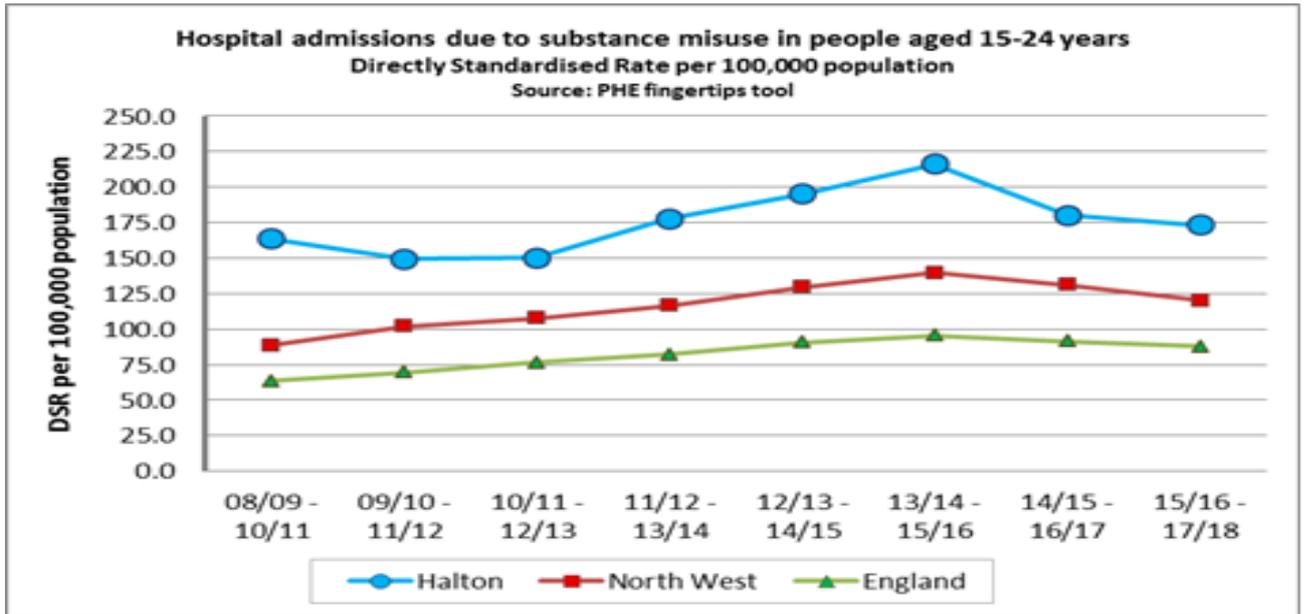
## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES

### 4.1 Under 18 alcohol-specific admission episodes

The provisional data for 2016/17-18/19 shows that the Halton rate has increased slightly from the previous year. Overall, Halton saw a greater reduction (71%) compared to England (54%), the North West (62%) and St Helens (38%), from 2006/07-2008/09 to 2015/16-2018/19. Despite this overall decrease, the Halton rate remains significantly higher than the England average. However, the rate is similar to the North West average and significantly lower than the St Helens rate.



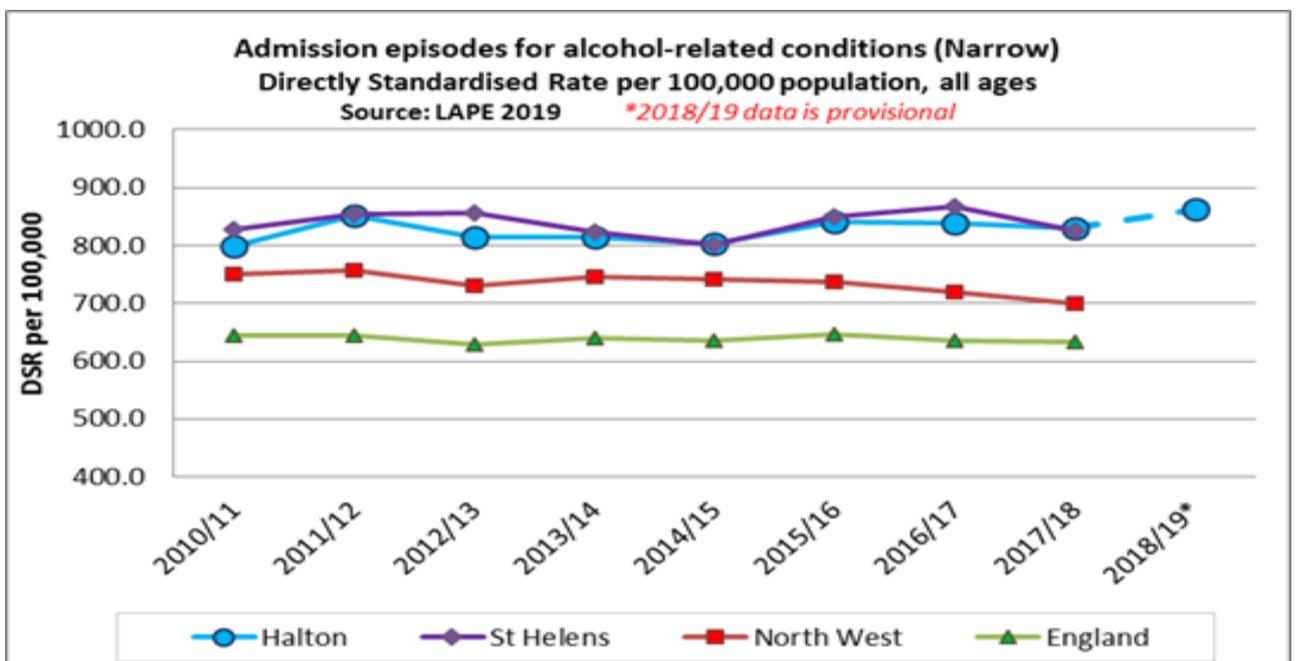
**4.2 Hospital admissions due to substance misuse:** The rate for admissions to hospital for young people aged between 15 and 24 is still higher for Halton than the averages for the North West and England although there does seem to be a general reduction in the number of admissions.



## 5.0 SPECIALIST COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR ADULTS

### 5.1 Alcohol hospital admission data

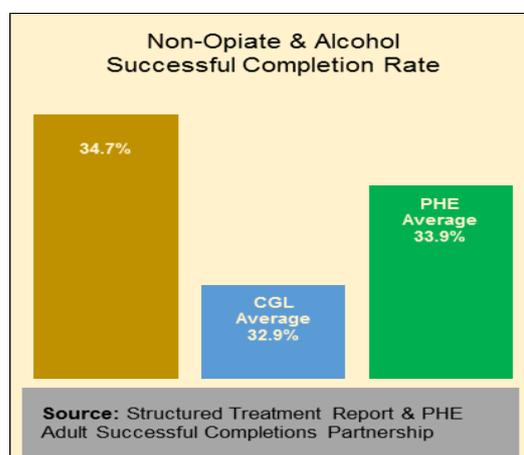
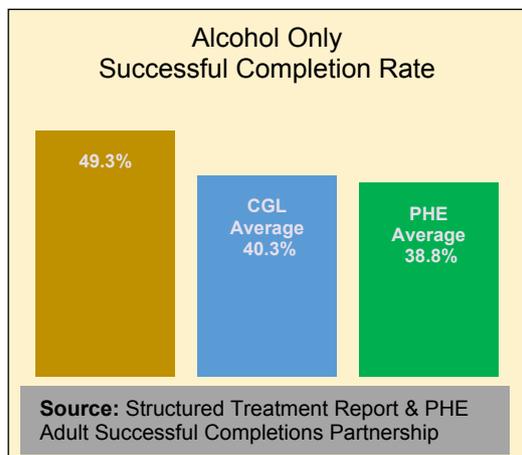
Admissions due to alcohol related conditions (narrow) decreased from a peak in 2011/12; however, the rate has increased since 2014/15, and the rate remains significantly higher than the England average. Data for 2017/18 shows that the Halton rate decreased slightly from 2016/17, however, the North West, England and St Helens rates also decreased.



### 5.2 Community Treatment Services - Alcohol

During Q4, CGL received **51** new referrals for alcohol only and **24** for alcohol and non-opiate problems. Local data suggests that by the end of Q4, **145** individuals were engaged in structured

treatment where alcohol was the primary concern, and a further **60** clients were in receipt of support for non-opiate and alcohol problems. **132** were involved in post treatment recovery support. At the end of Q3, Halton's alcohol successful completion rate was 49.3%, above both PHE and CGL national average. The alcohol and non-opiate completion has performed above the national average at 34.7%.



**5.3 Alcohol Detoxification services:** This year CGL received a total of 36 referrals for a medically assisted alcohol detoxification. The processes includes all individuals participating in an alcohol and healthcare assessment to establish the service users physical and mental health status along with identifying any safeguarding concerns which help to establish which type of detox the service user will be referred for at detox panel to enable a safe medical process is undertaken.

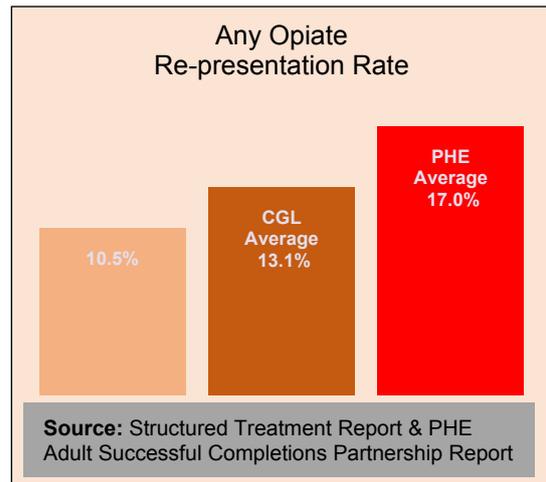
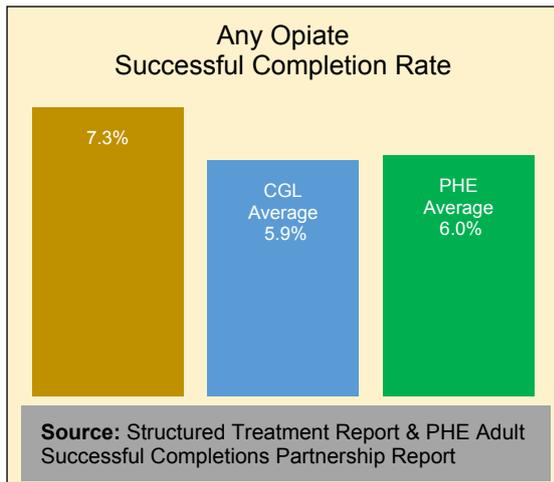
Out of the 36 detoxes 27 (75%) service users have been supported to reach their goals and remain abstinent from alcohol. Out of these 27, 4 went on to establish employment with 1 service user completing a peer mentoring course. This individual now volunteers at CGL 3 days a week, supporting and helping other service users who are thinking of becoming substance free.

Of the 9 who lapsed, their pathway through our Recovery Support enabled them to get return into treatment and revisit their recovery journey.

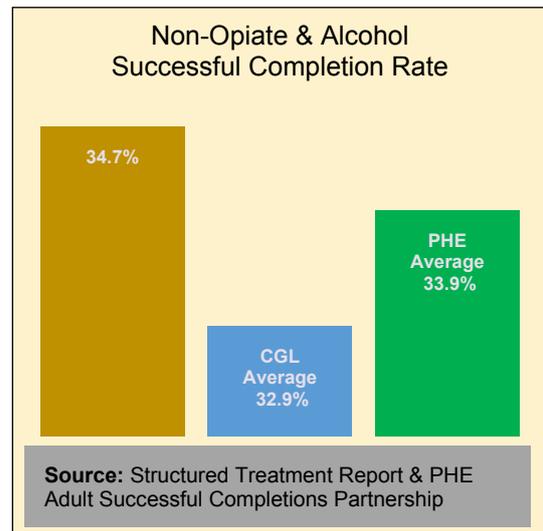
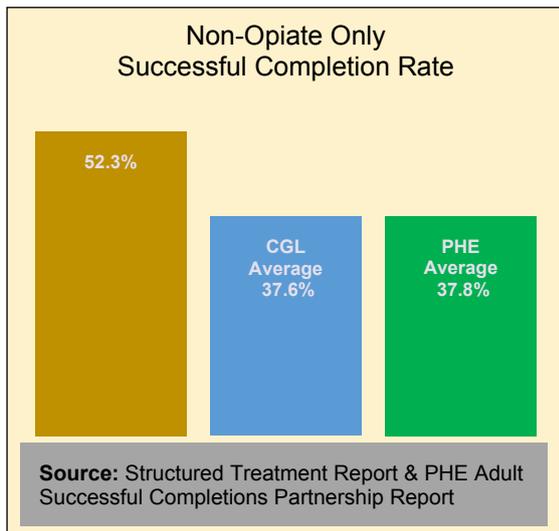
**6.0 SPECIALIST COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR ADULTS – Substance Misuse**

**6.1 Effective Engagement of New Treatment Journeys:** During Q4, **CGL** received **31** opiate referrals and **35** non opiate / non opiate & alcohol referrals. **361** clients were actively engaged in structured treatment (281 opiates and 80 non-opiates).

**6.2 Treatment Exits, Completed Treatment:** At the end of Q4, Cgl Halton's opiate successful completion rate was 7.3%, above both Cgl and PHE average. This year Halton has continued to perform consistently above PHE and Cgl national averages. In addition, this quarter we saw our opiate re-presentation rate successfully reduce to below both Cgl and PHE average.



During Q4, Cgl Halton contributed to perform above PHE and Cgl national averages, with 34.7% successful completion rate for non-opiate and alcohol and 52.3% within the non-opiate cohort.



### 6.3 Harm Reduction:

The government has set a goal to eliminate Hepatitis C by the end of 2030, and CGL will play a pivotal role in helping to make this a reality. In May 2018, CGL collaborated with Gilead, a pharmaceutical company (which produces hepatitis C medication) to provide funding to recruit to a number of dedicated HEP C staff.

Cgl has completed 312 Blood Borne Virus (BBV) tests after their triage in 2018/19 opposite to 100 clients tested in 2018/17 which makes it 212% increase. Also this year, 4 individuals have commenced treatment, with 2 completing. 15 service users have also been referred to hepatology for treatment. To date almost 85% current or previous IV users on current caseload (as per April 2019) accepted the BBV Screening.

This quarter has seen 203 individuals attend for needle exchange provision, predominantly for steroid use. For the 2018/19 year, the needle exchange has supported 926 individuals, providing clean works, advice and support, with 82% of those attending reporting steroids as the main drug of choice.

Cgl continue to work alongside Boots pharmacy in Widnes and Lloyd's pharmacy, Old Town, Runcorn, enabling individuals to attend for needle exchange services 7 days per week, providing late night availability.

## **6.4 Criminal Justice:**

During this quarter, Cgl have begun to attend a Prison Inclusion Meeting with a view to improving the transition from prison to the community.

Over the last 3 months – January, February and March 2019 we have been informed of 12 individuals being remanded into prisons:

- HMP Altcourse (7 alerts)
- HMP Styal (4 alerts)
- HMP Liverpool (1 alert)

Contact is made with the prisons weekly once Cgl require prison alerts regarding any active clients, arrangements will be made for the in-reach worker (with the service users consent) to visit them while in prison in readiness for their release back into the community.

This quarter our service has engaged with 10 individuals required to attend our service as part of their Drug Rehabilitation order and 6 individuals who are subject to an alcohol treatment order.

During the Q4 period, 18 individuals were referred onto Cgl Halton from custody staff following a positive test at custody suites. A total of 12 individuals attended, with 6 failing to attend as directed, instigating breach procedures via Cheshire police.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The CGL Drugs and Alcohol Contract value is £341,250 per quarter. The contract value includes all aspects of community specialist drugs and alcohol treatment and prevention within the Service, including Community Detox and Community based treatment, and service user engagement.

## **8.0 EMERGING ISSUES**

**Alcohol Care Teams** – Work is underway across Cheshire and Merseyside to develop an NHS response to the provision of hospital based alcohol care teams, as well as a local dashboard. This work is overseen by the Health and Care Partnership who have identified alcohol as one of their priority areas.

**Treatment completions** - Services have performed consistently well with successful completions across all four cohorts of service users. To support those leaving services, CGL have developed additional support groups, some focusing on abstinence, as well as developing further peer support group, both in service and within the community.

**Education and Employment** - This year service users have been supported to gain a total of 265 qualifications in a wide range of topics. 41 individuals have been supported into employment, with a 63% sustainment in jobs for over 6 months.

**Blood Borne Viruses** - Cgl has completed 312 BBV testing after their triage in 2018/19 as opposed to 100 clients tested in 2018/17 which makes it 212% increase. Also this year, 4 individuals have commenced treatment, with 2 completing and 15 service users referred to hepatology for treatment.

**The Recovery Café** - The recovery café continues to thrive and is a self-sufficient enterprise ran entirely by volunteers. Each week approx. 50 service users, friends and family members attend the café.

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

None

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Safer Halton PPB</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> September 2019</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>Director of Public Health</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>Environmental Services Health and Wellbeing</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Food Safety and Standards Service</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>Borough Wide</b>

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the board on the work of Halton's Food Safety and Standards Team in particular the ongoing operation of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and proposed changes to the law on allergen labelling.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) The Board note the report and the overall improvement in food hygiene standards.**
- 2) The Board take the opportunity to raise any observations or queries about the Food Safety and Standards Service**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Background**

- 3.1 The Food Safety Service is part of the Environmental Health Team within the Public Health Department and People Directorate.
- 3.2 The overall objective of the food safety and standards service is to protect the public from food-borne disease and food contamination by enforcing compliance with Food Hygiene and Standards Law. The law sets standards relating to the safety of food, the condition of food premises and the composition and labelling of food.
- 3.3 Compliance with Food Safety and Standards law is achieved by a variety of formal and informal activities. These include;
- Provision of advice and guidance to food businesses
  - Inspection of food premises
  - Investigation of complaints
  - Sampling and inspection of food

- Examination of food labels and menus
- Response to national food alerts
- Formal enforcement action: including; issuing improvement notices, emergency closure of food premises, seizure and detention of food.

### National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

- 3.4 The national food hygiene rating scheme is now an integral part of the food premises inspection programme. Halton council adopted the national scheme in 2011. Following an unannounced food hygiene inspection businesses are awarded a score from 0-6 based on the inspection findings. This score is published on the Food Standards Agency’s website at [www.ratings.food.gov.uk](http://www.ratings.food.gov.uk). Window stickers are also provided to enable business to display the score on the premises.
- 3.5 In practice only those premises with the higher ratings of 3 and above voluntarily display their score. There is no current legal requirement in England for all businesses to display their score. Such a requirement is however in place in Wales were health matters are dissolved to the Welsh Assembly. The Food Standards Agency are committed to making the display of ratings in the UK mandatory however this would require legislation to pass through the UK parliament. Given the current focus of Government and Parliament is on the UK’s departure from the European Union it is considered unlikely that that this will pass through parliament in the near future.
- 3.6 A description of each score and what that score means in practice is set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Description of Hygiene Rating Scores**

Score / Description	What this means in practice
 <p>Very good</p>	The premises is fully compliant with the law
 <p>Good</p>	The premises is essentially compliant with the law but with some minor contraventions that are not critical to food safety. No follow up is needed from the environmental health department
 <p>Generally satisfactory</p>	Overall satisfactory standard – premises need to make some minor improvements but these are not critical to food safety. Business will receive written advice but is unlikely to be a priority for revisit

 <p>Improvement necessary</p>	<p>A number of contraventions have been identified – improvement necessary to prevent fall in standards. Follow up action in accordance with enforcement policy. Premises likely to be subject to revisit to ensure action has been taken</p>
 <p>Major improvement necessary</p>	<p>A number of major contraventions identified some of which if not addressed may be critical to food safety. Premises subject to enforcement action in accordance with enforcement policy. Premises will be subject to revisit to ensure improvements are made</p>
 <p>Urgent improvement necessary</p>	<p>General failure to comply with food law. Premises <i>may</i> pose an imminent risk of injury to health. Immediate action required to improve standards – this may include closure – although this can be avoided if immediate action can be taken to remedy the risk otherwise enforcement action in accordance with enforcement policy. Premises will be subject to regular revisits and monitoring until situation improves</p>

- 3.7 The scheme applies to all premises that are open to the public and includes shops, café's restaurants, takeaways, staff canteens, pubs hospitals, schools and sports / entertainment venues. The scheme does not apply to premises that are not open to the public i.e. manufactures, warehouses, distributors packers, importers and exporters.
- 3.8 At the time of writing there are a total of 1052 food premises in Halton. 811 of those premises are within the scope of the scheme and published on the website. Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the number of premises achieving each score.

**Table 2 Breakdown of scores August 2019**

Score / Description	Number of premises	% of total premises
 <p>Very good</p>	632	78
 <p>Good</p>	95	12
 <p>Generally satisfactory</p>	52	6

 <p>Improvement necessary</p>	16	2
 <p>Major improvement necessary</p>	16	2
 <p>Urgent improvement necessary</p>	0	0

3.9 The Food Standard’s Agency monitor local authority performance by measuring and reporting the number of premises that are deemed to be broadly compliant with food law – this equates to a food hygiene rating score of 3 and above. Halton’s current broad compliance level is 96%. This is slightly above the regional (95%) and national (95.3%) performance. This represents an improved performance since the last board report on this matter in 2015 when the level of broad compliance was 94%

3.10 A further comparison of the current breakdown of scores with those reported in 2015 also demonstrates an improvement in the overall hygiene rating achieved. There has been a significant increase in the number of premises achieving the top hygiene rating of 5. This is due to premises that previously scored 3 or 4 improving their rating to 5

The number achieving the lower ratings of 0, 1 and 2 has also improved (gone down in number) but not as significantly as the rise in five star ratings. This is reflected in the modest increase in broad compliance levels since 2015.

**Table 3 Comparison of performance 2015 and 2019**

Score / Description	% premises 2015	% premises 2019
 <p>Very good</p>	63	78
 <p>Good</p>	21	12

 <p>Generally satisfactory</p>	10	6
 <p>Improvement necessary</p>	3	2
 <p>Major improvement necessary</p>	2	2
 <p>Urgent improvement necessary</p>	1	0

- 3.11 It is clear that the scheme has provided an incentive for food businesses to improve and maintain standards of hygiene because consumers are now able to make an informed choice about where they eat and shop. However it is unlikely that the current level of performance can be improved on significantly. There is a considerable turnover of management and staff in food businesses particularly those premises that regularly achieve low scores. This makes it difficult to achieve long term sustained compliance in these premises. The fact the current performance is consistent with the national and regional performance level suggests this issue is common to all local authorities. Low scoring businesses receive more regular visits to provide advice and guidance to help them improve compliance and to ensure public health is protected.
- 3.12 In general the food safety team prefer to use informal means to secure compliance such as providing advice and guidance or issuing written warnings rather than a more formal approach such as prosecution. Providing advice and guidance is more likely to result in sustained long term compliance. However the council will take action to address serious risks to public health and persistent non-compliance. Since the last board report in 2015 the food safety team have closed down 7 premises using emergency powers - 5 of those premises have remained closed since this intervention.
- 3.13 There are a number of safeguards in place to protect the interests of business and ensure operation of the scheme is fair, transparent and consistent across all local authority areas. All local authorities operate to a standard set of guidelines issued by the Food Standards Agency known as the “brand standard”. Businesses have a right to appeal their rating. In practice very few appeals are received. Businesses that have complied with outstanding inspection findings are also entitled to request a re-inspection which may result in the business being issued

with a new hygiene rating. The council now charge for re-inspection requests as they are not considered part of the statutory inspection programme. This is consistent with other local authorities. The current fee is £112.65. In the last 12 months the council carried out 19 re-inspection requests. Once the fee has been made the re-inspection is carried out as an unannounced visit.

### **Allergen labelling**

- 3.13 Allergens in the context of food law are food ingredients or processing aids that are known to cause allergic reactions in some consumers. In severe cases these allergic reactions can prove fatal. There are currently 14 allergens specified in EU food law and these include wheat, milk, peanuts and sesame seeds.
- 3.14 There has been a long standing requirement in UK food law for labels of pre-packed manufactured food to contain information on allergens. This requirement was extended in 2014 by EU law that requires allergen information to be provided for all food sold or served to consumers for example in restaurants, café's, takeaways and sandwich shops. This information can be provided verbally on request or in writing on menu's or notices. In practice this information is mostly provided verbally on request.
- 3.15 There is currently no requirement for foods that are packed on the premises - for example bread, cakes, and sandwiches at a bakers shop - to contain allergen information on the packaging. The rationale behind this approach is that the consumer can obtain that information from staff in the shop. However following a number of high profile fatal incidents the Government are now consulting on extending allergen labelling requirements that apply to manufactured food to all packaged foods.
- 3.16 It is essential that businesses provide accurate information to consumers as the consequences of providing inaccurate information could result in a serious allergic reaction. Failure to provide accurate information is potentially an offence. If this failure results in harm to a consumer then the business may be prosecuted under food law and also potentially by the police. A high profile case in Greater Manchester resulted in a takeaway owner being jailed for manslaughter after he served a meal containing peanuts that resulted in the death of a customer. The customer had specifically requested a meal without peanuts.
- 3.17 Despite the serious consequences compliance with allergen laws has proved challenging for many businesses particularly small independent business who do not have access to technical expertise available in larger multinational companies. Businesses must consider all components of the meals they produce including allergens that may be present in sauces and spice mixes that they buy in from suppliers.

Businesses also need to consider any changes to the menu and ingredients used and the potential for cross contamination in the kitchen that may result in the unintentional presence of allergens in a meal.

- 3.18 To promote compliance the food safety team has provided considerable advice and guidance to food businesses. Checks on the accuracy of information are made during the course of routine food hygiene inspections. To further monitor compliance and the accuracy of information provided the food team have scheduled a sampling programme for October and November 2019. Samples of meals will be submitted for laboratory analysis. The results will be compared with the allergen information provided by the food business.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Food Safety and Standards enforcement is a statutory function. Legislation and Policy is set at a European and National level and is overseen in the UK by the Food Standards Agency. Halton Council acts as a local enforcement authority for central Government.
- 4.2 Whilst the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is a non-statutory scheme it is strongly backed by the Food Standards Agency and has been adopted by every local authority in the UK.
- 4.3 The scheme provides a non-regulatory incentive for businesses to maintain high standards of hygiene by providing information that enables consumers to make informed decisions about where they eat and shop.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The overall objective of the food safety and standards service is to prevent food borne disease and prevent food contamination.

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

The overall objective of the food safety and standards service is to prevent food borne disease and prevent food contamination.

#### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The food premises inspection programme assists with the maintenance of town centres by ensuring food premises are clean and measures are in place to control pests and waste.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no significant risks associated with this report.

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

There are no significant equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

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

None.