

Public Document Pack



Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

Monday, 14 November 2022 at 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Geoffrey Logan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Abbott	Labour
Councillor Marjorie Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Irene Bramwell	Labour
Councillor Chris Carlin	Labour
Councillor Louise Goodall	Labour
Councillor Valerie Hill	Labour
Councillor Eddie Jones	Labour
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Aimee Teeling	Labour

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 or e-mail
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 23 January 2023*

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

Part I

Item No.		Page No.
1. MINUTES		1 - 5
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)		
	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.	
3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME		6 - 8
4. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES PPB ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021/22		9 - 15
5. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES		
(A) HEADTEACHER OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR HALTON CHILDREN IN CARE		16 - 65
(B) CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE		66 - 67
(C) HALTON LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY 2021-25		68 - 73
(D) SUMMARY OF 2022 PROVISIONAL UN-VALIDATED ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES		74 - 84
(E) SUPPORTING FAMILIES UPDATE		85 - 91
6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING		
(A) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 2 2022/23		92 - 108

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.

**CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE
BOARD**

At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 13 June 2022 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), Abbott, M. Bradshaw, Carlin, Goodall, V. Hill, Jones, Loftus and Aimee Teeling

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Bramwell

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, L. Davenport and A. Leach

Also in attendance: One member of the press

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

	<i>Action</i>
CYP1 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
CYP2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
<p>It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.</p>	
CYP3 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
<p>The minutes relating to the Children and Young People Portfolio, that had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix 1 for information.</p>	
CYP4 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE	
<p>The Board received a presentation, which gave an update of the work undertaken to date, following the Ofsted focused visit and the subsequent actions taken in response to their findings.</p>	

Halton received the focused visit to its Children's Services Department in October 2021 and inspectors looked at the arrangements for Children in Need (CIN), including those who were subject to a Child Protection Plan. Since the findings of the inspectors, steps had been taken to make improvements to the service, including the establishment of an Improvement Board.

The presentation outlined the progress made within leadership and management, areas of concern and the next steps to be taken; and progress made with the quality of practice, areas of concern and next steps to be taken. It also gave information on progress of quality assurance and performance and the activities carried out by the Operational Group.

Following the presentation, Members' queried the following:

Where was the structure of the management team currently – Principle Managers were operating a level down to cover the absence of practice managers. The aim was to have a visible leadership team to support social workers, however recruitment was difficult at all levels and there was a reliance on agency workers to fill management posts, as well as social worker and practice lead posts.

There was a high turnover of agency staff – yes, a snapshot of the workforce as of May 2022 was given. The Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) was brought via from agency staff and was making a positive difference. Reasons such as pay, distance from home, bridge tolls and lack of administration support were given as why workers left (agency and permanent). Recruitment and retention of staff was a priority and a workforce strategy had been launched and staff development forum had been created to help support this.

Why was Eclipse unpopular – social workers did not favour Eclipse as it could be time consuming to work with. It was being developed as much as possible to remove barriers to the system that would improve or reduce data input for workers. Eclipse was not like the previous system, Care First, whereby social workers could choose when to start a recording pathway. Eclipse follows the child's journey completely via the mandatory pathways and process re filling of forms and social workers have to follow the required steps to comply with the process and procedures that completes this journey.

Was there support for adopters following a successful adoption – yes a post adoption support team was in place available at any time for adopting parents to contact.

How was the increase in the numbers of unaccompanied child asylum seekers affecting the service – this has impacted on caseloads for social workers, budgets and sufficiency, as they either required foster care or accommodation. The Council has a statutory duty of care and other responsibilities in relation to asylum seekers.

It was commented by a Member that resell of the organisation was required to encourage the recruitment and retention of staff, in particular social workers.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the steps that had been taken and the role of the Improvement Board.

CYP5 HALTON LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY 2021-25

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – People, which provided update in relation to the progress of the local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2021-25.

The report also outlined some of the pressures on the SEND provision and support service. It gave the position in relation to applications for Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessments, in that these had continued to be received at a high rate since Covid restrictions were eased in Schools over summer 2021, with 20% of applications being made by parents. Further, it was reported that the completion rate of applications to within 20 weeks had dropped to 62.5%; the report discussed the three factors contributing to this decline.

The Board was also presented with information on the following strategic developments:

- The Working Better Together sub-group of the SEND Partnership;
- The development of a Halton Co-production Charter;
- The DFE's Delivering Better Values Programme; and
- The development of a new SEND Sufficiency Strategy.

Was the Co-production Charter a living document – no it would stay the same. It had been co-produced by parents

and the Council and allows parents to hold the partnership to account. The document was new to Halton but was in place in many other local authorities who also developed them independently. It was acknowledged that there may be risks associated with raising parents expectations, however it was commented that it was a worthwhile to have the Charter.

Would the SEND Sufficiency Strategy be ready for Autumn – yes, the implementation timeline for the Sufficiency Strategy is that it would be in place over summer 2022.

Can we have an idea of costs of Out of Borough placements – these were broad in range depending on the child's needs, but can range from £30k to £90k per year per child/young person. Transport costs would be on top on this.

What was the furthest distance travelled to for Out of Borough placements – Precise information was not to hand but there were some Key Stage 3 and 4 students travelling to Bolton, Ormskirk and Stockport.

More about funding packages please – placements were quoted on an individual basis, depending on the needs of the child. Each provider had their own pricing structure and it was recognised that there were differences between different authorities' charges. Costs of placements were challenged regularly.

Further to discussion it was also noted that there were 7.4% of children in Halton with and EHCP, so the population of SEND was above the national average. The Free School, Raise Academy, had been delayed and was causing pressures on SEND provision; it was now due to open in September 2023 and would mainly address autism and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the report and comments made.

CYP6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 3 &4 2021/22

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarters 3 and 4 of 2021-22 (1 October to 31 December 2021 and 1 January to 31 March 2022).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2021-22 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan, for the various functional areas

reported to the Board as follows:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

Members queried:

Virtual School PEP's, had they improved – this information was not to hand but a response would be sought from the relevant officer following the meeting. It was noted that the Annual Report of the virtual school was expected in the Autumn.

Was there an action plan in place to improve the attendance at the PRU – a response would be sought from the relevant officer.

RESOLVED: That the quarter 3 and 4 performance management reports be received.

Operational
Director -
Education,
Inclusion and
Provision

Meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

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

DATE: 14 November 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services

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.

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	14 November 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, People
PORTFOLIO:	Children & Young People
SUBJECT:	Annual Report 2021/2022
WARD(S)	All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To receive the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Boards' Annual Report for 2021/2022

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

i) **That the 2021/2022 Annual Report be received and noted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Article 6 of the Constitution requires each Policy and Performance Board to submit an Annual Report to Council outlining their work.

3.2 The Annual Report (Appendix 1) is submitted to the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board for consideration.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None identified.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

None identified.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

None identified.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

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

None identified.



Cllr. Geoff Logan
Chairman
Children &
Young People
PPB

**ANNUAL REPORT
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES
POLICY & PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021**

“My first year as Chair of Children, Young People, and Families PPB has been interesting and challenging as the pandemic continued to affect Halton. However, our staff across Children’s services have risen to the challenge and demonstrated flexibility, creativity and resilience whilst supporting, protecting and educating our children and young people of Halton.

This year has also presented our parents, and children in schools and colleges with unforeseen challenges as they have had to adapt back from virtual school life, hybrid models to a more typical educational offer, whilst coping with the return of exams and statutory assessments such as SAT’s. The children and young people are to be congratulated on achieving such tremendous results and moving on successfully to the next stage in their education, employment and training. Our school staff, governors and wider support services all demonstrated commitment and dedication to ensuring our young people received a bespoke offer to ensure any gaps in lost learning from the pandemic were plugged and young people were able to succeed and achieve.

I would like to thank all of our staff for their dedication, hard work, and selflessness in dealing with the challenges that have arisen in supporting our children in care, our foster carers, our care leavers, and our children in schools during the still ongoing pandemic.

Finally, I would like to thank the board (past and present) for supporting me during this first year as Chair and know that together we will ensure that our children and young people of Halton will be safe, healthy and gain a high quality education that will prepare them to be caring, achieving, contributing citizens of the future.

***Councillor Geoff Logan
Chair – Children, Young People & Families Policy and
Performance Board***

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2021/22 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors G. Logan (Chair);

Cllr C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice Chair), J. Abbott; M. Bradshaw, I. Bramwell; C. Carlin, L. Goodall, V. Hill; E. Jones; K. Loftus; and A. Teeling.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the work of the Council (and its partner agencies within Children’s Trust.

Arrangements) in seeking: to ensure that children and young people in Halton have the best possible start in life and opportunities to fulfil their potential and succeed; and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan and the Children and Young People’s Plan.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met four times during the Municipal Year, and returned post Covid to face to face meetings. Detailed below are some of the main areas of scrutiny the Board has considered at these meetings.

Halton’s response to Ofsted’s review of sexual violence and sexual harrassment in schools and colleges

The Board were advised of Ofsted’s review of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools (SVSH) and updated statutory guidance and how Halton had responded to this national review. Safeguarding support, training, advice and support materials were provided to Halton schools, colleges and educational establishments.

Education, Inclusion and Provision

The Operational Director for Education, Inclusion and Provision has provided the Board with summaries of the educational offer and support provided by the Department.

Members were informed that Early Years and primary statutory assessments had been cancelled this year by the government due to Covid and therefore no performance data could be provided. Whilst GCSE and post 16 qualifications did take place, these were not to be benchmarked and were to be used with caution as these grades were informed by

teacher assessed grades. Members received updates in relation to National Tutoring Programme; Catch up Premium and Return to School 2021 arrangements.

Service summaries were provided on the following key service areas:

- Early Years and School Improvement;
- School Improvement;
- Supporting Families
- Social Care
- Cheshire Youth Justice Service
- Halton Virtual Schools;
- Policy, Provision and Performance;
- Inclusion (0-25); and
- Broader Council support.

Annual report from the Headteacher of the Virtual School regarding Children in Care (CIC) and Care Leavers

The Headteacher of the Virtual School provided Members with a detailed report on the educational outcomes and achievement of Children in care. Included within the report were dashboards identifying attendance data; monitoring progress and achievements; mobility; placements; cohort information including SEND information; exclusions; access to alternative provision (AP); identification of Children and Young People Not in Education, Employment or training (NEET); PEP completion rates; training priorities and plans for 2022 for the Virtual School Population.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Review Autumn 2021- (CSA)

Members received an update on Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA). An update was provided as to how the Local Authority were meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare. The achievements made since the review last year was outlined and discussed along with Halton's current position. Gaps in provision were highlighted and it was explained how these were being addressed. An update to the response to Covid 19 in the early year's sector and the impact it was having on the sector was explored, along with market rates and quality of educational establishments was celebrated as graded by Ofsted.

Annual Report – Comments, Complaints and Compliments Relating to Children’s Social Care Services from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

This annual report is presented and discussed by members with a focus on the learning from any complaints. An opportunity is also taken to celebrate the compliments many individuals and services receive.

Ofsted Focused Visit of Children’s Services November 2021

The Strategic Director of People shared the findings from an Ofsted focused visit on 13th and 14th November 2021. The visit focused upon the arrangements for children in need, including those who are subject to a child protection plan. The Strategic Director shared Ofsted’s findings and the actions taken in response to the findings including the establishment of an Improvement Board. Members were keen to learn of the impact of actions taken, progress with regard to the action plan and next steps.

HMI Inspectorate of Probation Report of Cheshire Youth Justice Service

A report was shared with members regarding an inspection led by HMI inspectorate, but supported by Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and HMI Constabulary and Fire Service Inspectorate, regarding the outcome of the inspection in December 2021. The inspection of the Cheshire Youth Justice Service was graded as good. Members thanked all partners for their ongoing roles and offer to the Cheshire Youth Justice Service which covers Halton, Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West Authorities along with fire and police services.

Halton Local Area SEND Strategy 2021-2025

The Board were presented with a detailed presentation on the SEND Strategy and implementation arrangements for 2021-2025. Members were advised that the strategy had been co-produced with other statutory bodies across education and health, including schools, the CCG, parents and carers representatives and children and young people representatives. The vision, principles, priorities and governance were shared as well as the draft of the single page summary.

	<p>As part of its overview, the Policy and Performance Board also considers the Council's Executive Board minutes and Children's Trust minutes as well as the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports.</p>
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REPORT TO:	Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	14 th November 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, People
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Young People and Families
SUBJECT:	Headteacher of the Virtual School's Annual Report for Halton Children in Care
WARD(S)	All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Board with the Headteacher of the Virtual School's annual report on the education outcomes and achievement of Halton Children in Care.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- i) **note the information provided; and**
- ii) **accept the Headteacher of the Virtual School's annual report as an accurate account of the performance on the education outcomes and achievement of Halton Children in Care.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Please see the attached report for the detailed data, analysis and summary of the work of Halton Virtual School during the academic year 2021-22.
- 3.2 The work of the Virtual School has continued throughout the academic year and the full annual report does provide detailed analysis of how Halton Children in Care have performed against each of the individual key performance indicators, also a summary of the Virtual School's progress towards its identified key priorities for the academic year 2021-22 and identifying the priorities for the Virtual School in 2022-23.
- 3.3 As this is a covering report it only provides a summary of the overall performance of the children and young people and a summary of the Virtual School's performance for 2021-22.
- 3.4 **Children in care overall performance against key education outcomes**

Halton Virtual School operate an 'At Risk Register' so that we can track and prioritise those children and young people in care who are at risk of not

achieving good educational outcomes. On the At Risk Register good performance is considered to be when a child in care:

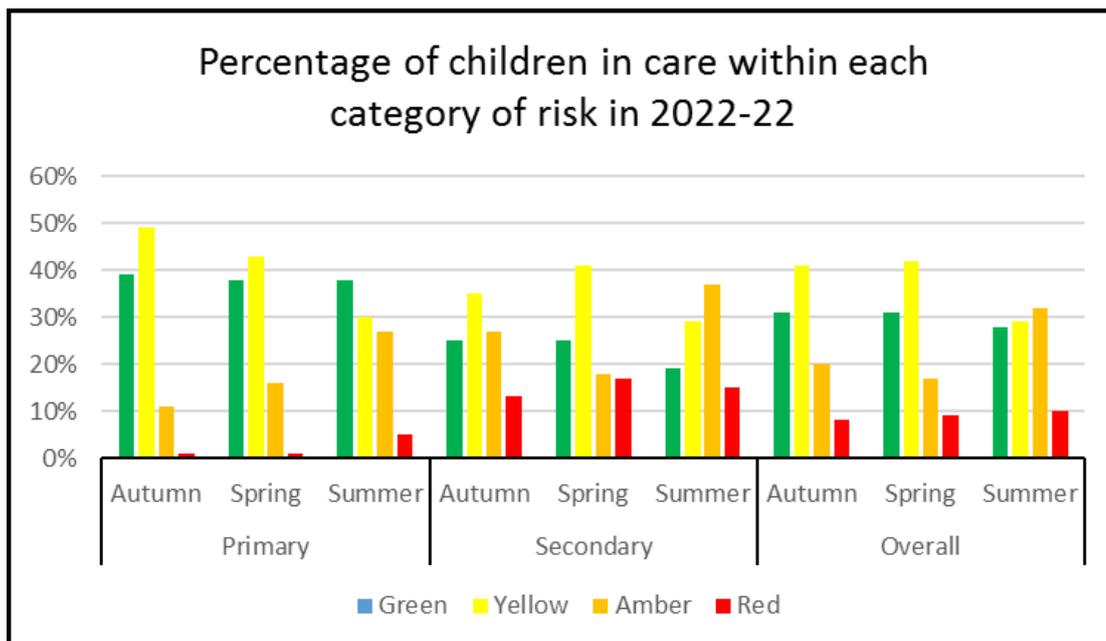
- Is making at least expected progress across all key subject areas in their phase of education.
- Is currently or likely to achieve age related expectations in all key subject areas
- Has attendance that is above 95%
- Has had no fixed term exclusions
- Is accessing their full educational entitlement
- Has not had any time off school roll

A child will be flagged in the following way against these criteria:

	Has no flags against any of the key performance indicators
	1 flag - Is not making at least expected progress/not going to achieve age related expectations OR is not achieving 1 other performance indicator
	2 flags - Is not making at least expected progress/not going to achieve age related expectations AND is not achieving 1 other performance indicator
	3 or more flags - Is not making at least expected progress/not going to achieve age related expectations AND is not achieving 2 or more other performance indicator

Positive performance is a reduction in the percentage of children who are flagged as red and an increase in the percentage of those flagged as green.

Positive performance is a reduction in the percentage of children who are flagged as red and an increase in the percentage of those flagged as green. The chart below shows the percentage of children in each of the risk categories across the academic year. As can be seen, the number of young people being flagged as green across the academic year has remained stable. This is because of the collaborative work lead by the Virtual School and including schools and Children’s Social Care. This collaboration has helped to mitigate the risks of children and young people not achieving good educational outcomes in challenging circumstances.



3.5 Summary of performance against Key Priorities

- = Good Performance
- ≈ = there is some improvement but there is still concern
- × = an area of underperformance

Priority	Achieved	Analysis
To continue to mitigate against the risk of lost learning and to increase the percentage of children who are achieving good educational outcomes.	≈	Outcomes at KS4 were positive in comparison to previous years. PEPs (Personal Education Plan) (Personal Education Plan) and the use of School Led Tuition Grant expanded the provision of tuition to tackle areas of lost learning.
Close the progress and attainment gap between Halton children in care and their non-care experienced peers, with a particular focus on achieving the higher grades in Key stage 4.	■	Improvements were made across all performance criteria. Performance on the combined measure at Grade 5+ also improved. There has been an increase in the number of Children in Care in Halton achieving 5 GCSEs including the combined English and maths at grade 5. This will continue to be a priority focus for the next academic year.
Continue to improve the quality of Personal Education Plans, including Early Years and Post 16, with a particular focus on target setting, impact measures for Pupil Premium Plus and tracking the curriculum accessed.	≈	The percentage of PEPs graded good or better has increased, particularly within the early years. The quality of targets within Post 16 and a NEET PEP are now required.

Commission and conduct a Halton Virtual School Pupil Premium Plus Review to ascertain impact, areas of good practice and areas for development.	X	This has not been actioned in 2021-22 but is identified as a priority for Spring 2023.
Develop a Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus model to provide additional support and improve retention.	R	Progress has been made but impacted upon by the departure of the Post 16 PEP lead, which is currently a vacant position. Following appointment, this will be completed during 2023.
To continue to improve the number of secondary age young people in care having attendance above 95%	X	Although progress has been made with individual students, the overall attendance was 85% for secondary age young people. However, as a whole cohort, the attendance remains above 90%
Reduce the number of children in care receiving one or more fixed term exclusion, and the length and the frequency.	X	Within the Primary cohort the number of exclusions remained low throughout the year. There has been an increase in exclusions from the previous year but remain broadly in line with exclusions in previous years.
Continue to monitor and risk assess the progress of any child in care attending a school judged as Requires Improvement or below by Ofsted, including undertaking additional support and challenge visits to the school.	R	Support and challenge visits to schools were completed on a termly basis. The information collated during these visits were then fed back to the termly Cross Service Monitoring group, attended by all sectors of the Inclusion division.
Develop a SEND dashboard to monitor the outcomes, support, and quality of provision more effectively.	X	Due to the retirement of the previous VHT and redeployment of existing team members, this has not been completed during 2021-22
Embed the direct working approach for 16 – 22-year-olds to continue to improve engagement in Education, Employment and Training with a particular focus on apprenticeships.	R	A high percentage of 16–18-year-olds are engaging with EET, but this is not sustained at 19+. Initial plans are in place for the development of a traineeship model in 2022-23. The arrival of additional UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children) has also impacted upon these figures.
To develop a proactive and bespoke package of support for UASC.	R	Support is provided, but this now needs to be strengthened and developed following the

	<p>appointment of a Post 16 PEP co-ordinator under the direction of the Post 16 team leader.</p>
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4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Please see below regarding national policy changes that will have implications for the support provided through Halton Virtual School.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Halton Virtual School relies heavily on the use of Pupil Premium Plus funding from the Government to support the educational outcomes of Children in Care. This includes support provided through the Personal Education Plan, for the staffing required to carry out its duties to a high and effective standard, and the ability to commission specialist psychological assessments, as well as provide direct curriculum support for the children and young people. There is currently an agreement that this funding will remain in place until 2022 but that it will be reviewed to take into account other budgetary changes and pressures.

5.2 There is a major risk to the outcomes of our most vulnerable children if this funding ceases because Halton Virtual School will no longer be able to provide the high level and necessary educational support for our children in care. Halton’s ILACS inspection in 2020 stated that the Virtual School required more capacity in order to keep delivering its very good work so the grant funding has been used to meet this suggestion (details of the staffing structure are contained within the full annual report). If the grant funding used by the Virtual School ceases this will have a direct impact on its capacity to meet not only the statutory requirements but continue to deliver its Ofsted validated bespoke support model to Halton’s children in care. Therefore, Council funding of at least the same level will need to be identified to mitigate against this.

5.3 Halton Virtual School continues to look to provide additional employment and training opportunities for Care Leavers through access to apprenticeships and work programmes. There needs to be a review of funding opportunities to support these and also creative opportunities both within the Council and within local businesses.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The educational outcomes of Children in Care remain a key priority for the Council.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

If Children in Care do not achieve their expected educational outcomes, there is a high risk that they will become NEET and therefore not achieve employment which fulfils their aspirations or enables them to be active participants in the community.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Research has demonstrated that issues related to the emotional health and well-being have a significant impact upon the educational outcomes for Children in Care. Timely and effective services are vital in providing emotional support for our young people to enable them to have positive engagement in their learning and achieve their potential.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Due to their lived experiences Children in Care can be at higher risk of child sexual exploitation, and episodes of missing from care or school. Research does indicate that these factors all have a negative impact upon educational outcomes for our children and young people in care. Therefore, all agencies need to provide proactive support in order to keep children in care safe.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 If the outcomes for our Halton Children in care do not improve then there is a continued risk that they are more likely to become NEET and not become active and positive partners in their community.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Children in Care continue to be a vulnerable group whose life experiences of trauma, neglect and abuse mean that they have not had the same start to life as other young people.

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

None.

VIRTUAL  SCHOOL

Annual Report

2021-2022

Written by

Benjamin Holmes

Headteacher of the Virtual School

Joanne Lloyd

Early Years and Primary Team Leader

(Acting Headteacher November 2021-July 2022)

Peter McPartland

Secondary and Post-16 Team Leader

(Acting Headteacher November 2021-July 2022)



Introduction 3

Executive Summary 3

 At Risk Register 5

 Priority Areas for 2022-2023 6

Context 7

 Halton Virtual School Team from September 2022 7

 Children in Care Cohort Summary 8

 Profile of Cohort 10

 School Phase 11

 School Ofsted ratings 11

 Key Education Provider priority for 2022-23 12

Key Education Placement actions for 2022-23:	12
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.....	13
Work undertaken by the Virtual School with SEN	13
Key SEN Priority for 2022-23	14
Key SEN Actions for 2022-23.....	14
Academic Outcomes in 2021-2022.....	14
Attainment and Progress	14
Context.....	14
Early Years Foundation Stage.....	15
Year 1 Phonics	15
Key Stage 1.....	15
Key Stage 2.....	16
At Key Stage 4	16
KS4 Summary	17
Attendance and Exclusions	17
Education, Employment and Training for Post 16	17
Virtual School Actions and Impact	18
Progress of other children in care.....	18
Key Educational Outcomes Priorities for 2022-23	19
Key Education Outcomes Actions for 2022-23	19
Attendance and Exclusions	19
Attendance 2021-22	20
Attendance of all children in care 2021-22.....	20
Attendance of all children in care over the past 6 years	20
Attendance - Influencing Factors.....	21
Exclusions.....	23
Exclusion Analysis 2021-22	24
Virtual School Actions and Impact on Exclusions	25
Key Attendance and Exclusion Priorities for 2022-23.....	25
Key Attendance and Exclusion Actions 2022-23.....	26
Accessing Alternative provision	26
Access to Alternative Provision in 2021-22.....	26
Post 16 Access to Education, Employment and Training.....	27
Outcomes for our 16–18-year-old young people in care	28

Virtual School Actions and Impact on EET	30
Key EET Priorities for 2022-23.....	31
Personal Education Plans	31
PEP Completion	32
Statutory Compliance and Quality Assurance	32
Quality Assurance	33
Key PEP Priorities for 2022-23	34
Key PEP Actions for 2022-23	34
Pupil Premium Plus	35
PP+ Expenditure 2021-22.....	35
Key PP+ Priorities for 2022-23	36
Key PP+ Actions for 2022-23	37
Post Looked After Children	37
Expansion of the Role of the Virtual School	37
Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) or in the last 6 Years (Ever6 CWSW)	37
Training and Development	40
Training priorities for 2022-23	40
Additional learning and literacy support	41
Activity and Support Programme.....	41
Key Wider Offer Actions for 2022-23.....	42
2022 – 2023 Virtual School Action Plan	42

Introduction

Halton’s Virtual School is responsible for promoting the educational achievement for looked-after children (LAC) in line with the statutory guidance ‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’ (2018). The virtual school is overseen by the Headteacher of the Virtual School and this annual report provides a summary of our actions and achievements for the past 12 months, a self-evaluation of the standard of service and support provided, and a focussed, measurable action plan for the 2022-2023 academic year.

This report also considers the progress made and actions identified to respond to the most recent DfE (Department for Education) guidance: ‘Promoting the education of children with a social worker: virtual school head role extension’ (2021).

Executive Summary

There has been notable change within the Virtual School in 2021-2022.

The long standing Headteacher, Sharon Williams, retired in November 2021. Following her departure, Joanne Lloyd and Peter McPartland shared the position of Acting Headteacher for the remainder of the academic year.

Benjamin Holmes was then appointed as the substantive Headteacher from 1st August 2022. In addition to this, following the expansion of the role of virtual school Headteacher, additional PEP co-ordinators (Rachael Williams and Alys James) joined the team to release Joanne and Peter to strategically lead upon the new responsibilities.

In other changes, Gemma Donaldson, our early year’s co-ordinator, is currently on maternity leave and we bid farewell to Louisa Rees (one of our education support workers) and Kelly Franklin (our Post-16 PEP lead). These departures have inevitably had an impact upon the team’s capacity and the level of support that has been possible to provide to schools, social care and directly with children and young people. This will therefore be reviewed in the next academic year to ensure stability and capacity is sustainable for all colleagues within the team.

Summary of performance against Key Priorities

-  = Good Performance
-  = there is some improvement but there is still concern
-  = an area of underperformance

Priority	Achieved	Analysis
To continue to mitigate against the risk of lost learning and to increase the percentage of children who are achieving good educational outcomes.		Outcomes at KS4 were positive in comparison to previous years. PEPs (Personal Education Plan) (Personal Education Plan) and the use of School Led Tuition Grant expanded the provision of tuition to tackle areas of lost learning.
Close the progress and attainment gap between Halton children in care and their non-care experienced peers, with a particular focus on achieving the higher grades in Key stage 4.		Improvements were made across all performance criteria. Performance on the combined measure at Grade 5+ also improved. There has been an increase in the number of Children in Care in Halton achieving 5 GCSES including the combined English and maths at grade 5. This will continue to be a priority focus for the next academic year.
Continue to improve the quality of Personal Education Plans, including Early Years and Post 16, with a particular focus on target setting, impact measures for Pupil Premium Plus and tracking the curriculum accessed.		The percentage of PEPs graded good or better has increased, particularly within the early years. The quality of targets within Post 16 and a NEET PEP are now required.
Commission and conduct a Halton Virtual School Pupil Premium Plus Review to ascertain impact, areas of good practice and areas for development.		This has not been actioned in 2021-22 but is identified as a priority for Spring 2023.
Develop a Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus model to provide additional support and improve retention.		Progress has been made but impacted upon by the departure of the Post 16 PEP lead, which is currently a vacant

		position. Following appointment, this will be completed during 2023.
To continue to improve the number of secondary age young people in care having attendance above 95%	✘	Although progress has been made with individual students, the overall attendance was 85% for secondary age young people. However, as a whole cohort, the attendance remains above 90%
Reduce the number of children in care receiving one or more fixed term exclusion, and the length and the frequency.	✘	Within the Primary cohort the number of exclusions remained low throughout the year. There has been an increase in exclusions from the previous year but remain broadly in line with exclusions in previous years.
Continue to monitor and risk assess the progress of any child in care attending a school judged as Requires Improvement or below by Ofsted, including undertaking additional support and challenge visits to the school.	≈	Support and challenge visits to schools were completed on a termly basis. The information collated during these visits were then fed back to the termly Cross Service Monitoring group, attended by all sectors of the Inclusion division.
Develop a SEND dashboard to monitor the outcomes, support, and quality of provision more effectively.	✘	Due to the retirement of the previous VHT and redeployment of existing team members, this has not been completed during 2021-22
Embed the direct working approach for 16 – 22-year-olds to continue to improve engagement in Education, Employment and Training with a particular focus on apprenticeships.	≈	A high percentage of 16–18-year-olds are engaging with EET, but this is not sustained at 19+. Initial plans are in place for the development of a traineeship model in 2022-23. The arrival of additional UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children) has also impacted upon these figures.
To develop a proactive and bespoke package of support for UASC.	≈	Support is provided, but this now needs to be strengthened and developed following the appointment of a Post 16 PEP co-ordinator under the direction of the Post 16 team leader.

At Risk Register

Children in care overall performance against key education outcomes

Halton Virtual School operate an 'At Risk Register' so that we can track and prioritise those children and young people in care who are at risk of not achieving good educational outcomes. On the At Risk Register satisfactory performance is when a child in care:

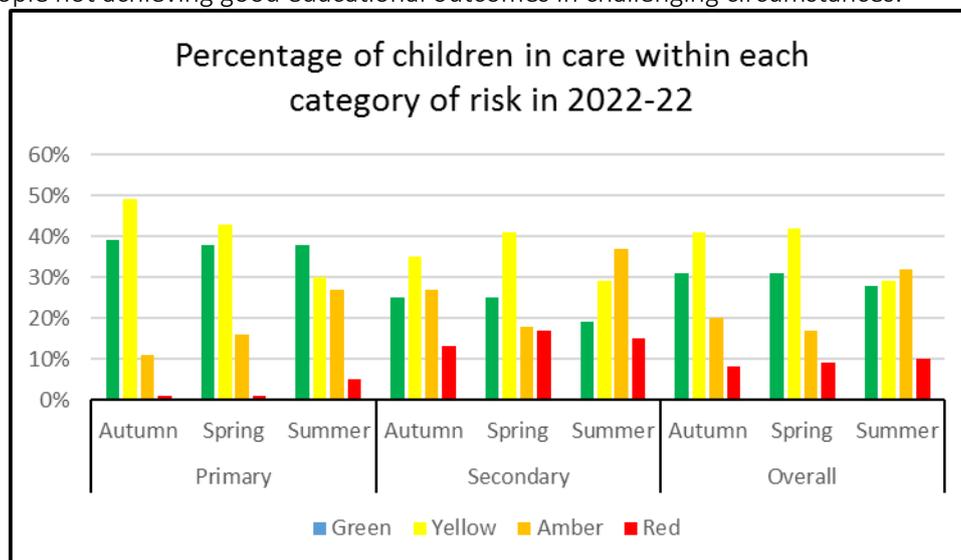
- Is making at least expected progress across all key subject areas in their phase of education.
- Is currently or likely to achieve age related expectations in all key subject areas
- Has attendance that is above 95%
- Has had no fixed term exclusions
- Is accessing their full educational entitlement
- Has not had any time off school roll

A child will be flagged in the following way against these criteria:

	Has no flags against any of the key performance indicators
	1 flag - Is not making at least expected progress/not going to achieve age related expectations OR is not achieving 1 other performance indicator
	2 flags - Is not making at least expected progress/not going to achieve age related expectations AND is not achieving 1 other performance indicator
	3 or more flags - Is not making at least expected progress/not going to achieve age related expectations AND is not achieving 2 or more other performance indicator

Positive performance is a reduction in the percentage of children who are flagged as red and an increase in the percentage of those flagged as green.

The chart below shows the percentage of children in each of the risk categories across the academic year. As can be seen, the number of young people being flagged as green across the academic year has remained stable. This is because of the collaborative work lead by the Virtual School and including schools and Children’s Social Care. This collaboration has helped to mitigate the risks of children and young people not achieving good educational outcomes in challenging circumstances.



Priority Areas for 2022-2023

This is a summary of the areas of focus. The full action plan can be found at the end of this report.

Priority	Rationale
To reduce the number of LAC becoming NEET whilst in care or as a care leaver. (This includes the launch of a NEET PEP)	Too many young care leavers are becoming NEET.
Develop a high quality, multi-agency moderation process of PEPs, to continue to build upon the progress and attainment within all Key Stages	Following the expansion of the virtual school team and several changes within Halton, the development of high-quality moderation of PEPs and PEP QA judgements will be established. The development of pupil progress meetings alongside the reestablishment of Pupil Causing Concern meetings will ensure greater strategic oversight for the cohort.

Embed a high-quality strategic model for the implementation of the expansion of duties to encompass all children with a social worker.	Due to the expansion of the role of the virtual Headteacher to cover all children with a social worker, it is essential that we have a clear plan, based upon a baseline assessment and identification of areas of need.
Develop a more rigorous and robust performance and quality assurance model, including the implementation of a PEP deadline, greater analysis of standards (including the completion rate for initial PEPs within 10 days) and reintegration within the corporate parenting board.	Following the expansion of the virtual school, it is important to increase the presence of the VS with partners, including social care and across education, and report upon performance through the governance of the corporate parenting board.

Context

Halton is a small borough which consists of two towns, Runcorn and Widnes. The population is 128,200 of which around 25,954 are children and young people between the ages of 0-15 and 4310 ages 16-18.

At the time of writing, the Index of Deprivation Measure (IDM) places Halton as the 23rd most deprived area nationally, a deterioration from previous IDMs (Index of Deprivation Measure). Alongside this we have the 8th highest national Free School Meal population for Nursery and Primary and 4th highest for Secondary. Over half the wards in the borough have a third or more children living in poverty. The local economy is amongst the fastest growing in the Liverpool City region and has a good proportion of high value industries.

The purpose of the Virtual School is to enable all children and young people in care to Halton to become resilient and effective independent learners, so that they can achieve their full potential and become full and active participants in society. Due to the expansion of the role of the virtual Headteacher, they also take a strategic lead on the educational outcomes for Post Looked-After Children (PLAC) and those with a social worker.

Halton Virtual School Team from September 2022

Role	Name	Funding	Contract type
Headteacher of the Virtual School	Benjamin Holmes	Core funded	Permanent
Primary and Early Years PEP and Progress Team Leader	Joanne Lloyd	Pupil Premium Plus	Ongoing grant
Secondary and Post 16 PEP and Progress Team Leader	Peter McPartland	Pupil Premium Plus	Ongoing grant
Early Years Education Support Worker	Gemma Donaldson	Pupil Premium Plus	Ongoing grant until March 2023
School Age Education Support Worker	Min Ling Lee-Tai	Core funded	Permanent

Post Looked After and Placed with Families Education Support Worker	David Bradshaw	Sec 31 Grant – PLAC / SW Expansion	Ongoing grant
Primary PEP Co-ordinator	Rachael Williams	Sec 31 SW Expansion	Ongoing grant until Jan 2024
Secondary PEP Co-ordinator	Alys James	Sec 31 SW Expansion	Ongoing grant until Jan 2024
Post 16 PEP Coordinator	Vacancy	Youth Service grant	Fixed term 2 years until March 2023
KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer	Ian Wilson	Troubled Families grant	Fixed term 2 years until March 2023

We have worked hard to expand the Virtual School in response to the feedback provided in Halton’s ILACS (Inspecting Local Authority Children’s Services) inspection which stated that more capacity was needed to further improve the excellent work of the Virtual School. We have ensured that our key priority areas of Early Years and Post 16 have benefited from this increase. However, we have also recognised that as Halton has a high number of children and young people placed within their families and that additional support was also required for this cohort.

Due to the nature of LA (Local Authorities) funding, many these posts are grant funded and on short term fixed contracts or rolling contracts with the confirmation of the continuation of the grant. In fact, there are only 3 permanent posts within the Virtual School as a whole. This presents a risk to the work of the Virtual School and the LA in fulfilling its statutory duty to promote the education of children in care and post looked after children. These vital roles will cease if the grants end or further funding is not found.

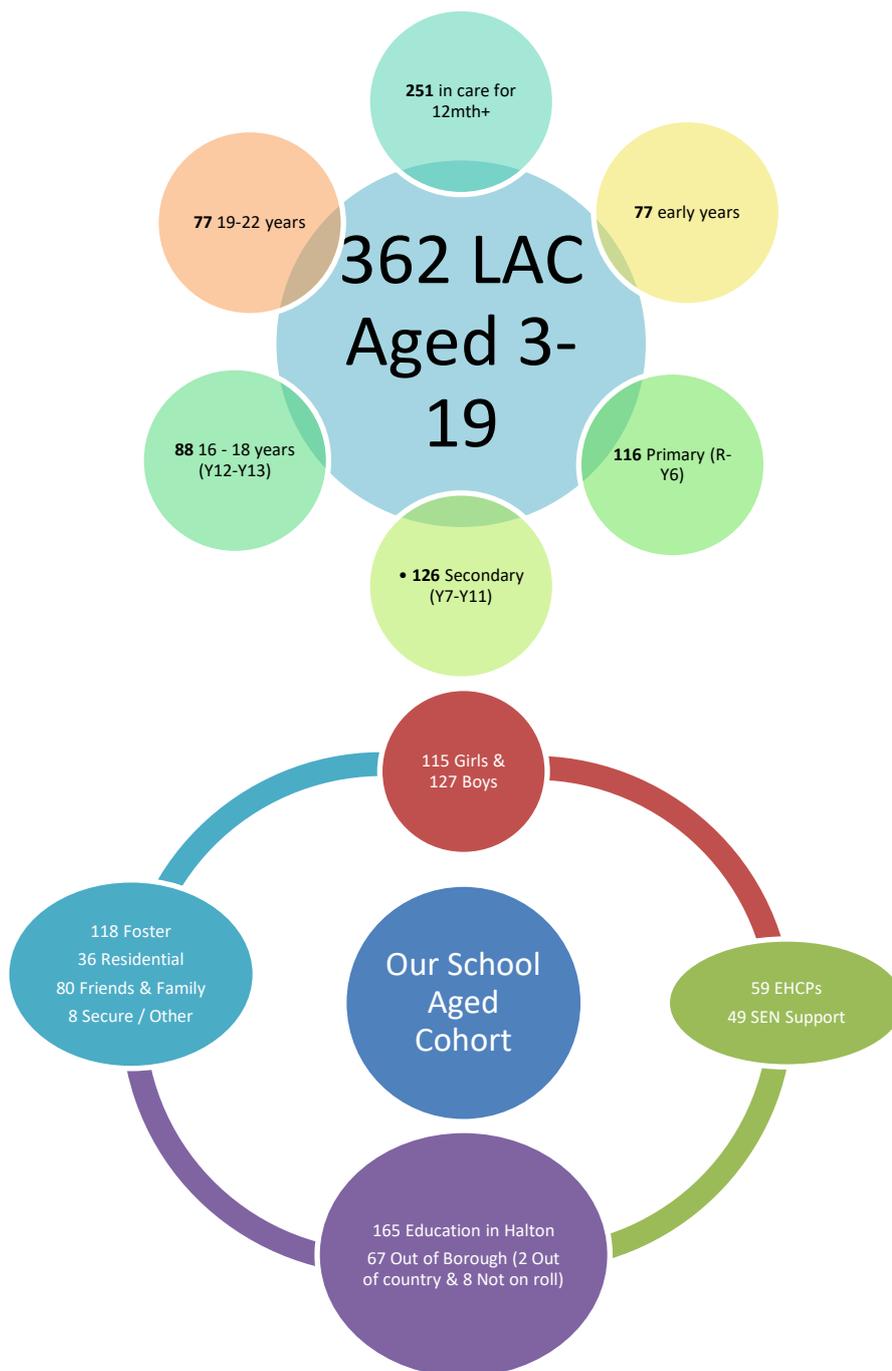
We work closely with several other services within the LA and have additional capacity because of corporate parenting responsibilities:

- Named SEN Case Worker – provides support with EHCPs (Education and Health Care Plan) and finding appropriate specialist provision
- Named Education Welfare Officer – provides attendance alerts and advice
- Education Psychology – commissioned to provide training and advice for schools
- Named YOS officer – provides support with YOS risk assessments and securing appropriate education provision
- Named 14-19 Case Worker – ensures priority is given to tracking our post 16 young people accessing education within Halton

We support and promote the education of all children in care (CIC) to Halton regardless of where they are living or being educated, from the age of 3 until they have completed their formal education. For the purposes of national performance reporting the cohort of children and young people consists of those that have been in care to Halton for at least 12 months by 1st April 2022. However, we do support, monitor and evaluate the educational outcomes of all children from the first day they enter care. The following information is accurate at the end of the academic year 2021-22.

Children in Care Cohort Summary

This data covers the academic year 2021-22, up to 31st August 2022. Over the course of the 12 months there were...



Governance of the Virtual School is undertaken by the Children in Care and Care Leavers Partnership Board which has multi-disciplinary membership, including Headteacher representation and the Director of Children and Adults Services, and is chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Young People. In addition, further scrutiny and oversight is provided by Elected Members through the Children and Young People’s Policy and Performance Board and the Corporate Parenting Board. A key area for the Virtual School is to ensure that there is collaborative working with all services that help to support and promote the education of children in care and care leavers. This includes professionals from Children’s Social Care, other services across the Local Authority, Schools, carers, key partners and most importantly the children and young people. The Virtual School team achieves this by the following:

- Being fully active support members to the Children in Care and Care Leavers Council attending each session and regularly consulting with the members on educational issues.
- Membership on the Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership's Executive Group and Chair of the Education Subgroup.
- Membership of the Fostering Panel to ensure that providing support for education is a key part of carer's assessments and when placing and matching children to carers.
- Membership of the Foster Carers Forum to ensure that any education related issues for foster carers can be addressed as they arise, including provision of training.
- Membership of the Placement Resource Panel and the Out of Borough Resource Panel to ensure that education provision is not disrupted without the agreement of the Headteacher of the Virtual School and only in exceptional circumstances.
- Membership of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Panel to ensure that support is provided both in school and at home.
- Membership of the Northwest Virtual Heads network group focusing on sharing good practice, developing strategies to overcome shared challenges and to plan effectively on a regional footing.
- Membership of Halton's associations of Primary and Secondary Headteacher's and a key member of the Halton Learning Alliance.

Profile of Cohort

Placement moves

During 2021/22 there was an increase in the number of CYP (Children and Young People) who experienced a placement move. 57 children and young people who had 1 or more placement move during the academic year 2020-21 (up from 31 in 20/21). Of these:

- 36 had 1 placement move which in most cases was related to moving to a long-term placement (up from 25)
- 14 had 2 placement moves (up from 6)
- 7 had 3 placement moves (up from 3)

School moves

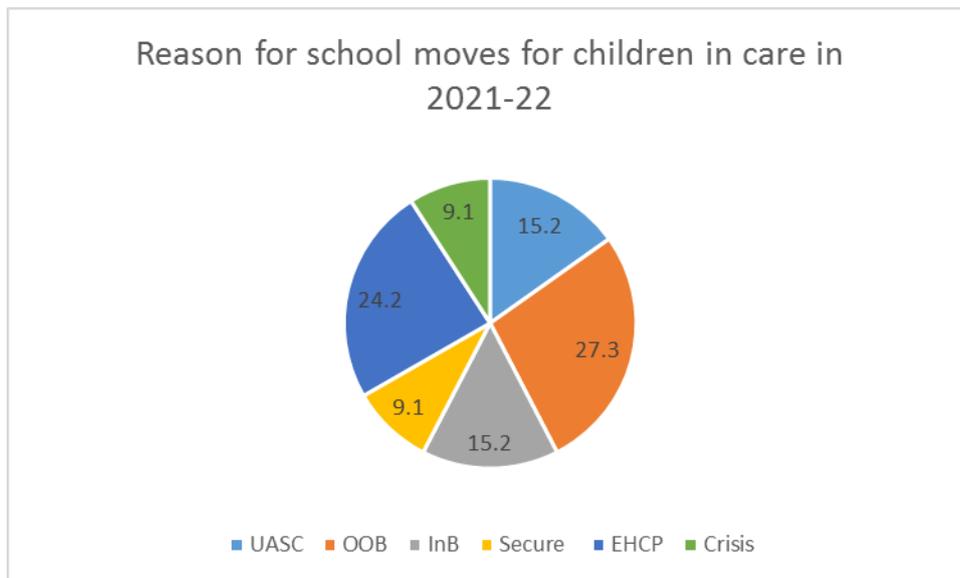
There were 33 children and young people who had a school move during the academic year, 31 had 1 move, whilst 1 had 2 moves and 1 had 3 moves.

There were 19 young people who have had periods of time not on a school roll.

There has been several UASC in this cohort and it has been difficult to source an appropriate education provision because of delays in the age assessment confirming they are of statutory school age and due to their extremely low levels of English. There were also 3 young people who had been discharged from secure accommodation and due to the impact of the pandemic care placements and specialist education provision have been hard to acquire at the same time. For all young people awaiting a school place the Virtual School provides tuition and sources an appropriate provision as soon as possible.

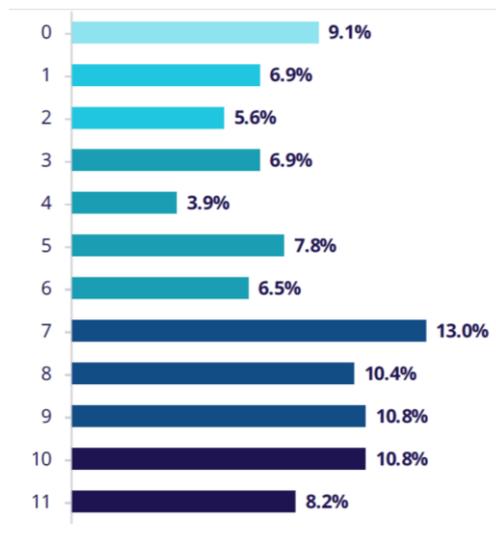
The average wait for a school place across the whole academic year was 34 days which is above the required 20 days. This figure was particularly impacted by UASC awaiting age assessments to be

completed. There were also 2 young people who were school refusers, and it was not possible to obtain a school place due to non-attendance following a placement move.



School Phase

The chart below shows a breakdown of children in care by each national curriculum year group for 2022/23. There are clear growth areas in pre-school aged children and within secondary.



School Ofsted ratings

When a child comes into care it is not appropriate to simply move them from their school because the school is rated as less than Good. However, Halton Virtual School does undertake a risk assessment which considers knowledge of the school’s overall performance, pastoral support systems, the child’s progress, and individual circumstances. Once this risk assessment has been completed and the view of the Virtual School is that a school move would be appropriate in the best interests of the child,

then discussions take place with the child’s social worker, parent/carer, and Independent Reviewing Officer and a supported transition plan is put in place.

This same process is undertaken if a school has an adverse Ofsted inspection and judgement and children in care are currently on roll.

Whenever there is a decision that a child in care remains in a school that is rated as Requires Improvement or below, rigorous monitoring of the child’s progress and outcomes is undertaken, particularly through scrutiny of the Personal Education Plan.

All school moves for children in care must be agreed by the Headteacher of the Virtual School prior to the move taking place, unless in emergency and exceptional circumstances. When a request for a school move is made, the Virtual School complete an analysis of any recent Ofsted inspections of possible schools, speak to key staff including the Designated Teacher and where appropriate other local authority Virtual Schools. This is to ensure that the school chosen can meet all the child’s needs.

When a child is transitioning into Reception or to secondary school, the Virtual School provide advice and guidance to social workers and carers to ensure that all children are placed in suitable provision, with priority being given to schools that are judged as Good or better. The Headteacher of the Virtual School makes the final decision.



Key Education Provider priority for 2022-23

- Continue to monitor and risk assess the progress of any child in care attending a school judged as Requires Improvement or below by Ofsted, including undertaking additional support and challenge visits to the school.

Key Education Placement actions for 2022-23:

- Through termly tracking identify all schools’ whose Ofsted judgement has changed so that the PEP and Progress Coordinator can then carry out a challenge and support visit to discuss progress of the children attending that school.
- The Virtual School will continue to work closely with social workers and carers in discussions around school admissions and transitions to ensure that children in care are only placed in schools that are Requires Improvement in exceptional circumstances.
- Work closely with colleagues within the education division, to ensure that schools judged as Requires Improvement or below are making progress to achieve a better Ofsted outcome.

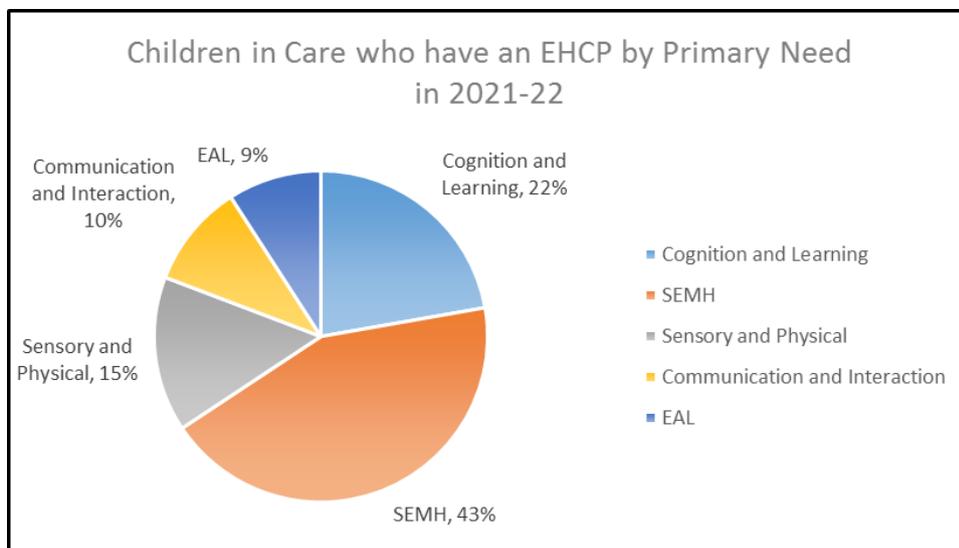
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children in care are significantly more likely to have additional needs than their non-care experienced peers, and are more likely to have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

As corporate parents Halton SEND services and the Virtual School have agreed that we need to retain responsibility for our most vulnerable children in care who are living outside of Halton but not in a stable placement and require a statutory assessment. In these circumstances the Virtual School commission the Education Psychology Service to undertake the assessments and an SEN Caseworker is allocated to ensure the assessment is completed at least within the statutory timeframe. This decision has been made to ensure that the assessment process is not disrupted should the placement breakdown and to minimise the number of local authorities involved in completing the assessment. For all other children placed outside of Halton in stable placements it is the resident authority that undertake the assessment as per the Belongings Regulations.

To ensure that children in care have early identification of their needs and appropriate timely support, the Virtual School have commissioned bespoke children in care education psychology time, and this is used to support our most vulnerable children who require statutory assessment but are being educated out of Halton; this time is also used for joint support and challenge meetings between schools, the school EP and the PEP and Progress Coordinator. This ensures that children in care are discussed on at least a termly basis and the graduated approach is implemented in a timely manner.

The following chart shows the percentage of Halton children in care who have an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) and the primary reason. We currently have 4 children across Primary and Secondary that are undergoing statutory assessment.



I have included EAL as although it is not within the SEN Code of Practice is it an additional barrier that our increasing number of UASC face in accessing their educational entitlement.

Work undertaken by the Virtual School with SEN

- We have ensured that despite the challenging situation there has been no drift where applications for an EHCP have needed to be made or whilst the child or young person is undergoing statutory assessment. This has been facilitated by the PEP Coordinators and by our commissioned EP support.

- The Virtual School has continued to work with our SEN Commissioning and SEN Assessment Teams to ensure that when a new specialist provision is required this is done as promptly as possible, including if the child is placed out of Halton on an emergency.
- We have supported social workers and carers to complete their elements of any assessment or annual review documentation to ensure that the EHCP is comprehensive and holistic so better meeting the child's needs.
- We have supported, through Pupil Premium Plus, any child in care who has struggled with returning to school both academically and emotionally.
- Whilst a joint 'hands on' quality assurance process for our out of borough provisions was developed with our SEND Commissioning Service it was initially impacted by COVID restrictions. However, this took place remotely and once appropriate has become face to face again.

Key SEN Priority for 2022-23

- Develop a SEND dashboard to monitor the outcomes, support, and quality of provision more effectively.

Key SEN Actions for 2022-23

- Continue with the joint school, EPS and Virtual School SEND support and challenge meetings with targeted Halton Primary and all Secondary schools to address early identification of need. This will ensure that schools are assessing needs and under performance early, providing appropriate and timely support and requesting statutory assessment without delay as determined by evidence.
- Further enhance scrutiny of SEND provision and related under performance through the termly Personal Education Plans, including challenging schools to request statutory assessment in a timely manner.
- Continue to provide training to develop understanding and awareness of the additional needs and impact of trauma on the learning of children in care, post looked after children and those with a social worker.
- Resume implementation of a robust quality assurance process of all out of borough specialist provision attended by Halton children in care.

Academic Outcomes in 2021-2022

Attainment and Progress

Whilst the Virtual School scrutinises and monitors the performance of all children in care to Halton, there is only a statutory requirement to nationally report on educational outcomes for those who have been in care for 12 months or more. The data within this section refers only to those children and young people who meet this statutory requirement.

Context

Please note that this is the first academic year that young people have completed standardised assessments since 2019. It is worth noting that those young people in Year 2, began their Primary education at the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Early Years Foundation Stage

There were 10 young people in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) cohort who had been in care for 12 months or more at the time of assessment – 60% of these young people achieved a ‘good level of development’ (GLD).

- 6 of whom were male, 4 males reached GLD and 2 females.
- 7 were educated in Halton schools.
- All schools attended by Halton young people in care were rated as Good or better by Ofsted.
- 3 children lived out of borough, and 5 were placed with parents/family.
- 2 had attendance below 95%, with 1 young person in this group having attendance below 90% as well.
- 1 young person had a school move during Reception to an out of borough school.

Year 1 Phonics

There were 6 young people in the cohort who had been in care for 12 months or more – 33% of this cohort passed the Phonics screening check with a score of 32/40 or greater (both were female):

- 1 of whom were male.
- 2 were educated in Halton schools.
- All schools attended by Halton young people in care were rated as Good or better by Ofsted.
- 3 children lived out of borough, and 2 were placed with parents/family.
- 1 young person has an EHCP, and she attends a specialist resource base provision.
- 2 had attendance below 95%, with no young people in this group had attendance below 90%.
- 0 children had periods of fixed term exclusions during Year 1.
- 1 school move took place, 1 child had an adoption breakdown and therefore moved placements twice this academic year.

Key Stage 1

- A child has achieved the Expected Standard in each subject area (Reading, Writing, and Maths) and in the 3 combined areas (RWM).

There were 9 young people in the cohort who had been in care for 12 months or more:

Reading	Writing	Maths	SPaG	Science	Combined
11% (1)	11% (1)	22% (2)	11% (1)	33% (3)	11% (1)

- 6 of whom were male.

- 6 were educated in Halton schools.
- 7 children attended schools rated as Good or better by Ofsted.
- 3 young people have an EHCP, with an additional child going through Statutory Assessment.
- 3 children live out of borough, 1 of those resides in a residential placement, 5 were placed with parents/family.
- 4 had attendance below 95%, with 2 young people in this group having attendance below 90% as well.
- 0 children had periods of fixed term exclusions.
- 1 young person had a school move during Year 2 due to an adoption move out of borough.

Key Stage 2

- A child has achieved the Expected Standard in each subject area (Reading, Writing, and Maths) and in the 3 combined areas (RWM). In addition, the child had made at least their expected progress in Reading, Writing and Maths, from their educational starting point at Key Stage 1 (this indicated by a positive number).

There were 18 young people in the cohort who had been in care for 12 months or more:

Reading	Writing	Maths	SPaG	Science	Combined
28% (5) GD -6% (1)	33% (6)	39% (7)	33% (6)	28% (5)	28% (5)

- 10 of whom were male.
- 9 were educated in Halton schools. 2 children attended a resource base provision, 5 young people attended specialist provision.
- All young people attended schools rated as Good or better by Ofsted.
- 7 young people have an EHCP, with an additional child going through Statutory Assessment.
- 13 children live out of borough, 1 of those resides in a residential placement, 2 were placed with parents/family.
- 6 had attendance below 95%, with 2 young people in this group having attendance below 90% as well.
- 2 children had periods of fixed term exclusions.
- 3 young people had a school move during Year 6.

At Key Stage 4

- A young person has achieved English and Maths at grade 5 or above and that they have achieved highly on Attainment 8 and have a positive Progress 8 score.

There were 33 young people in the cohort who had been in care for 12 months or more:

- 16 of whom were male.

- 23 were educated in Halton schools.
- 13 schools attended by Halton young people in care in Y11 were rated as good or better by Ofsted.
- 30% had an EHCP, 27% were educated in non-mainstream provision.
- 36% were placed in residential provision, 36% lived out of borough, and 9% were placed with parents.
- In Year 11, 75% had attendance below 95%, 30% of students had attendance between 94% - 90% with the remaining students below 90%. Across Key Stage 4, 5 young people had attendance below 95% both years and of this group, 4 young people had attendance below 90% for both years.
- 6% had periods of fixed term exclusions during Key Stage 4, however, all exclusions were below 5 days.
- 4 young people accessed alternative provision and 5 young people had periods on a reduced timetable to re-engage them in their education.
- 4 young people had a school move during KS4, 2 young people because of moving into secure, 1 young people following a move out of borough and 1 who has a provision identified following statutory assessment.

Due to the way the GCSE grades were awarded this year there cannot be a like for like comparison with previous years. However, performance does show that young people did achieve above the previous year's Teacher Assessed Grades and Centre Assessed Grades.

2021-22	E4+	E5+	M4+	M5+	EM4+	EM5+	SC4+	SC5+	5GCSEs EM4+	5GCSEs EM5+	5GCSEs 4+	5GCSEs 5+
% CIC achieving	42.4	27.3	30.3	9.1	24.2	9.1	42.4	3	24.2	6.1	30.3	12.1

KS4 Summary

Attainment		Improvements were made across all performance criteria highlighted above. Performance on the combined measure at Grade 5+ also improved. There has been an increase in the number of Children in Care in Halton achieving 5 GCSEs including the combined English and maths at grade 5. This is a priority focus for the next academic year.
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Attendance and Exclusions

- A child or young person's attendance has been above 90% for the academic year (the Persistent Absence benchmark). However, Halton Virtual School have set an attendance target of above 95% for the academic year as an internal measure of success.
- In addition, we aspire for no fixed term exclusions (suspensions) and that no LAC is permanently excluded from school.

Education, Employment and Training for Post 16

- A young person should be actively engaged in Education, Employment or Training (EET) from the age of leaving school until at least 19 years old.

Virtual School Actions and Impact

- Scrutinised the appropriateness of the targets within each PEP and ensured that the Pupil Premium Plus funding had impact.
- PEP Leads held termly meetings with schools and hosted cluster meetings to discuss individual young people's progress and the impact of Pupil Premium Plus interventions, as well as standards across the authority. This ensured that the interventions were targeted at the areas of development identified through their outcomes. This was further supported by the inclusion of Education Psychologists to support in offering intervention suggestions to support any identified young people.
- Provided one-to-one tuition on core subjects when identified as an area of development in the PEP.
- Maintained contact with the young people and their carers to ensure that all resources and support were made available as required.
- Provided appropriate IT equipment to enable the young people to continue to access learning remotely.
- Worked closely with Secondary Designated Teachers to ensure that the young people had the opportunity to complete their work portfolios and assessments prior to the Teacher Assessed grades being awarded.

Progress of other children in care

Halton Virtual School monitor the progress of all children in care on a termly basis using data provided by schools through the PEP and the termly data collection.

Standardised assessments returned this summer for the first time since 2019. Children in KS1 & KS2 continued to make satisfactory progress from their starting points. 31% of Year 2 pupils reached ARE, it is worth noting that 56% of this cohort are on SEN support or have an EHCP. This cohort of pupils began their education during the COVID19 pandemic. 34% of Year 6 children reached ARE, it is worth noting that 55% of this cohort are on SEN support, have an EHCP or are undergoing statutory assessment. 39% of this cohort entered care in the last 12 months. For the Reception cohort, 60% reached expected at GLD, although more children did make progress from their starting point. The main area of concern is Communication & Language. Within the secondary cohort there has been an increase across the academic year of the number of students making satisfactory progress. This has been seen replicated in the external assessment that have returned this year for the year 11 cohort. 60% of the key stage 3 cohort have been identified as making satisfactory progress across the academic year.

Term:	Reception			Primary			Secondary			Total		
	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC
Autumn	8	66%	12	63	89%	71	43	38%	112	114	56%	204
Term:	Reception			Primary			Secondary			Total		
	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC
Spring	7	64%	11	67	92%	73	66	54%	123	140	68%	207
Term:	Reception			Primary			Secondary			Total		
	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC	#	%	Total CIC
Summer	11	61%	18	76	85%	89	72	54%	133	159	66%	240

Key Educational Outcomes Priorities for 2022-23

- Ensure that all Halton children in care continue to access their educational entitlement
- Close the progress and attainment gap between Halton Children in Care and their non-care experienced peers, with a particular focus on Key Stage 4.
- Expand the tracking of cohort progress and attainment to include Post-LAC and Children with a social worker.

Key Education Outcomes Actions for 2022-23

- Develop the use of pupil progress meetings within the virtual school to gain a greater understanding of where progress is sustained or where action is required to narrow the attainment gap.
- Analysis of PEP assessments and their accuracy in predicting end of year outcomes through moderation to ensure support is successfully targeted.
- Undertake question level analysis with our Primary and Secondary schools to ensure that our children and young people are ready and prepared for the examinations.
- Work with our Secondary schools to conduct ‘deep dives’ to gain a greater understanding of why our KS4 pupils are not achieving the higher grades.

Progress		Data shows that children in care have continued to make progress despite the disruption to learning. However, this is not consistent.
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Attendance and Exclusions

NOTE: The data presented in this section covers all children in care through the academic year of 2021-22.

Regular school attendance is a key part of giving any child the best possible start in life. However, it is highly likely that a child who comes into care has already missed some time in school, and for some this is a considerable amount. Therefore, it is vital that children in care are supported to attend regularly to mitigate against the impact of previously lost learning. Government research has shown that:

- 14 days absence across Years 3 – 6 (Key Stage 2) makes it less likely for a child to achieve the expected standards in their subjects. (This equates to 84 lessons missed)
- 7 days absence across Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4) reduces the prospects of the young person achieving 5 GCSEs at Level 5 or above. (This equates to 42 lessons missed)

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent days	Equivalent sessions	Equivalent weeks	Equivalent lessons missed
95%	9 days	18 sessions	2 weeks	54 lessons
90%	19 days	38 sessions	4 weeks	114 lessons
85%	29 days	58 sessions	6 weeks	174 lessons
80%	38 days	72 sessions	8 weeks	228 lessons
75%	48 days	96 sessions	10 weeks	288 lessons
70%	57 days	114 sessions	11.5 weeks	342 lessons

65%	67 days	134 sessions	13.5 weeks	402 lessons
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Halton Virtual School commission a company called 'Welfare Call' to monitor the attendance and exclusions of all Halton children in care regardless of where they are educated. This is done by daily contact with all schools and alternative providers to ensure that attendance is tracked and recorded appropriately and to comply with safeguarding procedures.

Whilst the DfE have determined below 90% attendance to constitute persistent absence, Halton Virtual School monitor both below 90% and 95% attendance, with the latter aspiration target being the benchmark for analysis.

Attendance 2021-22

Given the lifting of COVID restrictions at the beginning of the Autumn term, it has been a difficult year for school attendance, due to medical and sickness related absences. However, the Virtual School has ensured that each child in care received support whilst studying at home if an absence was related to COVID.

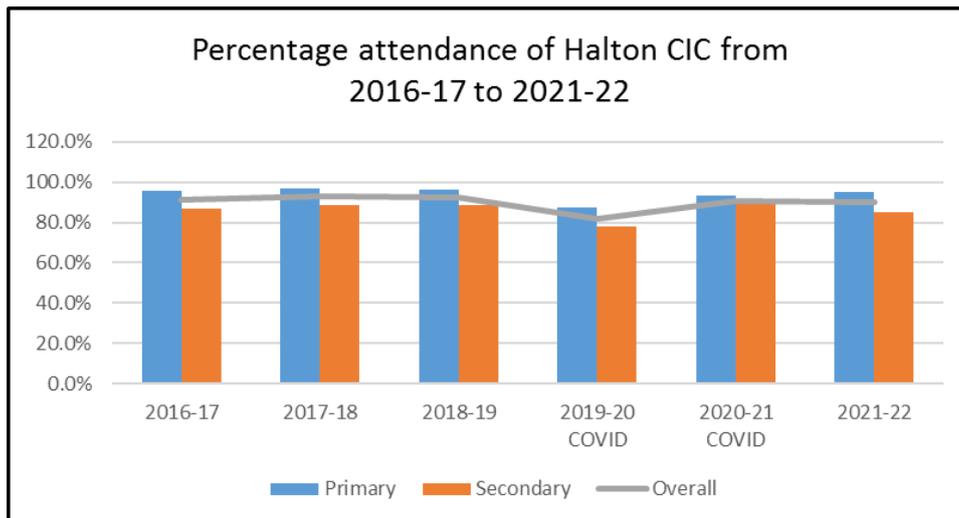
The Virtual School maintained Welfare Call monitoring attendance processes throughout the year, ensuring that any COVID related absences were monitored closely to ensure educational support was provided whilst at home. This approach was developed because of the high transmission rates within Halton as an additional measure of safeguarding our children and young people in care. The Virtual School team would contact both carers and young people to ensure they had everything they needed to complete their remote learning and to address any issues of non-engagement.

Attendance of all children in care 2021-22

Average % attendance	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Autumn	95%	84%	89%
Spring	94%	85%	90%
Summer	97%	85%	91%

Attendance of all children in care over the past 6 years

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 COVID	2020-21 COVID	2021-22
Primary	96.0%	97.1%	96.2%	87.5%	93.3%	95.3%
Secondary	86.9%	88.7%	88.6%	77.9%	90%	84.6
Overall	91.4%	92.9%	92.4%	81.9%	90.5%	90%

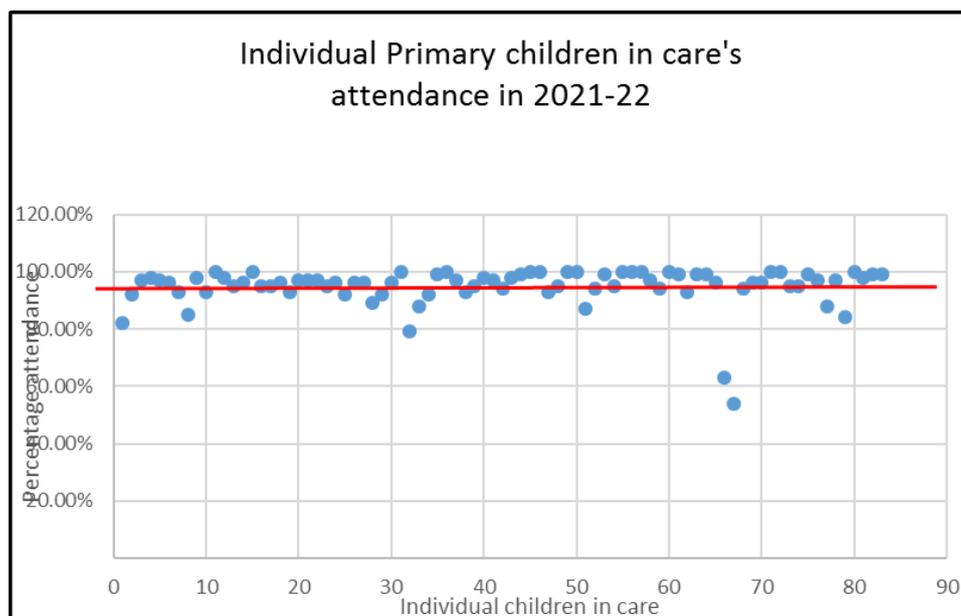


As can be seen, despite the pandemic the attendance of Halton children in care has remained positive with only a relatively low drop overall.

Attendance - Influencing Factors

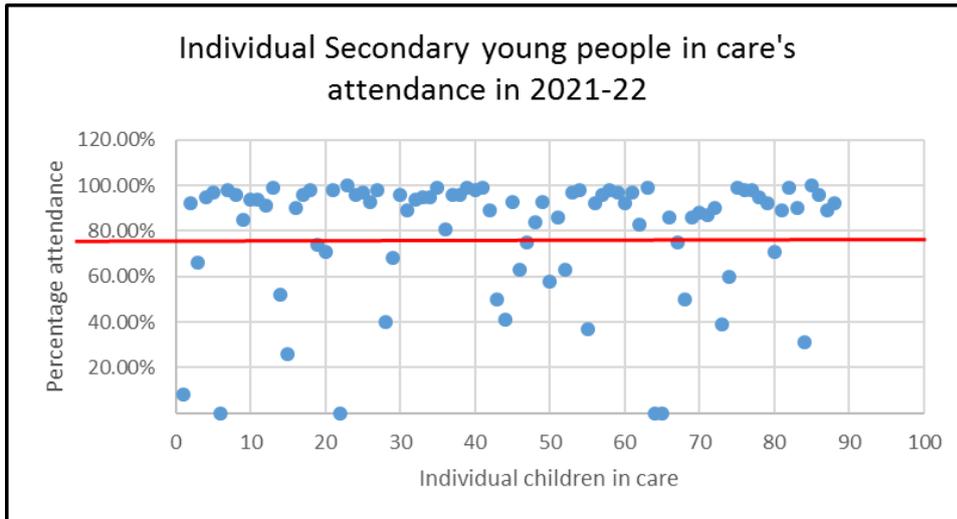
24 Primary children had attendance below 95% - of this cohort;

- 14 children live with parents/family members
- 5 came into care during the academic year
- The main reasons for absence were illness
- 1 child had unauthorised absences (1 day lost learning).
- 1 child had a school move due to SEMH (Social Emotional and Mental Health) needs; 5 days were lost due to a staggered start to the Spring term.
- 1 child also received fixed term exclusions (7.5 days lost learning)
- 2 children had emergency placement moves out of borough
- 2 children went through the adoption process, unfortunately, 1 of these broke down and therefore an emergency placement move needed to take place (9 days lost learning collectively)
- 4 children have profound health issues.



71 secondary pupils had attendance below 95% - of this cohort:

- 20 young people live with parents/family and 26 are placed in residential settings
- 23 young people came into care during the academic year.
- 5 are UASC – all these young people had a delay in their age assessments and extremely low levels of English so making it challenging to find education provision.
- The main reasons for absence were unauthorised (861.5 days lost learning), illness (178 days lost learning) and authorised absences (2410 days lost learning). Authorised absence has increased due to number of UASC waiting age assessments and not having school place identified.
- 63 young people had unauthorised absences. 24 of these live in residential accommodation, 6 are with family and 13 were new into care.
- 117 young people had authorised absences. 22 were new into care, 9 live in residential accommodation and 4 are living with family.
- 12 young people had periods of not being on roll, of these 2 had multiple times within secure accommodation, 2 had emergency placement moves and required specialist education provision once they had moved, 3 had emergency placement moves out of borough, and 5 were UASC.
- 14 young people had periods of reduced timetables, 1 young person required this to stabilise their education placements due to elevated risk of exclusion, 1 due to mental health issues, 8 to support reengagement with school studies, and 2 following discharges from secure accommodation.
- 21 young people had exclusions (56 days lost learning)
- 4 young people had periods of time in secure accommodation



Attendance	u	Data shows that attendance for both phases has stayed above the persistent absence rate of 90% despite the challenges of the pandemic and has broadly stayed in line with pre-pandemic rates.
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Exclusions

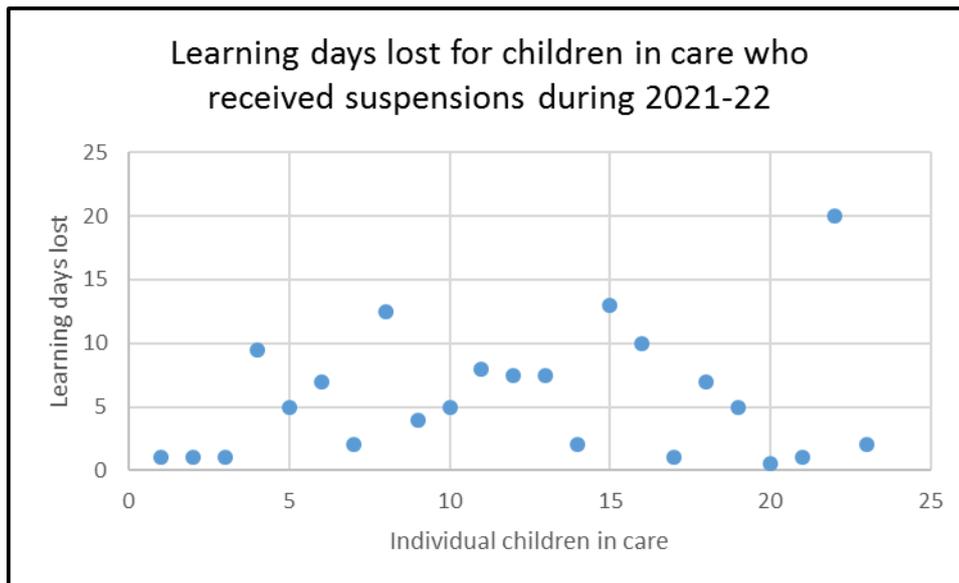
There have been no permanent exclusions of a child in care since the role of the Headteacher of the Virtual School was established.

Work was done with all schools attended by our children and young people in care to remind them of the additional anxieties and challenges that our cohort often face. These issues could be exacerbated due to the anxiety of returning to a more open society and a relaxing of rules within schools.

Percentage of children in care receiving 1 or more fixed term exclusions in 2021-22:

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Primary	1	0	0.8
Secondary	8.1	9	10
Overall	4.9	4.8	5.8

As can be seen from the graph below this has resulted in a in 23 young people receiving one or more periods of exclusion throughout the academic year. There we 2 Primary pupils who had received periods of suspension from education and 21 Secondary age pupils. Of this number there were 8 pupils who received 1 period of suspension throughout the academic year.



Exclusion Analysis 2021-22

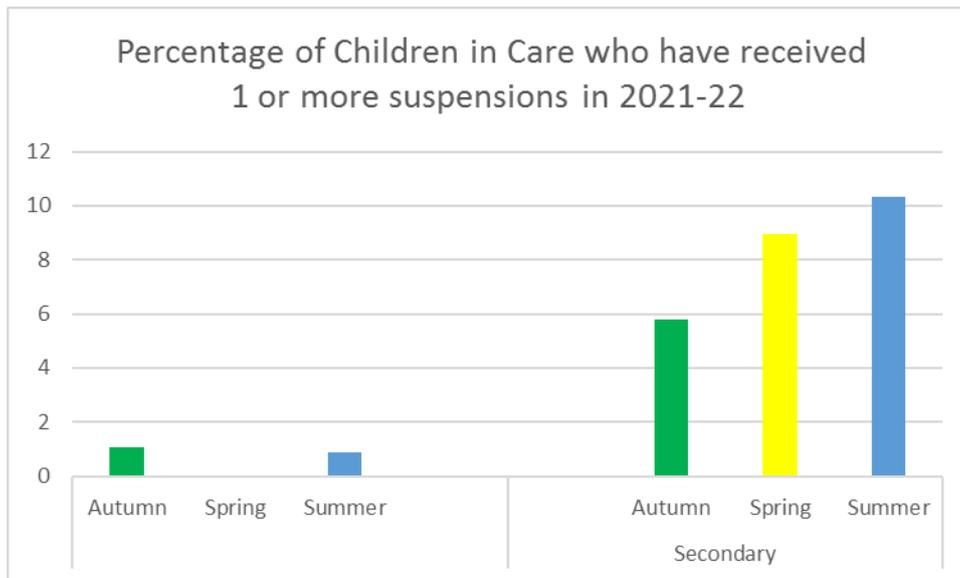
2 Primary children had 1 or more periods of fixed term exclusions

- 2 were educated out of borough
- 1 was in residential provision and 1 placed with foster carers
- 1 had an EHCP, was in specialist SEMH provision out of borough
- Total days lost learning for Primary children was 17 days

23 Secondary pupils had 1 or more periods of fixed term exclusions:

- 11 young people attend out of borough schools and 10 attend Halton schools.
- 9 have an EHCP
- 8 attend specialist provision or a PRU
- 10 live in residential provision and 3 are placed with family
- There are 12 girls, 8 of whom were in Y9 and Y10
- 7 young people had 3 periods of exclusion
- Total days lost learning for Secondary young people was 115 days

The chart below shows that the primary cohort have continued to have low rates of suspension throughout the academic year. Within the secondary cohort there has been an increase on the previous two years suspension rates, but this remains in line with previous years suspension rates.



Exclusions	✘	Within the Primary cohort the number of exclusions remained low throughout the year. There has been an increase in exclusions from the previous year but remain broadly in line with exclusions in previous years.
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Virtual School Actions and Impact on Exclusions

- Provided support and advice to schools who were experiencing difficulties managing challenging behaviour.
- Provided tailored packages of support to high-risk pupils
- Provided attendance support through Pupil Premium Plus
- Commissioned specialist assessments to support schools to meet the needs of complex children
- Supported schools to undertake the graduated approach in relation to SEMH needs.
- Supported schools in applying for and securing an EHCP when appropriate.
- Provided ongoing advice to increase awareness and improve practice in meeting the needs of children with attachment difficulties
- Worked with SEND colleagues to support identification of appropriate education placements

Key Attendance and Exclusion Priorities for 2022-23

- Continue to improve the number of secondary age young people in care having attendance above 95%
- Continue to reduce the number of children in care receiving one or more fixed term exclusion, and the length and frequency
- To enable our UASC to access education as soon as possible.

Key Attendance and Exclusion Actions 2022-23

- Continue to work with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to provide early alerts of any child who has had more than 3 days absence and those whose attendance is falling below 95%. The EWO will provide advice and guidance to carers around proactive support for attendance and liaise with a school link EWO to ensure that issues related to school are addressed.
- Resume our work on developing 'Adverse Childhood Experiences Aware' (ACEs) schools which will focus on increasing awareness of the impact of ACEs and toxic stress and the impact they have on a child's resilience and ability to learn.
- Resume our work with the Behaviour Support Service to implement the PIVOTAL Approach to managing behaviour within 4 pilot schools.
- Work with our secondary schools to develop more bespoke and proactive support for children in care who are presenting with behaviour issues, particularly girls who are experiencing emotional and anxiety related issues.
- Develop a bespoke and proactive support package for UASC so enabling them to access full time education provision in a timelier manner.

Accessing Alternative provision

The Bridge School (Halton's PRU) provide an Engagement Programme for Y10 and Y11 young people who require access to alternative provision. This alternative provision is quality assured by The Bridge School.

If a school purchases alternative provision placements for young people with providers who are not part of The Bridge School Engagement Programme, then it is the school's responsibility to quality assure the provision.

Agreement must be gained from the Headteacher of the Virtual School prior to a young person in care being placed on alternative provision. This is to ensure that the provision will meet the educational needs of the young person and their long-term aspirations. Scrutiny of the outcomes of these young people is undertaken through the termly Personal Education Plan.

If the provision is via the Engagement Programme the Secondary PEP and Progress Coordinator liaises with The Bridge School to ascertain quality assurance outcomes.

Access to Alternative Provision in 2021-22

During the academic year 8 young people accessed alternative provision at some point, with 3 young people accessing across all 3 terms, the remaining young people only accessed alternative provision for 1 term. 3 of the young people were accessing their alternative provision to enhance their skills and for post 16 progression, with the final young person having access as a result of a permanent exclusion prior to coming into care.

Post 16 Access to Education, Employment and Training

The Virtual School provide support and guidance for all young people in care or care leavers up to the age of 25 around access to Education, Employment and Training (EET), and provide advice and guidance for their social workers or PAs as appropriate.

Halton's ILACS inspection in March 2020 highlighted that the Virtual School required more capacity to further develop its excellent work, in particular around support for our Post 16 cohort. As a result of this we have created 2 new roles, a Post 16 PEP Coordinator and a KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer. The purpose of these 2 roles is to improve the engagement of Post 16 young people in care and care leavers in EET and to also ensure that they have access to direct support to explore a range of EET options and achieve good post 16 outcomes.

The Post 16 PEP Coordinator focuses on those in FE and moving to HE, ensuring that PEPs are high quality, and the young people have all the support they require to achieve their educational outcomes. The KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer focuses on those who may require more bespoke guidance on choosing a Post 16 career path, including developing and improving our apprenticeship support or moving into employment when age appropriate. The KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer also undertakes direct work with young people who are or at risk of becoming NEET (Not Engaged in Education, Employment and Training) and this has been extended from previous years to now include young people up to the age of 22 years (which was an area for improvement from the last inspection).

Planned transition meetings during the Spring and Summer terms take place between the Secondary PEP and Progress Coordinator and both the Post 16 officers for early identification of those leaving school who may become NEET, or who are unclear about their chosen career path.

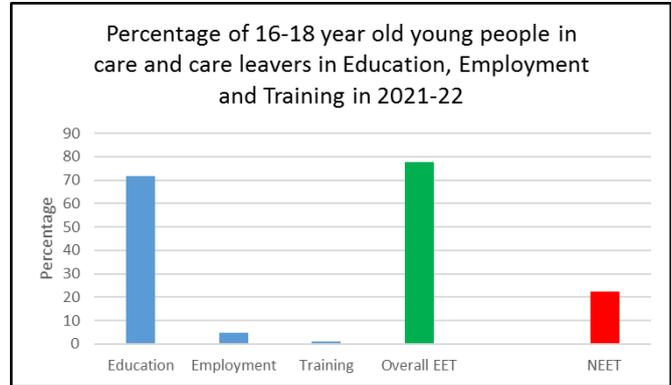
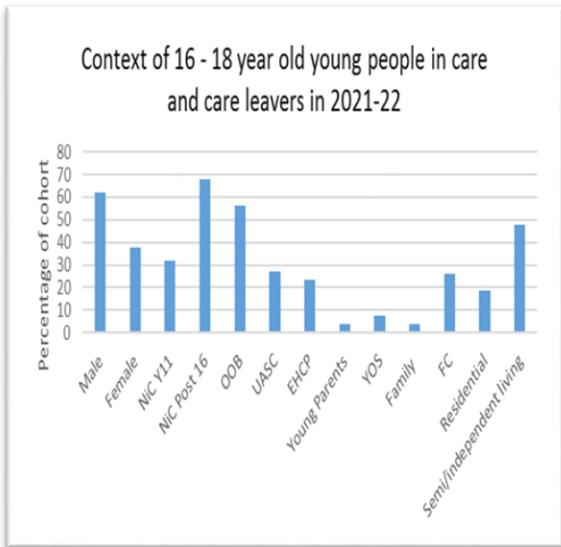
Monthly tracking is undertaken by the Post 16 PEP Coordinator to ensure that there are early alerts for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET as well as those currently NEET. The direct work to re-engage this group, undertaken by the KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer, is to ensure that the views of the young person are heard and that any barriers are addressed when formulating a plan for re-engagement. Both Post 16 Officers work with young people regardless of where they live or are educated, and they also liaise with the 14-19 team if the young person is resident in Halton and their equivalents out of area, other agencies, providers, social workers, and PAs. During the 2021/22 academic year, the Post 16 PEP lead position became vacant. This work has therefore been continued by the wider VS team, until the post can be filled.

Creating the right apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities and support remain a struggle for us in the current financial and political climate. However, the KS4 and Post 16 Employability Officer is working closely with the Apprenticeship Hub to ensure that children in care and care leavers have access to high quality information regarding apprenticeships and support to enable them to apply if they want to. In addition to this we are working with other parts of the Council to develop a Care Leaver Apprenticeship Strategy to broaden the support our young people can access but also increase their range of opportunities.

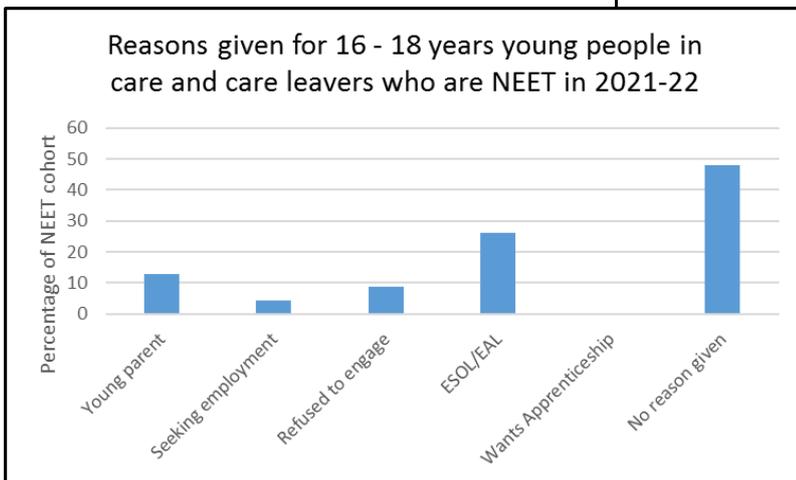
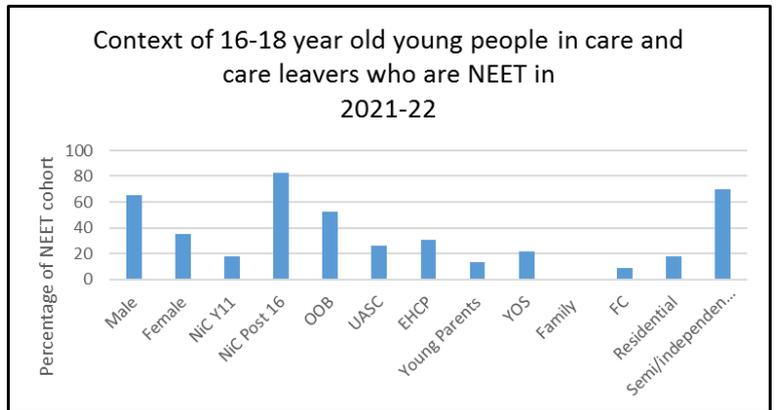
As a result of COVID restrictions, Post 16 learners have experienced a lot of disruption not only to their college courses, but also to apprenticeship and traineeships opportunities. Employment opportunities have also been impacted due to the uncertain economic climate.

Outcomes for our 16–18-year-old young people in care

The overall cohort is 103 young people of which 78% are EET.



There are 23 young people who are NEET within this cohort. Of those who refused to engage in EET activities, 12 lived outside of Halton. There has been

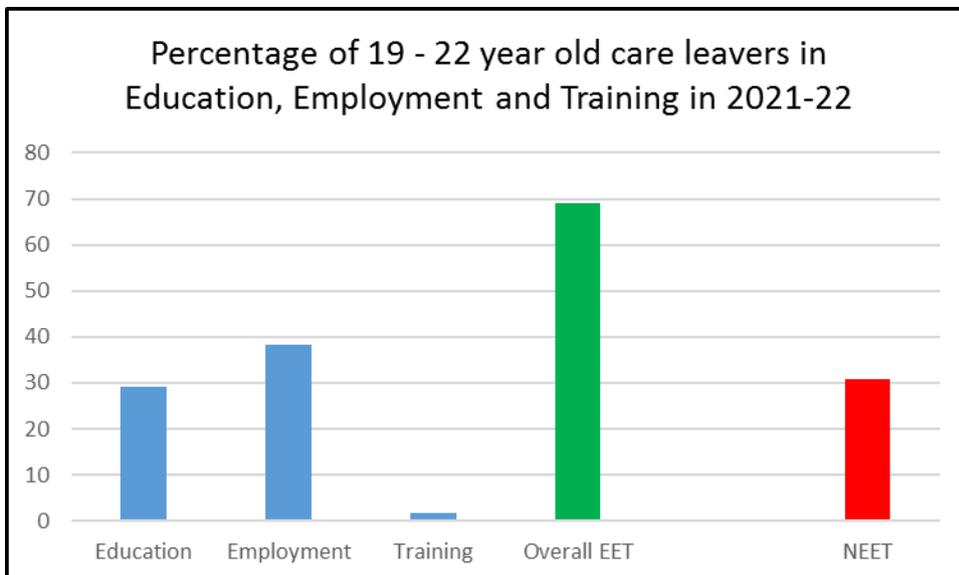
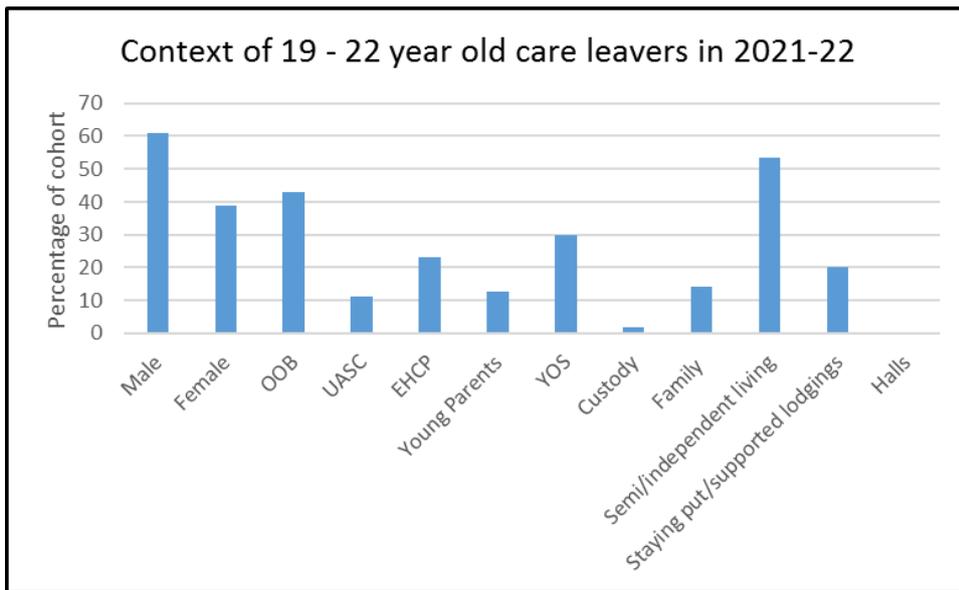


an increase in the number of UASC who have extremely limited English and would therefore struggle to access mainstream FE. For each of these young people, they have an ESOL support package in place with a view to then enrolling them at college once their career aspirations are more fully understood.

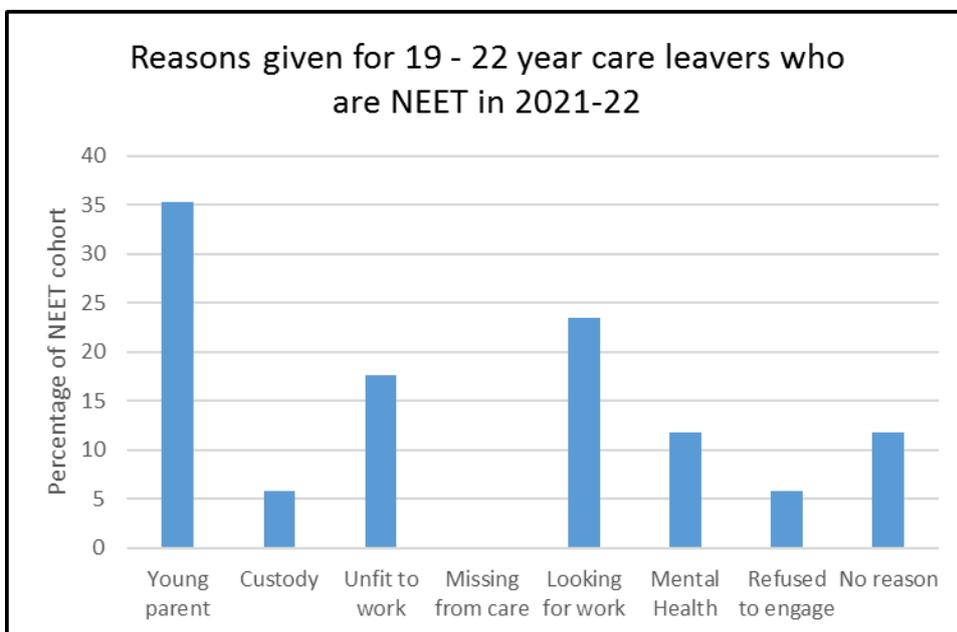
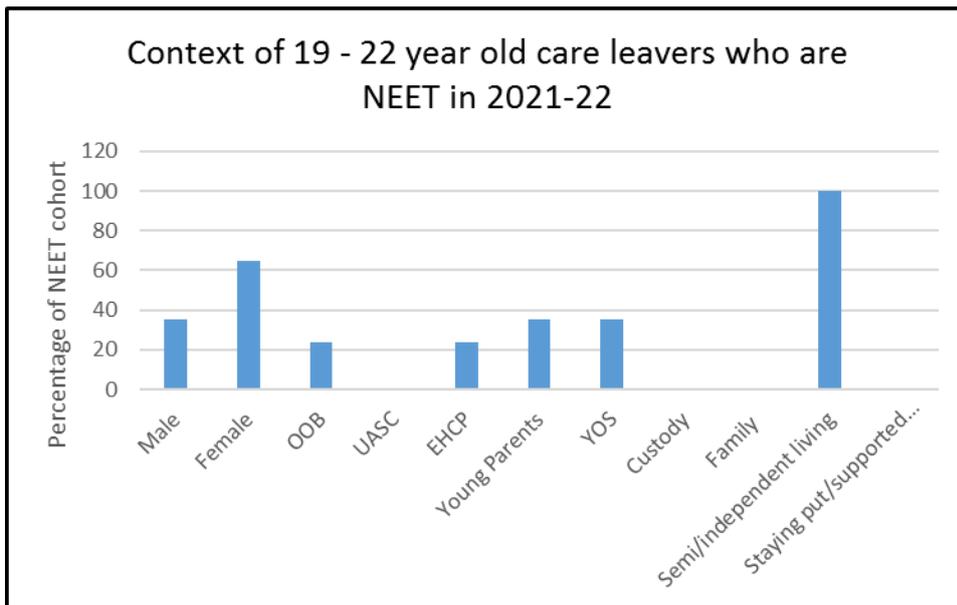
Outcomes for our 19 - 22-year-old

care leavers:

Of these 55 young people, 69% are currently accessing EET.



There are 17 young people in this cohort who are NEET:



This chart identifies that of the 17, a high percentage are not able to be able to access EET. However, as a virtual school we plan to establish a NEET PEP during 2022/23, which we consistently offer support and guidance throughout the year on a plan of re-engagement.

Virtual School Actions and Impact on EET

- Created 2 new roles within the Virtual School to have a greater focus on post 16.
- A dedicated member of the team now has a direct work case load of young people who are at risk of becoming NEET.
- Strengthened transition support from the end of the secondary phase to post 16 to ensure that all appropriate support is put in place to maintain post 16 engagement.
- Reviewed approaches used by other local authorities and are working towards implementing an improved model of support for care leavers, with a particular focus on increasing access to apprenticeships or traineeships.

Key EET Priorities for 2022-23

- To improve the percentage of Post 16 young people in care and care leavers 16 – 22 years who are in EET through the introduction of a NEET PEP.
- Embed the direct working approach for 16 – 22-year-olds to continue to improve engagement in Education, Employment and Training with a particular focus on ensuring that they are accessing their chosen career pathway.
- Improve support for those young people who wish to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Personal Education Plans

The statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children' (February 2018) places a duty on Local Authorities to maintain a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for every child in care in an educational setting up to the end of the school year that s/he turns 18 (Year 13). On coming into care a PEP must be initiated and completed no later than 20 working days (aspirational goal of within 10) so that it can inform the first statutory review (28 days) and then be reviewed termly from that point on.

For a PEP to be high quality and effective, the guidance states that it should be: A 'living,' evolving, comprehensive and enduring record of the child's experience, progress, and achievement (academic and otherwise), and inform any discussion about education during statutory reviews of the child's wider care plan' (Para 23 pg. 15)

It is a process that should enable each child or young person to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential. It should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations, and builds life chances.

As the PEP is an integral part of the care plan it is the responsibility of the child's social worker to initiate the first PEP and ensure each PEP is completed from that point onwards. However, the guidance is clear that the quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority and the school.

The role of the school, via the Designated Teacher, is to ensure that all appropriate educational information is shared, that SMART targets are set to accelerate the progress of the child in their education, that all appropriate support is in place for the child to be successful within their provision, and to demonstrate the impact of any Pupil Premium Plus funding. The Designated Teacher leads on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored.

The role of the Virtual School is to ensure that there are effective systems in place to ensure social workers, Designated Teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP; ensure that PEPs are up-to-date, effective and high quality and focus on educational outcomes; ensure that all children in care (aged 3 – 18), wherever they are placed, have such a PEP; undertake regular quality assurance of all PEPs.

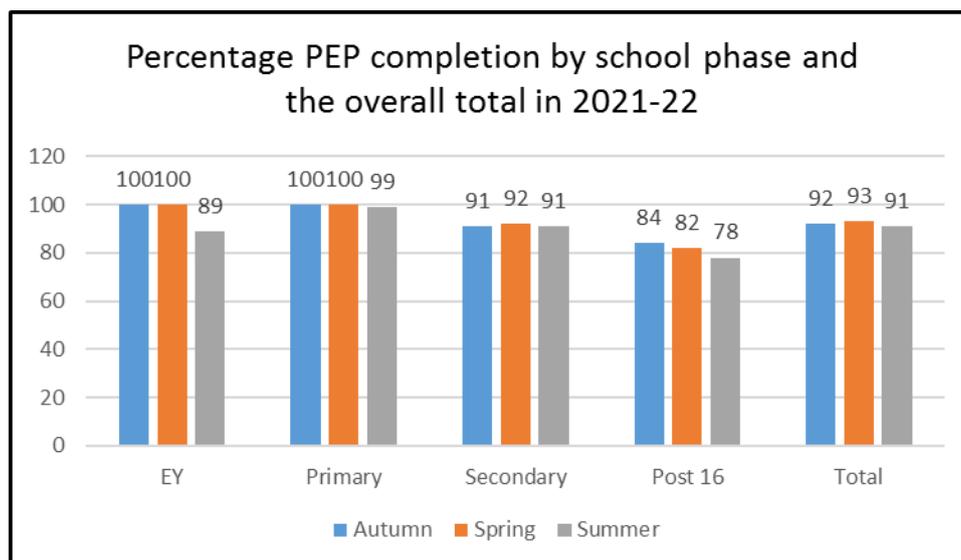
The Virtual School track on a termly basis the number and quality of PEPs completed. This is then reported to schools and senior Children’s Social Care managers.

PEP Completion

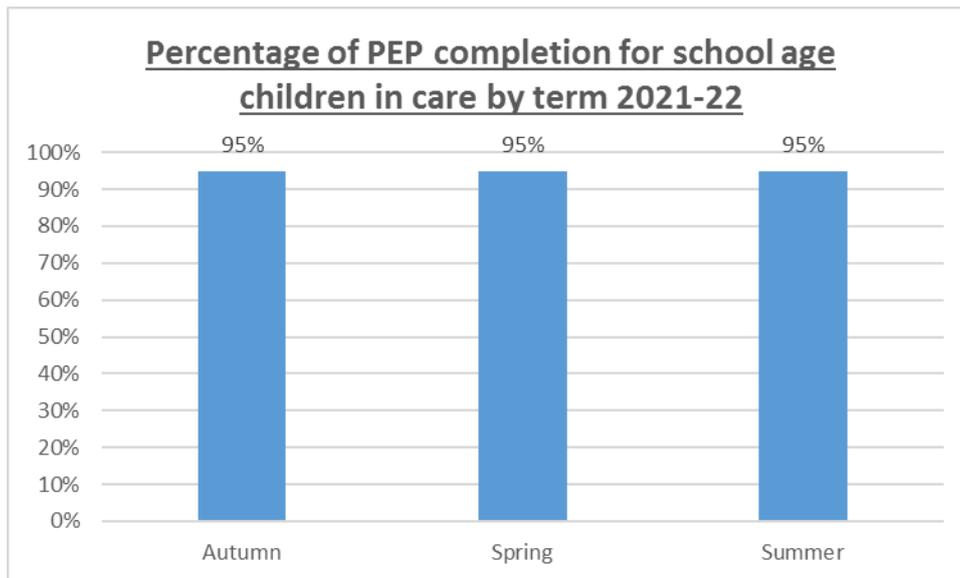
During 2021/22, the PEP system was migrated from Eclipse over on to Welfare Call. Training and guidance were provided for all professionals involved in the PEP process, which resulted in a successful launch.

Statutory Compliance and Quality Assurance

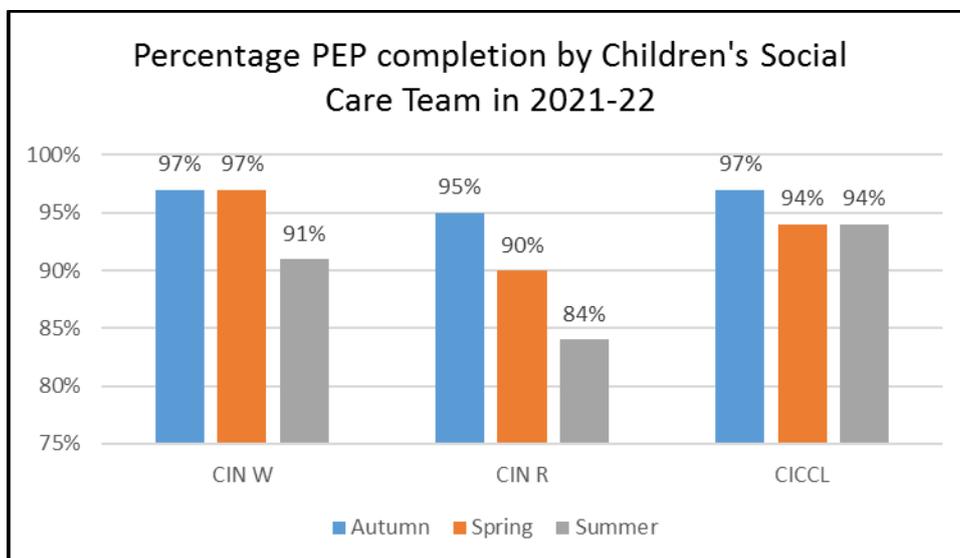
For 2021-22, overall PEP completion for the Autumn term was up from 85% last year to 92%, this improved in the Spring term to 93% and this rate was sustained in the summer term remaining at 91%. This is taking into consideration the capacity issues within the Early Years and Post-16 areas of the Virtual School. The Virtual School also saw a much higher number of children in care compared to previous years. As can be seen by the chart below Primary PEP completion was 100% across all two terms, dropping to 99% in the Summer. The rates in the other phases were impacted by issues with capacity in the team. Within Secondary and Post 16 there are a higher number of out of borough provisions.



The chart below shows the completion rate for school age children across the full academic year, and this demonstrates that the PEP completion rate has remained consistently high despite the challenging circumstances.

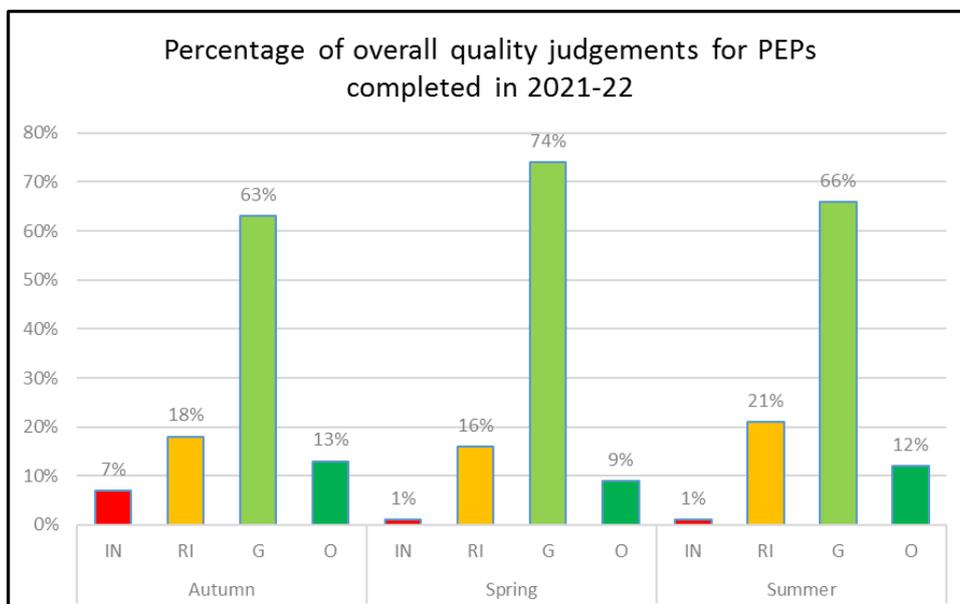
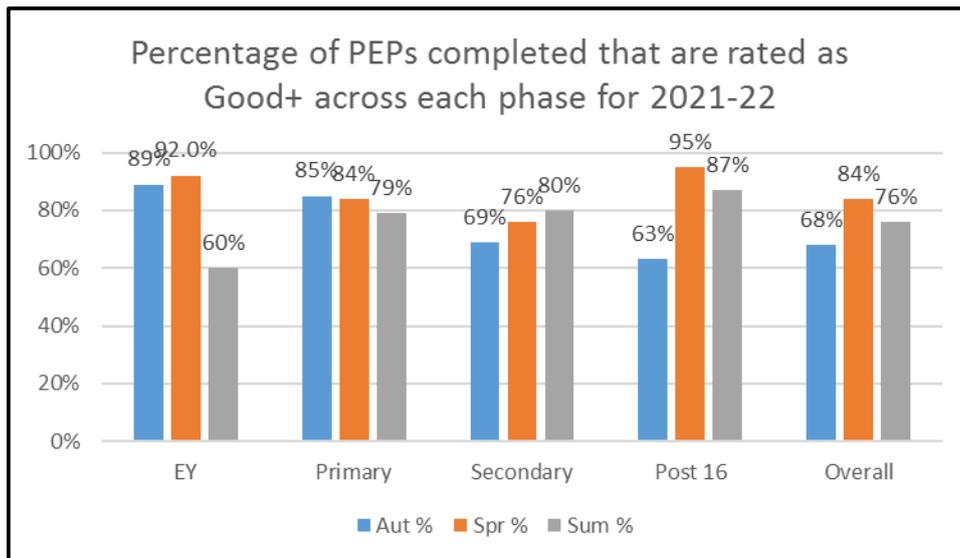


The chart below shows the PEP completion rate by CSC teams. There have been capacity issues within all teams as a result some PEP meetings did not take place. In these cases, PEP Coordinators continued with a prominent level of communication with settings to ensure support was offered for our young people. For new social workers, PEP and Progress Coordinators have ensured that new members of staff were fully aware of their roles and responsibilities around PEPs and so the completion rates have remained relatively high.



Quality Assurance

The Virtual School quality assure every PEP that is completed each term and provide feedback to schools around areas of improvement. Analysis has shown that in Post 16 and Secondary PEPs it is the SMART targets and impact of Pupil Premium Plus sections that continue to need improvement. However, the overall percentage of PEPs that are rated as Good or better is increasing each year.



Key PEP Priorities for 2022-23

- Improve the quality of Personal Education Plans, including Early Years and Post 16, with a particular focus on target setting, impact measures for Pupil Premium Plus and tracking the curriculum accessed.
- Increase the number of initial PEPs completed within timescale
- Provide greater performance related data to managers, schools, and those to whom the virtual school is accountable throughout the academic year.

Key PEP Actions for 2022-23

- To continue to support social workers to improve the completion across all phases. This will be done in collaboration with team and Divisional Managers through their performance clinics.
- Embed a new rigorous multi-agency moderation process across Halton, including managers, social care, designated teachers, and other key agencies to improve the quality of PEPs.
- To continue to provide support and challenge to schools to improve the quality of all PEPs. This will be done through the termly support and challenge meetings and also through Designated Teacher network meetings.
- Build on the positive feedback to schools by completing quality assurance in 'real time' with targeted schools to drive improvements through the development of the use of Welfare Call.
- Deliver additional training and support for schools whose PEPs are judged as Requiring Improvement or below.
- To establish a network of Post 16 providers to offer support, training, and target improving PEP quality.

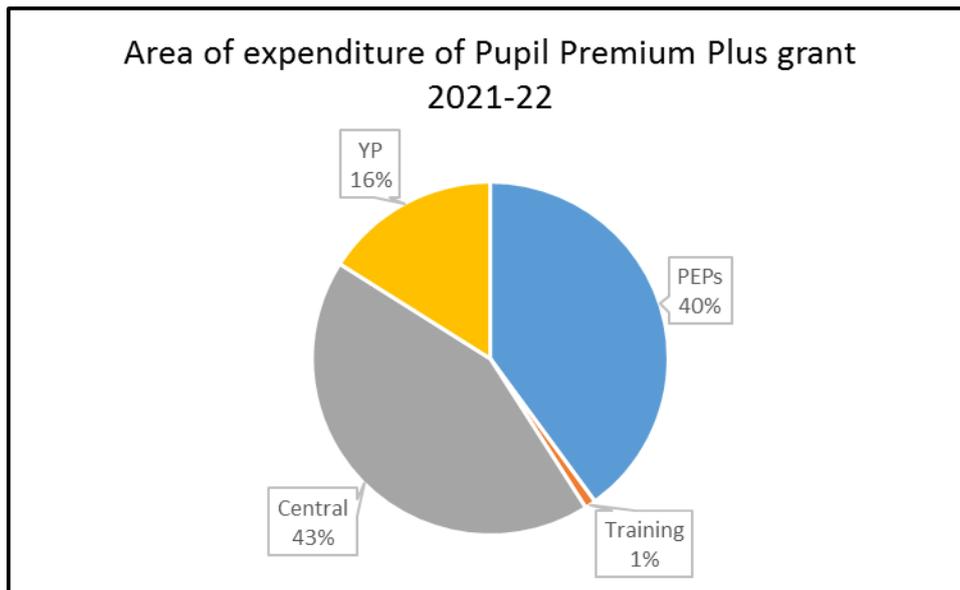
Pupil Premium Plus

Children and young people who have been in care for 1 day or more and are of statutory school age are entitled to access Pupil Premium Plus funding (PP+). The PP+ allocation of £2300, is made per child for the number of children looked after for at least one day as recorded within the census data. (Children Looked After Data Return (SSDA903) for those aged 4 to 15 on 31 August the previous year.) The funding runs in line with the fiscal year (1st April – 31st March) and not an academic year. The conditions of grant clearly state that the grant allocation must be managed by the Headteacher of the Virtual School and does not go directly to the school the child is attending. The total grant is the number of eligible children multiplied by £2300. This does not mean that every single child must be allocated the full £2300. The Headteacher can manage the grant in the best interests of individuals or the full cohort. The Virtual School can top slice the PP+ grant and retain this centrally in order to undertake additional activities, projects or to discharge more effectively some of its statutory duties.

Halton have adopted an individual child needs led model for the allocation of PP+. This is in recognition that the needs of each child can vary significantly over time depending on their life experiences and the barriers to learning that they encounter. Each individual child's needs and circumstances are considered, and the allocation of funding is managed carefully and robustly through the completion of effective, timely and high-quality PEPs.

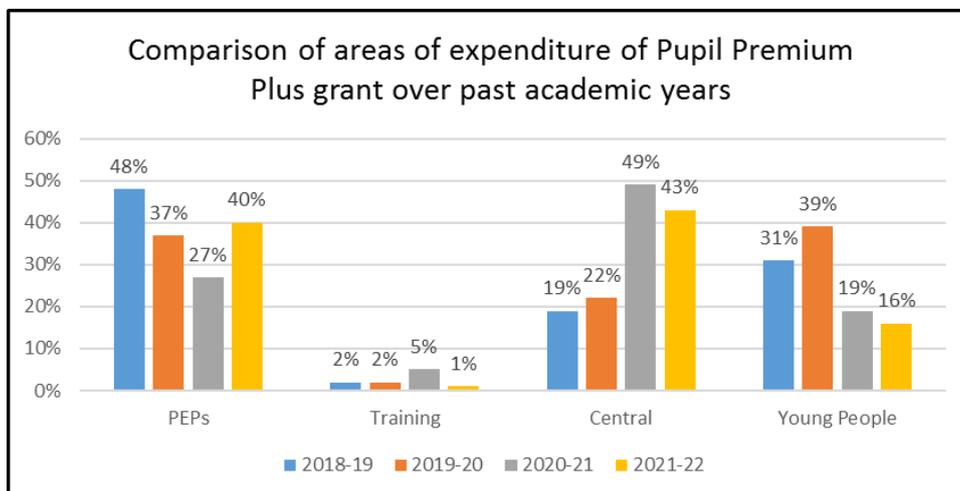
PP+ Expenditure 2021-22

The PP+ grant is awarded on a financial year basis and for 2021-22, the total grant allocated for Halton was £515,900. The chart below demonstrates that through PEP allocation and other Virtual School support 56% was spent directly on the children and young people to improve their educational outcomes.



Following the easing of Covid restrictions and the development of remote delivery of training, we have been able to make significant savings on the costs associated with training, whilst still delivering all that has been required.

The centrally retained portion is for the attendance service the Virtual School commission, dedicated Education Psychology time, purchasing of Boxall Profile licences, and for staff within the Virtual School (including the Post 16 PEP Co-ordinator). It is important to note that this central allocation is vital to ensuring that we can track the educational outcomes and provide support for both schools and children in care. The ‘Young People’ portion is spent on subscriptions, activity days, additional emergency support (such as to avoid permanent exclusions) and ‘keeping in touch’ packs.



Key PP+ Priorities for 2022-23

- Benchmark the spending of PP+ in comparison to other LAs (Local Authorities) and Virtual Schools.
- Develop greater measurement of IMPACT of spending, which will feed into the longer-term planning for the virtual school.

- To develop a system of support for our Post 16 young people

Key PP+ Actions for 2022-23

- To continue to scrutinise the use and impact of PP+ funding through the PEPs and the termly support and challenge progress meetings.
- To develop and share a good practice guide with our local schools and across the region through the Designated Teachers network meetings and the regional meetings, as well as with social work teams.
- To review and disseminate the EEF Toolkit for PP+ to all schools to ensure that they are utilising evidence-based approaches.
- Work with our Post 16 providers to develop a Post 16 PP+ fund linked to the PEP and aimed at improving educational outcomes and retention, alongside the use of the school-led tuition grant.

Post Looked After Children

Halton's Virtual School uses the Previously Looked After Children Grant to contribute towards the funding of staffing to ensure there is capacity to provide advice and guidance in relation to Children Previously Looked After (PLAC) and provide capacity to develop resources for families and professionals.

Raising the profile of the role of the Virtual School for children previously looked after, delivering training, sharing information and signposting to professionals, parents, and schools, ensuring provision and support is in place is at the heart of this role.

The educational support worker for children previously looked after provides schools and other alternative providers of education advice on how to make the best use of pupil premium funding for children previously looked after, adopted, or placed on an SGO (Special Guardianship Order), and that Designated Teachers have positive relationships with adoptive parents and guardians.

Work in 2021/22 included:

- Support and advice to schools and adoptive parents
- Referral handling, signposting, advising, and directing for all matter PLAC related
- Updating Virtual School website on PLAC so that it can be used as a resource
- Development of a PLAC Personal Education Plan
- PLAC information for schools on our VS newsletter and bulletins
- PLAC training (Early Years and Statutory School Age)
- Termly networking meetings with Virtual School PLAC leads in the Northwest to share information and ideas

Expansion of the Role of the Virtual School

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) or in the last 6 Years (Ever6 CWSW)

Brief context:

2019 Child in Need Review found that in 98% of state schools children with a social worker are:

- Almost 3 times more likely to be persistently absent
- 3 times as likely to have SEN,
- Almost 4 times as likely to be claiming FSM
- Nearly 6 times as likely to have both FSM and SEN
- 25-50% less likely to achieve a strong pass in English and Maths even after accounting for limiting factors
- Had an average attainment 8 scores of just 21, compared to 50 for all pupils in 2019/20.

Following the conclusion of the review:

- The DfE committed to ensuring children with a social worker are seen, safe and able to succeed so that they can achieve their potential
- The leadership and the impact that Virtual School Heads (VSH) have had for CIC and PLAC was highlighted, and pathfinder Virtual Schools were to be explored

Impact of the pandemic:

- Virtual School Pathfinders were paused
- Children with a social worker were able to attend schools, but generally only a minority took the offer up and since schools have reopened their attendance has remained below pre-pandemic levels and that of their peers
- The DfE have concluded the impact of the pandemic is likely to have disadvantaged children with a social worker further, adding to the education barriers identified in the Child in Need review

On Wednesday 16 June 2021 the Department for Education announced more than £16m to extend the role of Virtual School Heads from September 2021.

What is within the scope of the extended VSH role?

As strategic leaders who champion children with social workers, VSHs (Virtual School Head) should create a culture of high aspirations and drive improved outcomes. They will:

- Enhance partnerships between education settings and the LA so agencies can work together. Some suggested activities to achieve this could be:
 - o Work with education settings to encourage anyone supporting children with a social worker to hold high aspirations for this cohort of children.
 - o Convene education and LA leaders to develop shared goals and set the direction for improving outcomes, including addressing links with other strategic priorities e.g., working with Violence Reduction Units to tackle serious violence
 - o Clarify the role of the VSH and communicate the offer of support to education settings and others in the LA so everyone has clear expectations of the VSH and what help is available.
- Identify the cohort's needs and intervene to overcome barriers to poor educational outcomes and ensure pupils reach their potential. Some suggested activities to achieve this could be:
 - o Use data and analysis to understand and monitor local trends in accordance with strategic priorities, e.g., safeguarding trends, attendance rates
 - o Promote evidence and good practice that prioritises consistency, high support, and exacting standards for children with a social worker and recognises the importance of stability and strong information sharing.
 - o Share knowledge and training to strengthen how education settings and social care understand the impact of adversity on education (newsletters, webinars, and workshops)

- Support and advise key professionals to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence using evidence-based interventions. Some suggested activities to achieve this could be:
 - Engage and support key professionals and local services including social workers and school staff to promote improved outcomes for children.
 - Advise on evidence-based interventions and strengthen links with research organisations to participate in work that will build a stronger evidence base for what works for children.
 - Encourage schools and social care to be creative and thoughtful in communicating with children and families, including taking account of children's wishes and feelings.

What is not in scope of the extended VSH role?

- Work with individual children and their families - including tracking and monitoring educational progress of individual children.
- Responding to requests from parents or carers to offer advice and support in relation to individual children with a social worker
- Responsibility for children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) who do not require or need a social worker.

Ambitions for the extension of the VSH role:

- Make the disadvantage of children in need visible and strengthen relationships between education settings and the LAs to ensure all hold lofty ambitions for these children
- Promote engagement in education, including as a means of keeping children safe
- Level up outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so children reach their potential. Ensure education recovery activity reaches children in need.

Crucially - all statutory duties relating to CIC and PLAC remain the same; this means that the duties around children with a social worker are in addition to the core work of the Virtual School and the VSH.

Funding for the role extension:

- Will be via a Section 31 grant of the Education Act 2002. This is done via a funding formula based on the number of education settings within a LA. For Halton, £100,000 has been allocated.
- Funding is to be used to provide VSHs with additional resources required to take on the strategic leadership role for children with a social worker and is sufficient to recruit additional team members to support them with these responsibilities.
- Funding has been allocated up to 31st March 2022 and in recognition of the brief period between the announcement and the commencement of the role the allocation has not been reduced to a pro-rata for 21-22.
- There has been no guarantee of funding for the next academic year as the proposals are within the Government's spending review. However, feedback from Andrew Baxter, Head of the DfE CIN (Children in Need) Unit, is that there is an expectation that it will be made available for 2022-23, at the same level whilst a decision is made about the status of the guidance.
- Each LA must sign a memorandum of understanding to receive the funding which will be delivered in 3 payments.
- There is no change to FSM Pupil Premium allocation or regulation.

Status of the DfE guidance:

- Currently the guidance issued in June 2021 is non-statutory and will be reviewed before the end of March 2022.
- The DfE are appointing a research partner to gather evidence of good practice and the impact the expansion of the role of the VSH has had to the outcomes for children with a social worker
- Pending the outcomes of the research and review of the expansion to the role of the VSH it is anticipated that the guidance will become statutory within the next 2 years (Andrew Baxter Head of the DfE CIN Unit).
- As the guidance is currently non-statutory the DfE have confirmed it will not form part of any Ofsted inspection framework.

Halton's response to the expansion of the role so far

- Map out existing processes and systems
- Identify current cohort and performance
- Establish 'Education not on track' panel
- Ensure CSC planning processes and systems are robust
- Build skills and capacity in all teams to ensure that education is firmly embedded in decision making
- Provide advice and guidance to support professionals in improving the educational outcomes of the cohort

Training and Development

The Virtual School offers a comprehensive training programme that is based on feedback from schools and analysis of the educational experiences of our children in care. Any costs incurred are covered through the Pupil Premium Plus grant. This year, the Virtual School have focussed on trauma-informed practice and theory to ensure our schools are supporting our young people throughout the Covid recovery period. PEP Coordinators have also offered a more bespoke approach of improving practice through the Support and Challenge Progress meetings, the joint meetings with the school EP and the Designated Teacher and via feedback on the PEPs.

Training priorities for 2022-23

- Develop a 'new to the role of DT' training course
- Relaunch the training provision for social workers and DTs using termly workshops in addition to cluster / network meetings.
- Re-instate the network meetings for each phase.
- Further developing and embedding our trauma informed practice across all settings
- Expand the training provision to incorporate DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Lead) (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and school safeguarding teams following the expansion of the role of the virtual school.
- Working with Halton's Education Psychology Service and Behaviour Support Service to further develop our package of training focused on supporting mental health issues, including for those working with children who have a social worker.
- Develop induction support for new social workers, including within the 'Child in Need' teams, as well as those in the Children in Care team.

Additional learning and literacy support

Halton Virtual School provides an elevated level of 'outside the classroom' educational support for our children and young people in care. We have worked hard to find different and creative ways to continue this support despite the COVID restrictions being in place.

The Virtual School coordinate additional one-to-one tuition for any Halton child in care who requests support with a subject regardless of where they are educated or living. The tutors are always qualified teachers and subject specialists and provide regular tuition reports. Whilst our original 1:1 tuition offer has been face to face, we have responded to the current situation and moved to provide online tuition. This has continued throughout the academic year and over the holidays to support children and young people to remain engaged in their learning and to mitigate against falling behind. We have also ensured that face to face tuition has taken place for children and young people who have stated a preference this.

In partnership with a local bookshop (The Curiosity Book shop) the Virtual School send an individualised book parcel to each identified child in their placement on a half termly basis. The children are identified through analysis of the PEP outcomes and all Reception age children receive them. The parcels are tailored to the child's interests and their reading and writing levels. The aims of the book parcels are to encourage a love of reading at home; and improve reading ages and vocabulary development. 21 children and young people received the parcels during the academic year.

The Virtual School also has a yearly subscription to Storytime Magazine which is sent out each month to identified children in Key Stage 2 and when appropriate to some Key Stage 3 children. The magazines are brightly illustrated and have short stories. The aim of the magazines is to encourage a love of reading at home particularly for those who struggle accessing a book and to improve reading age and vocabulary development. 45 children have had the Storytime magazine this year.

The Virtual School website (www.myvirtualschool.org) has been enhanced and regularly updated with curriculum links particularly Maths and English and other subjects; resources to support learning at home; other activities to support carers in keeping children and young people engaged in their learning such as virtual tours of museums, cross curricular activities, coding projects, arts & craft ideas, fun ideas from famous authors etc. A new section with ideas and resources to support Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing has also added.

Activity and Support Programme

During the school holidays the Virtual School usually provide a range of activity days to engage and support our children and young people to develop a variety of academic, personal and independence skills. Some days are fully developed and led by the Education Support Workers within the Virtual School and others are delivered in partnership with other guests, agencies, and providers. All the activity programme is funded through the Pupil Premium Plus grant.

Key Wider Offer Actions for 2022-23

- Review the activity day offer, to ensure it provides effective and impactful use of the pupil premium + grant for the greatest number of young people.
- To develop the website and social media presence to improve communication with and support for carers and children and young people in care.
- To develop a model of direct support sessions delivered by the Education Support Workers during term time, in line with targets identified within PEPs. These sessions will be focused on developing and supporting quality home learning, through modelling to parents and carers whilst providing homework support for the children.

2022 – 2023 Virtual School Action Plan

As a Virtual School, we will continue to perform our statutory duties and work closely with colleagues across the 'People' directorate, schools, and Halton as a whole, to support all Looked-After Children, Post Looked-After Children, and those with a Social Worker.

However, as a 'school,' it is also essential that we reflect on our strengths and areas for development, as outlined within this report (our equivalent of a school SEF (Self-Evaluation Form)) to formulate our 'School Development Plan.'

I have focussed on the four over-arching priority areas, within which several key actions and targets have been identified, to enable us to track progress and impact towards each of the strands.

Priority	Action / Areas of Focus	Timescale	Lead	Progress / Desired Outcome
To reduce the number of LAC becoming NEET whilst in care or as a care leaver.	Implement the use of a NEET PEP for 16–18-year-olds.	Dec 2022	PMcP IW	
	Stabilise team structure within Virtual School for Post-16 support with PEPs and Employability	Mar 2023	BH	
	Launch Traineeship Model within HBC and broaden post-16 offer (including CSCS Cards and Apprenticeships)	Jan 2023	BH PMcP IW	
	Improve the completion rate and quality of PEPs within Post-16 sector	Dec 2023	PMcP	
Develop a high quality, multi-	Implement PEP deadline each term to allow time	November 2022	BH	

agency moderation process of PEPs, to continue to build upon the progress and attainment within all Key Stages	for analysis and moderation			
	Establish internal moderation process for VS team	December 2022	BH JL PMcP	
	Develop 'model' PEPs to show good practice, including use of PP+ & analysis of impact	December 2022	JL PMcP	
	Write a PEP policy and disseminate out to all professionals to provide consistency and clarity.	December 2022	BH	
	Launch multi-agency moderation panel with feedback disseminated to social care and schools	February 2023	JL PMcP	
	Develop prioritisation and targeted support / attendance of VS at PEPs based on needs-based analysis	January 2023	JL PMcP	
Embed a high-quality strategic model for the implementation of the expansion of duties to encompass all children with a social worker.	Create a baseline data collection to identify areas of focus and need	November 2022	BH	
	Embed the role of the SCiE Officer within the VS and attendance within the HCYPSP.	December 2022	BH	
	Develop training programme for DSLs, HTs, ECTs, SWs and other key professionals based upon areas of focus identified within data and through discussion with schools – including trauma informed	November 2022	BH	
	Work with 'Education, Inclusion, and Provision division' to develop 'pupils causing concern' meetings and a graduated response for those at risk of perm ex.	October 2022	BH/ DB	
	Review the impact of support and liaise with	July 2023	BH	

	colleagues across the Northwest to measure impact of expansion work.			
Develop a more rigorous and robust performance and quality assurance model, including the implementation of a PEP deadline, greater analysis of standards (including the completion rate for initial PEPs within 10 days) and reintegration within the corporate parenting board.	Develop an improved 'new into care' PEP process	November 2022	BH JL PMcP	
	Develop a new performance reporting process to provide greater accountability and challenge with schools and social care on a termly basis.	December 2022	BH	
	Provide regular reports and updates to the governance board, corporate parenting board and the CiC (children in care) Council	July 2023	BH	
	Write a Belonging Strategy, including for those with an EHCP	December 2022	JL	
	Ensure timescales for QA and PP+ analysis is measurable, and impact is demonstrable.	March 2023	JL PMcP	
	Implement 'Pupil Progress Meetings' to review attainment and achievement of pupils, using Analytics	January 2023	JL PMcP	

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	14 November 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, People
PORTFOLIO:	Children & Young People
SUBJECT:	Children's Social Care Update
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 Members of the Board to receive a presentation on an update of the work undertaken to date following the Ofsted focused visit which took place in October 2021 and the subsequent actions taken in response to their findings.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That Members of the Board:**

- i) **Note the steps that have been taken and the role of the Improvement Board;**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Halton received a focused visit to its children's services department in October 2021 and inspectors looked at the arrangements for children in need, including those who are subject to a child protection plan.

3.2 Since then, steps have been taken to make improvements to the service including an establishment of an improvement board.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Having a strong and robust framework for identifying and responding across all agencies is the key to ensuring that children and young people are safe and protected, and partners are clear about their responsibilities and role in working together.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Children and young people whose health needs and level of development is potentially compromised are identified early and multi-agency support is in place to support them.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Children who are at risk of harm are identified quickly and services work together to minimise the risk of harm and take action to formally protect children in a timely way.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 All key stakeholders are committed to working together to ensure a robust and consistent approach to protect children in Halton.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Issues arising from a child's equality and diversity needs will inform the decision-making at the point of contact and it will be ensured that the voice of the child is to the forefront.

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

None.

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

DATE: 14 November 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO: Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Halton Local Area SEND Strategy 2021-25

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise the board on the progress and updates in relation to the local area SEND Strategy and current pressures.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **Members are asked to consider the presentation and raise any questions they may have on SEND provision and support, the local area strategy and its implementation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 EHCP Position

3.1.1 Throughout the 2021/21 Halton in common with other local authority areas has seen an unprecedented growth in demand for Education Health and Care Needs Assessments. The number of applications for EHC needs assessments reached 353 for the academic year in July. This represents a 35% increase in demand with that demand accelerating towards the end of the year (fig1)

Year	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Autumn Term	31	61	88	89	87	61	128
Spring Term	28	41	49	92	84	69	89
Summer Term	50	70	105	83	56	105	136
Total	109	172	242	264	227	235	353

3.1.3 Halton is slightly lower than its statistical neighbours and nationally with regards to the number of applications received that are converted into a final EHCP with 12% of applications not meeting assessment criteria or assessments not meeting the threshold for issuing an Education Health and Care Plan.

3.1.4 The rise in parental applications over the year is becoming cause for concern. Parental applications now account for almost 20% of applications. Applications from parents are often missing information so do sometimes result in delays in the

application process due to having to request further information from parents and or their educational provision.

- 3.1.5 The upsurge in demand has placed considerable pressure on the capacity in both the SEN Assessment Team and those services that provide advice and assessments that contribute towards developing EHCPs such as the Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy Services, Occupational and Physio Therapy Services etc. As a result Halton's ability to meet its statutory 20 week completion rate for EHCPs has fallen throughout the year, although is still in line with current national trends as all areas are experiencing similar pressures, increase in applications and decline in 20 week completion rate.
- 3.1.6 The decline in completion rates is due to three factors. The first is the increase in EHC needs assessments coming through the system placing an increased caseload for each assessment co-ordinator. Caseloads currently sit at an average of 180 per co-ordinator up from 100 four years ago. The SENAT are currently operating below capacity with a 25% vacancy rate for assessment co-ordinators due to pressures on recruitment. The situation is projected to improve across the autumn as additional staff and capacity are recruited but this will take time to be reflected in the figures.
- 3.1.7 The second factor has been an ongoing lack of capacity within the admin hub. The admin hub is responsible for monitoring the SENAT inbox, maintaining and moving workflows forward on the system, receiving and logging new applications and annual reviews on synergy and sending out requests for professional advice. Lack of capacity and delays in a number of these areas have led to cases going over timescales with decisions to assess being taken within the 6 week statutory timescale being impacted as a result. SENAT and Admin are working closely to streamline and improve the systems and will also improve once further admin capacity is resolved due to recruitment challenges post Covid (again a national issue but impacting upon Halton too). To support this a new suite of management information reporting is being developed and embedded to facilitate tighter monitoring of the EHCP process.
- 3.1.8 The final factor that is impacting the timeliness of plan delivery is the increasing complexity of cases and the ongoing challenge to find appropriate provision for a number of children and young people. In addition to the current sufficiency challenges faced by the local area with respect to its in borough specialist provision, the availability of more regional independent school places is under increasing pressure creating delays in finalising plans as provision placements are sought.
- 3.1.9 Despite this challenging outlook there does continue to be positive progress made to improve the quality and impact of EHCPs. In July a new SEN Assessment Team Manager joined Halton SENAT, this was a role that has been vacant for some time. Since Starting the manager has been focussed on addressing and managing the capacity issues in the team as well as focussing on improving process clarity and communications with families and schools. Quality monitoring and assurance continues to be a priority despite the pressure faced by the team. The assistant DCO (health colleague) for Halton is now co-located part time with the assessment team to support better quality and partnership working with respect to the health elements of EHCP's.

- 3.1.10 A key component of the EHCP process is the multiagency EHCP partnership panel. This panel provides moderation and support to the local authority in its decision making regarding whether to undertake assessments for SEN and, following assessment, whether to issue a statutory EHCP. Following feedback and reflecting on the current demands and pressures in the system the EHCP Partnership has been revised and reviewed over the summer. This has resulted in a revision to the terms of reference for the panel clarifying its role and powers and increasing the representative range of membership.
- 3.1.11 The EHCP Partnership Panel also operates, on behalf of Halton Local Authority, as the placement and admitting authority for all Halton children and young people with an EHCP. As such its communications with families and schools are critical in ensuring that decisions are well understood and clearly conveyed. Part of the review of the panel therefore has been to provide clarity to schools and families going forward on the local criteria used for decision making. This will support better applications for assessment and reduce the number of instances where decisions are challenged.

3.2 Sufficiency

- 3.2.1 As described above the growth in demand for EHCPs is placing a huge stress on the availability of specialist places in Halton. Fig 2 shows the growth of EHCPs over the last 5 years by school phase and type.

3.2.2

EHCP Halton %	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22
State-funded nursery	0.0	1.2	0.4	1.8	2.0
State-funded primary	0.5	0.9	1.5	1.9	2.3
State-funded secondary	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.9
State-funded special school	98.0	98.1	97.9	97.2	98.6
Pupil referral unit	2.1	6.3	6.7	8.6	7.4
All Phases	2.3	2.7	3.3	3.7	4.2

- 3.2.3 This represents an increase in the number of EHCPs in Halton from less than 800 in 2017 to 1362 as at August 2022. This increase is faster than that national rate of increase but still leaves Halton in line with many of its statistical neighbours in terms of the proportion of EHCPs.
- 3.2.4 This growth rate in the proportion of pupils with an EHCP has been managed in part by working with Halton's mainstream schools to improve the rate of pupils with EHCPs that they support. Historically Halton has a lower proportion of pupils with an EHCP in mainstream schools than regional and national comparators.
- 3.2.5 Halton is an outlier in the inclusion of its mainstream academies. In Halton, less mainstream academies have children and young people with EHCP plans than those supported with EHCP plans in mainstream academies nationally. There are a number of strategies in place to support mainstream schools to be more inclusive including the development of nurture provision, investment in specialist teaching and

advisory support and educational psychology support and a more robust detail of sharing outcomes of decisions and assumptions in making placement decisions. This has resulted in great progress being made in this area and halving Halton's gap to national in the proportion of new EHCPs delivered in mainstream. Halton now has 36.4% of pupils with an EHCP in mainstream compared to 42% nationally.

3.2.7 However the increase in complexity and number of pupils with SEND has placed huge pressure on specialist places with all special schools and resource bases oversubscribed for 2022. To meet this demand a number of capital developments have been put in place over the last 3 years including the following:

School	Age Range	Specialism	Capacity	Additional Accommodation
Ashley	11–19	ASD; Social Communication Needs	112 places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 aged 11-16 • 42 aged 16-19 	7 places at satellite provision at The Heath School Bungalow added September 2020 resulting in overall capacity of 119 places comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77 aged 11-16 • 42 aged 16-19
Brookfields	2–11	ASD, Cognition and Learning	73	18 places at satellite provision at The Grange School (9) Sept 2020 & (9) Sept 2021. Overall capacity of 91 places. SEND consultation ending 09/06/21 suggests 92 places available at Brookfields and 18 places at the satellite provision, overall capacity of 110 places on a temporary basis whilst a long term, sustainable solution is agreed *taken from the SEND consultation document
Cavendish	11–19	Severe and Complex Learning Disability/Difficulty ASC/SLD/SLD/PMLD	90	Summer 2021 feasibility for a 2 classroom extension to be commissioned for use from September 2022, taking overall capacity to 110 places
Chesnut Lodge	2–16	SLD, PMLD	76	Additional classroom built in 2020 to meet existing need
The Grange	5-11	ASC		Additional resource base class funded for KS2 from Sept 2022
Simms Cross	5-11	ASC		Additional resource base places funded for KS1/KS2 from Sept 2022

3.2.8 Despite these developments, due to limited capital funding available from government, numbers of specialist provision has not kept at pace with increased demand, which has been magnified by impact of Covid too. This is reflected in the pressure for independent school places outside of the borough. Halton remains an outlier in its dependence on independent schools with 7.2% of pupils with an EHCP in independent schools compared to 3.6% nationally. In numbers this represents over 110 pupils in independent schools as at the end of 2022 up from just 63 in

2019. Total spend on the independent sector is projected over 20% of Halton's overall Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block this financial year.

- 3.2.9 In order to develop a more coordinated approach to meeting local need a new SEND Sufficiency Strategy is being consulted on over September. The Sufficiency Strategy will set out how the local authority will work with schools and other education providers to meet the needs of local children. The strategy will show projected growth in need over the next 4 years and how we will work with our schools and providers to meet those projections. The sufficiency work will be supported by the SEN Capital Grant announced at the end of March. The grant provides for £3.3m in capital funding to support the development of provision.
- 3.2.10 However the first steps have already been taken in ensuring that demand growth can be met. The Raise Academy for 11-16 year old children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) is due to open in September 2023 and this will significantly reduce reliance on out of borough provision for those pupils. Over time the Raise academy will accommodate at least 25 pupils with SEMH who would otherwise be in the independent sector. Additional special free school applications are currently being sought for pupils with SEMH and ASC/communication needs in key stages 1 and 2.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The purpose of the 2021-2025 Halton SEND Strategy is to improve outcomes for, and the lived experience of, children and young people with SEND and their families. Currently children recognised as having a special educational needs and/or disability make up over 17% of the areas school age population therefore the strategy will make a significant contribution towards ensuring that Halton's children and young people have the best possible start in life.

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

Young people with SEND and Learning difficulties are disproportionately likely to be NEET or unemployed. Elements of the strategy are aimed at improving employability and skills for these young people leading to meaningful employment.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Historical data and research shows that children and young people with SEND are disproportionately likely to be overweight, lack opportunities to access healthy lifestyles and leisure activities and die young. Improving health outcomes for these children and young people is a core objective of SEND Strategic Priority 3: Preparation for Adulthood.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Without a coherent and joined up strategic approach to meeting the needs and improving the life outcomes and lived experience of children and young people and their families it will be considerably more challenging for the local area to meet its statutory and morale duties. The SEND strategy and SEND sufficiency document are key documents that will identify and articulate how as a collective partnership education, health, social care and wider partners will support children and young people with SEND and their families to meet these morale and statutory duties effectively.

7.2 Individual objectives within the strategy will in some cases contain projects that may require separate risk analysis. Where this is the case these will be overseen by the SEND Strategic Partnership.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Individual objectives within the strategy will in some cases contain projects that require separate and individual equality impact analysis and assessment as part of good practice. Where this is the case these will be overseen by the SEND Strategic Partnership.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People & Families Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	14 November 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, People
PORTFOLIO:	Children & Young People
SUBJECT:	Summary of 2022 Provisional Un-validated Attainment Outcomes
WARDS:	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide a presentation on the provisional 2022 educational outcomes for Halton's children and young people for Early years Good Level of Development (GLD) indicator; Key Stage One phonics results; Key stage 1, 2, 4 and 5 attainment information. To share some key updates regarding educational national and local priorities and developments.

RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Members receive the presentation; and**
- (2) Members ask any questions about the implications of these results; and**
- (3) Members are aware of any key updates and implications for the borough**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 As part of the Children's Policy and Performance Board overview and scrutiny role for children's services in Halton, members regularly receive reports on educational attainment and other educational developments/issues in the borough. This report is to feedback on Statutory Educational Assessments throughout EYFS and Statutory Assessments undertaken in the summer term throughout the primary, secondary and post 16 phases of education. This marks the return of the first statutory assessment in the primary phase post pandemic and first set of exams sat by students since the Covid pandemic. The information provided shares information regarding pre pandemic performance to gain an insight of the borough's prior educational position and then the provisional results achieved this academic year. Clearly direct comparisons cannot be made against prior performance and whilst Halton as a region were badly affected by Covid infections, individual schools have been affected to varying degrees so caution also needs to be exercised as there is variance in performance across schools.
- 3.2 The Interim Operational Director for Education, Inclusion and Provision will provide a summary of 2022, GLD, phonics, Key Stage 1, 2, 4 and 5 provisional un-validated educational attainment. This data provide an early indication of the

educational attainment data across Halton's Schools before publication of the validated data by the Department for Education in December. At that time more detailed national data on progress and comparative groups will be available. This data, does however, provide sufficient information for Schools, LA and wider stakeholders to plan and prioritise actions.

3.3 Provisional Attainment Results for 2022: Early years Good Level of Development (GLD):

Percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development						
Year	Halton		England		gap	
2017	60.9	↓ -1.0	70.7	↑ 1.4	-9.8	↓
2018	64.5	↑ 3.6	71.5	↑ 0.8	-7.0	↑
2019	66.1	↑ 1.6	71.8	↑ 0.3	-5.7	↑
2022	60.1	↓ -6.0	65.2	↓ -6.6	-5.1	↑

For information this is also the first year of a new Early Years Framework and revised Early Learning Goals so cannot be compared with prior data. However gap to national is a useful indicator to give a benchmark of how we are comparing to the national average. This new framework has removed any exceeding measurements so figures are based upon percentage of children reaching the expected standard in the Early Learning Goals (ELG).

The children undertaking these assessments were only three years old when the Covid pandemic hit. This cohort of children had reduced social interaction opportunities at a formative stage of their lives and many also had reduced physical development opportunities with parks, leisure centres, children's playbarns and outdoor activities closed due to Covid. Any delays in gross motor skill development lead to delays in fine motor skills development so whilst pencil hold, scissor control, manipulative skills are impacted, so are self care skills and using tools such as a knife and fork to feed themselves. These are significant experiences that this generation missed out on and are seen nationally as well as locally. From early data, we have seen the following results in each Early Learning Goal (ELG), but as yet do not have comparative data to benchmark against:

- Communication and Language 77.7% reached the expected standard in the ELG.
- Personal Social and Emotional ELG, 82.3% reached the expected standard
- Physical Development ELG, 82.5% reached the expected standard%
- Literacy ELG, 61.8% reached the expected standard
- Maths ELG, 71.8% reached the expected standard
- Understandign the world ELG, 77.5% reached the expected standard
- Expressive Arts and Design ELG, 80.7% reached the expected standard

Phonics:

End of Year One data:

Phonics - Year 1								
Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard								
Year	Halton			England			gap	
2017	79	↑	3	81	→	0	-2	↑
2018	79	→	0	82	↑	1	-3	↓
2019	80	↑	1	82	→	0	-2	↑
2022	73.2	↓	-6.8	75.5	↓	-7	-2.3	↓

Whilst it is disappointing to see such a drop in the percentage of children achieving the expected standard (which is a mark of 32 out of 40 words read correctly in the phonics test), this group of children were impacted significantly as they started reception class in the midst of the pandemic and had experienced disruption to nursery/pre-school during lockdowns. The decline is less than the national decline in this measure. Schools are working with children to reach the expected standard and provide interventions and catch up strategies for those that have not yet reached this standard and will take the test in Year Two.

End of Year Two data (this includes those whom retook the assessment in Year Two as they didn't reach the expected standard by the end of Year One).

Phonics - by end of Year 2								
Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard								
Year	Halton			England			gap	
2017	91	→	0	92	↑	1	-1	↓
2018	93	↑	2	92	→	0	1	↑
2019	90	↓	-3	91	↓	-1	-1	↓
2022	86.4	↓	-3.6	87	↓	-4	-0.6	↑

Again whilst teaching time was affected by the pandemic, the impact noted is in line with national figures. Pupils will continue to develop their phonic skills throughout the following school years and the gap to national data has decreased.

Key Stage one Assessments: Expected standard

% pupils achieving the expected standard				% pupils achieving the expected standard				
Reading				Writing				
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap	
2017	66	↓	-1	76	↑	2	-10	↓
2018	73	↑	7	75	↓	-1	-2	↑
2019	72	↓	-1	75	→	0	-3	↓
2022	66.4	↓	-5.6	66.9	↓	-8	-0.5	↑
2017	58	↑	4	68	↑	3	-10	↑
2018	67	↑	9	70	↑	2	-3	↑
2019	66	↓	-1	69	↓	-1	-3	→
2022	57.9	↓	-8.1	57.6	↓	-11.4	0.3	↑

% pupils achieving the expected standard				% pupils achieving the expected standard			
Maths				Reading, writing and maths			
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	65	75	-10	2017	53	64	-11
2018	74	76	-2	2018	63	65	-2
2019	71	76	-5	2019	61	65	-4
2022	66.9	67.7	-0.8	2022	53.3	53.4	-0.1

Key stage one data is based on teacher assessment informed by tasks. The combined reading, writing, maths figure isn't a DFE reportable measure at Key Stage One but is a useful indicator to track and identify the proportion of children reaching the expected standard in all three areas by the end of Key Stage One.

It is pleasing to note that trends are following national performance but with the decline from previous years pre pandemic. Halton have seen less of a decline than national and expected figures are in line with national. Given that disadvantaged areas have been more adversely affected than most and Halton specifically were impacted with high rates of infection and subsequent absence due to illness, these figures demonstrate the hard work and effective home learning, interventions, tailored catch up strategies that schools have deployed. Such bespoke and individualised analysis of gaps in learning have accounted for making the gains back on lost learning. Schools are continuing to deploy such strategies to continue this progress.

Key Stage One: Greater Depth/Higher Standard

% pupils achieving greater depth				% pupils achieving greater depth			
Reading				Writing			
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	17	25	-8	2017	9	16	-7
2018	21	26	-5	2018	12	16	-4
2019	22	25	-3	2019	11	15	-4
2022	17.1	18	-0.9	2022	7.8	8	-0.2

% pupils achieving greater depth				% pupils achieving greater depth			
Maths				Reading, writing and maths			
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	13	21	-8	2017	6	11	-5
2018	17	22	-5	2018	8	12	-4
2019	18	22	-4	2019	9	11	-2
2022	14	15.1	-1.1	2022	6.5	5.9	0.6

As with the data for children achieving expected standard, the data for those achieving greater depth in all three areas is also not a national reporting requirement, however it is encouraging to see from the tables above that Halton's performance has not declined at the same rate as national performance in all of the subject areas and Halton has closed the gap to national across all subjects. It is of note that Halton was ahead of the national performance for 2022 for children achieving greater depth across the combined measure for all three subject areas in key stage one, despite having trailed national data in this measure in 2019 and in the other reported pre-pandemic academic years.

Key Stage Two; Expected Standard:

% pupils achieving the expected standard Reading				% pupils achieving the expected standard Writing (TA)			
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	69 6	72 6	-3	2017	72 6	76 2	-4
2018	75 6	75 3	0	2018	75 3	78 2	-3
2019	70 -5	73 -2	-3	2019	76 1	78 0	-2
2022	75.3 5.3	74.5 1.5	0.8	2022	70.2 -5.8	69.5 -8.5	0.7

% pupils achieving the expected standard Maths				% pupils achieving the expected standard Reading, Writing and Maths			
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	70 5	75 5	-5	2017	56 9	61 8	-5
2018	74 4	76 1	-2	2018	63 7	64 3	-1
2019	75 1	79 3	-4	2019	60 -3	65 1	-5
2022	68.9 -6.1	71.4 -8	-2.5	2022	58.1 -1.9	58.7 -6.3	-0.6

% pupils achieving the expected standard Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling			
Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	75 5	77 4	-2
2018	75 0	78 1	-3
2019	74 -1	78 0	-4
2022	70 -4	72.5 -5.5	-2.5

Key Stage Two data is based on tasks/tests in Reading and Maths and teacher assessment of writing. This is the first year that tasks/tests have returned since the pandemic. Achievement in reading has increased by 5.3% and Halton's reading standard is now above national data. Similarly writing performance is above national. Whilst maths and the combined read, writing and maths measures are slightly lower than national, the decline from pre pandemic levels has been less than that witnessed at national level and Halton's performance gap to national has decreased across all performance measures in 2022.

Key Stage Two: Greater Depth/Higher standard:

% pupils achieving high score/greater depth Reading				% pupils achieving high score/greater depth Writing (TA)			
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	19 4	25 6	-6	2017	13 5	18 3	-5
2018	25 6	28 3	-3	2018	19 6	20 2	-1
2019	22 -3	27 -1	-5	2019	19 0	20 0	-1
2022	24.8 2.8	27.8 0.8	-3	2022	10.8 -8.2	12.8 -7.2	-2

% pupils achieving high score/greater depth Maths				% pupils achieving high score/greater depth Reading, Writing and Maths			
Year	Halton	England	gap	Year	Halton	England	gap
2017	17 6	23 6	-6	2017	6 3	9 4	-3
2018	21 4	24 1	-3	2018	9 3	10 1	-1
2019	21 0	27 3	-6	2019	9 0	11 1	-2
2022	17.7 -3.3	22.5 -5	-4.8	2022	5.7 -3.3	7.2 -3.8	-1.5

% pupils achieving high score/greater depth Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling						
Year	Halton		England		gap	
2017	25	↑ 6	31	↑ 8	-6	↓
2018	30	↑ 5	34	↑ 3	-4	↑
2019	30	⇒ 0	36	↑ 2	-6	↓
2022	22	↓ -8	28.3	↓ -7.7	-6.3	↓

Although Halton's performance against the greater depth measures was lower than national data in 2022, the data for reading, maths and the combined reading, writing and maths measures has shown less of a decline since 2019 than the national data and in these areas the gap to national data has declined for Halton. Greater depth performance in writing, which is a teacher assessed measure, has declined since 2019 by more than the national data and the gap to national has increased.

Key Stage Four Attainment: GCSE Performance:

Halton LA Trend	2018	2019	2021	2022	% Diff to 21	% Diff to 19
Cohort	1333	1364	1488	1572		
Number achieving grades 4 - 9 in English	70.4	72.8	75.5	75.3	-0.2	2.5
Number achieving grades 5 - 9 in English	52.3	57	58.1	60.4	2.3	3.4
Number achieving grades 4 - 9 in maths	63.9	61	67	66.5	-0.5	5.5
Number achieving grades 5 - 9 in maths	39.9	39.8	46.1	48.7	2.6	8.9
Number achieving grades 4 - 9 in English AND maths	58.1	56.8	63.5	63.0	-0.5	6.2
Number achieving grades 5 - 9 in English AND maths	32.3	36.1	41.5	44.0	2.5	7.9
Number achieving EBacc grades 4 - 9	24.6	21.9	21.8	9.2	-12.6	-12.7
Number achieving EBacc grades 5 - 9	14.5	13.2	15.1	6.6	-8.5	-6.6
EBacc average APS	3.72	3.78	3.96	3.78	-0.18	0.00
Attainment 8 average score	44.2	45.4	47.2	45.7	-1.5	0.3

2022 are the first cohort, post pandemic to undertake exams as the last two years GCSE results have been based on Centre Assessed Grades and Teacher Assessed Grades. The last year where GCSE's were based on purely exams and assessments was 2019. Early national data indicates that most GCSE performance nationally shows a small increase on 2019 data and a decline on 2021 teacher assessed grade data. Halton's GCSE results mirror much of this pattern, although maths at grades 9-5; English grades 9-5 and combined English and Maths grade 9-5 have all also increased on 2021 data too.

Ebacc data has declined slightly. The Ebacc measure is calculated by average point score counting all schools in all measures, based on a range of subjects including:

- English language and literature
- maths
- the sciences
- geography or history
- a language

To count towards the English part of the EBacc, pupils need to take both English literature and English language GCSE exams. For the science element, pupils need to take either GCSE combined science, or 2 single sciences. The language includes any ancient or modern foreign language.

Whilst Ebacc is a measure encouraged by DFE, for some pupils it does not reflect their strengths and ambitions. In some circumstances pupils individual best results may be gained by selecting subjects which don't cover this diverse, approved range. In these cases these students won't meet the Ebacc measure, but may have attained strong results in their chosen subjects.

Key Stage Five: Post 16 A level Attainment:

2022: A-Level		% A*-A	% A*-B	% A*-C	% A*-E
	Entries				
Halton LA	1191	26.3%	58.4%	83.0%	99.7%
Emerging National (GOV.uk)		35.9%	62.2%	82.1%	98.4%

Based on the data provided by the schools and college, Halton's percentage of A*-C grades has increased by almost 13% since the last pre-pandemic set of results in 2019, rising from 70.2% A*-C in 2019 to 83% in 2022. It is of great credit to the staff and students that this figure was also ahead of the emerging national data for 2022. A*-E grades have also risen by 1.6% from 98.1% in 2019 to 99.7% in 2022, again being ahead of the emerging national data in 2022. Although students achieving the higher grades are below national figures for 2022, the percentage of A*-A grades has increased in Halton from 16.8% in 2019 to 26.3% in 2022, and the A*-B grades have increased from 43.2% in 2019 to 58.4% in 2022.

Technical/Vocational Attainment:

2022: Tech/Vocational		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Entries	Distinctions		High Grades (MMM or above)		Passes	
Halton LA	518	350	67.6%	467	90.2%	31	6.0%

National data is not yet available for comparison purposes for those students taking technical/vocational qualifications at key stage five. In Halton a total of 491 students undertook these qualifications in 2022, down from 537 in 2019. Distinction grades have dropped from 86% in 2019 to 67.6% in 2022, with 96.1% of entries being a pass or higher, down from 99.9% in 2019. Entries achieving three merits or above have also dropped from 95.1% in 2019 to 90.2% in 2022.

Pupil characteristic data

Data regarding performance of vulnerable groups; performance by gender and performance of SEND support, EHCP and Looked after children and care leavers will be published in a subsequent report. DFE release characteristic data in December 2022 and so analysis and performance reporting of these groups will be reported at Spring PPB.

3.4 Key Educational Developments:

- **Priority Educational Investment Area (PEIA)**- Halton have been identified as a Priority Educational Investment area and are one of 24 Local Authorities to be identified in this category. 55 out of 152 Local Authorities across England have been identified as Educational Investment Areas. These areas will receive additional funding to support local and national priorities in line with ambitions identified within The Schools White Paper. As a PEIA, Halton will work closely with the DFE whom will join our regional strategic board (in Halton this is our Halton Learning Alliance). The purpose is to develop the school led system; share effective practice and learning whilst meeting the priorities identified within the Schools White Paper.
- **Halton Learning Alliance** –Halton Learning Alliance have been operating as a shadow board and will be formally re-launched with all educational sector representation on 6th October 2022. This Alliance are working collectively on our Learning Community principles that:
 - *Every learner and every learning place in Halton are our collective responsibility*
Every learner is known, valued and supported to achieve
Our young people aim to become responsible, caring, effective and contributing citizens.

By the whole system acting with true morale purpose, we will pursue our collective ambitions so that all education is high quality and inclusive; outcomes are achieved and that young people are aspirational, ambitious, successful and achieve so that they contribute to the education, schooling, businesses and the wider community.

- **Delivering Better Values**- Halton have been identified as a Local Authority to be part of the Delivering Better Values Programme. This programme is targeting authorities with high needs DSG funding deficits (about a third of all LA's) whom aren't at the highest level risk but have deficits that need to be addressed. The programme have commissioned Newton and CIPFA (specialists working with public financial management) to share how regions address their high needs and inclusion needs whilst reducing deficit budgets. Halton are part of tranche three so will be part of the programme from Summer 2023, although data is currently being collected and liaising with DE regarding this programme has been initiated.
- **Early Years Experts and Mentors Programme**- Halton are taking part in DFE's Experts and Mentors programme. This programme invests and uses leads of Early Years both within LA's and Early Years provisions to share effective practice, pedagogy and practice and coach and mentor other providers regarding a range of elements of Early Years practice including Communication, Language and maths. It is pleasing to share that both LA staff and Early Years practitioners from Halton are part of this programme and will build system support and knowledge across the system.
- **Headteacher of the Virtual School**- A successful appointment to the role of Headteacher of the Virtual School has been made, with Mr Benjamin Holmes being the appointed candidate. Ben has previously been a successful primary

headteacher in Lancashire. Ben then joined Halton Local Authority in 2020 and had a positive impact developing safeguarding and effective practice working with schools, multi agency staff, police and health colleagues. He took up the Headteacher of the Virtual School role on 1st August 2022 and is already championing the education and experience of children in care, looked after children and care leavers. Ben will share his report on educational outcomes of the Virtual School in a forthcoming PPB meeting and wider Virtual School updates and developments.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This data will also be shared with Department for Education (DFE) and Ofsted. As Halton are a priority education investment areas (PEIA), this data will be used to help identify educational key priorities and inform any action planning and deployment of priority funding use in consultation with DFE and overseen by the Regional Delivery Directorate (RDD).

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Local Attainment results are summarised, the current national data is non-validated until the Statistical First release due in December 2022.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Outcomes for children and young people have to be treated with some caution as they are the first set of results post Covid pandemic and all pupils and schools were affected to varying degrees. Relative position to non-validated national figures are reported, but again consideration does need to be given to the varying impact of Covid across regions, with disadvantaged areas being affected more adversely than other areas. This performance information will inform the priorities, training, support and challenge available to schools. Schools continue to be risk assessed and challenged/supported whilst also developing the capacity of the whole school system to be a sector led improvement system working in partnership with multi agency teams and local authority and Children's services colleagues. Our collective ambition is to raise aspiration and ambition for children and young people across the borough, so that they achieve successful outcomes in line with their aspirations and contributing to the regions development, businesses, services, growth and regeneration.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Due to the pandemic young people have received a range of disruptions due to lockdowns and varying Covid infection levels. Curriculum offer, work experience, field trips, practical experiences have all been adversely affected by Covid. Employers and trainers need to be aware that young people moving into employment/training may not have received the same ranges of experiences and opportunities as cohorts did pre pandemic and need to consider this in relation to induction and training processes that will be required to support new recruits/trainees into the workforce/placements.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Data regarding Covid infections in settings/schools/colleges is still being collated and is shared with relevant parents/carers/professionals as appropriate if any action needs to be taken to protect children, young people and the school workforce. Risk assessments and mitigation of risk are ongoing.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

7.0 **Risk Analysis**

7.1 The Schools White Paper articulates the governments' ambition that all schools will become part of a "family of schools by 2030" i.e. part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Current legislation identifies that this can happen through governor choice to convert or can be a forced conversion if a school becomes graded as inadequate by Ofsted. Halton do not currently have any maintained schools graded as inadequate so cannot at this stage be forced to convert into an academy. However, legislative powers may change and there are some indications that schools who have been graded as Requires Improvement on two or more continuous occasions may also be included within the powers to issue an academy notice. Halton currently only have one school with a grading of two Requires Improvement judgements. The government ambition is clear and Diocesan boards are also being actively encouraged to support this academy conversion agenda and Halton do have a large number of Diocesan schools.

7.2 As a PEIA, Halton are working closely with DFE and anticipate that there will be a drive by DFE to progress with The White Paper ambitions. If this does occur, there will be increased requirements from legal services to support academy conversion processes and may impact on their capacity for wider work. Multi Academy trusts can buy into any council traded services, but frequently have their own back office teams and contract their own services. This could impact adversely on wider traded services to schools, with a decline in demand for some council services.

8.0 **Background Reports**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 31 st March 2021, effective 1 st September 2021, DFE.	Rutland House	Paul Moore
Key Stage One Assessment and Reporting arrangements Guidance (ARA), October 2021, Standards and Testing	Rutland House	Paul Moore

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Agency		
Key Stage Two Assessment and Reporting arrangements Guidance (ARA), October 2021, Standards and Testing Agency	Rutland House	Paul Moore
Secondary Accountability Measures update, June 2022, Department for Education, June 2022	Rutland House	Paul Moore
Schools causing concern Guidance for local authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners on how to work with schools to support improvements to educational performance, and on using their intervention powers”, DFE, March 2022	Rutland House	Paul Moore
Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child,” HM Government, March 2022	Rutland House	Paul Moore

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	14 November 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, People
PORTFOLIO:	Children & Young People
SUBJECT:	Supporting Families Update
WARD(S)	All

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide an update of the Supporting Families Programme and current performance levels.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

i) **The report be noted.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 **Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) Update**

3.1.1 The Spending Review in October 2021 announced an extra £200m boost to the Supporting Families Programme which will not only continue for the next three years (2022-25), but that the programme will be expanded.

3.1.2 The DLUHC are committed to improving the programme to achieve this. The Supporting Families programme will:

- Raise the ambition for vulnerable families, driving local services to work better together to build their resilience and help them to thrive.
- Drive improvements to local partnership working and data use so that vulnerable families receive the right support, at the right time. This means investing more in good practice, overcoming barriers to data-sharing and involving the voice of families in service design and commissioning.
- Update our eligibility and outcomes framework to ensure it continues to reflect the needs of families and provides flexibility for authorities to respond.
- Help local areas to work towards stronger multi-agency, data-driven local partnerships by co-designing a road map to

achieving a mature local system of family support services and considering new incentives to help drive progress.

- Using our national voice, alongside local and national networks to champion the case for early help, ensuring families get the support they need as early as possible before their problems escalate into crises and they need statutory support. Because we know that this is the key to making services more sustainable for the future.

3.1.3 Halton signed up to the programme commitments and funding agreement in April 2022. Within this agreement there were key parameters around performance requirements, resourcing the programme and service and data transformation.

3.1.4 The key differences in the programme are:

- A new outcomes framework includes ten headline outcomes rather than the previous six. This will enable more detailed reporting on the problems families are facing, clarify what good looks like for these outcomes, and what levels of evidence would be expected when measuring these outcomes. The 10 headline outcomes are listed below. Within each outcome there are a number of measures:
 - Getting a good education
 - Good early years development
 - Improved mental and physical health
 - Promoting recovery and reducing harm from substance use
 - Improved family relationships
 - Children safe from abuse and exploitation
 - Crime prevention and tackling crime
 - Safe from domestic abuse
 - Secure housing
 - Financial stability
- A refreshed Early Help System guide has been published following collaboration with local authorities and other government departments. It's a self-assessment tool to support discussion, reflection and action planning against key areas that influence the effectiveness of Early Help. It aims to provide a framework for local workshops, partnership conversations and strategic planning and to support prioritisation around Early Help.

3.2 Halton Update

3.2.1 For Halton, the practice commitment is still the same, supporting vulnerable families via whole family support from a lead professional where families are experiencing multiple complex problems. The partnership will continue to identify families in need of extra help, target services more effectively and track family level outcomes over

the long term.

- 3.2.2 Halton's funding agreement gives an indicative funding amount each year as a 'core' element to support the resourcing of the programme plus an 'target' for each year of the families that we can claim successful outcomes for under a payment by results (PBR) scheme. The numbers are 22/23 - 291 families, 23/24 - 354 families and for 24/25- 438 families, making a potential income of £866,400 under PBR.
- 3.2.3 Due to the additional demands of the programme, we have recruited an additional data tracking officer so now there is 2.4 FTE tracking officer's in post. We will also be look to recruit a part time performance post. These posts will support with the additional requirements on data collection and quality assurance as well as developing those process for monitoring and evidencing successful outcomes.
- 3.2.4 We are currently working with the Eclipse team to ensure one of the key programme requirements will be in place from September within HBC case management system. This is to ensure all individual indicators and outcomes (at indicator level) are embedded from notification / assessment to closure. Further work will be done with Eclipse and IT colleagues in the coming months to develop additional requirements within Eclipse.
- 3.2.5 For the 1st August each LA is required to complete a Supporting Families Outcome Framework that will highlight the data and evidence sources we will use across the partnership to evidence outcomes. Once this is complete this will inform a refreshed information sharing agreement across the partnership as well as new Supporting Families Outcome Plan for Halton.
- 3.2.6 Halton held a session with partners in June to share the Early Help Guide and have some conversations around the 5 areas of focus within the guide these are Workforce, Communities, Leaders, Data, Family Voice and experience. All LA's are required to choose 3 specific descriptors from the Early Help Guide they want to work on and progress during the coming year.
- 3.2.7 Halton's had previously submitted an Early Help system guide and Halton's self-assessment score was a 2 within the data model section. Given this benchmark Halton could only pick descriptors from the data section of the new guide. Halton's guide was submitted on 1st July and the 3 descriptors from the data model that we will be working on over the next 12 months will be:
- **Our case management system allows us to record all issues affecting the family and outcomes in a quantifiable way and run reports on these. - A mature**

area quantifies issues that could previously only be captured and monitored in a qualitative way (such as parenting needs or parental conflict). This enables the partnership and analysts to understand which issues are affecting families and how these interact with other issues and outcomes. Embedding quantitative reporting should commence from notification through to closure and should be checked by supervisors at closure

- **We have a system that allows us to pull together all data, analyse these data and ensure practitioners can see results** - *Data warehouses and data lakes provide the opportunity to bring all data together in one place, and automate matching across partnership data. This in turn will allow analysis of these data, which could be in this system or in a separate system. It is important that the results of this analysis and any matched data are visible to practitioners to inform their work with families*
- **We are using data to inform performance across the Early Help partnership, demand and resourcing (including commissioning), operational delivery and workforce development.** *A mature area uses data and analytics effectively with senior leadership, across the partnership and at a lower tier authority level (where appropriate). These data and analytics are used to inform what is commissioned, resourced and in future planning (in terms of volume of staff/skills/resources required by practitioners in all services across the partnership). Processes should be in place to ensure and continuously improve data quality to ensure these data and analyses are robust.*

3.2.8 In order to address some of these we have some capacity from an HBC IT developer to support the development of a data warehouse to assist with data matching. We are also during July completing the training of 24 HBC staff members that includes IT, Children's Performance team, Supporting Families and other selected individuals around the use and development of Power Bi as a reporting tool. A Task and finish group has been set up with its first meeting last month. This task and finish group chaired by IT will look to support the implementation and use of Power Bi across the council. The first reports to developed using Power Bi will be around the Councils Early Help Offer.

3.2.9 Halton will continue to take steps forward to ensure we integrate and transform local public services to embed whole family working using the Early Help System Guide. This will continue to build on working with complex families and service transformation so that the programme will clearly sit as part of a wider system, with key changes to identification of families, improving data, tracking and

monitoring of families, as well as the potential change for funding distribution and performance requirements.

- 3.2.10 This approach will support Halton's development and implementation of a new Early Help strategy. Work around the strategy will start in the coming months once the Early Help Strategic Partnership Board is re-established in the Autumn. This will enable Halton to fully embed preventative approaches into our support systems for families, creating more resilient communities for the long term.

3.3 **Performance Update**

- 3.3.1 Halton has achieved targets set by the DLUHC across all phases of the programme, achieving 100% year on year since the start of the programme, enabling the Local Authority to maximise on the income available. The annual report published in Spring 2021 highlighted of the 140 areas that recorded PBR only 19% (27 areas) achieved 100% PBR of which Halton was one.

- 3.3.2 The Halton Supporting Families team continue to be supported by our internal audit team with selected audit days to dip sample 10% of the families that we highlighted have achieved successful outcomes in order to claim PBR. We have completed our first audit for 22/23 and successfully claimed for 82 families (28% of our target) A further audit will take place in the autumn which we are projecting that we will achieve our 2022/ 23 target early in order for us to refine and enhance work on our chosen 3 descriptors from the early help guide.

- 3.3.3 The National Supporting Families team will continue to conduct assurance visits from April 2022 to make sure that all areas are adhering to and progressing against the programme sign up conditions.

- 3.3.4 To do this, local authorities will be asked for anonymised information on 10 randomly selected claims submitted in the most recent claims window and a self-assessment detailing their progress against their sign-up conditions. Following the case reviews and self-assessment the national Supporting Families team may request a visit to discuss the selected cases in more detail. At these visits the national team will review how local authorities use their case management and data systems to track, monitor and evidence outcomes.

3.4 **Case Study**

- 3.4.1 There is a Widnes family that consists of Mum, stepdad, 16yr old girl, 14yr old boy, 5yr old boy living in a Halton Housing property (HHT). The family had previously been open to social care a number of years ago due to family breakdown. The family were

highlighted through the different data criteria of the programme around ASB, education issues and the 16yr old missing from home incidents. The family information was passed for the locality team in order for a MAP to be completed to have that holistic approach to identify the needs of the whole family. The family engaged positively and welcomed the additional support to help address key issues. Outcomes that were achieved:

- CAB support around debt management
- 16yr old 1-2-1 work around missing and life skills. Reduction in missing incidents. Improved attendance
- 14yr old worked with YOS divert programme. Reduction in ASB. Improved attendance
- 5yr old in Nurturing programme at school with 1-2-1 support
- Stepdad was referred by HHT Customers into Employment
- 69% reduction in calls for service to the Police over a three-month period -estimated cost savings of £64K
- 87.5% reduction in Missing from home -estimated costs saving £7K
- 79% reduction in ASB incidents and arrests- estimated cost saving of £55k (using police national costs)

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The future model for the Supporting Families could have policy implications for the future implementation and delivery of services. These implications will need to be evidenced within individual action plans.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Supporting Families' initiative is intended to address the crucial factors for children in disadvantaged settings not meeting their potential.

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

The programme will be integrated with other employment/learning based initiatives.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

A range of health partners are committed to contributing to the programme including case analysis and service delivery.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Troubled Families make a significant impact on public resources; a more targeted approach offers economic advantage.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Depending on the future remit of the programme there will be need to be adapt processes including HBC internal case management systems to identify, monitor and evidence outcomes.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The aim of the programme is to try and work with disadvantaged families supporting them to overcome many of the barriers they face.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People & Families Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	14 th November 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – People
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Education and Social Care
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Report for Quarter 2 2022/23
WARDS:	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider and to raise any questions in respect of performance management for the second quarter period 1st July 2022 to 30th September 2022.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2022/23 were agreed by Members and included in the Business Plan, for the Children and Families Services Department and the Education, Inclusion and Provision Department. The report details progress made against objectives and milestones and performance targets and provides information relating to key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy and Performance Board

- 1) Receive the second quarter's performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Board**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures, both local and national, are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a Thematic Priority Based Report and the identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.

6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

Children and Young People Priority Based PPB Report

Reporting Period: Quarter 2 2022-23

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress that have occurred during the period of the report towards the priority of Children and Young People (CYP). The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 1 (section 8).
- 1.2 Please note initials have been provided to indicate which officer is responsible for the commentary to aid Members, as requested by the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board. A key is provided in Appendix 1 (section 8).

2.0 Key Developments

2.1 **Priority Education Investment Area**

Halton have been identified as a Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA), one of 24 Local Authorities identified (12 being existing Opportunity areas) and 12 being newly identified, including Halton. This will bring some funding to the area (amount yet to be announced and signed off by ministers) to support improving outcomes particularly at Key Stage Two and Key Stage Four, but spend will be agreed by the Regional Directorate (Vicky Beer) through an independent strategic board. This will now sit as a priority sub group reporting into Halton Learning Alliance too, to ensure all regions priorities are understood, agreed and owned by all educational stakeholders. JF

2.2 **Halton Learning Alliance**

Halton Learning Alliance will be launched in October 2022 and expected strong attendance from educational stakeholders including schools, governors, Early Years colleagues and Department of Education. The Alliance now have five priority sub groups including Inclusive Practice; Early Years and Acquisition of Early Language and Literacy Skills; Future Schooling Health, Well-being and professional development of the workforce; and Priority Education Investment area agreed outcome based priorities. The Alliance will see the shadow board move to a new Strategic Board as the educational sector are identifying their sector representatives to progress these key priorities with all partners contributing to work streams. JF

2.3 **Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Strategy**

The SEND Sufficiency Strategy has been shared with educational stakeholders and schools are currently in the process of submitting Expressions of Interest to develop inclusive provision including the establishment of some further resource bases to meet out increasing level of SEND children and young people needs. JF

2.4 **Free School bid**

The joint Halton and St Helen's DFE Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Free school bid is still in progress, but unfortunately has encountered some delays due to complexities between building contractors and DFE. However, in the interim alternative accommodation is being sought so that the Free School establishment will open as planned in September 2023, albeit initially in temporary accommodation before moving a few weeks later to the new build. JF

2.5 **Safeguarding Children in Education Officer**

The Safeguarding Children in Education Officer Role has now been recruited to, following the promotion of the previous post holder. The new officer will join Halton towards the end of autumn term 2022/23. JF

2.6 **Virtual School**

The Virtual School's substantive Headteacher has now started in post and the team has raised their presence across education and within children's social care. A new termly deadline for Personal Education Plans (PEP) completion has been implemented to allow greater opportunity for analysis, pupil progress reviews and identification of children causing concern. A PEP for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) will also be launched by the end of Q3 2022/23. There has been excellent progress towards the launch of a traineeship programme for care leavers within different departments within the local authority, which will launch as a pilot later this year. JF

2.7 **Family Hubs**

Excitingly Halton is one of 75 local authorities to be eligible for Family Hub funding to transform existing provision into family hubs model and framework. DM for early help is the strategic lead for coordinating this and working closely with all partners to deliver the new model. A steering group has been set up and will oversee the sign up and the delivery plan. Governance structure of accountability has been suggested and ready for management sign off. The vision is that an Early Help Partnership board will be established that will offer scrutiny, challenge and support to many streams of work within early help and prevention including family hubs, supporting families, right to succeed, early help assessments, reducing parental conflict and parenting. PM

2.8 **PAUSE**

Pause in Halton is now well established and 14 months into the pilot programme. The programme works with women who have previously had 2 or more children removed from their care. In September the annual event and celebration was held with huge success. The project has already made significant impact on the women and really made a difference to their lives. Evidence already shows positive outcomes including women moving into adult education and gaining employment. A sustainability and cost avoidance report has now been submitted for LA and Partner agency strategic leaders to review and commit funding to secure the project in Halton for a further 3 years. PM

3.0 **Emerging Issues**

3.1 **Permanent Exclusions from School**

During the early autumn term, Halton have seen an increase in the level of permanent exclusions from schools. The majority of these are from the secondary sector during years 8 & 9. Halton Local Authority are working the school sector to identify how as a system we can work in partnership to meet need collectively and ensure early intervention and de-escalation strategies, so that we see lower exclusion rates and increased inclusion across our school communities. JF

3.2 **Free School Bid**

The joint Halton and St Helen's DFE Free School bid is experiencing some complexities between building contractors and DFE. The aim is that alternative accommodation will be sought so that the opening of the Free School will not be further delayed by DFE and that school can open as planned in September 2023. JF

3.3 **Alternative Provision**

The main provider of the boroughs Alternative Provision has given notice that they can no longer provide a re-integration offer to secondary schools from autumn term 2022. We will be working with the sector to identify needs and demand so that appropriate services/support can be commissioned collectively with scale of economy to meet local need. JF

3.4 **Children in Care Accommodation**

The national shortage of secure accommodation, independent fostering placements and residential placements has continued to impact upon where our children and young people are placed when requiring a move (or new into the care system). However, Children's Social Care, Placements Team and the Virtual School have worked hard to minimise the disruption to the child or young person's care arrangements and education. There is active scrutiny of children and young people's care plans to ensure that where appropriate and subject to sufficiency, children and young people are placed in a placement suitable to their need, including within a fostering family. For those children and young people already in care, particularly those in children's homes, care plans are being scrutinised to ensure placements are suitable to their needs. PM

3.5 **Joint Targeted Area Inspection New Framework (JTAI)**

A new framework for the inspection of early help services has been launched under the JTAI framework. This is a new theme and will expect partners and the LA to demonstrate how services are provided and delivered to help and support families at the right time to prevent further escalation into statutory involvement. Previously JTAI meetings were in place and chaired by Operational Director for Education. This is now being overseen by an Improvement Partnership Group, led by the Strategic Director for Children's Services.

3.6 **Eclipse Case Management System**

External partners are still unable to access the Halton Eclipse system effectively. This has caused a delay in ongoing support and training offered to partners in respect of multi-agency plans. We cannot challenge our partners to be the lead professional on multi agency plans if they cannot easily access our systems. This has been ongoing now for many months and needs addressing urgently. PM

4.0 Performance Overview

The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate. It should be noted that given the significant and unrelenting downward financial pressures faced by the Council there is a requirement for Departments to make continuous in-year adjustments to the allocation of resources in order to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget. Whilst every effort continues to be made to minimise any negative impact of such arrangements upon service delivery they may inevitably result in a delay in the delivery of some of the objectives and targets contained within this report.

Objective: Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective multi-agency early intervention (PED01)

Ref	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
PED01 01	Increase the number of early help assessments (MAP/PRE MAP) health/education and other partners are leading on (financial year cumulative to end of quarter Val Armor)	484 all MAP	N/A	323 all MAP		N/A

Supporting Commentary: Val Armor

40 School MAPS held recorded on Eclipse at 3rd September 2022. Already for this quarter we have seen increased amount of MAP's opened and held in the borough. Again over 90% of these MAPs are led by the local authority Team around the Family Early Help. However although the LA lead on most MAP's there is evidence of multi-agency planning and working in the MAP document this also has management oversight. The significant delay in getting external partners set up and using eclipse effectively has contributed to the reason for few MAPs held by partner agencies. DM has highlighted this in IMPACT dashboard and management meetings.
DM to raise at safeguarding partnership meeting.

PED01 02	Improve overall attendance at schools: Primary –Pri PRU – PRU Secondary – Sec Special – Spec Total	LA - 91.18% Primary – 93.25% Secondary- 88.92% Special 85.49% PRU 59.09%	95%	Refer Comment	N/A	N/A
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Supporting Commentary: Debbie Houghton /Scott Middlehurst

Attendance overall for spring/autumn 21/22 is 92% similar to our statistical neighbours at 92.1% and the Liverpool city region (LCR) at 92% and slightly below the average for England of 92.6%. In primary Halton's attendance is 93.4% slightly below our statistical neighbours and the LCR at 93.7% and the England average of 93.8%. In secondary Halton has 90.5% attendance slightly above our statistical neighbours at 90.3% and the LCR at 90% but below the England average of 91.4%. Special schools attendance in Halton is 87.1% which is above the LCR at 86.6% and the England average of 86.8% but slightly below our statistical neighbours at 87.5%.

Although Halton's persistent absence rate for ALL schools was the highest across the areas in Autumn & Spring terms 2021-22, the year-on-year change from 2019-20 was broadly in-line with national rate changes and slightly lower than that of the LCR and SN areas

Attendance has declined following Covid due to an increase in emotional based school refusers reflected in an increase in illness from 1.95% in 21/21 to 5.26% in 21/22 and an increase in medical appointments from 0.13% in 20/21 to 0.24% in 21/22. The rate of illness (I) absence in Halton was the highest across all comparison areas in autumn and spring terms 2021-22 and was the largest rate increase since pre-pandemic data for autumn and spring terms 2018-19. Illness continues to be the primary reason for absence across all areas. Halton also saw an increase in holidays taken in term time from 0.05% in 20/21 to 0.18% in 21/22. Authorised holidays in term time has also increased from 0.01% in 20/21 to 0.06% in 21/22. Whilst not affecting attendance data unauthorised lates have also risen from 0.07% in 20/21 to 0.15% in 21/22 which can mean children missing out on some lessons and other unauthorised absence has increased from 0.89% in 20/21 to 1.7% in 21/22.

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED01a	Work with schools to maintain the level of attendance at Primary and Secondary Schools. Debbie Houghton (March 2023)	

Supporting commentary: Debbie Houghton.

The Education Welfare Service offers elements of a traded service but is currently reviewing the support offered to schools to ensure we can meet new increased statutory responsibilities from September 23. Service Managers are also currently in discussion with the Department for Education as part of the Priority Education Investment Area work-stream to promote the issue of school attendance, and work in partnership with the DfE, schools, and other agencies to support school attendance.

PED01b	Implement Pause project and support women to make positive choices, improving their relationships with their children and preventing further children being taken into care. (Val Armor March 2023)	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Val Armor</i> PAUSE in Halton is now over 12 months old and we have celebrated an annual event showcasing the superb work that is being carried out. The project is already having a significant positive impact on the lives of the women involved. The next step is to find funding from partners and the LA to continue with this offer. A sustainability and cost avoidance report has been submitted to management to consider as part of The Invest to Save model within the transformation team.</p>		
PED01c	Revise Halton's parental offer that will include further developmental of reducing parental conflict training (Val Armor March 2023)	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Val Armor</i> The Parenting officer has been in post since January and now all referrals for parenting go to one central point. This has made it much easier for partners to understand. There has been one parenting event so far in June and this will be on a rolling programme so partners in the borough are aware of all of the parenting offer. Talks are still in place with IT to develop our own parenting hub. The reducing parental conflict programme has been rolled out over the past 2 years and over 160 workers have been trained. The aim is to embed this work into the everyday work of frontline practitioners. A new partnership with Amnity (training provider) has been established and the parenting coordinator will become a train the trainer and roll this programme out in the next quarter. The success in this parenting role has resulted in the need to look for further funding to have an assistant parenting role to help with the delivery and coordination of the parenting hub. A further nurture programme will be delivered in January to train any outstanding staff not trained in the programme. Locality teams have also had further staff trained in the teen nurture parenting group and working with high schools in the borough to identify potential parents/carers for these workshops. There is a wide variety of parenting group offered through the children centres universal provision as well as a more targeted offer. The parenting offer particular perinatal mental health is a huge element of the family hub and best start to life offer and we will be working with health colleagues on this agenda over the next 18 months is key priority.</p>		

Objective: Keeping Children and Young People safe by improving practice (PED02)

Ref:	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
PED02 01	Monitor the rate of referrals to Children's Social Care per 10000 0-18-year-olds (Forecast annualised rate at end of financial year)	458	500 (Full year)	316		
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Liz Davenport</i> Referrals figures are projected to be in line or lower than previous years outturn based on current data. Whilst the overall rate of re referrals has increased within the last 12 months, it remains in line with comparators which is a good indicator.</p>						
PED02 02	Monitor the rate of children in need (open cases) per 10000 0-18-year-olds (snapshot at end of quarter)	360	380	389		
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Liz Davenport</i> As can be noted from the previous data, this figure has been largely consistent. However, Service Manager has facilitated reviews of those CIN cases that have been open for 9 months and longer. This has resulted in schedules of work being established in order to close or step-down long-term cases. These cases will continue to be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Service Manager in order to prevent any further drift.</p>						
PED02 03	Monitor the rate of children subject to a child protection plan per 10000 0-18-year-olds (snapshot at end of quarter)	59	45	56		
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Susanne Leece</i> In respect of our plans per 100,000, Halton is above NW comparators but below Statistical neighbours. At the end of Q2, there was a 10% reduction in individual child protection plans compared to the beginning of Q1. It is too early to identify if this is the beginning of a sustained downward trend. Initial Child Protection Conferences in October 2022 have some large families moving through and this will likely increase our numbers.</p>						
PED02 04	Monitor the rate of children in care per 10000 0-18-year-olds (snapshot at end of quarter)	107	90	131		
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Sarah Riley</i></p>						

Ref:	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
<p>The scrutiny of a child entering care identifies the correct threshold is being applied to keep children safe, legal advice meetings gate-keep and the Operational Director provides agreement before children enter care. There are several pieces of work being completed providing oversight of children in care numbers with a focus on entering care at the right time, being suitably placed, and where possible achieving permanence outside of the care system</p>						
PED02 05	Reduce the number of children and young people who enter the care system (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter)	132	68	76		
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Liz Davenport</i> The Children in Care rise is linked with the increase number of unaccompanied asylum (UASC) seeking children currently at 30 (8% of Halton CIC). The reception into care is managed under Legal Advice Meetings, which gate keeps and ensures scrutiny of threshold and often directs children through to pre proceedings before any reception into care is considered. There are a number of cases that warrant children being in care due to significant concerns.</p>						
PED02 06	Reduce the average caseload in Children in Need Teams (snapshot end of quarter)	23	18	18		
<p><i>Supporting commentary Liz Davenport</i> There remains a turnover of staff (Agency) in the CIN teams which can increase caseloads and indeed the complexity and breadth of the work in the teams. There is a targeted schedule of work reviewing all CIN cases open for longer than nine months, which ensures cases are closed or stepped down appropriately. Social work caseloads across the Service are continually reviewed.</p>						
PED02 07	Increase the proportion of missing incidents where a return interview is completed (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter)	71%	85%	46%		
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Clare Hunt</i> For this period, there have been 78 return interviews completed with 56 young people by the commissioned service. 46% of young people completed a return interview and 63% were completed within 72 hours, this is a decline from the previous quarter. The Declines for return interviews were 108 incidents by 49 young people over half were declined a point of contact.</p>						
PED02 08	Reduce the number of children who repeatedly run away in Halton (in last 12 months, snapshot end of quarter)	38	N/A	8		N/A
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Clare Hunt</i> For this reporting period, there has been a total of 220 notifications. There have been eight young people with repeat missing incidents. These eight young people have made five or more incidents during the quarter, accounted for 30% of all missing incidents in the quarter. 8% of all young people for the quarter are within the repeat cohort. There is one young person (Care) who has generated 44% of the total number of incidents this quarter. Excluding the young person in Care mentioned with exemptions recorded for each missing from home (MFH) incident over the quarter, With you directly engaged 5/7 of the young people in the repeat cohort this quarter (71%) The other two young people had multiple and varied attempts to engage both in-person, virtually and via telephone, and liaising with other professionals in an effort to engage every young person in a return home interview (RHI).</p>						
PED02 09	Reduce the number of children who go missing in the year (number of children recorded as missing in last 12 months, snapshot end of quarter)	243	N/A	85		N/A
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Clare Hunt</i> There has been an increase 11% of missing incidents from 247 to 220, as well as a decrease of 16% young people 99 to 85. It continues to be the case that the majority (61%) of CYP reported missing are residing at home, following the trend seen in the previous quarters. The significant reasons that CYP reported as their main reasons/trigger for going missing this quarter were boundary issues (Home & Care), direct family conflict, substance misuse and issues at school. Looking at the professional reasons identified within the RHI alongside this, these reasons were largely agreed with, however peer pressure was identified by the professional completing the RHI as a key trigger for CYP going MFH. There were several CYP this quarter who were all missing at the same time from within the same care provision and it has been identified through the RHIs that in most of these instances there had been one CYP acting as the key instigator of these incidents. This was also causing some challenges in completing RHIs, with each CYP encouraging others in the provision to not to engage.</p>						
PED02 10	Record the number of young people flagged as at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (snapshot end of quarter)	15	20	23	Refer comment	N/A
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Liz Davenport</i></p>						

Ref:	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
<p><i>CSOG is held monthly to monitor all children flagged as high risk, resulting in a multi-agency response. The Child Exploitation Strategic Group oversees all developments and practice improvement recommendations for the operational group and acts as a governance body to promote best practice and improved outcomes. A review has been commissioned led by Children's Services and supported by the Safeguarding partnership examining the effectiveness of the operational and strategic arrangements in responding to child exploitation. This review is likely to report its findings in December 2022.</i></p>						
PED02 11	Record the number of young people flagged as at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (snapshot end of quarter)	36	12	32	Refer comment	N/A
<p><i>Supporting commentary Liz Davenport</i> See above</p>						

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED02a	Embed a systemic model of social work practice across the whole service, social workers, managers and senior leaders. Peter Murphy (March 2023)	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Peter Murphy</i> Children's Services were successful in its application to the Department for Education to provide grant funding supporting the implementation of the systemic practice model. This work is now being progressed with the support of Warrington Children's Services as a Sector Led Improvement Partner.</p>		
PED02b	Review and update Workforce Strategy in line with the Knowledge and Skills framework and the Professional Capabilities Framework. Developing the competencies, skills and knowledge of the workforce making them motivated, stable and ambitious will improve the outcomes for families and keep them at the heart of everything we do. Peter Murphy (March 2023)	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Peter Murphy</i> A social work workforce strategy has been completed and the action plan is being developed in line with this. It is focused on several priorities: recruitment, retention, professional development, including management and leadership.</p>		
PED02c	Implement redevise structure for children and need service to ensure better resilience and management accountability to provide a safe and structured environment for social workers. (Peter Murphy)	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Peter Murphy</i> Changes to the Children in Need structure have been completed. Further significant changes to the structure won't be considered until early 2023, in order for the Service to focus on the key priorities linked to the requirements set out in the Improvement Notice issued by the DfE.</p>		
PED02d	Implement redevise quality and assurance framework to monitor improvements in practice (Peter Murphy)	Refer comment
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Peter Murphy</i> Revised performance and quality assurance arrangements are now in place. Whilst these arrangements are continuing to develop and need to become embedded, it is providing greater oversight re quality of practice issues.</p>		

Objective: Improve outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers (PED03)

Ref:	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
PED03 01	Reduce the number of children who are placed in residential care (snapshot at end of quarter)	35	20	43		
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Sarah Riley / Sam Murtagh</i> A review of the Local Authorities Sufficiency Strategy began in Q1 2022/23, this will include other more localised residential options operating as a Community Interest Company linked to the Liverpool City Regional Market Reform Programme. Within Halton two sites for children's homes are being explored along with some joint work with the Community Land Trust. The draft Strategy is due to be completed by November 2022.</p>						

There is a significant focus currently in respect of reviewing those children and young people who are placed in a residential placement to ensure that only those children and young people who require this type of placement remain in such placements. There are two focus areas, those children in residential care with a plan to return to a fostering family placement and secondly, those young people aged 16 and over who require pathway and transition planning through to full independence. A number of children and young people are in the targeted cohort where placements and regional events are sought to support children moving back to a fostering family. Furthermore, the Care Leavers Accommodation Group continues to meet on a monthly basis to discuss all referrals for those young people aged 17 plus who require their own accommodation in line with their Pathway Plan. SR

PED03 02	Reduce the number of children who are placed in independent fostering agencies (snapshot at end of quarter)	35	35	56 (prov)	Refer comment	Refer comment
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***Supporting Commentary:** Sarah Riley / Sam Murtagh*

All placements are tracked through the resource and placements meeting where sourcing Halton's mainstream foster carers is a primary focus. The current level of sufficiency due to increase of looked after children is resulting in the use of Independent Fostering Agencies, and in some circumstances residential, however as foster carers approvals are also tracked there are means to place with in house carers planned. SR

PED03 03	Maintain the percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of quarter)	99%	95%	98%		
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***Supporting Commentary:** Sarah Riley / Sam Murtagh*

The Care Leavers Accommodation Group is embedded within the Service with registered landlords being part of the meeting which meets on a monthly basis. The meeting reviews and tracks all young people aged 16 and older who require accommodation in preparation for leaving care. Referrals to this group continue to be coordinated and tracked via the Placements Team. Halton have an embedded Supported Lodgings scheme within the service. Halton have placed three young people currently placed with hosts. Lavender House, our commissioned service continues to be operational. This is a four bedroomed group living property in Runcorn and we currently have three young people placed in this provision. We also have two trainer flats which are commissioned from Social Landlords, one in Widnes and one in Runcorn both of which are operational. SR

PED03 04	Increase the percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (snapshot at end of quarter)	51%	65%	54%		
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***Supporting Commentary:** Sarah Riley*

Strong and effective links with the Virtual School continue as supporting care leavers into education, employment and training is a priority area. Pupils Causing Concerns meetings are held on a monthly basis where the Virtual School and Managers from CIC and Care Leavers Team attend and discuss all children and young people up to the age of 25 to share information in respect of education and any placement or accommodation difficulties. This meeting also extends to include reviewing the education, employment and training status for all care leavers over 18 to ensure that those who are not in education, employment or training are provided with targeted support to enable them into education, training or employment. Monthly meetings are also being held with the Head Teacher of the Virtual School, Divisional Managers for CIC and Care Leavers and Child in Need and Child Protection and the Operational Director to review all care leavers who are not in education, employment and training and consider what support can be provided to support them into a positive destination. The Head Teacher of the Virtual School is also progressing 6 traineeships across the council for care leavers. SR

PED03 05	Benchmarking year – Percentage of CIC Residential and Leaving Care placements that have received a Quality Assurance Visit from the Placements Team within the previous 12 months (cumulative from April to end of quarter)	N/A	N/A	Available Q3	N/A	N/A
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***Supporting Commentary:** Sam Murtagh*

PED03 06	Report on the budget spent on independent and out of borough placements for Children in Care (Forecast end of year) (Sarah Riley/Sam Murtagh)	Projected spend forecast for 2022/23 Residential £13,805,604.33 IFA £2,713,219.28 UASC Residential £1,550,840.21 IFA £189,878.55	Projected 9,583,822	Available Q3	N/A	N/A
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***Supporting Commentary:** Sarah Riley / Sam Murtagh*

In order to address these rising costs, the following initiatives have been embedded help to reduce spend in this area:

Residential Step Down, Supported Lodgings, Care Leavers Training Flat, In House Care Leaver/Edge of Care accommodation.
SR

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED03a	Ensuring all children in care achieve permanency in a timely way. (Sarah Riley March 2023)	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Sarah Riley The progress of long-term matching to achieve permanency is tracked on a monthly basis. For those children and young people, where a plan of Special Guardianship Order to their foster carers is also tracked on a monthly basis. When adoption is the child's plan, monthly tracker meetings are held to identify children within care proceedings to enable earlier tracking and to review and prevent any delay in family finding for those children who are subject to a Placement Order.</p>		
PED03b	Ensure that Safeguarding Unit escalate any delays or concerns using escalate policy (Susanne Leece March 2023)	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Susanne Leece The Dispute Resolution Process is used by the IRO's in the Safeguarding Unit to challenge drift or delay in planning for individual children. Resolution is often achieved at the initial, informal stage through the IRO having a discussion with the Social Worker and their Practice Lead. This discussion is recorded on the child's file but is not reportable from the system. We are working with the Eclipse Team to remedy this so that the IRO's footprint and evidence of effective challenge can be extracted and reported on. We are already able to do this with our formal escalations.</p>		
PED03c	Review and quality assure the commissioning of services for Children in Care and Care Leavers to ensure that they meet the needs of Halton's population and inform future commissioning decisions (March 2023 Sam Murtagh)	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Sam Murtagh Work remains ongoing within the Liverpool City Region framework for Fostering the Residential placements. The Team continues to work with colleagues across the Council to identify further properties for residential purposes within Halton, to assist in driving costs down.</p>		
PED03d	Through the quality assurance of Personal Education Plans (PEP), identify areas of need and support to improve outcomes for individual Children in Care (March 2022 Peter McParland and Jo Lloyd)	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Ben Holmes At the end of the summer term 2022, 91% of PEPs were completed within timescale, down from 93% in Spring 2022. This was as a result of capacity within the virtual school team and an increase in CYP coming into care, including over the summer whilst schools were closed.</p> <p>Early Years 89%; Primary 99%; Secondary 91%; Post 16 78%. Capacity continues to be impacted by a vacancy and staff absence, but a tighter deadline has now been implemented to allow greater opportunity to challenge and hold professionals to account in relation to PEP completion from September 2022. For school age children, 95% of PEPs were completed.</p> <p>Of the PEPs completed, the percentage rated as outstanding increased to 12%, with 78% rated good or better. Greater dissemination of performance data with divisional and operational managers within EIP, CSC and directly with Headteacher's will raise the profile of PEP standards. Due to staff absence, the most notable dip in standards is within early years, which is therefore a focus for the autumn term.</p> <p>Our PEP Leads are continuing to develop our toolkit which will support the creative use of Pupil Premium Plus alongside a new PEP policy. A new multi-agency moderation panel will also be established in Q3 and performance data on initial PEPs will also be included in future reports.</p>		

Objective: Improve the offer for children and young people with disabilities and those with Special Educational Needs (PED04)

Ref:	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
PED04 01	Increase the percentage of Education Health Care Plan assessments completed within 20 weeks (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	78.9%	75%	55.9%		
<u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Adrian Leach						

PED04 02	Reduce the number of incidents of fixed term Suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	535	500	196 Q2 Autumn term 122	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Behaviour Team / Scott Middlehurst</i> <i>The Q2 data cuts across two academic years (2021/22 and 2022/23) and a more informed view of the 2022/23 data will emerge as the academic year progresses and will be reported in Q3 (2022/23).</i>						
PED04 03	Reduce the number of children subject to fixed term suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	308	350	135 Q2 Autumn term 91	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Behaviour Team / Scott Middlehurst</i>						
PED04 04	Reduce the number of children subject to a permanent suspension (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	15	30	6 Q2 Autumn term 4	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Behaviour Team / Scott Middlehurst</i>						
PED04 05	Report on the proportion of children subject to Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) placed in independent and out of borough provisions (snapshot end of quarter) – long term target is to reduce	7.4%	3.6%	8.1%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Adrian Leach</i> <i>As highlighted in the report for PED04 06 continued place pressure in the borough coupled with high demand for places has made reducing the reliance of OOB specialist provision challenging. The announcement of capital grant funding for SEND places and the opening of the SEMH special school in Sept2023 will allow the improvements in place sufficiency locally to reduce these numbers over the next 3-5 years.</i>						
PED04 06	Report on the budget spent on independent and out of borough (OOB) provision for SEND (Forecast end of year)	Overspend £1,108,429	£250000 reduction	Available Q3	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Sam Murtagh</i> Available Q3						
PED04 07	Increase the percentage of children subject to EHCP placed in mainstream provision (snapshot end of quarter)	44.6%	65%	49% prov	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Adrian Leach (Paul Greenwood)</i>						
PED04 08	Monitor the percentage of Special Schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding	xx	100%	100%		N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell This data is up to 30th Sept 2022 and includes the data for three of the four special schools, with one of them currently not yet inspected following academisation. Several schools in Halton are overdue inspection or due their first formal inspection since academisation.</i>						
PED04 09	Increase the percentage of Education Health and Care plans for Child Protection and Children in Care completed in 16 weeks (academic year cumulative to end of quarter) (Adrian Leach)	N/A	75%	To follow	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Adrian Leach Paul Greenwood</i>						

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED04a	Develop and Implement the Social Emotional and Mental Health Strategy (SEMH) by March 2023. Impact to be monitored through the action plan. (Adrian Leach)	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Adrian Leach</i> <i>SEMH is one of four areas of need recognised by the 2015 SEND Code of Practice. Halton has experienced a significant rise in SEMH needs over the last few years in line with many other local authority areas. Because of the central importance in identifying early pupils SEMH needs and helping schools to meet them effectively the objectives and outcomes for pupils with SEMH needs are fully embedded into the local areas SEND Strategy 2021-25. In particular the Inclusive Education Priority focused on understanding the causes of SEMH needs and the associated behaviour and identifying them and managing them more effectively. (Q1 commentary)</i>		

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED04b	Review the current framework of support for children and young people with disabilities, including short breaks provision (Sam Murtagh March 2023)	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary: Sam Murtagh</u> All Short Breaks Provision contracts have been recommissioned in quarter 3 informed by feedback from SEND Parent / Carer forum and children. Applications were invited for Sports, Arts and Crafts, Trips and Visits and Swimming Lessons, a Play Service, a Youth Support Service and a new service to support families to recruit their own PAs as this an area of need. Sixteen bids were received, 22 Parents and Carers and 28 children were involved in evaluating the small grant applications (this is the highest number of participants we have seen to date) and awards have been made for 6 small grants:- in pool/wet play sessions; a monthly outdoor activity program; monthly digital and creative media workshops; art lessons; trips and visits during school holidays and swimming lessons together with a reshaped play service that offers weekend play groups for 50 weekends of the year and a 2 week summer play scheme, a reshaped weekly youth support service (previously fortnightly) and a PA Service. Feedback from families has been extremely positive in terms of the new services commissioned.(Q1 commentary)</p>		
PED04c	Review direct payments with all recommissions co-produced with parents and young people. (March 2023 Val Armor)	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary: Val Armor</u> This has been reviewed in terms of commissioning to get the best offer and value for parents and carers. The current commission is now in place until march 23 2023.</p>		
PED04d	Improve quality and timeliness of Education Health and Care Plans. (March 2023 Adrian Leach)	Refer comment
<p><u>Supporting Commentary: Adrian Leach</u> The first four months of 2022 have seen the highest number of referrals for needs assessment ever seen for EHCPs. Halton received over 340 requests to assess in 2022/23, a 40% increase in demand. Caseloads per Assessment co-ordinator currently stand at 170, a 60% increase in workload since 2018. Due to the ongoing demands and the current constraints in the LA's budget position it is forecast that completion rates will begin to fall back to 50% by the end of the calendar year. The decline in timeliness is compounded by the fact that that SENAT are currently operating below capacity with a number of vacancies in the team that are looking to be filled over the Autumn period. Work is underway to look at how additional capacity can be allocated to the team within the current stringent budget restraints.</p> <p>The ongoing presence of the DCO for Halton is improving the quality of health advice in plans and better partnership working with the local authority. There remains a gap in QA and oversight of care and social care advice, however it is hoped that this will be addressed as capacity grows in the system to support more integrated working. A new manager for the SEN assessment team has started with accelerating and imbedding the quality improvements as a key priority (Q1 commentary)</p>		
PED04e	Quality assure all provision currently being utilised to ensure that provision meets the needs of our children and young people (March 2023 Sam Murtagh)	Refer comment
<p><u>Supporting Commentary: Sam Murtagh</u> Monitoring visits have continued in collaboration with the SEN Team and Designated Clinical Officer resulting in 11 of 31 schools receiving a monitoring visit, which encompasses 58.5% of children placed in NMIS settings. We continue to work closely with the Safeguarding Children In Education (SCIE) Officer. (Q1 commentary)</p>		
PED04f	Review in borough specialist provision and revise to meet the needs of Halton's children and young people (March 2023 Adrian Leach)	Refer comment
<p><u>Supporting Commentary: Adrian Leach</u> Work continues in the development of SEND provision in Halton. The delayed SEMH free school is still scheduled to open in September 2023 and this will cut by 50% the borough's out of borough requirement for SEMH places for children and young people 11-16.Despite an absence of capital funding available in the reporting period additional places have been funded at all 4 special schools who continue to work with the local authority in meeting local demand. Additionally, resource base provision in mainstream schools continues to be developed with an additional class for KS2 pupils with ASD funded at The Grange and provision expanded for 2022/23 at Simms Cross.</p> <p>Growth in demand however continues to place pressure on places. A SEND Sufficiency Strategy will be published over the summer identifying our projected provision gaps and calling for expressions of interest from local schools. The development of provision will be supported by the SEND Capital Grant (£3.3 million for 2022-25). (Q1 commentary)</p>		
<p>Objective: Raise achievement across Early Years and all Key Stages, and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers (PED05)</p>		

Ref:	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
PED05 01	Ensure all eligible children for the vulnerable 2-year-old funding access quality EY provision (internally collected termly information – may not match to published data from Jan census)	91	100% of eligible	Refer comment	N/A	N/A
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell / Belinda Yen</i> The DfE provided a target of 559 children to be placed. Halton have placed 495 (not including 7 Out of Borough (OOB) settings) which equates to 91%. This number is slightly higher than usual; process of placement continues as normal; however, some places were declined until parents felt more comfortable for their children to return/commence due to the effects of the pandemic. 100% of day care and pre-school settings are good or outstanding; funded two-year-olds are only placed in good/outstanding Childminders provision 44.</p>						
PED05 02	Increase the take up of Early Years Entitlement for 3- to 4-year-olds.	89%	96%	89%		
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell / Gail Vaughan-Hodkinson</i> The current 89% figure is based on national data produced from the January annual census as recorded in 'Education provision: children under 5 years of age, Source: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-provision-children-under-5/2022, Published 30th June 2022' This remains the same as the previous quarter as the data set is not due to be updated until June 2023.</p>						
PED05 03	Monitor the percentage of Early Years settings (pre-schools, day care, out of school clubs, childminders) with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding (snapshot end of quarter)	94%	N/A	93%	N/A	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell / Gail Vaughan-Hodkinson</i> 93% of all our Early Years settings, who have been inspected by Ofsted, are graded 'Good' or 'Outstanding'; 4% are graded 'Requires Improvement'; and 3% are graded 'Inadequate'. There are currently 5 settings who have not yet been inspected and 9 who are 'meeting the requirements' (this is the judgement awarded to Child minders who have an inspection when there are no children present).</p>						
ED05 04	Monitor the percentage of Primary schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding	81.6% (As of 30th April 2022)	N/A	86.7%	N/A	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> This data is up to 30th Sept 2022 and only includes the data for 45 of the 49 primary schools, with four who have not yet been inspected following academisation. Ofsted paused school inspections during Covid and then gradually reintroduced inspections focusing upon remote learning offer during the pandemic. Full inspection frameworks returned from 1st September 2022, although Ofsted have many school inspections to carry out nationally and are limited in capacity to carry out, therefore many schools are awaiting an inspection.</p>						
PED05 05	Monitor the percentage of Secondary schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding (snapshot end of quarter) N.B. 7 out of the 8 schools are academies. (snapshot end of quarter)	50% (as of 30 th April 2022)	N/A	80%		
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> This data is up to 30th September 2022 and only includes data for five of the eight secondary schools, with three schools not yet formally inspected since academisation. It does include the outcome for The Grange School, an all-through academy, as they are formally identified as a secondary school for these purposes. Ofsted paused school inspections during Covid and then gradually reintroduced inspections focusing upon remote learning offer during the pandemic. Full inspection frameworks returned from 1st September 2022, although Ofsted have many school inspections to carry out nationally and are limited in capacity to carry out, therefore many schools are awaiting an inspection.</p>						

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED05a	Monitor and evaluate educational outcomes of all pupils, vulnerable pupils (CIC: EHCP etc.), disadvantaged pupils and the impact of funding streams (including Free EY Entitlement, Catch Up funding, Pupil Premium, Sports Premium etc.) to raise achievement for all and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers (March 2023 Jill Farrell)	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> Case studies and qualitative information is shared at the disadvantaged working group network and with Associate School Improvement Advisors.</p>		

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED05b	Monitor and evaluate the impact of COVID-19 lockdown and remote learning offer on all pupils and vulnerable pupils learning (March 2023, Jill Farrell)	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> As qualitative information with Associate School Improvement Advisors (ASIA's) and effective practice shared across the sector. Whilst schools still provide a remote offer if young people have Covid but are well enough to work, most schools are operating on a more typical offer onsite now Covid measures and lockdown have been eased.		
PED05c	Review the process of risk assessment for schools and settings to target support and drive improvement (March 2023 Jill Farrell)	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> Schools are risk assessed on a range of information shared across services including safeguarding; inclusion; educational performance/outcomes; governance; leadership and management stability; leadership experience and other strengths/vulnerabilities. Schools have received categorisation letters sharing their category with school leaders and governors. Wider vulnerabilities are risk assessed through a Cross Service Monitoring Group.		
PED05d	Build engagement, capacity and governors understanding of the strategic roles and responsibilities (March 2023 Jill Farrell)	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> Ongoing training, CPD, online learning is available through SLA with Entrust Governor services and school improvement team bespoke work and wider governor briefings and conferences. There has been a turnover of governors during the pandemic so also requires recruitment into governor roles. Halton governor Conference is being held in November and provides a further training offer whilst termly briefings are seeing an increase in attendance rates now face to face meetings have now returned.		
PED05e	In partnership with schools, review and design an effective educational vision for the region that meets pupils needs whilst raising ambitions (March 2023 Jill Farrell)	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> Educational vision for the region has been coproduced through Halton Learning Alliance. Whilst this was launched and shared virtually during the pandemic, progress and further were shared with stakeholders in October during the Halton learning Alliance re-launch. Once the newly formed HLA Strategic group meet in November, implementing this shared vision will be a collective responsibility.		
PED05f	Launch Halton Learning Alliance Strategic Partnership to develop an inclusive, ambitious approach developing contributing, successful citizens locally, nationally and globally. All educational stakeholders and community members acting with morale purpose for Halton children, young people and community members (March 2023, Jill Farrell)	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell</i> Halton Learning Alliance was relaunched in early October and will be led by a newly elected Strategic group in November. A fifth priority sub group has been established and will be Chaired independently by DFE. A refined strategic board will drive forward the priorities aligned to the Priority Education Investment area as well as local place based system agreed priorities within the other four priority sub groups.		

Objective: Improve participation and skills for young people to drive Halton's future (PED06)

Ref:	Measure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel	Quarterly Progress
PED06 01	Maintain the percentage of 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training (snapshot end of quarter, end of year information February)	3.7%	4.0%	5.3%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> August 2021 performance was 4.4%, Quarter 2 2022 is a significant increase from last year's position, which was also the case in Quarter 1 2022. The same issues remain, a significant greater number of young people are not available to the labour market due to illness, including mental health issues, in 2022 compared to this period in 2021. In addition, there are a greater number of young people who are not in education, employment or training this year. All are allocated to a worker to support them, although not all do want support from the team.						
PED06 02	Maintain the percentage of 16-17 year olds whose activity is not known (snapshot end of quarter, end of year information February)	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> August 2021 performance was 0.6%. There are more young people (and/or their families) who have refused to disclose the young person's activity or where they are currently living in 2022 than in previous years meaning more young people are						

recorded as cannot be contacted or refused to disclose. This means their current situation is not known and we have no other means of gaining the information.

PED06 03	Increase the percentage of 16-17 year olds with an offer of learning (September guarantee)	96.6%	98%	95.7%		
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Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell

Whilst the percentage of offers made to young people is better than this time last year we are further on in our tracking of young people than this time last year, which explains the performance. As we are further on in our tracking we are aware that we are unlikely to meet the target, or even match last year's overall performance. This is once again a result of the increased number of young people who are not available to the labour market due to illness and who have not sought options for learning due to their illness.

PED06 04	Increase the percentage of 16-17 year olds participating in education or training that meets the Government definition of full participation (known as Raising the Participation Age)	90.9%	92%	87%		
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Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell

Young people who progress to employment without training are defined as not meeting the duty to participate in education or training and therefore not counted in the Raising the Participation Age figures. We saw an increase of academic age 17 year olds progressing into employment without training in September 2021 and this has been sustained through the academic year, affecting this performance measure. The increase in young people who are not in education, employment or training also negatively affects this performance measure.

Whilst a new cohort of young people joining Year 12 started in September 2022 the data for this cohort will not be verified until the beginning of November 2022 for analysis, therefore it is too soon to measure the impact on the annual target.

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED06a	Closely monitor the cohort of young people not in education, employment or training and identify common patterns/issues to inform actions, guide the effective use of resources and to identify any future commissioning needs (Háf Bell) (March 2023)	
Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell		
Ongoing analysis takes place to respond to need and ensure the resources are being targeted appropriately. In the second half of the autumn term 2022 analysis will take place to review those who have not progressed or been unable to sustain their education, employment or training and identify how resources should be used to meet need.		
PED06c	Work with schools, the College and training providers to review the post 16 offers of learning made to young people and increase the amount of offers made before the end of an academic year. (July 2023) (Háf Bell)	
Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell		
This work has begun with institutions. The first stage is to review the cohort from 2021/22, the progressions young people made and whether the identification of those at risk of not progressing was accurate.		
PED06d	Work with schools, the College and training providers to report where young people progress to Post 16 as quickly as possible so those who haven't progressed can be identified and contacted to offer support (Háf Bell)	
Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell		
This work is currently taking place with institutions. Those in borough are communicating regularly with us. As yet we have not completed the process of verifying the accuracy of information received, which was an issue last academic year. We've been able to access information from out of borough institutions quicker this year than previous years, helping us identify young people who need support sooner.		
PED06d	Work with Post 16 education and training providers in the borough to support the development of provision that does have clear progression opportunities (March 2023) (Háf Bell)	
Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell		
Post 16 providers in the borough is very limited. After a positive collaborative session with all providers in June 2022 to identify progression routes and gaps in provision two providers have withdrawn their provision offer in Halton. Whilst one gap has been filled by a current provider expanding their own offer, there are still limited choices of provision post 16 for young people in Halton. This is as a result of the small size of the borough. Progression routes are available close to the borders of Halton and more work is taking place to expand offers, such as traineeships, where most of the week is based with employers in the borough, with only limited travel needed for study or offered as online study.		

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
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5.0 Financial Summary


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6.0 Appendix I

6.1 Symbols are used in the following manner:

Progress		Milestone	Measure
Green		Indicates that the milestone is on course to be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual target is on course to be achieved.
Amber		Indicates that it is uncertain, or too early to say at this stage whether the milestone will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that it is uncertain or too early to say at this stage whether the annual target is on course to be achieved.
Red		Indicates that it is unlikely or certain that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the target will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.

6.2 Direction of Travel indicator

Where possible measures will also identify a direction of travel using the following convention:

Green		Indicates that performance is better compared to the same period last year.
Amber		Indicates that performance is the same as compared to the same period last year.
Red		Indicates that performance is worse compared to the same period last year.

6.3 Key for responsible officers:

- JF** Jill Farrell, Operational Director, Education, Inclusion and Provision Service
- PM** Peter Murphy, Operational Director, Children and Families Service