

## 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, 11 September 2023 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Baker, Goodall, Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, McDermott, Rowe, Ryan and Skinner

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: J. Farrell, A. Jones and J. Wilson

Also in attendance: C. Harris and V. Shepherd – Halton Carers Centre

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

		<i>Action</i>
CYP8	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2023 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CYP9	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
CYP10	CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES PPB ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23	
	The Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2022-23.	
	RESOLVED: That the 2022-23 Annual Report be received and noted.	
CYP11	YOUNG CARERS UPDATE	
	The Board received an update on the work and achievements of Halton Carers Centre, which was at the request of the Chair.	

Members welcomed Carl Harris, CEO of Halton Carers Centre and his colleague Vikki Shepherd, Young Carers Support Worker. They reported that the Carers Centre was the primary organisation working with young carers in Halton. Their aim was to enhance wellbeing, build skills and increase knowledge for both young and adult carers in Halton.

According to the 2021 census, 2.7% of children and young people in Halton were identified as having a caring role; this was the highest proportion of unpaid carers amongst younger age groups in the Country. Currently there were 954 young carers aged between 5-17 registered with Halton Carers Centre.

The guests outlined how the Halton Young Carers Team supported registered young carers; gave examples of the tasks they may have to do at home; and explained the effects that these responsibilities can have on a young person. Appended to the report was the *Halton Borough Council 2022/23 Carers Report – Quarter 4*, which gave detailed information on Halton Carers Centre statistics for that period, which included activities and support information for the quarter and for the full year 2022/23.

Following the presentation Members raised questions and the following additional information was provided in response to these:

- The Centre did have and maintained links with other organisations for purposes such as raising awareness and arranging respite activities and days out for young carers;
- Concern for young carers was expressed;
- It was very difficult to identify a child who was a carer, which could take up to 4 years;
- With regards to increasing GP links, one member informed of the *Patient Participation Group*, which was a good way of being able to communicate with GP's;
- The Centre had a team of 3 support workers plus the CEO and would like additional funding to be able to recruit another support worker, to be able to increase outreach in schools for example;
- Only 27 schools were being engaged with by the Carers Centre at the moment;
- One Member, who was a SEND teacher, offered her services in the music and art area and invited the Centre to make contact if they wished to arrange an activity relating to the arts;

- The educational attainment of young carers was discussed and noted that this would need to be tracked for a young carer as it was with any other pupil and vulnerable group;
- Regarding absence and lateness from school, it was important that schools were aware of the reasons as to why a young carer may be late or absent from school and how they could try to mitigate this;
- Home visits were made to 'primary carers' of which there were 52 in Halton;
- Approximately 40% of young carers cared for parents with alcohol and drug misuse problems;
- Concerns were raised regarding the fact that Halton was identified as having the highest proportion of unpaid carers amongst younger age groups in the Country;
- School absence was a concern and schools needed help to be able to identify young carers, so they could seek support to enable them to support the young person; and
- Officers would share the Carers Centre details with the relevant teams within the Council, so that connections could be made.

Funding was explained – 58% came from Halton Borough Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and 42% came from outside funding. The Centre aspired to increase respite activities and days out for young carers but funding was limited for this purpose. Activities such as training, gardening, bee keeping, mental health awareness, first aid training, healthy eating and cooking had previously taken place for young carers and staff would like this to continue, as it reduced feelings of isolation many young carers experienced in their lives, as they are able to mix with people in the same situation.

A copy of the most recent Newsletter was passed to Members for information, this included details of days out arranged for young carers, such as Gulliver's World, Blue Planet, kayaking and therapy and podiatry treatments.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked Mr Harris and Ms Shepherd for attending the meeting today and sharing a valuable insight into the work of the Halton Carers Centre.

RESOLVED: That the information and comments made be received.

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## CYP12 OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Board considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Children's Services, which provided an update on Children's Early Help and Social Care in relation to unresolved issues in performance, quality, and practice.

It was reported that since the Ofsted Inspection known as ILACS (March 2020) there had been a continuous circle of priorities and plans, audits and reviews; two Ofsted Focus Visits including one which led to the issue of a DfE Improvement Notice (Jan 2022); and the creation of a Children's Improvement Board.

It was noted that staff changes at senior levels was stabilising and the appointment of a new Director of Children's Services, who starts in October 23, provided the context for the creation of a twelve week priority plan. The twelve week priority plan will focus its work in ensuring that children of the Borough were safe, which was distilled in three priorities: *see children, hear children, help children*. The focus of the twelve week plan, of which 6 weeks now remained, was described for Members.

The Board discussed the plan, and the following information was provided in response to questions:

- Identification of child neglect at an early age was best and at the right place at the right time, so that support could be built around the family to be able to help them and prevent entry of a child to the care system;
- Halton has good early years educational provision and health services which were able to support the identification of child neglect;
- Ensuring children received the right help at the right time was crucial and management oversight is essential for this to happen;
- Part of the 12 week priority plan included building morale amongst staff and motivating them going forward;
- The remaining 6 weeks of the plan would include a focus on the quality of plans put in place for children in need of help;
- A social work academy was being set up to enable a 'grow your own' approach to recruitment – this would provide training support for 10 newly qualified social workers each year;
- It was important to make the 'Halton offer' more attractive to potential employees, both newly qualified and to those with experience, as a mix of both was

- needed; and
- There were currently 26 agency staff within the service.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) receives the update; and
- 2) is aware of the key challenges in children's social care and their implications for the Borough.

#### CYP13 SUMMARY OF 2023 PROVISIONAL UN-VALIDATED ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES

The Board considered a report of the Interim Executive Director Children's Services, which presented the provisional 2023 educational outcomes for Halton's children and young people.

It was noted that the Board regularly received reports on educational attainment and other educational developments and issues in the Borough, as part of the overview and scrutiny role for Children's Services in Halton. The report provided feedback on Statutory Educational Assessments throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and statutory assessments undertaken in the summer term throughout the primary, secondary and post 16 phases of education. It was noted that this series marked the return of non-compensated statutory assessment, post pandemic.

A summary of 2023 outcomes was provided for the Board for Early Years Good Level of Development (GLD), key stage one phonics and key stage 1, 2, 4 and 5 provisional unvalidated attainment information. The information provided also showed pre pandemic and 2022 performance, to gain an insight into the Borough's prior educational position and then the provisional results achieved this academic year.

Members were also advised of recent educational developments – the Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) of which Halton was one, and Delivering Better Values Programme, which Halton was part of.

After receiving the information Members raised questions about foreign languages uptake in Halton which appeared to be declining, and the destinations of young people post 16. It was recognised that data on the latter was not available to local authorities.

Concerns were also raised on attendance figures, which had not recovered to pre pandemic levels. Officers advised that attendance was tracked and funding was being made available from the DfE for Attendance Support Officers, as part of the Priority Education Investment Area. This was a distinct role, with education welfare service continuing with the statutory attendance role. It was shared that Halton had also experienced a decline in attendance at its special schools, so this would be also be looked at further.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) receive the presentation; and
- 2) note the key updates and implications for the Borough.

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#### CYP14 PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2022/23

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 4 of 2022-23 (1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023). It was noted that these were emailed to Members on 12 July 2023, as soon as they were finalised.

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the following Departments:

- 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 were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management reports for quarter 4 of 2022-23 be received.

#### CYP15 PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2023/24

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 1 of 2023-24 (1 April 2023 to 30 June

2023).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2023-24 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the following Departments:

- 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 were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

Family Hubs were highlighted – it was reported that the Family Hub on the Runcorn side would be at Brookvale. The Chair requested to know the opening date and the process put in place for the selection of the location for the Hub. This would be sent following the meeting and reported to a future meeting of the Board.

Members discussed the academisation of schools in Halton. It was confirmed that Local Authorities were not permitted to establish a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management reports for quarter 1 of 2023-24 be received.

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*Meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.*