

Public Document Pack



Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

Monday, 15 July 2024 at 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Geoffrey Logan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Sandra Baker	Labour
Councillor Victoria Begg	Labour
Councillor Louise Goodall	Labour
Councillor Eddie Jones	Labour
Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones	Labour
Councillor Tony McDermott	Labour
Councillor Margaret Ratcliffe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Mike Ryan	Labour
Councillor Aimee Skinner	Labour

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The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 9 September 2024*

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

Part I

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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.	
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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, 22 January 2024 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), Begg, Goodall, Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, McDermott, Rowe and Ryan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors C. Plumpton Walsh and Baker

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: J. Farrell, A. Jones, K. Bazley, J. Gallagher, V. Armor and A. Hindhaugh

Also in attendance: None

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

	<i>Action</i>
CYP21 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
CYP22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
<p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
CYP23 THE CORPORATE PLAN - THE BIG CONVERSATION ANALYSIS AND THE WAY FORWARD	
<p>The Board received a report of the Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which gave an update on 'The Big Conversation', since it was presented at the last meeting in November 2023.</p> <p>The consultation closed on 30 November 2023. The report outlined the engagement results of the consultation, broken down into age groups and presented the methods used and areas the consultation had reached, which included many stakeholders and partners.</p>	

It was reported that there was a high level of agreement to the suggested themes within the consultation. It was evident however that the addition of a 6th theme was required to encompass areas such as: environment, open and green spaces and the protection of these, litter, overgrowth and weeds, regeneration, business, economy, growth support and town centres, housing and supported living. It was proposed that these would come under '*Place and Community*'.

The timeline for the new Corporate Plan was provided and its launch was scheduled for April 2024. All Elected Members of the Council had been emailed to advise of the qualifying statements devised for each priority/theme. These would also be made available to the public, employees and residents, who would now be given the opportunity to provide feedback on these statements, which set out what each priority would aim to achieve over the next 5 years.

The public consultation was open from 19 January to 26 January and was being shared via social media and drop-in sessions in the libraries and Direct Links in Runcorn and Widnes.

Members made the following comments:

- It was felt that the priorities were similar to the original priorities the Council has now;
- One week for a public consultation on the qualifying statements was not very long and there was the potential for criticism;
- A 1% response from 16–19-year-olds was skewing the figures – the efforts made with this age group were reiterated; and
- Funding for the new Corporate Plan was queried – this would be confirmed at a later date.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board continues to endorse the approach to facilitate the implementation of a new Corporate Plan.

CYP24 SUMMARY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director Children, which provided a summary of the key

work taking place locally and at a regional level, to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

An accompanying presentation was provided which gave an overview of work taking place in Halton by a variety of organisations and teams. It also included an overview of preventative work that aimed to keep children and young people mentally well, and services that provided direct interventions and support when children and young people were struggling.

Members were also provided with details of the *The Resilience Framework* and details of the core/statutory services available in Halton. It was noted that this was not a definitive list of support that was available, as there were many other services that had a positive impact on children and young people's mental health – these examples were listed.

The following additional information was provided in response to Members questions:

- The nurturing agenda was connected to this as all services were encouraged to be part of the network of support, as they all complimented each other;
- Training was a rolling programme as staff members changed all the time;
- Not all schools were using the service, as they chose not to. Some felt they did not need the support; some were doing their own work in the mental health area; and some were dependent upon the availability of funding;
- It was thought that 1 in 6 children had a probable mental health disorder;
- Outcomes of services were measured but varied across organisations/teams and were dependent on the intervention utilised;
- The remedial role of the service was understood and it was commented that schools and mental health services approach was also prevention, as outlined in the presentation;
- It was recognised that teachers leaving and joining different schools could be unsettling for children; and the same could be said for the staff members losing colleagues;
- It was commented by one Member that a simple way of encouraging good mental health in students was to encourage sports – it was felt that extra-curricular activities were becoming exclusive due to the costs involved. It was noted that all schools' curriculums

did include sports and HBC employed a Schools Games Officer, who worked with schools to encourage sporting activities, events, competitions and support for children and young people with disabilities;

- Access to the Baby Infant Bonding Service was explained;
- The main transition period for pupils dealt with by the Team was children transferring from primary to secondary school; any other significant periods would be checked and reported after the meeting; and
- The number of Educational Psychologists in Halton would also be reported back.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) receive the presentation; and
- 2) note the key work and services contributing to the positive mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

CYP25 HALTON FAMILY HUBS

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Children, which gave an update on the progress of Halton's Family Hubs and the next steps.

The Government's 2019 Manifesto pledged to champion Family Hubs across England. In December 2020, the Minister for Children outlined plans to create a national Centre of Excellence for Family Hubs, funded by the Department for Education (DfE). The *Best Start for Life Review: A Vision for the 1001 Critical days*, outlined a programme of work to ensure the best support during those crucial first 1001 days, setting babies up to maximise their potential for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing.

It was announced in April 2022 that 75 local authorities would become pilot areas for the Family Hubs and Best Start for Life schemes and Halton had been selected for this.

The Board was advised that since December 2022 the Council had been working hard to develop the Family Hub Model and the presentation outlined the journey so far in the development of these, as well as the challenges faced over the past year; achievements reached; and how they were making a difference.

In response to questions the following additional information was provided:

- The Family Hubs were a universal offer for children and young people in the Borough aged 0-19 or 25 with SEND;
- It was commented that the benefits of the Programme could be long term as it would help with the prevention of children entering the care system for example – officers had already seen results as referrals to specialist targeted parenting programmes had reduced, as a result of more people accessing at a lower level;
- The costs of capital projects had increased recently and these would be raised with the North West delivery lead this week;
- 25,000 young people had used the Hubs so far, and 130 new referrals were being seen each month across the Borough;
- Outcomes of the Family Hubs were reported back to a control group in Government, to demonstrate the programmes were working;
- The demographics of the Family Hubs was not a barrier to residents as they could visit any, and all residents had the same opportunity to access the services offered – if the demand for a service existed in a particular Hub it would be provided there;
- The digital offer would be improved as a new system was being procured; and
- The Family Hubs were also focussing on increasing access for fathers so that all family members could benefit from the services.

The Family Hubs were located in Runcorn at Halton Lodge Children's Centre, Windmill Hill Children's Centre and Brookvale Community Centre, with a satellite site at Halton Brook Learning Centre. Widnes Family Hubs were located at Kingsway Community Centre, Ditton Community Centre and Warrington Road Children's Centre, with a satellite site at Upton Community Centre.

Overall Members were pleased to hear the success of the Family Hubs to date and would welcome a further update as the Programme develops.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives the presentation.

CYP26 SUMMARY OF VALIDATED HALTON EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE, SUMMER 2023

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children, which presented a summary on the validated outcomes for Halton's Children and Young Peoples' educational performance from summer 2023, in comparison to validated national, regional and statistical neighbour data.

Members were referred to Paper One, appended to the report, which included attainment and progress outcomes from the summer 2023 statutory assessment and exam period for all pupils – cohorts of children and young people with SEND; cohorts of children and young people who were eligible for Free School Meals; Early Years Foundation Stage Good Level of Development (GLD); phonics outcomes; end of Key Stage One outcomes; end of Key Stage Two outcomes; and End of Key Stage Four outcomes (GCSE English and Maths). Explanations on the outcomes for each of the above cohorts were provided in the report.

Members discussed the implications of Local Authority funding cuts (Schools Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grants, SIMB Grant) and how this had led to the offer of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that schools could purchase going forwards, due to the removal of funding for the SIMB Grant. The extent of what schools had bought into this year would become clear at the end of January 2024.

One member suggested writing to schools' governors to ensure they were informed of the situation. It was noted that this information was shared with headteachers at headteacher meetings and would be shared with other stakeholders, including Governors at the Governor termly briefing on 30 January 2024.

Following a question regarding the Council's position on academisation, it was noted that advice was given to schools thinking of converting but a neutral view was maintained. Schools were advised of the risks/disadvantages, eg, Local Authority services that could be lost by converting.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments/feedback received be noted.

CYP27 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER 2
OF 2023-24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 2 of 2023-24 (1 July 2023 to 30 September 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.

The Chair commented that these were now out of date but invited questions from Members. The Board queried the overspend that existed in Children's Services, around residential and educational placements and out of Borough placements provision for some children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), requiring specialist provision. They discussed the possibilities of this being reduced both in the short term and long term.

RESOLVED: That the quarter two 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

Meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.

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

DATE: 15 July 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

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 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None identified.

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

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

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

DATE: 17 July 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Children and Young People Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None identified.

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

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

Appendix 1**Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Children, Young Peoples and Families Policy and Performance Board****EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING – 18 JANUARY 2024****76****SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2025/26**

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Children’s Services, which requested the approval of the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Schemes, for admission to primary and secondary schools, including Academy, Free School and Voluntary Controlled schools for the September 2025 intake.

The Board was advised that on 2 October 2023, the Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2025 intake for primary and secondary schools (attached as appendices 1 and 2 respectively). The primary scheme also included the proposed oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Local Authority was the admission authority.

The report provided details of the consultation, which ran until 10 November 2023. One response was received which was outside the remit of the consultation and had been responded to separately. Additionally, no amendments to the oversubscription criteria were suggested, as these reflected the criteria which are considered good practice and acceptable by the Department for Education.

It was noted that all Halton’s secondary schools were either academies, free schools or voluntary aided and were therefore their own admission authorities, with responsibility for consulting and determining their own admissions criteria and their own Published Admission Number (PAN).

Reason(s) for Decision

Local Authorities as the admission authority for community and voluntary schools are required to consult and then determine their admission arrangements annually, and are also required to determine coordinated schemes for primary and secondary admission rounds that apply to all schools.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

Implementation Date

The implementation date is September 2024 which is when the timetabled process for the September 2025 intake commences.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the Coordinated Scheme for Admission to Primary Schools – which also contains the Local Authority’s admission criteria to community and voluntary controlled schools, and approves the Coordinated Scheme for admission to secondary schools, both of which will apply to the September 2025 intake.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING – 22 FEBRUARY 2024

91	FAMILY HUBS DIGITAL SOLUTION
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children, which provided an update on the progress of the Halton Family Hubs Programme in meeting the Department of Education’s ambition to implement a Digital / Virtual Family Hub by March 2025. Family Hubs were a system wide model of providing high quality, joined up, whole family support services. Hubs delivered these services from conception, through a child’s early years until they reached the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

It was noted that Beebot Family Hubs Support had conducted a successful proof of concept exercise with families, residents and professionals, with the aim to gain feedback and opinion from a range of demographics and job roles across Halton. Following on from the exercise, that included positive stakeholder workshop feedback and support, Beebot had been asked to provide a fully costed proposal. The estimated cost of a 3-year licence was £194,000, funded through the Department for Education Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, and a waiver of Procurement Standing Order 1.14. (iv) and 1.14 (v) was requested for the purchase of the Family Hub Digital Solution.

RESOLVED: That approval be given for a Waiver request in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14. (iv) and 1.14 (v) for the purchase of the Family Hub Digital Solution.

REPORT TO:	Children Young People and Families PPB
DATE:	15 th July 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director of Children's Services
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Young People & Families
SUBJECT:	Children and Young People's Plan 2024
WARD(S)	Borough Wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide a presentation on the development of Halton's new Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2027

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approves the Strategy.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 A presentation will be given during the meeting to share the progress made in the co-production and drafting of Halton's new Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2027

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The priorities identified within the plan will inform policy development within Children's Services and the Key Performance Indicators measured within the quarterly monitoring reports.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Budgetary decisions over 2024-2027 will be informed by the priorities identified within the plan

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Children and Young People's Plan is informed by Halton's Corporate Plan and reflects its key priorities for all Children and Young People in Halton.

- 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
The Children and Young People's Plan considers the opportunities within the borough for Post 16 provision to increase the number moving into Education, Employment and Training.
- 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**
The Children and Young People's Plan is informed by Halton's Corporate Plan and reflects it's key priorities for a Healthy Halton for Children and Young People.
- 6.4 **A Safer Halton**
The Children and Young People's Plan is informed by Halton's Corporate Plan and reflects it's key priorities for a Safer Halton for Children and Young People.
- 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**
The Children and Young People's Plan is informed by Halton's Corporate Plan and reflects it's key priorities for an Urban Renewal and it's impact upon Children and Young People.
- 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**
- 7.1 Progress against each of the priorities identified within the plan will be tracked and inform future reports to the Policy & Performance Board.
- 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**
- 8.1 None Raised
- 9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**
- 9.1 None Identified
- 10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**
- 10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People & Families PPB
DATE:	15 th July 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director of Children's Services
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Young People & Families
SUBJECT:	Children's Social Care
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide and update to Members on the progress of Children's Social Care.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Overview report of Children's Social Care Services.

3.2 Childrens services in Halton are on an improvement journey, in 2020 an ILACS inspection advised services require improvement, in 2021 two areas of priority action were given which led to an improvement board.

3.3 Following this Halton has experienced fluctuations in its senior leadership team which has led to inconsistent messages and practice, however in November 2023 Halton appointed a permanent DCS and in January 2024 a permanent Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help. This has led to a re-focus for children's social care and a request for corporate support to significantly improve services. Over the last 6 months significant changes have been implemented around culture and practice, however there is a significant journey of improvement required. Outlined below are some key areas of focus:

4.0 **Recruit and retain staff**

4.1 Our ambition and goal is to create a stable and sustainable workforce. There are multiple workstreams below this ambition as it is a critical area in order to achieve consistency and sustainable improvements in practice to provide our children and their families with effective relationship based social work.

- 4.2 A workforce board was created in January which has produced a recruitment and retention strategy, this will now be the “way in which we recruit and retain our staff”.
- 4.3 Significant work continues in this area. Our newly created Social Work Academy has responsibility for the oversight of newly qualified Social Workers and ensuring they are supported in their first year of practice. Step up to Social work opportunities and apprenticeships to become a social worker initiatives are also managed and supported within the Academy.
- 4.4 Halton is attracting newly qualified social workers, with over 70 applications for the last advert. Out of this round of recruitment, 10 newly qualified social workers were appointed, they will join Halton over the next few months.
- 4.5 The next phase will be to review progression opportunities to ensure we then retain these staff as they become more experienced. We know from our data that the majority of newly qualified social workers want to remain in Halton. We need to ensure the pay and package of support Halton offer is competitive to reduce the reliance upon high-cost agency staff.

5.0 **Training, Development & CPD**

- 5.1 This priority is to ensure all of our workforce have access to high quality, relevant training to develop the workforce to provide the best service we can to children and families in Halton.
- 5.2 We continue to “grow our own” social workers and are building upon the existing ASYE (newly qualified social worker) programme. Halton received some investment from the DFE in December 2023 to develop a Social Work Academy which strengthens the approach to training and development across the service.
- 5.3 The Academy is delivering a cohesive training plan linked to need and knowledge gaps identified in supervision. The approach being taken aligns with the culture and values being developed from a corporate perspective to ensure consistency of approach.
- 5.4 With all of the training that is offered the department considers this against the longer-term objectives, ensure it fits with the social care review structure and provides job satisfaction.
- 5.5 The progression policy is being reviewed to ensure it aligns to the adults offer and encompasses progression not just up to management but to ensure that advanced social workers are able to support other aspects of the service, the current example is the training being undertaken in respect of AIMS- assessment of children with harmful sexual behaviour. This is a specialist area of
- 5.6

social work where Halton require a number of workers with specialist knowledge and expertise.

5.7 This approach supports retention and enables skilled workers to continue to grow and develop areas of specialism.

6.0 **Stabilisation of the Management Team**

6.1 As detailed earlier having a stable senior leadership team is critical in order to drive ambition and raise practice standards, ultimately this will improve outcomes for our children and their families. In February 2024 all of the senior leadership team within Children's Social Care and Early Help were permanent, this is against a backdrop of 70% agency in 2023. Through the stabilisation of the senior leadership team, governance arrangements are now in place with key milestones and targets in place.

6.2 The right people are in the right place to now start to impact and drive the pace of improvement. One of the most important areas of influence for the senior leadership team is the culture, influencing the culture can take a significant amount of time, however through effective leadership behaviours this can be achieved.

6.3 In September 2024 a permanent Head of Service for commissioning will join the team to drive a real focus on all of our commissioned services alongside our sufficiency agenda.

6.4 A decision was made in March 2024 to release 3 Agency Practice improvement leads and create one permanent Head of Service for practice improvement, this role will also incorporate the Principal Social Worker role which is a key role for Halton's regional and national engagement. This role was successfully appointed to in June 2024 and the experienced candidate will join Halton in September.

6.5 Having a stable and experienced senior leadership team will lead to consistency of practice and a modelling of key leadership behaviours. This is already starting to attract applications from social workers from other local authorities which in turn will decrease the requirement for high cost agency staff and improve consistency of practice alongside enabling key relationships to be formed with our children and young people.

7.0 **Service Redesign Project**

7.1 As part of a full service redesign, supported by the Transformation Delivery Unit (TDU), there are several areas of practice that are being strengthened to ensure we deliver high quality effective services for our children and their families.

- 7.2 We know that through early intervention/identification of need for our families we are able to offer the right support at the right time and support the reduction of escalating need.
- 7.3 However at times need can escalate very quickly and parents/carers may feel unable to continue to care for their children. It is at this point that families at times, require crisis intervention, this wrap around intensive support is offered by an “Edge of care team”, this includes needs led support which may need to be delivered out of hours or of a weekend.
- 7.4 Halton does not currently have this offer in place however via a redesign approach stakeholder and staff contributions have been sought. The feedback is now being collated and the working model will be drawn up.
- 7.5 This is an exciting approach and the workforce are keen to be a part of the co-design, it is anticipated through this approach more of our children will be able to remain within their homes where safe to do so with a robust package of support.
- 7.6 A full service redesign could not be progressed until our ILACS inspection had taken place, this is now complete (May 2024) and we can now progress at pace, services need to be strengthened, revised and re designed in order to comply with the Care Review recommendations.
- 7.7 Based on what we know we have identified some immediate challenges to address as well as medium and long-term aspirations and changes to build a Children’s Services that is fit for purpose, adaptable and able to move with changing demands and requirements in the years to come
- 7.8 The Care Review completed in 2023 saw some changes in how children’s services should deliver their services with the emphasis on resetting nationally the role to fall in line with the key principles outlined in the Children Act 1989. The current proposals around service redesign are being completed with the overall principles of the Care Review in mind.
- 8.0 **Children in Care and Care Leavers**
- 8.1 The children in our care and our care leavers deserve the very best services and care we can corporately give them. They deserve to live in homes close to their birthplace, have regular quality family time with their birth relatives and be supported to achieve their aspirations.
- 8.2 We have a high number of children and young people who are subject to statutory orders that identify them as “Children in care”

although they live at home with their parents. Some of these children require a legal process to discharge their legal orders. Halton have recently created a “Discharge from care team”, adverts went out in May 2024 and I am pleased to report that 3 experienced Social Workers will join Halton on fixed term contracts in the next few weeks, again this supports the change in senior leadership and how stability and culture can lead to increased workforce stability, previously very few experienced social workers have applied for posts which has led to high numbers of agency staff.

8.3 Halton’s Corporate Parenting Board has been refreshed and revised to ensure it is effective and harnesses the corporate support required for our children and young people. In March 2024 the DCS and Director of Children’s Social Care and Early Help presented at Full Council to explain the role of a corporate parent and to ask for support and attendance at the meeting, we know we need to improve our offer and have an advisor joining us in September to offer advice on how to corporately build an extensive and robust local offer.

8.4 As an improving authority Halton are offered small packages of support from other local authorities who are delivering good or outstanding services, Halton have made this request and are awaiting the allocation of some support from a NW Authority, specifically around improving the offer to our care leavers. It takes a “Whole Council to raise a child” will our methodology in harnessing the very best corporate support in this area.

8.5 We recognise and acknowledge sufficiency around provision and having sufficient foster carers for our children has been a challenge in Halton for many years. We have now set an ambitious sufficiency strategy to develop provision and Halton are part of a regional approach to increasing the number of foster carers through a project called “Mockingbird”, many authorities already have this service in place.

8.6 The Mockingbird approach to fostering is a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK, the approach supports local authorities to create and increase **sustainable foster care**. It is an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides, this is mirrored by created “family of foster carers” who offer support to the substantive carer like a family member would. Halton is very excited to be part of the regional approach and what it will mean for our children.

9.0 **Local area partnerships and accountability**

9.1 Historically Halton has always maintained strong partnership arrangements with a collective approach to improving outcomes.

Covid significantly impacted upon these arrangements, coupled with significant changes within the Local Authority leading to a less robust partnership approach to practice and service delivery.

9.2 In response to this the partnership arrangements have been reviewed and codesigned with partners. The new arrangements were launched in March 2024. There is now a business manager in place and an independent scrutineer. A key joint priority setting day took place in June with an agreed approach to the priorities for the partnership over the next 3 years. A communications strategy is being created to ensure we all know our partnership priorities for the next 3 years and how we hope to achieve them.

9.3 The ask is clear, we must work together with a shared understanding and accountability to improve services for our children and young people across Halton, we must engage our partners and key stakeholders in order to improve at pace.

10.0 **Budget**

10.1 Every Council in the country is experiencing financial challenges primarily in children's services.

10.2 This is driven by profiteering from private companies offering care places to children at hugely inflated costs, some placements for children displaying complex behaviour can cost upwards of 22k per week.

10.3 This is being raised regionally and nationally and several articles have been published via the Association of Directors of Children's services (ADCS).

10.4 The sufficiency agenda is being progressed internally to explore provision for our children, keeping them close and providing high quality care. This will be driven via our sufficiency strategy.

10.5 The second key area of high cost within children's services is through the use of agency social workers, Halton currently has high numbers of agency staff, however as explained earlier in the report the recruitment and retention strategy has now been launched and will start to impact over the next 12 months.

11.0 **Summary**

11.1 It is a challenging time in Halton Children's Social Care services but we are meeting our challenges with ambition and commitment to achieving the changes needed. We know exactly what we need to do and how to improve services. We have a passionate and skilled workforce, who, with the right support, conditions and environment will move at pace to deliver improved services across the Borough.

11.2 We are clear that the children and young people in Halton deserve the very best services we can deliver and will ensure the journey over the next 12 months delivers our shared ambition and goals.

12.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

13.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Detailed above in budget section.

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

14.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

This is an overview report that relates to this Directorate.

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

N/A

14.3 **A Health Halton**

N/A

14.4 **A Safer Halton**

N/A

14.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

N/A

15.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

N/A

16.0 **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

N/A

17.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

17.1 None identified.

- 18.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**
- 18.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Children, Young, People's & Families Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	15 th July 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Executive Director, Children's Services
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Young People & Families
SUBJECT:	SEND Improvement Plan Update
WARD(S)	Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To assure the board of the progress today against the targets set out in the Area Priority Action Plan, following the SEND Area Inspection, November 2023. To provide a update of progress in improvement work following receipt of the Delivering Better Value Grant. (Note: this report should be read in conjunction with the SEND Priority Action Plan, the Priority Action Plan Risk Register and the Delivering Better Value Grant Application).

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted**

3.0 **SEND Area Inspection and Priority Action Plan**

3.1 In November 2023, Halton SEND Local Area Partnership were inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC); the purpose - to evaluate the effectiveness of the area's partnership SEND arrangements in improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The Inspection found widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND.) As a result of this inspection, His Majesty's Chief Inspector required the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND). The priority action plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders from across the area, and was subsequently approved by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

3.2 The inspectorate identified 5 priority areas for improvement:

- 1- Leaders at Halton local authority and the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB should cooperate at pace to improve the shared strategic oversight, governance, support and challenge to drive improvements to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Halton.

- 2- Leaders in the local authority, ICB and education, health and social care providers should improve the efficiency and quality of their information gathering and sharing processes to ensure that children's and young people's needs are understood accurately and met more swiftly and effectively through coordinated approaches.
- 3- Leaders across education, health and social care should improve the joint commissioning of services to ensure that children, young people and their families receive sufficient support to have their needs met effectively.
- 4- Leaders across education, health and social care should urgently improve the early identification of needs and access to specialist health pathways, including the neurodevelopmental assessment pathway and speech and language therapy and the support available, while children and young people wait.
- 5- Leaders across education, health and social care should improve the timeliness of new EHC plans and updates to EHC plans following the annual review process, so that, if appropriate, children and young people receive an effective EHC plan within statutory timescales.

3.3 The purpose of this report is to update the board on progress against all 5 areas of the Priority Action Plan, to set out the current risks to delivery and the control measures in place to mitigate the risks.

3.4 **Overall Priority Action Plan Progress across** the entire action plan. 17% of all actions are marked as complete with a further 51% on target to be completed by identified timeframe. 30% of actions are marked as delayed, but notably no actions are identified as significantly delayed or not expected to meet target. 2% of targets are noted to be not started, however those actions are held within action areas with a large number of actions and are dependent on the completion of other actions. It should be noted that the action relating to the parent and carer survey sits across each area of the priority action. This action is noted to be delayed across all Priority Action Areas, due to a direction from the SEND Strategic Improvement Board to take the additional time needed to complete the survey in a co-produced manner and effectively with partners- specifically the Parent Carer Survey. This has delayed actions across all priority action areas. The survey is now live, with an closing date of 30th June. When the survey closes, all related actions will shift from delayed to complete.

3.5 **Priority 1-** Priority Action 1 has now completed 44% of its action points. However 44% of the actions are delayed. It is encouraging that 55% of the actions are either completed or on target and that there is reportable progress on all actions points . No delays have caused completion dates to be missed as yet, aside from the delays

to the Parent/ Carer Survey. Once the survey closes at the end of June, the related actions will shift from “delayed” to “complete”.



3.6 **Priority 1 Risks** – The Senior Responsible Officer for Priority 1 has identified 2 significant risks:

- 1- Failure to have an Integrated SEND Performance and Business intelligence Dashboard in place demonstrates the inability of Senior Leaders to assess delivery of strategic vision, objectives and outcomes for children and young people.

The following Control measures are in place to mitigate the impact of this risk:

- i. A Working Group has now been established
 - ii. Meetings have been diarised
 - iii. A separate Senior Responsible Officer has been identified and appointed.
 - iv. A long list of Key Performance Indicators have now been developed and the first draft of the Dashboard was presented to the SEND Strategic Board on 20th June 2024. A further action was agreed for a small working group to be established to narrow down the data points to between 25-30, to enable effective and efficient oversight of performance.
- 2- Timescales are now short to have an Alternative Provision(AP) Strategy drafted, approved by the Strategic Improvement Board and in place for implementation for September 2024. Failure to progress at pace could result in no AP Strategy in place for September 2024, potentially leaving some children and young people vulnerable to potentially avoidable suspension or permanent exclusion.

Control Measures are in place to mitigate the impact of this risk:

- i. DCS agreement to commission external

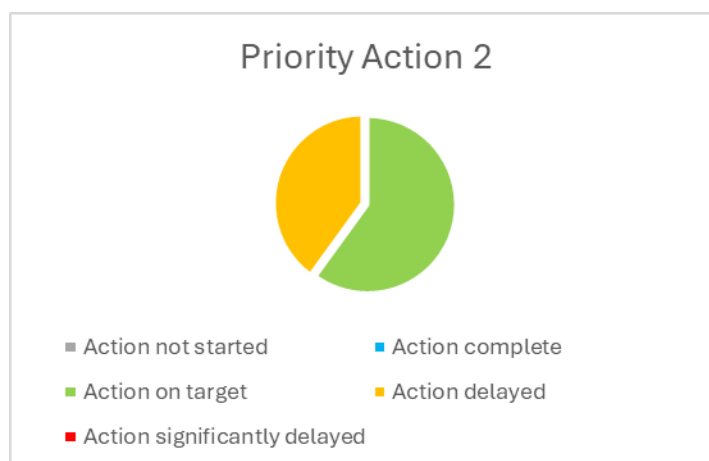
consultant to undertake at pace review of AP and draft an AP Strategy

- ii. An approach has been made to Paul Brennan, former DCS and Education Consultant, who has agreed to consider if he may complete this workstream for September. A further meeting between Paul Brennan and Charlotte Finch has been agreed for 2nd July to confirm arrangements.
- iii. A further risk to delivery has emerged in the progress of appointing the SEND programme Manager. This is a key post to drive forward progress across all priorities in the action plan. The Job Descriptions and Person Specification has been coproduced by colleagues from Health and Education and submitted for Evaluation. Halton HR have given assurances that the evaluation process will commence week beginning 1st July. A request has been submitted for the job evaluation to be expedited.

3.7 Priority 2 Action Updates

60% of Priority 2's action points are on target. 40% are delayed. No actions are yet complete. However, there is reportable progress on all actions points and no delays have caused completion dates to be missed as yet.

Note: *Paper regarding local offer delayed due to the IILACs inspection. Assurance have been given that this paper has been prioritised for completion.*



3.8 Priority 2 Risks

No risks have been Identified in Priority 2.

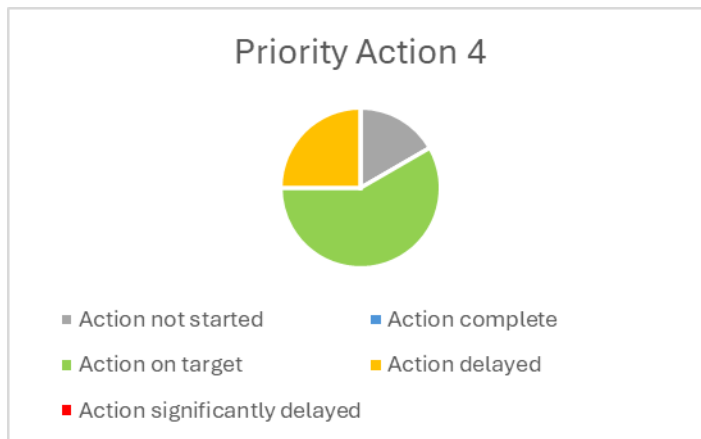
3.9 Priority 3 Updates

In Priority 3, 71% of actions points are on target, whilst 29% of actions are delayed. No actions are yet complete. However, there is reportable progress on all actions points and no delays have caused completion dates to be missed as yet.



3.10 **Priority 3 Risks**
No risks have been Identified.

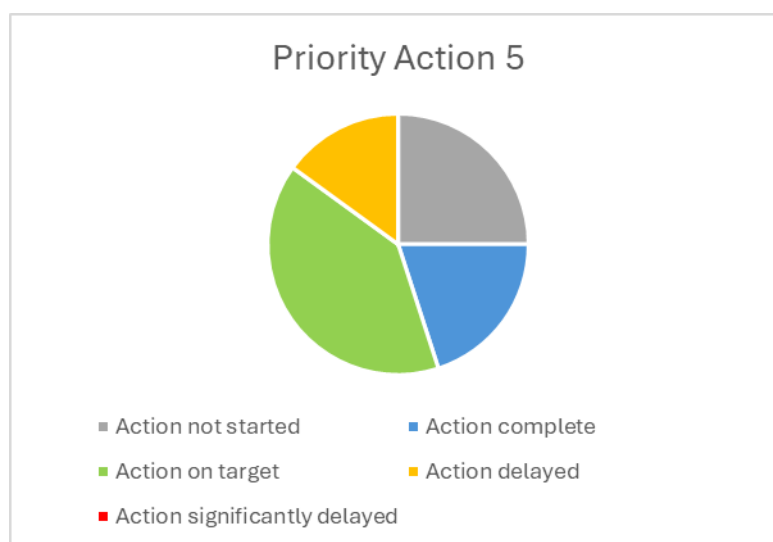
3.11 **Priority 4 Action Updates**
In Priority 4, 58% of actions points are on target, whilst 25% of actions are delayed and may miss completion date. No actions are yet complete and 17% are not yet started (although this does not mean they are delayed) There is reportable progress on the majority of actions points . No delays have caused completion dates to be missed as yet. Priority 4 has a high number of action points, so it is reasonable to expect later commencement dates for some of these actions.



3.12 **Priority 4 Risks**
No risks have been identified.

3.13 **Priority 5 Update**

In Priority 5, 22% of actions are now complete. 40% of actions points are on target, whilst 15% of actions are delayed. 23% of actions are not yet started (although this does not mean they are delayed) There is reportable progress on the majority of actions points and no delays have caused completion dates to be missed as yet. As with Priority 4, Priority 5 has a high number of action points, so it is reasonable to expect later commencement dates for some of these actions.



3.14 **Priority 5 Risks**

The Senior Responsible Officer for Priority 5 has identified 1 risk, that being “General capacity” which is creating some delay in meeting time scales.

3.15 Control measures are in place for this risk are the ongoing appointment of the SEND programme Lead. However, delays in the recruitment process are exacerbating this issue. As stated above, it is hoped that this recruitment exercise can be completed without further delay, adding much needed capacity into the Improvement Workforce.

General Risks Identified- with control measures.

- 1- The recent ILACs inspection, and any consequent work required, may create tension in priorities from officers working across Children’s Services. The appointment of the Designated Social Care Officer should ensure that SEND Improvement work stays high on the improvement agenda.
- 2- Joint working across all SEND Services remains inconsistent. Steps have been taken to strengthen partnership working across all areas and Halton LA have secured time from Consultant Deborah Glassbrook, former Executive Director at Reading Borough Council, but now a highly regarded

professional coach and mentor. Deborah has offered two dates in October for a facilitated SEND session, intended to cement best working partnership practices. These are Tuesday 22nd & Wednesday 23rd October.

4.0 **Delivering Better Value – Update**

4.1 Delivering Better Value (DBV) is a Department for Education programme working to identify and implement local opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND across 54 LAs, and aid local systems (alongside existing local and other DfE programmes) in their objective of achieving financial sustainability. Halton was identified as eligible to apply for DBV grant funding and subsequently a grant application was submitted on the 20th December 2023. Halton requested £1m of grant funding, primarily to build resilience across all educational systems to support and include learners with Social, Emotional Mental Health Needs. The initiatives outlined in our bid are designed to allow schools and settings to support SEND children effectively, without necessarily having to request an Education Health and Care assessment, alleviating the demand for specialist placements, and reducing both the risk of out of borough placement and permanent exclusions. We were notified in March that our bid was successful and that we had been awarded the full £1m grant. This additional resource presents a significant opportunity to positively transform inclusive practices across Halton.

4.2 **Workstream plan & use of grant money**

The grant has been split into two workstreams:

1. Behaviour Support Change Programme: £690,000 – staffing, comms, resource, training and evaluation
2. Inclusion Framework: £310,000 – staffing, comms, resource and training

4.3 **Workstream 1** – Behaviour Support Change Programme Objective: reduction in escalating Social and Emotional Health needs across settings, fewer requests for statutory assessment, fewer EHCPs, improved attendance, fewer exclusions, fewer Maintained Special School(MSS) placements, fewer Independent Non-Maintained Special School(INMSS) placements.

Objective: Children with a wide range of special needs to be included within mainstream settings, without recourse to statutory assessment or movement into MSS. Reduce exclusion, reduce the number of requests for statutory assessment of Education Health and Care(EHC) needs and the need for MSS and INMSS placements. Inclusive practice celebrated visibly and greater support made available across settings.

- 4.4 **Workstream 2** - Inclusion Framework Objective: Children with a wide range for special needs to be included within mainstream settings, without recourse to statutory assessment or movement into. MSS. Reduce exclusion, reduce the number of requests for statutory assessment of SEND and the need for MSS and NMSS placements. Inclusive practice celebrated visibly and greater support made available across settings.

Approach: Implementation of a borough-wide Inclusion programme to promote and recognise excellent inclusive practice across all age ranges - with a specific focus on EYFSS and primary SLCN and CI learners.

- 4.5 Mike Stapleton-Chambers was appointed as programme lead on 10th June 2024

- 4.6 Work has begun on implementing Workstream 1. £300,000 has been spent on 'Thrive'. Thrive will offer a trauma-informed, whole school or setting approach that helps to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. This will be provided with training, resources and an award-winning online tool, so school based staff can better understand the needs of their pupils and provide targeted, effective support where it's needed. This will be offered to all settings within Halton and funded for two years via the grant.

- 4.7 Roll out has been swift with schools already starting the training. 17 delegates from 11 Halton Schools have taken up Thrive Licensed Childhood Practitioner Training which started on 14th June 2024. The schools are:

- Murdishaw West Primary School
- Oakfield Community Primary School
- Lunt's Heath Primary School
- Gorsewood Primary School
- St Bede's Catholic Junior School
- Moore Primary School
- St Clements Catholic Primary
- Victoria Road Primary School
- Brookfields Special School

- St Martins Catholic Primary
- The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary

Further training starts on 25th June 2024 we have 5 confirmed delegates from the following schools:

- Sandymoor Ormiston Academy
- Ashley Special High School
- Ormiston Bolingbroke
- The Brow Community Primary school
- St Mary's CofE Primary School

4.8 Exploration on other elements of the program have started. Costings and timelines for implementation are being considered in co-production with school settings and other Halton officers.

5.0 **Policy Implications**

5.1 The SEND Priority Action Plan mandates the production of 4 new or revised strategies: SEND Strategy 2025-2030, Alternative Provision Strategy, SEND Sufficiency Strategy and the Waiting Well Strategy. All documents will be published within the 18 month delivery schedule of the Priority Action Plan.

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

6.1 Priority Action 5 contains actions relating to Preparation for Adulthood and Transitions. The intention of these actions is to strengthen our approach and strategy towards learners in this phase, ensuring we are preparing pathways and opportunities well in advance of them reaching adulthood.

7.0 **A Healthy Halton**

7.1 The Priority Plan was coproduced with colleagues from health and has a heavy emphasis on waiting times for therapeutic services and diagnostic pathways.

8.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 Both the Priority Action Plan and the Delivering Better Value workstream, maintain a Risk Register which identifies risk early, and take recovery action at the earliest possible opportunity. The Priority Action Plan Risk Register is appended to this report.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The recommendations of this report support the Council's response to the environment and climate emergency e.g. by promoting energy efficiency; limiting/eliminating fossil fuel use for heat, power and transport; limiting/eliminating waste and encouraging re-use of resources and encouraging procurement of local suppliers.

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

'None under the meaning of the Act.'

<https://haltongovuk.sharepoint.com/:x:/s/SENDInspection/EdzjVKnG0SBCmGnZ2dTYXaYBulhjOI4a4tlZvPutDzLsuA?e=GGxRrn>



DBV Grant Application

LA: Halton Borough Council

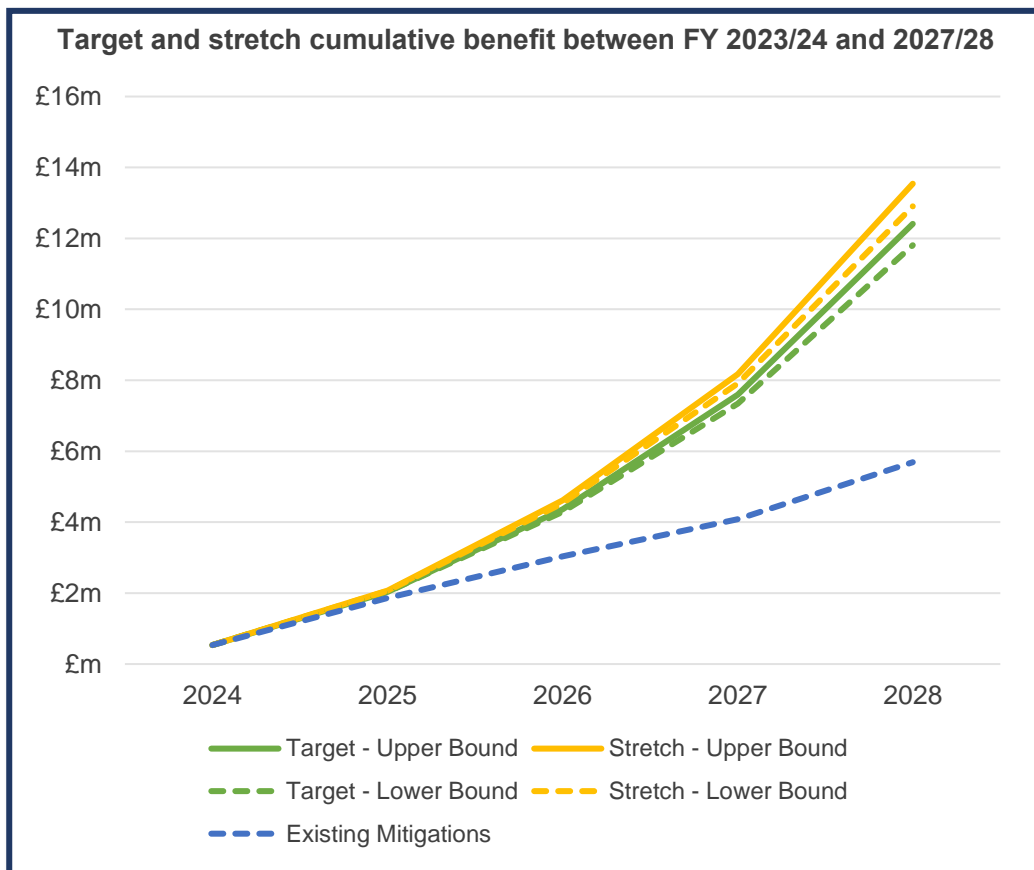
Date of Submission: 20/12/2023

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1. Grant Application Executive Summary

DSG ALLOCATION 22/23 £23.8m	UNMITIGATED CUMULATIVE DSG DEFICIT END OF FY 22/23 £2.9m	% DSG DEFICIT TO DSG ALLOCATION 22/23 12.2%
Unmitigated Scenario: Upper Bound		
TARGET CUMULATIVE OPPORTUNITY 22/23 – 27/28 £12.4m	STRETCH CUMULATIVE OPPORTUNITY 22/23 – 27/28 £13.5m	RANGE OF ANNUALISED BENEFIT (TARGET TO STRETCH) £1.2m
Unmitigated Scenario: Lower Bound		
TARGET CUMULATIVE OPPORTUNITY 22/23 – 27/28 £11.8m	STRETCH CUMULATIVE OPPORTUNITY 22/23 – 27/28 £12.9m	RANGE OF ANNUALISED BENEFIT (TARGET TO STRETCH) £1.1m



Summary of Diagnostic Findings

High Impact Analysis

- High Needs Block spend has grown 46% in Halton since Financial Year ending 2020, with 78% of all spend coming from Maintained Special Schools (MSS), Independent and Non-maintained special schools (INMSS) and Mainstream settings.
- Growth in HNB spend is being driven primarily by caseload growth and there has been increasing demand across all provisions, most notably in Mainstream, where growth in EHCPs per capita was second highest nationally.
- Unit cost growth has remained steady, and Halton's average cost of placement is either on or below national average across the largest three provisions.
- Halton are supporting a higher proportion of their caseload in specialist provision than their statistical neighbours, particularly in INMSS, where 9% of Halton's EHCPs are supported compared to the national average of 5%.
- Another factor contributing to growing demand is Halton's cease rate. Less than 1% of EHCPs were discontinued in 2022 – only one other authority ceased fewer plans nationally. This has been addressed via ongoing work auditing EHCPs and improving the quality of plans.
- The highest number of EHCP starts are found at transition ages, particularly Reception→Primary in Mainstream settings, Primary→Secondary in INMSS, and both transition ages in MSS. Primary needs across provisions vary, but the most common in Halton are SEMH, SLCN and ASD.

Case Reviews

- On average, 24% of Halton's EHCPs and a child/young person's journey through SEND resulted in them achieving their goals and aspirations: this is lower than average within the wave 7 authorities in the DBV programme.
- 71% of the time, it was considered that an EHCP was required to meet the needs of the child or young person.
- Key areas driving non-ideal outcomes were Provision Type and Timing of Intervention.
- Key themes driving non-ideal outcomes were a lack of accountability for adhering to the graduated approach, a lack of a multi-disciplinary team approach, and gaps in the services on offer in the authority.

Surveys

- We released 3 distinct surveys, engaging with 270 Parents & Carers, 67 Education Professionals and 92 Children & Young people. Questions were focussed on current practice, key levers to enable improvements, and cross service collaboration.
- Parents & Carers cited a lack of confidence in Mainstream Settings as the key reason for moving their child to a Special School.
- Educational practitioners felt that additional specialist staff and support was the most important factor to improve their setting's ability to be more inclusive.
- Parents & Carers of CYP in Mainstream settings reported that additional 1:1 support was the core component of the support their child or young person could access via an EHCP,

whereas Parents & Carers of CYP in Specialist settings believe this to be access to highly skilled staff.

- The timeliness and effectiveness of social care and health services were identified by Parents & Carers as an area of the LA SEND service that they have less confidence in. On the other hand, survey responses show that Parents & Carers' most agreeable responses were in relation to school curriculum and quality of staff/SEND training.

Deep Dive Insights

- A workshop with 12 attendees focussed on reviewing the new graduated approach framework design for Halton took place in November. A range of practitioners were involved to ensure we promoted a MDT response from Schools, EPs, Parent/Carer forums, amongst others.
- Professionals mapped out a 4-wave graduated approach, each with increasing levels of support and funding required. In each case, pain points were identified, evaluated based on their complexity and impact, then prioritised the most value-add changes.
- Key areas of improvement include:
 - Accountability
 - Quality of Data/Information
 - Multi-Disciplinary Co-ordination
 - Staff Knowledge and awareness
 - Parental Confidence and Communication

Workstream plan & use of grant money

Overall programme: £100,000 – programme team, communications, and resource.

1. Behaviour Support Change Programme: £590,000 – staffing, comms, resource, training and evaluation
2. Inclusion Framework: £310,000 – staffing, comms, resource and training.

2. Funding Breakdown: What will the grant money be used for?

Funding Summary

Halton Borough Council is applying for £1,000,000. The funding will be used to realise the identified opportunities and as per the description in the grant application. The funding will be required at the following points and is based on the proposed programme delivery plan.

A breakdown of the use of funding is listed below:

Workstream & Area	Total Financial Cost	Spend 2024/25 (Financial Year)			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Behaviour Support Change Programme					
Project manager appointment	£100,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
Thrive Mode and Trama Informed Practice - cost of programme purchase, licence and roll out management	£300,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Educational Psychology backfill Associate recruitment	£100,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
Team Teach Deescalation Roll out	£30,000	£7,500	£7,500	£7,500	£7,500
Mental Health Lead Practitioner Programme	£48,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000
SEMH Lead Practitioner programme	£48,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000
SEMH HN Dependency Unit pathway - start up costs including coping and resources	£40,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Refreshed EBSN Pathway	£24,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000
Inclusion Framework					
Temp Inclusion Manager	£60,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Project Officer appointment	£40,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Inclusion Quality Mark	£50,000	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500
Inclusion Toolkit and Self-Assessment framework	£50,000	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500
Data Officer	£60,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Inclusion Lead Practitioner/ Mentor Programme	£50,000	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500
Totals	£1,000,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000

Workstream	Which Opportunities is it Targeting?	How does this link to the diagnostic?
1.1: Thrive Model and Trauma Informed Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Opps listed in key below. • Improved mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. • Settings benefit from profiling and action planning tool • Improved Measurable evidence base place across the authority. • Reduction in Exclusions which lead to EHCP and MSS/ INMSS placement. • Improved attendance • Early identification of SEMH need and therefore early intervention 	<p>Benchmarking analysis shows that, despite recent growth, Halton is supporting fewer children with EHCPs in mainstream settings than many of its statistical neighbours and benchmarks 10% lower than the national average. On the other hand, Halton is supporting a greater proportion of children with EHCPs in specialist settings than local authorities nationally, particularly in INMSS. The Thrive model is a whole authority approach to improve inclusivity across all settings and aims to reduce the number of exclusions from mainstream schools that lead to escalations into specialist settings.</p> <p>The trauma informed training addresses the results from surveys, where less than 30% of parents and carers of children in mainstream settings agreed that social care services had a positive impact on their child.</p>
1.2: Educational Psychology Backfill Associate Recruitment		
1.3: Team Teach de-escalation Rollout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Opps listed in key below. • Reduction in Exclusions which lead to EHCP and MSS/ INMSS placement. 	<p>In case reviews, professionals identified “gap in service offering” as a key theme driving non-ideal outcomes. This is specifically around SEMH support at secondary age, which is leading to an increased number of INMSS placements from age 11 onwards. The workstream aims to reduce exclusions and better</p>
1.4: Mental Health Lead Practitioner Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Opps listed in key below. 	
1.5: SEMH Lead Practitioner Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Opps listed in key below. • Reduction in Exclusions which lead to EHCP and MSS/ INMSS placement. 	
1.6: SEMH HN Dependency Unit Pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opps 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 • Reduction in Exclusions which lead to EHCP and MSS/ INMSS placement. 	
1.7: Refreshed EBSN Pathway		

		<p>support CYP with SEMH through the primary-secondary transition.</p> <p>Insight from parent and carer surveys also shows that the timeliness and effectiveness of health and social care support were two of their biggest concerns. This is further supported by results from the education practitioner survey, where only 40% of respondents agreed that existing CAMHS services were positively impacting children in their settings. Hence, a MH lead practitioner will be appointed and a focus on children with SEMH and behavioural issues will prevent unnecessary exclusions and therefore escalations in provision.</p>
<p>2.1: Inclusion Manager and Project Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Opps listed in key below. 	<p>A lack of commitment to the graduated approach was a key theme in case review discussions, which was followed up by a workshop looking at the graduated response framework in more detail.</p>
<p>2.2: Inclusion Quality Mark</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Opps listed in key below. • Reduction in Exclusions which lead to EHCP and MSS/ INMSS placement. • Improved attendance • Early identification and therefore early intervention 	<p>Practitioner confidence and knowledge and accountability from schools were identified as key barriers to adhering to the graduated approach, so the inclusion quality mark and self-assessment framework aim to support lead practitioners and share best practice to create a more inclusive environment for children with SEND. This will be specifically focused on improving support for children with ASC and SLCN at primary and secondary transitions, which are the most common primary needs for new EHCP starts in MSS.</p>
<p>2.3: Inclusion Toolkit and Self-assessment Framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Opps listed in key below. • Reduction in Exclusions which lead to EHCP and MSS/ INMSS placement. • Improved attendance • Early identification and therefore early intervention 	<p>Lack of confidence in mainstream settings was also cited in surveys by parents and carers as the main reason for moving their child to a special school, so the introduction of the inclusion quality mark aims to improve transparency with parents and instil more confidence in their</p>
<p>2.4: Inclusion Lead Practitioner Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opps 1, 2 and 3 • Reduction in Exclusions which lead to EHCP and MSS/ INMSS placement. • Improved attendance • Early identification and therefore early intervention 	<p>Lack of confidence in mainstream settings was also cited in surveys by parents and carers as the main reason for moving their child to a special school, so the introduction of the inclusion quality mark aims to improve transparency with parents and instil more confidence in their</p>

		ability to support their child to achieve their goals and aspirations.
2.5: Data Officer	All Opps listed in key below.	The quality of information in EHCPs and transfer of data between different services was discussed at length in case reviews. Professionals agreed that it could be improved, as it was affecting the level of support children were receiving and causing delays in the updates of plans after annual reviews. Ongoing work outside of DBV is underway to address this, but it was recognised that a data officer needs to be appointed.

5 year cumulative opportunity: £6.1m-£7.2m

Opportunities Key:

1. Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child can be achieved **without the need for an EHCP**
2. Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in a **Mainstream setting rather than MSS**
3. Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in **RP/SEN Units rather than MSS**
4. Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in a **Mainstream setting rather than INMSS**
5. Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in **RP/SEN Units rather than INMSS**
6. Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in **MSS rather than INMSS**

3. LA Context and Sign Off

Local Authority Approval

This is the grant application for Halton.

We have completed the diagnostic activity and identified key areas to improve outcomes and financial sustainability. We are applying for £1million (maximum £1 million) from the Delivering Better Value grant to achieve this.

The application represents the authority’s best estimate of the financial impact of the pressures and demands on High Needs Block expenditure and the associated initiatives we are pursuing to mitigate any increases in spending over and above the assumed 3 per cent annual increase in DSG funding.

Changes in circumstances, such as significant changes in national SEND policy or DSG funding formulae may impact on the forecasts for the High Needs Block in this authority. The estimates shown in the attached grant application as it stands, however, include all relevant issues explored through the DBV programme and the initiatives that this authority expects to pursue over the time period.

This application has been approved by Zoe Fearon Director of Children's Services and Ed Dawson, Section 151 Officer. These parties agree that the evidence and resulting plans represent the right balance of ambition and realism about what can be delivered locally.

The LA is already working to an ambitious improvement plan, but it is possible this will require refreshment, following publication of the very recent Local Area SEND inspection.

Key programmes already underway, which will not require investment from DBV are the SEND Sufficiency Programme, which is working in conjunction with the Capital programme set out in appendix 2. These programmes are working towards some shared objectives with our DBV programme.

SIGNED (Director of Childrens Services):



DATE: 20/12/23

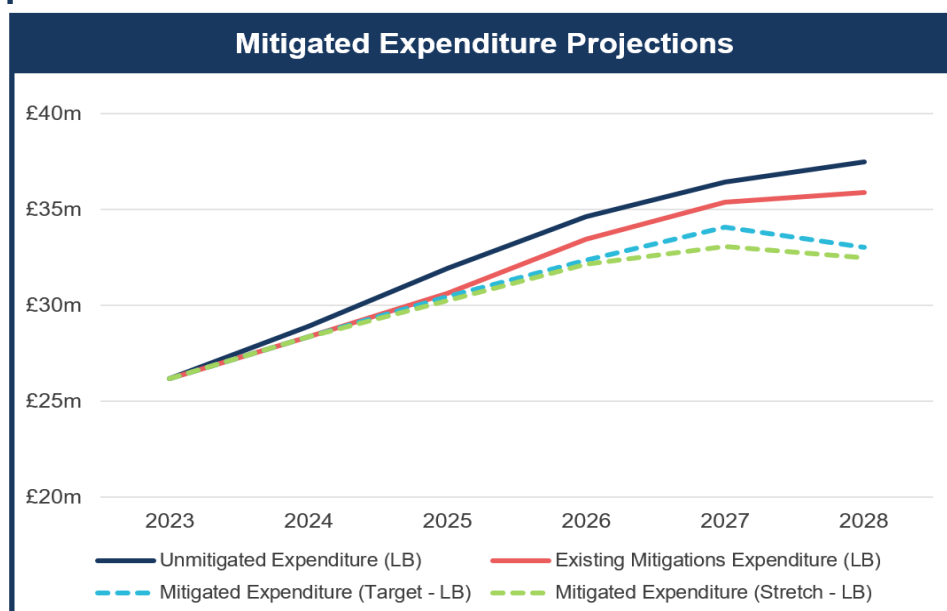
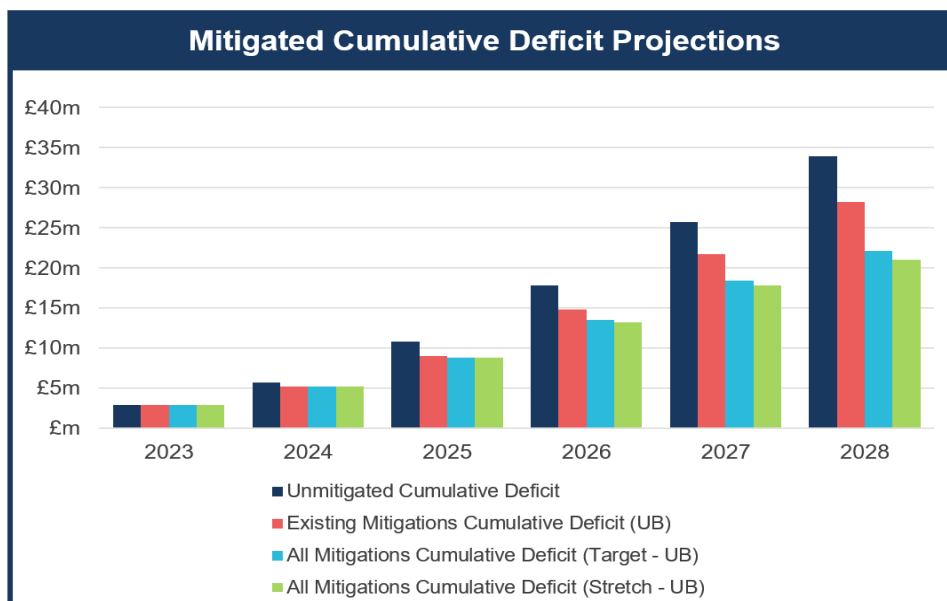
SIGNED (S151 Officer):



DATE: 20/12/2023

Scenario Selection & Rationale

Unmitigated scenario selection: We have chosen the Lower Bound (Target) scenario as our operating model for our budgeting process.



Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Unmitigated Expenditure	£ 26.1m	£ 28.9m	£ 31.9m	£ 34.6m	£ 36.4m	£ 37.5m
Unmitigated Cumulative Deficit	£ 2.9m	£ 5.7m	£ 10.8m	£ 17.8m	£ 25.8m	£ 33.9m
Target Expenditure	£ 26.1m	£ 28.4m	£ 30.4m	£ 32.3m	£ 34.1m	£ 33.0m
Stretch Expenditure	£ 26.1m	£ 28.4m	£ 30.2m	£ 32.1m	£ 33.0m	£ 32.5m
Target Cumulative Deficit	£ 2.9m	£ 5.2m	£ 8.8m	£ 13.5m	£ 18.4m	£ 22.1m
Stretch Cumulative Deficit	£ 2.9m	£ 5.2m	£ 8.8m	£ 13.3m	£ 17.8m	£ 21.0m

4. LA SEND Improvement Summary

Halton’s SEND Improvement Programme:

See Appendix A

SEND Sufficiency Strategy – Phase Two

This is under development and is the second phase of our already existing strategy and is due to be launched in March 2024. This work involves accurate forecasting of future growth trends, and plans for the development of further in-borough provision for SEND learners, to avoid the requirement for Halton children with SEND to be educated in INMSS settings. Following the forecasting work, the phase 2 of the strategy will be coproduced with a range of key stakeholder. The strategy will outline the sufficiency needs across Halton in all age phases for the next 5 years and will plan provision around this demand.

Capital Projects Work and Pilot Projects:

March 2022 DfE wrote to LAs advising them of their High Needs Capital Grant Allocation to support the provision of additional places for SEND or AP. Halton was allocated £3.3M. In Autumn 2022 the LA wrote to all schools (primary, secondary and special) asking for Expressions of interest to provide additional SEND capacity and wrote again in early Spring 2023, providing schools with a copy of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy so they could identify whether they wished to meet a specific area of need at their school as identified within the Strategy. Following assessment of responses against Halton's SEND Sufficiency Strategy, approval was sought from the Council's Executive Board on 20th April 2023 to consult on expansion of provision at those schools who had expressed an interest, and did not already have SEND provision at their schools. A statutory consultation process was then undertaken from 10th May 2023 to 7th June 2023 at those schools where new SEND provision was proposed, following which the Council's Executive Board on 13th July 2023 approved the recommendations to expand SEND provision in Halton, and work has been ongoing since then to provide those places (see table below). Links to the Executive Board reports are here: [Exec Board 20th April 2023](#) and [Exec Board 13th July 2023](#) (the decision was taken under Chief Executive's Urgent Decision power, due to the restricted timetable to have new SEND provision in place). Work has been progressing since that point as per table below:

School	Provision	Number of places	Completed	anticipated completion date
Ashley School	Extend KS3&4 ASD Provision	24	Feasibility stage	Late 2024 / 2025 subject to budget availability/planning permissions etc

Astmoor Primary	KS1 & 2 SEMH Resource Bases	16	On site	December 2023
Kingsway Academy	Extend KS1 ASC Provision	10	Completed	Completed August 2023
Oakfield Primary	KS1 & 2 SLCN Resource Bases	20	Completed	Completed August 2023
St Basil's Catholic Primary	Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment area and Early Years Foundation Stage /Key Stage 1 Complex needs SEN Resource Base	16	With Diocese	Unknown
Sts Peter and Paul Catholic High	KS3&4 ASC Unit	16	With Diocese	Unknown
Victoria Road Primary	KS1 & KS2 SEMH Resource Bases	16	KS1 Completed / KS2 Out for pricing	KS1 Completed August 23 / KS2 will be completed in time for Sept 24
Westfield Primary	KS1 & 2 SLCN Resource Bases	16	Completed	Completed August 2023
Woodside Primary	KS1 SEMH Resource Bases	7	On site	December 2023
Brookfields	Extend provision		Site to be agreed	Unknown

Alternative Provision Strategy:

DBV Workstreams:

Plan Element	Funding Detail	Expected Benefits
DBV Workstream 1	<p>Behaviour Support Change Programme, including the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thrive model Implementation/Trauma Informed Practice Implementation - Team teach De-escalation roll out - Lead Practitioner roll out - Refreshed EBSNA Pathway - High Dependency Unit Pilot Set up <p>Total Cost: £590,000</p> <p>Funded from DBV grant funding</p>	£6.1m-£7.2m
DBV Workstream 2	<p>Inclusion Programme, including the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion Quality Mark - Inclusion Self Assessment toolkit and framework - Headteacher Peer coach and influence programme - Peer support programmes for stakeholders and children/parents/ carers - Halton inclusion award for SENDCO/ Lead Practitioner <p>Total Cost: £310,000</p> <p>Funded from DBV grant funding</p>	

5. Engagement with Local Partners

Approach to Engagement

Stakeholder engagement has been recognised as fundamental to the success of the DBV programme and has underpinned all our work. We have ensured all system partners have been given the opportunity to share their views and opinions on the findings of the diagnostics and implementation plans going forward and kept updated throughout.

To obtain the views and opinions of our SEND partners, we have undertaken:

- Case reviews
- Surveys
- Deep Dives/ Process Mapping Exercise
- Headteachers conference
 - Halton convened a conference for all Head teachers on 7th November, where details of the DBV programme were shared in a session led by Newton Europe. This included sharing the evidence packs and diagnostic insights summarising the local context in Halton. Following this, local plans for DBV programmes were shared with Heads both at Halton Inclusion Partnership and Secondary Heads Association.
 - Whilst no written feedback was gathered at this event, ideas as set out in this application were well received and verbal support secured.
 - Proposed workstreams were shared with Halton Association of Secondary Heads and these were positively received. In particular, workstreams designed to target and include SEMH learners were welcomed and encouraged. Input was gained from Headteachers as to how these workstreams could be amended to best suit their needs and these influenced the design. Schools have requested further inclusion and involvement in these particular workstreams, both in design and delivery.

Stakeholder Group	Contributed to problem definition	Contributed to shaping implementation	How are they feeling about SEND improvement?
Parents & Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views gathered via Survey and views represented by PCF and SENDIASS during Case reviews and Deep Dives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey results and case reviews significantly influenced implementation plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent and carer feedback tells us that there is a need to bolster the offer in mainstream settings to establish trust and negate the move towards MSS and INMSS
Children & Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views gathered via Survey and views represented by PCF and SENDIASS during Case reviews and Deep Dives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey results and case reviews significantly influenced design and implementation plans- this allowed co-production of the proposed workstreams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Education Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stakeholder activities were represented by multiple agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey - Case Reviews - Deep Dives - Implementation planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation planning day confirmed that proposed plans are the correct ones to respond to the presenting challenges and have the potential to make a real difference in Halton. Direct consultation with Heads received favourable and positive verbal feedback regarding all workstreams. Schools have already requested involvement in any pilot projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and feedback confirmed views that there is a need for investment into mainstream settings, focussing on inclusion and behaviour support. Schools in particular report ongoing challenge of managing complex needs particularly in the area of SEMH. Headteachers responded positively to all proposed workstreams. In particular, SEMH workstreams have been warmly welcomed and a number of secondary settings have already requested early involvement.

Multi-Disciplinary Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers • CYP • Schools/ settings from all age phases • Health • Social Care • Specialist Outreach • Educational Psychology • SENDIASS • PCF • Commissioning professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys, case reviews, deep dives, conferences, and implementation planning including reps from multiple agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys, case studies, deep dives and Implementation planning day confirmed that proposed plans are the correct ones to respond to the presenting challenges and have the potential to make a real difference in Halton. Highly favourable response from all agencies. • Plans were felt to be appropriate and achievable.
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Engagement Summary

How will we engage and involve key system partners as part of the implementation phase of DBV?

Halton is committed to coproducing the DBV implementation plan with all stakeholder groups.

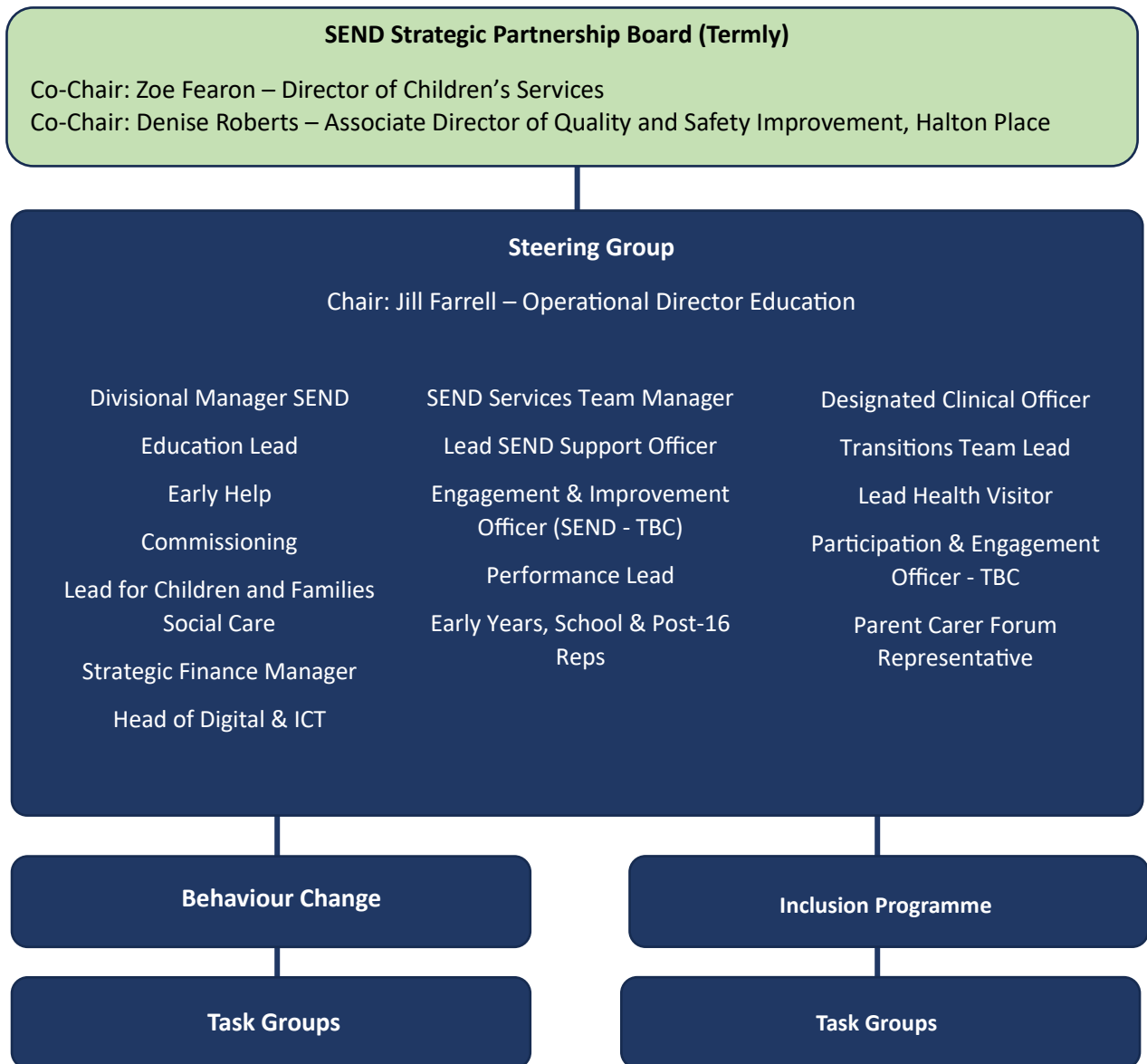
The engagement opportunities, methods of engagement, target groups, objectives and frequency we are set out in the table below:

Engagement event	Target groups	Objective	Method	Frequency
Operational Director Newsletter	Schools, settings, LA internal stakeholders, Health Directorate Parents Children and Young People School councils	Information/ update sharing	Email Local offer Social media	Recurring ½ termly
SEND Newsflash	Schools, settings, LA internal stakeholders, Health Directorate Parents Children and Young People Parents School councils	Information sharing/ update stakeholders	Email Local offer Social media	Recurring ½ termly

DBV Roadshows	Schools, settings, LA internal stakeholders, Health Directorate Parents Children and Young People Parents School councils	Information sharing/ update stakeholders Gather input from stakeholders to guide implementation planning	In person	4 roadshows within the first month of launch
Headteacher briefings	Headteachers/ SEND Leaders	Information sharing/ update stakeholders Gather input from stakeholders to guide implementation planning	IN person/ (TEAMS if appropriate)	Recurring ½ termly
SENDco Briefings	SENDcos and SEND Leaders	Information sharing/ update stakeholders Gather input from stakeholders to guide implementation planning	IN person, (TEAMS if appropriate) Halton Improvement Partnership sessions	½ termly
DBV Launch event-professional	Schools, settings, LA internal stakeholders, Health Directorate	Information sharing/ update stakeholders	IN person	One-off event
DBV Launch event-Key stakeholders	Parents/carers, CYP	Information sharing/ update stakeholders Gather input from stakeholders to guide implementation planning	In person	One-off event
Workstream workshops	School/ setting/ AP staff, Health colleagues, LA SEND staff (including EP. Specialist outreach rep, Early Help rep, EWO rep,	Implementation planning Roll out design and agreement Monitoring Reviewing metrics Information sharing Gathering feedback from stakeholders	IN person, (TEAMS if appropriate)	Recurring monthly initially (reviewed as appropriate)
School council sessions	CYP	Implementation planning	In person	6-monthly

		Roll out design and agreement Monitoring Reviewing metrics Information sharing Gathering feedback from stakeholders		
CYP Engagement Event	CYP	Implementation planning Roll out design and agreement Monitoring Reviewing metrics Information sharing Gathering feedback from stakeholders	<u>In person/ Conference</u>	Annually
Stakeholder Surveys	Schools/ settings, CYP, Parents	Measure impact Elicit views to steer strategy and implementation planning		6 monthly

6. Programme Governance



7. Enablers and Foundations for Change

Enablers & Foundations for Change

We have completed a self-assessment of key foundations and enablers required for a successful change programme (1 = Low 3 = High). The below details our scoring. For those scored at Level 1, key mitigations are explained below.

Governance	Digital Capability	Leadership	Capacity	Capability
G2	D2	L2	CC1	CB3

Key Mitigations

Capacity:

Recruitment of Project Management team (4x project managers)

Backfill for EP team- utilising Associate EPs to cover some elements of statutory workload

Recruitment of Data Officer to support project management team with KPI and impact assessment

Recruitment of Deputy Divisional Manager SEND to create capacity and release Divisional Manager for DBV Implementation

8. Summary of Opportunities and Workstreams

Workstream 1 – Behaviour Support Change Programme

Objective: reduction in escalating Social and Emotional Health needs across settings, fewer requests for statutory assessment, fewer EHCPs, improved attendance, fewer exclusions, fewer MSS placements, fewer INMSS placements.

Approach: Multi-faceted approach including full-rollout of DfE-accredited training, online profiling and action planning tool, pilots of high need dependency units within mainstream settings, Lead Practitioners in place across localities, review and restructure of EBSNA pathway.

This is a programme targeting all settings across Halton at all age ranges and requires the input, engagement and support of multiple stakeholders. The programme requires the carefully managed and phased roll-out of trauma informed training across borough, embedding the **Thrive** model across all settings. Thrive is a trauma-informed, whole authority approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Thrive offers DfE-accredited training and an award-winning profiling and action planning tool, Thrive-Online. It also provides the means to measure impact. This training will be supported and partly delivered by our Educational Psychology and Specialist Outreach Service and will allow this model to be sustainable over the long-term.

In order to implement this successfully, it is imperative that the roll out of this programme is phased very carefully, particularly considering it will be being rolled out alongside other programmes. Care must be taken not to overwhelm stakeholders with initiatives. Roll out will be phased following a data-led prioritisation exercise which will determine the order, taking into account state of readiness, capacity and urgency. The roll out will be phased taking into account the delivery schedules of other improvement programmes.

The programme also involves training a number of Team teacher Advanced trainers across the LA, who can deliver the de-escalation element of Team Teach to all Halton settings, equipping them with an advanced skill set in managing highly challenging behaviour within settings. As trainers will be based within borough, this is also a sustainable investment. Further to this, we intend to train a number of SEMH and mental health school- based Lead Practitioners based in settings, to provide support, training and mentorship borough wide, helping the development of excellent inclusive approaches and strategies for this cohort of learners. These LPS will require a salary uplift, which would be funded via DBV as a pilot for 2 years. It is intended that the added-value showed through improvement metrics will encourage settings to continue with this investment going forward, making it sustainable. Halton are currently in the process of restructuring the Specialist SEND Outreach support offer, adding in a traded element. SEMH LP interventions and support will be added to the

traded menu, allowing schools too either spot purchase LP support, or to access it through a wider service level agreement, hence building long term sustainability into this option. As with the Thrive programme, the roll out of this programme must be phased carefully, following a prioritisation exercise, which will take into account state of readiness, capacity and urgency. The roll out will be phased taking into account the delivery schedules of other key improvement programmes.

The final strand of this programme is the development of a small number of pilot High Needs Support units within mainstream settings, targeting highly vulnerable students at risk of perm-ex and the most likely to require placement into INMSS. These pilots will not be funded solely by DBV, but via EHCP place funding. The full costs will be calculated via coproduction with a host setting though the pilot and may be subject to change. Early discussion/scoping with schools indicates that place funding should be between 120k pa- 160k pa, to support 4-6 young people. This will represent an investment, in order to save approximately £35k per child in each Unit, by maintaining the child in their local school, and avoiding the additional cost of INMSS and associated transport. Children identified for these bases, will be children at high risk of exclusion or already subject to an exclusion, with an EHCP for SEMH, where an annual review that the child's needs require more support than can ordinarily be provided by a mainstream setting. DBV funding will be used to develop the systems, training and resources underpinning the units and will not require recurrent funding. As above, the implementation of these pilots must take into account other improvement programmes, to maximise the opportunity for success. All care must be taken to avoid change fatigue and to maintain interest and momentum.

Delivery Team: *Who will be responsible for the workstream?*

Responsible Officer – Charlotte Finch

Training roll-out and implementation of online profiling and action planning tool

- Local Authority Teams, Education Settings and Health Partners

High Need Dependency Units

- Local authority Teams, Education Settings and Health Partners

Lead Practitioner

- Local Authority, Educational settings and Health Partners

EBSNA Pathway

- Local authority and Health Partners

Measures: *What top-level measures do you track? What shorter term indicators can we track?*

Top level measures:

- Request for Statutory assessment SEMH

- Exclusions
- Attendance
- Placement into MSS SEMH
- Placement into INMSS SEMH
- Thrive online profiling tool, EHE levels, Unit cost INMSS.
- Placement into HN units
- SEND Transport spend

Short term indicators:

- School/ setting uptake of training offer
- Appointment of Project managers
- Implementation of training programme
- Lead practitioner identification and appointment.
- Launch of HN Units

Workstream specific risks: *Any additional risks not captured in programme level risks?*

- Setting non-engagement, inability to identify LPs, difficulty securing pilot settings, weakness around data support., change-fatigue amongst settings, capacity among all stakeholder groups.

Dependencies: *What needs to happen in order for this to be successful?*

- Secure grant.
- Secure partnership working arrangements, appointment of project management.
- Secure agreement via LA governance boards, Gain approval via LA governance.
- Appointment/ identification of key staff
- Gain agreement for roll out/delivery schedule

Sustainability: *If using fixed term resource/pilots, what steps will be taken to assess effectiveness?*

How do you ensure the benefits are sustained?

- Train the trainer for long-term training capacity
- Restructure the Specialist Outreach Support offer, adding Lead Practitioner advice and support into the menu. This allows schools to continue to access SEMH support, for a nominal fee going forward, and builds sustainability into the model. As settings develop their wider skill and expertise in this area over time, the requirement for external support and advice will be diminished.
- Agree ongoing investment for HN dependency unit as cost avoidance strategy.
- Demonstrate added value via pilots in order to secure future investment from settings.

Milestone	When
Service announcement	April 2024

Design complete	July 2024
Launch of Pilot	May 2024
High Needs Funding Allocation & Monitoring Report (Quarterly)	June 2024 -
Annual Impact Assessment	May 2024 (then annually)

2. Inclusion Framework

Objective: Children with a wide range for special needs to be included within mainstream settings, without recourse to statutory assessment or movement into. MSS. Reduce exclusion, reduce the number of requests for statutory assessment of SEND and the need for MSS and NMSS placements. Inclusive practice celebrated visibly and greater support made available across settings.

Approach: Implementation of a borough-wide Inclusion programme to promote and recognise excellent inclusive practice across all age ranges - with a specific focus on EYFSS and primary SLCN and CI learners.

Establishment of an Inclusion Quality Mark with accompanying toolkit and self-assessment framework. DBV funding will be used to develop the accompanying systems and resources, also drawing on the expertise already existing within borough. The appointment of Inclusion Lead Practitioners within settings, can be funded via DBV on a 2-year pilot. These LPS will require a salary uplift. Which would be funded via DBV as a pilot for 2 years. It is intended that the added value showed through improvement metrics, will encourage settings to continue with this investment going forward, making it sustainable. Peer coach and influence monitoring model in place to be led by Lead Practitioners.

Delivery Team: *Who will be responsible for the workstream?*

- LA teams
- School settings
- Health partners
- Specifically commissioned SALT service.

Measures:

Top level measures:

- Request for Statutory assessment, Exclusions, Attendance figures
- Placement into MSS
- Placement into INMSS
- EHE levels
- Unit cost INMSS
- SEND Transport spend

Short term indicators:

- School/ setting uptake of training offer
- Lead practitioner identification and appointment.
- Key staff appointment/identification

Workstream specific risks: *Any additional risks not captured in programme level risks?*

- Setting non-engagement, refusal to sign up to inclusion programme and quality mark, inability to identify LPs, unable to appoint key staff.

Dependencies: *What needs to happen in order for this to be successful?*

- Secure grant.
- Secure partnership working arrangements, appointment of project management.
- Secure agreement via LA governance boards, Gain approval via LA governance.
- Appointment of key staff

Sustainability: *If using fixed term resource/pilots, what steps will be taken to assess effectiveness? How do you ensure the benefits are sustained?*

- Train the trainer. Ongoing training capacity availability across borough.
- Resources developed which remain available going forward.
- Demonstrate added value via pilots in order to secure future investment from settings.

Milestone	When
Service announcement	April 2024
Design complete	July 2024
Launch of Pilot	May 2024

High Needs Funding Allocation & Monitoring Report (Quarterly)	June 2024 -
Annual Impact Assessment	May 2024 (then annually)

9. Overall Implementation Plan- Accountable Officer Charlotte Finch, supported by a team of Project Managers

Workstream Roll out Year 1	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
WS 1- Behaviour Support- Thrive	Co-design	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation
WS 1- Behaviour Support - Team teach	Co-design	Implementation	Implementation	Sustain
WS 1- Behaviour Support Lead Practitioner	Co-design	Implementation	Sustain	Sustain
WS 1- Behaviour Support EBSNA Pathway	Co-design	Co-design	Implementation	Implementation
WS 1- Behaviour Support HD Unit	Co-design	Pilot	Pilot	Pilot
WS 2- Inclusion Quality Mark	Co-design	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation
WS 2- Inclusion Toolkit/ SA Framework	Co-design	Implementation	Implementation	Sustain
WS 2- Inclusion Lead Practitioner	Co-design	Implementation	Implementation	Sustain
WS 2- Headteacher Coach and Influence Model	Co-design	Co-design	Implementation	Implementation

Workstream Roll out Year 2	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
WS 1- Behaviour Support- Thrive	Implementation	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
WS 1- Behaviour Support - Team teach	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
WS 1- Behaviour Support Lead Practitioner	Co-design	Implementation	Sustain	Sustain

WS 1-Behaviour Support EBSNA Pathway	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
WS 1- Behaviour Support HD Unit	Pilot	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
WS 2- Inclusion Quality Mark	Implementation	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
WS 2- Inclusion Toolkit/ SA Framework	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
WS 2- Inclusion Lead Practitioner	Sustain	Sustain	Implementation	Sustain
WS 2- Headteacher Coach and Influence Model	Implementation	Implementation	Sustain	Sustain

Detailed Implementation Plan by Workstream

1. Behaviour Support Change Programme- Accountable officer Charlotte Finch

Behaviour Support Change Programme	Start Date	End Date
1a- Team Teach De-escalation Roll-Out		
Co-Design Phase	March 24	May 24
Source Training	Feb 24	Feb 24
Identify Key staff	March 24	March 24
Complete Trainer training for key staff	April 24	April 24
Co-produce training rollout	May 24	May 24
Implementation Phase	April 24	March 25
Share training schedule with settings	April 24	April 24
Commence training Delivery	May 24	May 24
Complete Training roll out	March 25	March 25
Sustain Phase	May 24	Ongoing
Provide support materials	May 24	Ongoing
Agree ongoing support arrangements from trainers	May 2024	March 2025
Plan and agree Future refresher training arrangements	May 2024	Ongoing

Behaviour Support Change Programme	Start Date	End Date
1b- Thrive Roll- Out		
Co-Design Phase	March 24	May 24
Appoint Project manager	March 24	April 24
Design overarching Project Plan	April 24	April 24
Conduct Engagement Sessions with key stakeholders	May 24	May 24
Identify Pilot Schools	May 24	June 24

Co-produce Pilot-training rollout schedule	April	June 24
Share Pilot Schedule with key stakeholders	June 24	June24
Co-Design wider thrive roll out schedule with key stakeholders	May 24	July 24
Share wider roll out schedule with Settings	July 24	July 24
Implementation Phase		
Commence Phase 1 Pilots	Sept 24	Oct 24
Review Phase 1 Pilots against performance indicators	Dec 24	Jan 25
Commence phase 2 pilots	Jan 25	Apr 25
Review phase 2 pilots against performance indicators	Apr 25	May 25
Conduct any necessary redesign in line with review findings	May 25	July 25
Commence wider roll-out	Sept 25	Sep 25
Sustain Phase		
Complete rollout across all settings	Sep25	Jul 26
agree future review arrangements	Oct 25	Oct 25
Provide necessary support materials	Sep 25	July 26
Agree ongoing support arrangements including future refresher training arrangements	Sep 25	Ongoing

Behaviour Support Change Programme	Start Date	End Date
1c – Lead Practitioner		
Co-Design Phase		
Appoint Project manager	March 24	Sept 24
Design overarching Project Plan	March 24	April 24
Design LP Training programme	April 24	April 24
Share LP workplan with settings/schools	March 24	March 24
Identify/appoint LPs across all age phases	May 24	June 24
LP training schedule completed	June 24	July 24
Restructure/ redesign of Specialist Outreach Services- adding in additional future traded element for sustainability	July 24	July 24
Consultation with Schools re Specialist Outreach	Mar 24	July 24
Co-design LP brochure for schools/settings- containing training offer, support and advice offer, resources on offer and objectives and performance indicators	May 24	July 24
	Jun 2024	Sept 24

Implementation Phase	Sept 24	July 25
LP Programme Launch	Sept 24	Sept 24
Publish LP Brochure	Sept 24	Sept 24
Co-produce setting allocation schedule	Sept 24	Oct 24
Agree individual setting PIs with schools/ settings	Oct 24	Dec 24
Review Lp input against PIs	Jan 25	Jul 25
Sustain Phase	Jul 25	Ongoing
Review and agree ongoing LP arrangements with key schools/settings		
- Including any traded elements	Sept 24	Sept 25
Provide necessary support materials		
Plan and agree Future refresher training arrangements etc	Ongoing	Ongoing
Carry out regular review of support arrangements and outcomes		

Behaviour Support Change Programme	Start Date	End Date
1d- EBSNA Pathway		
Co-Design Phase	Mar 24	Dec 24
Appoint Project Manager	Mar 24	Apr 24
Design overarching Project Plan	Apr 24	Apr 24
Design Training	March 24	Apr 24
Identify Key Delivery staff	Apr 24	May 24
Recruit Backfill EP capacity	Apr 24	Jul 24
Co-produce training rollout	May 24	Jul 24
Co-produce new EBSNA Pathway	Sept 24	Dec 24
Implementation Phase	Jul 24	
Share training schedule with settings	Sept 24	Sept 24
Commence and complete training Delivery	Oct 24	Dec 24
Launch new EBSNA Pathway	Jan 25	Feb 25
Sustain Phase	May 25	Ongoing
Monitor and review EBSNA pathway	May 25	Ongoing
Agree ongoing support arrangements from trainers	May 25	Jul 25
Plan and agree Future refresher training arrangements	Jun 25	Ongoing

Behaviour Support Change Programme	Start Date	End Date
1e- High Dependency Unit		
Co-Design Phase	March 24	May 24
Appoint Project Manager	Mar 24	Apr 24
Design overarching Project Plan	Apr 24	Apr 24

Fully co-produced design of HN Unit Pilot	Mar 24	Apr 24
EHCP place funding scoped and agreed Through governance	Mar 24	Apr 24
Pilot overview and project plan shared across settings	Apr 24	May 24
Design appropriate training	Apr 24	Jul 24
Identify Key schools for pilot	Apr 24	Apr 24
Resource requirements agreed and delivered	Apr 24	Jul 24
Settings identify/ appoint key staff	Apr 24	Jul 24
Complete training for key staff	Apr 24	Sep 24
Agree review arrangements with settings	May 24	Jul 24
Implementation Phase	Sept 24	Jul 25
Launch Pilots	Sept 24	Oct 24
Settings/ LA identify student for units	Sept 24	Oct 24
1st pilot review completed	Dec 24	Dec 24
2 nd Pilot review completed	Apr 25	Apr 25
3 rd Pilot review completed	Jul 25	Jul 25
Wider roll-out plan agreed	May 25	Jul 25
Wider roll out plans shared with settings	Jun 25	Jul 25
Sustain Phase		
Wider roll out commenced	Sept 25	Ongoing
Provide ongoing support materials	Ongoing	Ongoing
Agree ongoing support arrangements	Jul 25	Ongoing
Termly review schedule in place	Sept 25	ongoing

2. Inclusion Change Programme- Accountable officer Charlotte Finch

Inclusion Change Programme 2a and B-Inclusion Toolkit and Quality Mark	Start Date	End Date
Co-Design Phase	March 24	Sep 24
Appoint Project Manager	March 24	Apr 24
Design overarching Project Plan	Apr 24	Apr 24
Co-produce Toolkit	Mar 24	Jul 24
Co-produce/source materials	Mar 24	Jul 24
Co-produce Self-Assessment Framework alongside toolkit	Mar 24	Jul 24
Design Training for key staff	Apr 24	May 24
Identify Key staff to audit against toolkit	May 24	Sep 24
Identify 2 pilot schools in each age range	Apr 24	Jun 24
Complete training for audit staff	Jun 24	Jul 24

Co-produce training rollout for pilot settings	apr 24	Jun 24
Co-produce audit schedule	Jun 24	Jul 24
Co-produce future training schedule for all settings	Jun 24	Sept 24
Co-design Quality Mark Strategy and Operational Guide	Mar 24	Jul 24
Co-design Quality Mark	May 24	Sept 24
Identify necessary support resources	Apr 24	Jul 24
Share pilot roll out and audit schedule across settings	Jul 24	Jul 24
Implementation Phase	Jul 24	Jul 25
Publish Pilot Plan	Jul 24	Sept 24
Publish Quality Mark Strategy	Jul 24	Sept 24
Publish Quality mark Operational Guide	Jul 24	Sep 24
Publish Self-assessment Framework and Toolkit	Jul 24	Sept 24
Launch pilots	Sept 24	Oct 24
Publish Training Menu for all settings	Sept 24	Oct 24
1st Review of Pilot Settings	Dec 24	Dec 24
2 nd Review of Pilot Settings	Apr 25	Apr 25
Quality mark Audit for Pilot Settings completed	Jun 24	Jul 25
Sustain Phase		
Launch Quality Mark across all settings	Sept 25	Oct 25
Launch Self-assessment process across all settings	Sept 25	Oct 25
Finalise review and audit schedule across settings	Sept 25	Dec 25
Agree ongoing support and review arrangements for all settings	Jul 25	ongoing

Inclusion Chage Programme	Start Date	End Date
2c – Lead Practitioner		
Co-Design Phase	March 24	Sept 24
Appoint Project manager	March 24	April 24
Design overarching Project Plan	April 24	April 24
Design LP Training programme	March 24	March 24
Share LP workplan with settings/schools	May 24	June 24
	June 24	Jul 24

Identify/appoint LPs across all age phases	Jul 24	Jul 24
LP training schedule completed	Mar 24	Jul 24
Restructure/ redesign of Specialist Outreach Services- adding in additional future traded element for sustainability	May 24	Jul 24
Consultation with Schools re Specialist Outreach	Jun 2024	Sept 24
Co-design LP brochure for schools/settings- containing training offer, support and advice offer, resources on offer and objectives and performance indicators	Sept 24	July 25
Implementation Phase	Sept 24	Sept 24
LP Programme Launch	Sept 24	Sept 24
Publish LP Brochure	Sept 24	Oct 24
Co-produce setting allocation schedule	Oct 24	Dec 24
Agree individual setting PIs with schools/ settings	Jan 25	Jul 25
Review Lp input against PIs	Jul 25	Ongoing
Sustain Phase		
Review and agree ongoing LP arrangements with key schools/settings - Including any traded elements	Sept 24	Sept 25
Provide necessary support materials		
Plan and agree Future refresher training arrangements etc	Ongoing	Ongoing
Carry out regular review of support arrangements and outcomes		

Inclusion Chage Programme 2d Headteacher Coach and Influence Model	Start Date	End Date
Co-Design Phase	March 24	Sept 24
Appoint Project manager	March 24	April 24
Design overarching Project Plan	April 24	April 24
Audit training needs	Mar 24	Apr 24
Co-Design Training programme	Apr 24	May 24
Share workplan with settings/ schools	May 24	June 24
Identify/appoint Coaches across all age phases	June 24	Jul 24
Headteacher training schedule completed	Jul 24	Jul 24
Co-design support schedule for schools/settings- containing training offer, support and advice offer and objectives and performance indicators	May 24	Jul 24
Co-produce setting allocation schedule	Jun 2024	Jul 24

Implementation Phase	Sept 24	Jul 25
Heacteacher C&I Programme Launch	Sept 24	Sept 24
Publish Support Schedule	Sept 24	Sept 24
Agree individual PIs with schools/ settings	Sept 24	Dec 24
Review C&I model input against PIs	May 25	Jul 25
Sustain Phase	Jul 25	Ongoing
Review and agree ongoing C&I arrangements with key schools/settings	Jan 25	Ongoing
Provide necessary support materials	Ongoing	Ongoing
Plan and agree Future refresher training arrangements etc	Jan 25	Ongoing
Carry out regular review of support arrangements and outcomes	Termly	Termly

10. Programme Risks

No	Workstream Name	Risk Description	Impact	Risk Manager	Rating	Control/Mitigation	Review
1	Behaviour Support Thrive	Cost of training programme	Unable to purchase desired programme/ programme severely compromised	DM SEND	L	No back up if grant not secured Pilot as an alternative Additional admin support	Sept 2024
2	Behaviour Support Thrive	Low engagement from partners	Unable to roll out programme across borough- impact diminished	DM SEND	M	Project management Support Additional admin support	July 2024
3	Behaviour Support Thrive	Roll-out slippage/ undeliverable roll out schedule	Impact/ delayed/ diminished/ not achieved	DM SEND	M	Project management support Additional admin support	July 2024

			across borough. Financial opportunities not realised				
4	Behaviour Support Team Teach	Roll-out slippage/ undeliverable roll out schedule	Impact/ delayed/ diminished/ not achieved across borough. Financial opportunities not realised	DM SEND	M	Project management support Additional admin support	Sept 2024
5-	Behaviour Support Team Teach	Failure to recruit PM	Reduced capacity	DM SEND	L	Distribute work amongst existing workforce Look to recruit alternative role e.g. additional SEND manager Additional admin support	March 2024
6-	Behaviour Support Team teach	Cost of programme	Unable to purchase desired programme/ programme severely compromised	DM SEND	L	No back up if grant not secured Pilot as an alternative Additional admin support	April 2024
7-	Behaviour Support Lead Practitioner roll out	Low engagement/ unable to identify key staff Settings unwilling to purchase LP support when it moves to traded model	Delayed/ diminished impact Unable to realise financial opportunities	DM SEND	M	Readvertise/ increase engagement effort Additional admin support Effective restructure of Specialist Outreach team. Excellent communication strategy to promote and share benefits	April 2024

8-	Behaviour Support Refreshed EBSNA Pathway	Insufficient capacity to achieve goal	Delayed/ diminished impact Unable to realise financial opportunities	DM SEND	L	Project management support Recruitment of additional staff Health Additional admin support	July 2024
9	Behaviour Support High Dependency Unit Pilot	Low engagement/ take up from settings	Delayed/ diminished impact Unable to realise financial opportunities	DM SEND	M	Increase engagement effort/ meet with Trust CEOs Additional admin support	March 2024
10-	Inclusion Quality Mark	Low Engagement/ Aversion to potential growth in SEND	Delayed/ diminished impact Unable to realise opportunities	DM SEND	M	Increase engagement effort Additional admin support	July 2024
11-	Inclusion Toolkit/ Self-assessment framework	Capacity Low Engagement	Delayed/ diminished impact Unable to realise opportunities	DM SEND	M	Utilise associate EP workforce and additional management capacity to add capacity Additional admin support	May 2024
12-	Inclusion Lead Practitioner/ Mentor Programme	Low engagement	Unable to roll out programme across borough- impact diminished	DM SEND	M	Increase engagement effort/ meet with Trust CEOs Additional admin support	September 2024
13-	Headteacher Coach and Influence model	Low engagement Capacity	Unable to roll out programme across borough- impact diminished	DM SEND	M	Increase engagement effort/ meet with Trust CEOs Additional admin support	July 2024



HALTON SEND STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT BOARD RISK REGISTER JUNE 2024

Likelihood	Very Likely	5	5 Low	10 Moderate	15 Moderate	20 High	25 High
	Likely	4	4 Low	8 Moderate	12 Moderate	16 High	20 High
	Possible	3	3 Low	6 Low	9 Moderate	12 Moderate	15 Moderate
	Unlikely	2	2 Low	4 Low	6 Low	8 Moderate	10 Moderate
	Very Unlikely	1	1 Low	2 Low	3 Low	4 Low	5 Low
Risk Rating matrix			1	2	3	4	5
		Minor	Moderate	Significant	Serious	Major	
Impact							

KEY

	Action Complete
	On track no issues
	On track some delays
	Not started

Ref	Risk Opened	Priority Area	Description of Risk	Strategic SEND Lead	Current Controls	Key to risk score: L = Likelihood (1 low – 5 high) I = Impact (1 low – 5 catastrophic) R = Risk Score (LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT)			Management actions to mitigate the risk				SRO Risk Owner	Last Updated	Update
						Current	Current	Current	Target	Target	Target				
						Impact	Likelihood	Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Risk				
Rating	Rating	Score	Rating	Rating	Score										
1	01/03/24	PAP 1	Failure to have an Integrated SEND Performance and Business intelligence Dashboard in place demonstrates the inability of Senior Leaders to assess delivery of strategic vision, objectives and outcomes for children and young people.	Zoe Fearon and Denise Roberts	1. Working Group established 2. Meetings diarised 3. Long list KPIs being explored 4. Separate SRO identified	4	4	16	4	1	4	SRO: Michelle Creed	05/01/24	Long list of KPIs developed and liaison with SROs underway to establish final list to be used. Draft dashboard in development awaiting final KPIs	
2									Action to be taken	Lead	Due Date	RAG Status			

	06/05/24	PAP 1	Timescales are now short to have an AP Strategy drafted, approved by the Board and in place for implementation for September 2024. Failure to progress at pace could result in no AP Strategy in place for September 2024, potentially leaving some children and young people vulnerable to potentially avoidable suspensions or permanent exclusion.	Charlotte Finch	1. DCS agreement to commission external consultant to undertake at pace review of AP and draft an AP Strategy	3	3	9	1 Commissioned officer to be appointed and commence review of AP and draft AP strategy	Charlotte Finch	30/6/2024		2	3	6	SRO: MW Risk Owner: CF	06/05/24	
3									Action to be taken	Lead	Due Date	RAG Status						
		PAP 4	General capacity creating some delay in time scales.	Charlotte Finch	Send Programme Lead interviews 06.06.24. SEND PMO to be evaluated and advertised. all will add capacity. Data officer now in post	3	3	9	Appoint SEND Programme Lead	Charlotte Finch			2	3	6	SRO:CF Risk Owner:CF	06/06/24	Interviews held on day of writing for SEND Programme Lead, update on appointment to be given verbally at Strategic Partnership
									Appoint PMO	Charlotte Finch			2	3	6			
4									Action to be taken	Lead	Due Date	RAG Status						
	06/05/24	PAP 2	Some slippage due to ILACS review	M Stapleton-Chambers	Priority now given of upcoming agendas for various meetings	3	3	9	Ensure items are on upcoming agendas as priority	M Stapleton-Chambers			4	1	4	SRO : M Stapleton-Chambers	05/06/24	
5									Action to be taken	Lead	Due Date	RAG Status						

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	15 July 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Acting Director of Education
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Young People and Families
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Report for Quarter 3 2023/24
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the first quarter period 01 October 2023 to 31 December 2023.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023/24 were agreed by Members and included in the Business Plan, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Education, Inclusion, Provision Services
 - Children and Families Services

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 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

- 1) Receive the third quarter's performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; 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 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Have a strong and robust framework for identifying and responding across all agencies is key to supporting children and young people, and partners are clear about their responsibilities and role in working together.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Having a strong and robust framework to ensure that children, young people and families are supported in their learning and future employment and skills development.

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 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.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable.

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

10.1 None within the meaning of the Act

Children and Young People Priority Based PPB Report

Reporting Period: Quarter 3 2023-24

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 6).
- 1.2 Please note names 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 6).

2.0 Key Developments

2.1 **Mockingbird Programme for Fostering**

Mockingbird is a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK. It delivers sustainable foster care through an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.

Led by a hub home carer and liaison worker, the constellation community offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities, planned and emergency sleepovers and learning and development opportunities to strengthen relationships and permanence.

Halton Borough Council has secured over £2.3million in Department for Education (DfE) funding to transform fostering recruitment and retention across Cheshire and Merseyside. Warrington will be leading on the project and working with seven other local authorities – Liverpool, Wirral, Knowsley, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and St Helens to deliver the programme over two years up until 31st March 2025.

Over £1million of the funding will go towards delivering a new, larger and improved Foster4 Recruitment Hub which Halton are already involved in , which will launch in April 2024. The improved hub will help all councils in the consortium to deliver a more joined up approach to foster care recruitment and provide an offer that is attractive and supportive to prospective carers.

The remaining £1million funding will go towards the Mockingbird programme – which supports looked after children and their foster carers – as Warrington and Cheshire East will add another constellation to provide greater support to even more foster carers who will benefit from the model. All other local authorities will also have the opportunity to set up and embed their own first constellation using this funding.

Previously Warrington has set up and operates three Mockingbird constellations, which is a highly successful model that supports and retains foster carers effectively. Each constellation features an experienced Hub Carer at its core, providing crucial support for maintaining placements and ensuring stability and consistency for the children and young people in their care.

Halton Fostering will in Q4 2023/24 start the process of interviewing/ identifying who the Hub carer will be and we aim to have its first hub in place by the 1st April 2024. (KA)

2.2 **The Halton Lea 'Right to Succeed' Project:**

This project is part of the Steve Morgan foundation and working with Liverpool city region. Halton Lea was the ward that was identified 18 months ago to work in to improve outcomes for children and families. A hub model approach will be delivered and aligned with Halton's family Hub model. The programme has completed the discovery phase and has now moved into dedicated steering groups looking at education and wider services. The Right to Succeed education strand continues to make good progress, with services and activities commissioned and agreed with all schools and delivery successfully underway in 100% of identified schools within the region. A venue for the hub is still yet to be identified due to funds. (KA)

2.3 **Duty and Assessment Team Principal Manager**

A permanent experienced Principal Manager has been appointed to the Duty and Assessment Team. Lisa Riley has been in post since November 2023 offering stability to the management team.

2.4 **Family hubs:** Halton has launched first Family Hub with Kingsway Family Hub which was launched in July 2023 and In October 2023 we launched Runcorn 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. Early help leads coordinate the hub offer and working closely with all partners to deliver the new model. A steering group has been set up and will progress the different work streams and feed into the group. Year one funding has been rolled over.

Branding is now in place which was coproduced with children and families Governance structure of accountability has been suggested and ready for management sign off. The vision is that a starting well strategic governance 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. Halton Family Hubs has been recognised nationally due to the innovative practice and progress made on the family hub offer. We have been commended for the infant feeding work and the perinatal baby showers, In January 2024 we are due to have a visit from the Secretary of State of Education the right honourable Gillian Keegan MP. This highlights the dedication and hard work of all the partnership working. (KA)

2.5 **Specialist Safeguarding Health Coordinator**

The Duty and Assessment Team now have a Specialist Safeguarding health coordinator (Jo Lister) who has commenced building relationships with partner health agencies inclusive of hospitals, midwifery, and GP's. Whilst this work is still in its infancy, we are seeing a positive impact of Jo's work which has supported with coordination of multi-agency plans and positive outcomes for our children and families. Jo's experience, background and links with partner agencies has supported with relationship-based practice. (KA)

2.6 **PAUSE Project**

Pause Project in Halton is now well established, With 16 women already graduated and a further cohort engaging. The programme works with women who have previously had two or more children removed from their care. In September 2023 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. After a sustainability report and constant persistence funding was finally secured in March 23 for another 12 months for the programme. Currently being funding 50/50 by LA and ICB. Head of service for early help and

PAUSE practice lead are meeting with partners over the next few months for further discussions. None of the participants have gone on to have more children and two children have returned home to their mother as a consequence of the work completed and the changes made. Pause has also resulted in savings across agencies, including Mental Health services, A7E department, Police, housing and drug and alcohol services totalling up to £209,914. The cumulative cost savings are £3,256,537, equating to a cost benefit ratio of \$4.49 for every £1 spent.

2.7 **High Needs Capital Grant Funding**

Following receipt of circa £3.3M High Needs Capital Grant funding from the Department for Education to expand Special Educational Needs provision in Halton, works have now been completed at six of Halton's primary schools, resulting in an additional 77 SEND places in Halton. Works are also ongoing for provision of a further 40 additional SEND places (24 primary places and 16 secondary places) which should be completed for a September 2024 opening. Officers are also in discussion with colleagues in Halton's special schools to look at expanding their existing provision, also using the High Needs Capital Grant funding. (JF)

2.8 **Priority Education Investment Area – Attendance Strand**

Halton is part of the Department for Education's Priority Education Investment Area programme, and as a result following submission of a funding bid, was notified in November 2023 that it had successfully secured circa £400k up to 31st March 2025 to help tackle Halton's Persistent Absence rate across the borough's schools. The funding will allow for the recruitment of five School Attendance Support Officers, one Data/Performance Officer focusing on Attendance, a 0.5 FTE Assistant Educational Psychologist, and some Administration support, all of which will be used to specifically help target those pupils whose absence is persistent or at risk of becoming persistent. (JF)

Priority Education Investment Area – Educational outcomes strand

PEIA funding has been determined and commissioning of services and providers has been completed for the three educational outcome strands, with delivery now well underway (Improving outcomes at early years foundation stage, KS2 and KS4). 100% of spaces available on each programme have been filled with eligible schools. (JF)

2.9 **School Governance**

The School Improvement Service are now working in partnership with local businesses to promote the role of school governance, resulting in a decrease in vacancies on boards. (JF)

2.10 **School Exclusions**

The 'Team Around the School' initiative has brought together a multi-agency board of professionals from across services to reduce exclusion rates. This has successfully launched across 100% of mainstream secondary school, with further expansion into primary planned for Q4 2023/24. (JF)

2.11 **Kinship Care**

The DfE have announced an expansion of the Virtual School to encompass strategic support for children identified as receiving Kinship Care. This will launch in September 2024 with preparatory work underway in anticipation. (JF)

2.12 **Delivering Better Value**

Delivering Better Value (DBV) is a programme primarily working to identify and implement local opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND across 54 LAs, and aid local systems (alongside existing local and other DfE programmes) in their

objective of achieving financial sustainability. Halton is one of the LA's identified as eligible to apply for DBV grant funding. Our application was submitted on the 20th December 2023 and requested £1m of grant funding, primarily to build resilience across all educational systems to support and include learners with Social, Emotional Mental Health Needs. The initiatives outlined in our bid are designed to allow schools and settings to support SEND children effectively, without necessarily having to request an Education Health and Care assessment, alleviating the demand for specialist placements, and reducing both the risk of out of borough placement and permanent exclusions. The outcome of our application for funding is due to be released by the end of March 2024. (JF)

- 2.13 SEND Local Area Inspection – Between 6th and 24th November 2023, Halton SEND Local Area Partnership were inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the effectiveness of the area's partnership SEND arrangements in improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including the extent to which: children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed. The Inspection Outcome has not yet been published and therefore it is not possible to share that information in this report. The Inspection Outcome will be published no later than January 31st 2024. (JF)

2.14 **Children's Commissioning Team**

The Childrens Commissioning Team are currently reviewing all contracts and arrangements prior to the end of the financial year to support financial uplift negotiations with providers. This continues to be a challenging exercise due to the impact of cost of living rises and wider inflationary pressures. Despite this the team continue to monitor performance to maintain value for money and achievement against quality indicators. The individual placement team resource is being increased to review high-cost packages of care in terms of both spend and assessment of need.

A new provider of speech & language therapy services has been jointly commissioned with health colleagues called 'Communicate'. The service is currently in the process of recruiting the required number of speech therapists and colleagues are providing support to manage delivery and to prioritise cases accordingly. (JF)

3.0 Emerging Issues

3.1 **Wraparound Childcare**

From September 2024, primary school age children must have access to wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm. The Education, Inclusion and Provision Division of Children’s Services are engaging with schools and private providers to ensure sufficiency of places are available to enable this provision to be in place. (JF)

3.2 **Halton’s Childcare Sufficiency**

Whilst Halton’s Sufficiency Duty Report shows that Halton continues to provide a sufficient, flexible, and high-quality early years and childcare market, there continue to be concerns around the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly with the expansion of free childcare in 2024 and 2025. The Early Years team are working closely with other LA’s within the Liverpool City Region to address this issue. A marketing campaign aimed at attracting Childminders into the profession is also being developed to commence in Q4 2023/24. (JF)



- 3.3 **School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant:** The School Improvement Service has historically been funded by the ‘School Improvement, Monitoring and Brokering Grant’, which has enabled Local Authorities to risk assess, quality assure and provide educational, curriculum and leadership support and challenge to all our maintained schools. This also funded provision for training, briefings, and cluster networks for school staff, led by Associate School Improvement Advisors (ASIA) colleagues. Sadly, this grant has been ceased and we therefore need to move towards the service becoming funded through a service level agreement with all schools. This presents risks in engaging all schools and ensuring support is purchased back at a sufficient level to enable them to receive the necessary support, challenge, and guidance.




The SLA and course and network meeting charges have now been shared with school leaders and went live for sign up in Q3 2023/24. Halton have offered such key services for free and are one of the last authorities to move to a charging system. There are potential benefits that this enables colleagues to work with all schools, if school leaders wish to commission the function from Halton Local Authority, through a service level agreement. Engagement and sign up is being monitored with assurances sought that external provision is in place where take-up is declined. (JF)

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	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr. Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED01 01	Increase the number of early help assessments (MAP/PRE-MAP) health/education and other partners are leading on	613 MAP 263 PRE-MAP	N/A	516 MAP 149 PRE-MAP	 Q3 22-23 365 (All)	N/A
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Val Armor Work is continuing with regards to the roll out programme for training health and education in accessing the system and taking the lead professional role. Runcorn Locality manager is the lead officer in driving this forward however we are yet to see the impact of this on number of health and schools in the lead professional role. We are also going to develop a team around the school approach in collaboration with education colleagues. This will focus on increasing attendance but will also help to support school colleagues with MAP's. Support clinics and weekly working together meetings will oversee the increase in partnership uptake in the borough. Head of service and performance team are currently looking at data collection as the way that data is interpreted for early help is not a true picture of early help offer in the borough and across the partnership. New OD now in place and will establish an early help partnership board to offer scrutiny and accountability for partners.</p>						
PED01 02	Improve overall attendance at schools: Primary –Pri PRU – PRU Secondary – Sec Special – Spec Total	LA - 92.12% Pri - 93.86% Sec - 90.38% Spe - 87.62% PRU - 54.61%	95%	LA - 92.97% Pri - 94.81% Sec – 91.13% Spec – 88.46% PRU – 59.33%	N/A	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Debbie Houghton /Scott Middlehurst School attendance to the end of the autumn term 23 shows an improvement across all schools from the previous quarter from 92.12% to 92.97%, primary from 93.86% to 94.81% (0.19% off the 95% target), secondary from 90.38% to 91.13%, specials from 87.62% to 88.46% and the PRU from 54.61% to 59.33%.</p>						







Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED01a	Work with schools to maintain the level of attendance at Primary and Secondary Schools. Debbie Houghton (March 2024)	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Debbie Houghton The local authority has been allocated PEIA funding from the DfE to support children who are persistently absent (PA) from school to improve their attendance, and reduce PA. The PEIA funding is being utilised to recruit five new attendance support officers to work with schools. This should help Halton to continue the positive trend improving school attendance. In addition, the Education Welfare Service is continuing to provide additional statutory support to schools on attendance in line with the Working Together to improve school attendance alongside the traded offer.</p>		
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.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Val Armor 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.. Funding for a further 12 months have finally been secured in March 23. A plan is now in place to secure further funding from partners for 3-5 years. The new cohort of women for 23-24 have been contacted and are in the engagement process of the programme 90% of the women have already signed up to the programme</p>		
PED01c	Revise Halton's parental offer that will include further developmental of reducing parental conflict training.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Val Armor The Parenting officer has been in post since January 2022 and now all referrals for parenting go to one central point. This has made it much easier for partners to understand. There have been three parenting events so far in June 2022, January 23 and April 23 and this will be on a rolling programme so partners in the borough are aware of all of the parenting offer. Talks are</p>		




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 Amity (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. This funding will be aligned with Family Hubs transformation and two scale 5 parenting assistants have now been recruited to, this will enhance the reducing parental conflict agenda. The borough continues to embed nurture principles through all of our parenting work across the workforce.









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

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	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)	617	500 (full year)	662 (rate) 1218 (total)	 Q3 22-23 469	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Sarah Ellison</i> To continue with strengthening the understanding and application of thresholds in Halton the Integrated Contact and Referral Team (iCART) have presented the threshold document and multi-agency referral process to 80 education representatives at the Services to Schools briefing session. In quarter 4 there will be further re launches of the threshold and multi-agency referral pathway through the mandatory Working Together training and workshops in respect of consent. The Duty and Assessment Team now have a Specialist Safeguarding health coordinator (Jo Lister) who is based in the team. Jo has commenced building relationships with partner health agencies inclusive of hospitals, midwifery, and GP's. Whilst this work is still in its infancy, we are seeing a positive impact of Jo's work as Jo has supported with coordination of multi-agency plans which has led to positive outcomes for children and families. In this quarter our locality teams continue to engage and work with community partners to do more for children and families before referring to Children Social Care by completing comprehensive multi-agency plans (MAPs) for children referred at level 3 of Halton's Continuum of Need. This piece of work is ongoing, and we are yet to see the impact of this.</p>						
PED02 02	Monitor the rate of children in need (open cases including care leavers) per 10,000 0-18-year-olds (snapshot at end of quarter)	499	500	446 (rate) 1228 (total)	 Q3 22-23 385	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Sarah Ellison</i> During Q3 2023/24 we have had the additional resource and support of Practice Improvement Leads. The Practice Improvements leads have lead workshops on thresholds, practice standards and what 'good' looks like when assessing and reviewing intervention and support for our children and families. Caseloads have been reviewed and audited with the social workers which has supported improving the timeliness of assessments to determine the level of need. Early Help locality seniors have also offered additional support by basing themselves one day a week in the social work teams to discuss those children who are assessed as not requiring statutory intervention. This has strengthened the transfer to the locality teams / children centres.</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)	70	45	71.9 (rate) 198 (total)	 Q3 22-23 61	
<p><i>Supporting commentary: Sarah Ellison</i> Working closely with Early Help step down cases will be worked on so that they do not escalate back into statutory services. By strengthening the understanding and application of thresholds at different transition points (contact to referral, referral to assessment/ strategy discussion) we will reduce the number of cases progressing as CP. We have managed to reduce our caseloads per social worker. This is strengthening the quality of our assessments and intervention to reduce number of cases escalating to CP. Practice Improvement Lead and CIN Reviewing Officer are supporting managers in iCART/ DAT to ensure that cases are progressing at the right levels</p>						

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED02 04	Monitor the rate of children in care per 10000 0–18-year-olds (snapshot at end of quarter)	133	90	144.5 (rate) 398 (total)	 Q3 22-23 136	
<p>Supporting commentary: Jamie Pope Halton's rate of children in care has remained above all comparators for the past 18 months. The number of children in care has been impacted by the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as an LA. In Dec 23 there were 27 UASC.</p>						
PED02 05	Reduce the number of children and young people who enter the care system (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter)	147	68	90	 Q3 22-23 114	
PED02 06	Reduce the average caseload in Children in Need Teams (snapshot end of quarter)	21	18	20	 Q3 22-23 20	
<p>Supporting commentary: Raj Bharkhada There continues to be stability in our caseloads, our ability to step down cases to early help is improving as we work more closely with our colleagues in early help. We have weekly meetings with Staff from EH and begin the process of working together. A review of the CIN manager will be underway shortly, we anticipate that now is the right time for the manager to move from the front door to our CIN service. This will assist us to focus more specifically on the incoming work and put plans in place early to prevent drift.</p>						
PED02 07	Increase the proportion of missing incidents where a return interview is completed (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter)	70%	85%	53%	 Q3 22-23 53%	
<p>Supporting commentary: Clare Hunt For this period, there have been 88 return interviews completed with 46 young people by the commissioned service. 53% of all incidents have had a return interview and 74% were completed within 72 hours, this is an increase from the previous quarter. The Declines for return interviews were 74 incidents by 32 young people.</p>						
PED02 08	Reduce the number of children who repeatedly run away in Halton (in last 12 months, snapshot end of quarter)	21	N/A	23	 Q3 22-23 4	
<p>Supporting commentary: Clare Hunt For this reporting period, there has been a total of 220 notifications from the commissioned service. There have been 23 young people with repeat missing incidents. These three young people have made three or more incidents during the quarter, accounted for 69% of all missing incidents in the quarter. The repeat cohort was made up of 13 males and 10 female. 21 of the 23 young people received a return home interview. The repeat cohort continues to have good engagement with the MFH service and will mainly engage with RHI's. For those who continue to decline RHI's, With You case workers have identified alternative ways to engage CYP including joint visits with social workers/lead professionals and offering alternative locations/methods of completing RHIs. The repeat cohort are known to CSC and other services due to having trigger meetings to discuss their individual circumstances and a plan of support for these CYP. Where RHI's have been declined, the attempts made have been clear on the decline form and a request for social worker to complete instead.</p>						

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
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)	357	N/A	82	 Q3 22-23 88	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Clare Hunt</p> <p>There has been an increase of 20% of missing incidents from 184 to 220, there has been a slight reduction in young people from 96 to 82. The gender of CYP being reported missing remains equal in both age cohorts. The accommodation status of CYP is also evenly split between home CYP and the cared for cohort. There has been an increase in the number of other local authorities in this quarter, particularly in November and December. This was due to receiving missing notifications from social workers late, which should have been sent in the previous quarter. The main reasons young people said they went missing this quarter was due to boundary issues at home or care, family conflicts or relationship issues. Caseworkers also identified further reasons of substance misuse, peer pressure, older peers, or mental health. The main things that young people said they experienced while away was poor safety planning, which is consistent with caseworkers' views along with substance misuse and ASB. For Young People who said that substance misuse or mental health was their reason for going missing, onward referrals were offered to support. For any young person with CE/CSE indicators, the appropriate screening tools have been completed/contributed to and discussed in risk meetings. Advice & information has been given to young people following RHI's around these factors to prevent further missing incidents, including the use of portable chargers or the risks and dangers of having their phones switched off.</p>						
PED02 10	Record the number of young people flagged as at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (snapshot end of quarter)	13	20	18	 Q3 22-23 12	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Raj Bharkhada</p> <p>Multi-agency meetings are in place and are attended regularly by partner agencies. Social Care is the co-chair for this meeting. We need to ensure that all relevant cases are reviewed by this panel, actions addressed. And where required social workers are to provide a detailed and current risk assessment. All cases are heard at the monthly meeting with a targeted risk management plan for each child. Police and Social Care need to work closely over the next few months to establish good working relationships. Additionally, we have reviewed high risk cases within the service and continue to monitor them regularly. Attendance at this meeting by social workers with updated assessments has improved considerably over the past few months, this results in partners having a good picture of the risk and management of it.</p>						
PED02 11	Record the number of young people flagged as at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (snapshot end of quarter)	34	12	24 Low 23 Med 8 High	 Q3 22-23 22	

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED02a	Embed a systemic model of social work practice across the whole service, social workers, managers, and senior leaders.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Katherine Appleton Together with our SLIP partners in Warrington systemic training has been delivered across the workforce however the instability in the workforce remains a challenge when embedding the principals. SLIP partners are continuing to offer support to Halton as part of our improvement journey and the systemic approach to social work practice will continue to be driven across the teams.</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.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Katherine Appleton The workforce Board will be set up in January to co-ordinate and review all recruitment, the staff wellbeing offer, and workforce strategy. All HOS are members of the board ensuring full ownership of the boards objectives. The workforce strategy will be a priority in the forth coming quarter The Social Work Academy has implemented the ASYE practice standards across the service and the offer to our ASYE's is comprehensive. The Local Authority are pursuing the Frontline partnership and confirmation on whether this is approved will happen in January. The induction programme for staff joining Halton is also being reviewed in the new year.</p>		
PED02c	Implement redevised structure for children and need service to ensure better resilience and management accountability to provide a safe and structured environment for social workers.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Katherine Appleton Halton continue to review the workforce arrangements. Together with the TDU a number of workstreams and priorities have been identified and are being implemented. DAT has benefited from the recruitment of the Principal manager and Head Of Service which has improved the stability of the team. Each service area has completed a plan on a page to look at individual priorities and these are in line with the strategic plan for the council. Reviews around Business support, Edge of Care and DAT teams are progressing. All heads of service will be in post by January and the work around the PSW and workforce HOS has been completed and is pending Job evaluation. This new structure will bring increased stability to the workforce, improved consistency around messages and will support the review of policy procedures and processes providing additional reassurance to staff.</p>		
PED02d	Implement redevised quality and assurance framework to monitor improvements in practice.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Katherine Appleton The quality assurance framework is in place and providing an overview of the strengths of practice and areas for continued development. The QA framework has benefited from the appointment of a Quality Assurance officer to co-ordinate and lead on the embedding of the framework. Audits are completed monthly and moderated by Principal managers and above. The findings of audits are discussed in the learning review meeting and actions agreed on priority areas. When the permanent staff take up position in the Social Work academy they will link in with the QAF to deliver specific training to the workforce along with team and targeted support.</p>		

Objective: Improve outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers (PED03)						
Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED03 01	Reduce the number of children who are placed in residential care (snapshot at end of quarter)	40	20	49	 Q3 22-23 45	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary</u> Jamie Pope Please note this target is from previous directorate plan. New permanent head of service is now in post. Review of those children and young people who are placed in a residential placement will continue to ensure that only those children and young people who require this type of placement remain in such placements. Monitoring meetings take place to ensure appropriate timely plans are in place for young people moving towards independence as well as reviewing progress. (JP)</p>						
PED03 02	Reduce the number of children who are placed in independent fostering agencies (snapshot at end of quarter)	71	35	104	 Q3 22-23 76	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Jamie Pope Placement requests are tracked through the 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 this provides opportunity to consider in house carers. All requests for a fostering placement on Eclipse go to the internal fostering team to ensure best use of resources as well as tracking against new applicants at an early stage and only after this is a referral made to the independent sector. This remains an ongoing area of focus and the fostering team are looking to strengthen their fostering recruitment for in house carer. (JP)</p>						
PED03 03	Maintain the percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of quarter)	94%	95%	96%	 Q3 22-23 96%	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Jamie Pope The Care leaver accommodation group continues to meet monthly and track young people alongside sourcing appropriate accommodation for them to transition into.</p>						
PED03 04	Increase the percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (snapshot at end of quarter)	57%	65%	58%	 Q3 22-23 55%	
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Jamie Pope Halton are fully staffed with personal advisors which going forward will allow more focus in working with the virtual school in sourcing appropriate EET opportunities and supporting Care Leavers to access them.</p>						
PED03 05	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)	Residential 42% Leaving Care 94.7%	N/A	Refer comment	Q3 22-23 Residential 41% Leaving Care 58%	N/A
<p><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Kevin Greaves There continues to be resource constraints in the placements team that has impacted on the ability to complete some planned quality monitoring visits. As a result, the team have prioritised accordingly and have scheduled in as many visits as possible on a rota basis and in relation to any specific need or issues. However, as well as the planned visits there have been a number of responsive visits that have taken place linked to quality concerns from Professionals and in addition to the result of OFSTED inspection outcome reports. These issues will begin to improve during the next quarter as a new placement officer will have commenced in post whose role is to co-ordinate this process more effectively.</p>						





Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED03 06	Report on the budget spent on independent and out of borough placements for Children in Care (Forecast end of year) (Sarah Riley/Lucy Freaney)	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	Refer comment	N/A	N/A

Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves







Several initiatives are being implemented to effectively manage and reduce spend on placements:







- Focused interrogation of the highest cost placements via a targeted cohort approach whereby an agreed selection of young people can be tracked in relation to spend and interventions at review.
- Greater engagement with providers to understand the cost base of placements and how this is matched against need to determine best fit.
- Staff training
- Supported Lodgings, Commissioned Care Leavers Group and Training Flats
- Reviewing 'CARE Cubed' model alongside Salford colleagues in peer support group.





Consistent work being carried out with support from the Transformation & Delivery Unit to review cost.



Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED03a	Ensuring all children in care achieve permanency in a timely way.	
Supporting Commentary: Jamie Pope The new head of service is now in post and working in partnership with the transformation team to review permanence panel arrangements. To ensure all children in care are presented at panel in a timely way to add scrutiny and oversight to their permanence plan. This will be re launched to re-establish with staff.		
PED03b	Ensure that Safeguarding Unit escalate any delays or concerns using escalate policy.	
Supporting Commentary: Jamie Pope The Safeguarding Unit use the dispute resolution process to ensure timely and effective planning for our Children in Care and Children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan. The IRO's raise escalations through this process when more informal discussions with the Social Worker and Practice Lead has not led to satisfactory resolution/progress in planning for an individual child.		
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	
Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves The children's commissioning team are visiting all existing providers as part of a targeted review programme to ensure value for money and adherence to performance indicators and quality assurance. In addition to this and as part of a new 'sufficiency approach' several new providers are being engaged who are new to Halton to develop greater choice in the market, drive down cost and improve quality. This work is being used to inform the development of the HBC Commissioning Strategy.		
PED03d	Through the quality assurance of Personal Education Plans (PEP), identify areas of need and support to improve outcomes for individual Children in Care	
Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes At the end of the Autumn term 2023, 96% of PEPs were completed, this is slightly higher than the completion for Summer 2023. Following our new moderation process, the number of green or better PEPs is down slightly on Autumn last year. Grading of PEP's by team members have improved in consistency. To ensure a multi-agency oversight for the quality of PEP's, social care, fostering and education colleagues will form a multi-agency moderation panel meeting spring term. This will enhance qualitative monitoring arrangements and feed in to accountability procedures. Overall, the most popular spend of Pupil Premium + for the term was for social and emotional support. A focus for the Spring term will be looking at pupil level outcomes linked to Pupil Premium + spend to ensure that interventions continue to have impact. The rollout of the 2-year-old PEP has also started which will support in identifying areas of need in a timelier manner.		







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



Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED04 01	Increase the percentage of Education Health Care Plan assessments completed within 20 weeks (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	25.8%	75%	Refer comment	N/A	N/A
<p>Supporting Commentary: <i>Charlotte Finch</i> <i>The timeliness of EHCPs was on an improving trajectory, until the end of October 2023, beginning November 2023 when the assessment team were adversely affected by sickness absence. In addition to this the SEND area inspection required the team to focus resource and time on preparatory activity which took them away from Business as usual for approximately three weeks. These elements did impact negatively on the improvement trajectory. However, with the team now almost at full strength, the return to work of one staff member who had been absent for a prolonged period of time and the appointment of a new, but experienced Assessment Coordinator, business as usual is restored and we should expect to see the improvement trajectory should be restored.</i></p>						
PED04 02	Reduce the number of incidents of fixed term Suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	1218	500	580	 Q3 22-23 437	
<p>Supporting Commentary: <i>Debbie Houghton/ Scott Middlehurst</i> <i>The number of suspensions in the autumn term 2023 has resulted in 2,250 sessions lost due to suspensions. In 2022/23 the 1866 suspensions resulted in a loss of 6,784 sessions of attendance lost.</i></p>						
PED04 03	Reduce the number of children subject to fixed term suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	552	350	366	 Q3 22-23 293	
<p>Supporting Commentary: <i>Debbie Houghton/ Scott Middlehurst</i> <i>This is the first term of the 2023/24 academic year and the number of suspensions has already exceeded the target set and is more than double the number of suspensions for the first half term at 176. The Team around the School meetings are taking place each week to discuss children with multiple suspensions at risk of exclusion. These meetings are attended by school and other partner agencies including Education Psychologist, Education Welfare Service, Mental Health Support Team, Early Help etc. The aim of the meetings is to provide support and advice to schools to reduce suspensions and exclusions. Common themes raised by school are around persistent disruptive behaviour and internal truancy.</i></p>						
PED04 04	Reduce the number of children subject to a permanent suspension (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	39 (but 40 PERM Exc. One child excluded from 2 schools	30	16	 Q3 22-23 25	
<p>Supporting Commentary: <i>Debbie Houghton/ Scott Middlehurst</i> <i>There are 17 children permanently excluded until the end of autumn term 2023, two of whom are primary school children and the remainder secondary. This figure is slightly less than the 18 at the same point last academic year.</i></p>						
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	8% As of Q3 2022/23	3.6%	Refer comment	Q3 22-23 8%	N/A
<p>Supporting Commentary: <i>Charlotte Finch</i> <i>114 pupils are placed at 32 non-maintained and independent schools, an increase of one child since Q2 2023/24. In Q3 2023/24, 18 new non maintained independent special schools Search requests were received and there are currently 38 active searches, of these 14 are parental requests to consult with a NMISS school. The opening of the new Free School in September 2024, should reduce the demand for out of borough placement, along with the opening of additional Resource Base places across the borough.</i></p>						






Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED04 06	Report on the budget spent on independent and out of borough (OOB) provision for SEND (Forecast end of year)	Total year projected spend £6,726,000	£250000 reduction	Refer comment available next quarter	N/A	N/A
<p>Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves 114 pupils are placed at 32 non-maintained and independent schools, an increase of one child since Q2. In Q3 2023/24 – 18 new non maintained independent special schools Search requests were received and there are currently 38 active searches, of these 14 are parental requests to consult with a NMISS school. The average placement cost has risen to £60,572. Of the children on-roll their Primary Needs are: - 38 Cognition and Learning or have ASC as a primary need, SEMH – 64, Speech, Language and Communication - five and Visual Impairment – seven, the children are in Key Stages are: - KS1: 5, KS2: 16, KS3: 40, KS4: 41, KS5: 12. (CG)</p>						
PED04 07	Increase the percentage of children subject to EHCP placed in mainstream provision (snapshot end of quarter)	51% As of Q3 22/23	65%	50%	 Q3 22-23 51%	
<p>Supporting Commentary: Charlotte Finch The number of children with EHCPs in Halton placed in mainstream settings is growing. We are not yet in line with our statistical neighbours, with a disproportionate number of children attending specialist settings, both in and out of borough.</p>						
PED04 08	Monitor the percentage of Special Schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding	100%	100%	100%	same Q3 22-23 100%	
<p>Supporting Commentary: Jill Farrell Of all of Halton's maintained special schools, one is graded as good by OFSTED. Three are graded outstanding.</p>						
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)	N/A	75%	100%	N/A	
<p>Supporting Commentary: Charlotte Finch Significant improvement has been made in this area. Whilst we are unable currently to monitor assessment data for CP children, we are closely monitoring the assessment performance of CIC. Performance has significantly improved in this area</p>						
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.					
<p>Supporting Commentary: Charlotte Finch SEMH remains the second highest are of need in Halton. The Strategy on SEMH requires revision following the successful establishment of additional resource bases for SEMH and the opening of the new Free School. In addition to this, our recent application for the Delivering Better Value grant focusses heavily on SEMH, and contains many new initiatives to support this group of vulnerable learners. Should we be successful in our application for DBV, the offer for SEMH will be transformed exponentially. This will need to be reflected in a refreshed SEMH strategy.</p>						
PED04b	Review the current framework of support for children and young people with disabilities, including short breaks provision					
<p>Supporting Commentary: Claire Gurney Short Breaks - in Q3 2023/24 a new monitoring document has been developed to use during provider monitoring visits, this will be rolled out in Q4 2023/24 in collaboration with Disabled Children's Service. Delivery has maintained through Q3 2023/24, and providers are submitting their completed Q3 2023/24 quarterly performance information during January 2024. Nine Short Break services are due to end March 2024, eight have been approved: - Halton Play Council – Play Services, Vibe – Friendship Groups and Positive Future Consultancy - PA Support. These are supported by small grant awards to Everton in the Community – Trips and Visits, Vibe – Outdoor Activities, Sport Works – Splash Play and Swimming Lessons and Mako Create – Digital Media Workshops and will continue to provide support to children and families to April 2025. Motiv8 Sports Dance, Drama and Art Workshops will end. Work will start in 2024 to consider the 2025 offer. (CG)</p>						



Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED04c	Review direct payments with all recommissions co-produced with parents and young people.	
<u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Val Armor		
This has been reviewed in terms of commissioning to get the best offer and value for parents and carer.		
PED04d	Improve quality and timeliness of Education Health and Care Plans.	
<u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Charlotte Finch		
<p>The timeliness of EHCPs was on an improving trajectory, until the end of October, beginning November when the assessment team were adversely affected by sickness absence. IN addition to this the SEND area inspection required the team to focus resource and time on preparatory activity which took them away from Business as usual for approximately three weeks. These elements did impact negatively on the improvement trajectory. However, with the team now almost at full strength, the return to work of one staff member who had been absent for a prolonged period of time and the appointment of a new, but experienced Assessment Coordinator, business as usual is restored and we should expect to see the improvement journey recommence.</p> <p>Much work has been completed, with a focus on quality of EHCPs. A new QA framework is in place and added layers of QA are now implemented. A new EHCP template has been coproduced with stakeholders, which will shortly be launched. Invision 260 QA tool will also be launched this term, which again is envisaged to further improve the quality of EHCPs.</p>		
PED04e	Quality assure all provision currently being utilised to ensure that provision meets the needs of our children and young people.	
<u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Kevin Greaves		
Monitoring visits for Independent non maintained special school continue with a visit taking place in Q3 2023/24 and of the 32 schools commissioned 15 have been monitored covering 65% of children placed. Short Breaks - a new monitoring document has been developed to use during provider monitoring visits, this will be rolled out in Q3 2023/24. (CG)		
PED04f	Review in borough specialist provision and revise to meet the needs of Halton's children and young people	
<u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Charlotte Finch		
<p>The first phase of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy has been delivered. Phase two of the strategy is now being coproduced with stakeholders. An additional 117 specialist places will come on stream before the end of this academic year. A new SEMH Free School will open its doors in September 2024, providing up to 36 additional specialist school places across Halton and St Helens. This will increase to 64 places in total by Sept 2026. Phase 2 of the SEND sufficiency strategy will look at the development of additional resource base places at secondary phase, in order to provide smooth transition from primary aged resource base. We are currently liaising with School Place Planning analytics company, Edge Analytics, to scope out options for more accurate SEND Forecasting data, to allow more forensic planning in the next phase of the sufficiency strategy.</p>		
Objective: Raise achievement across Early Years and all Key Stages, and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers (PED05)		

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	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 census)	98%	100% of eligible	94%	 Q3 22-23 92%	
<u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Karen Hardman						
473 out of 501 children were placed up to end of Autumn term.						

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED05 02	Increase the take up of Early Years Entitlement for 3- to 4-year-olds.	93.9%	96%	89%	 Q3 22-23 89%	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Karen Hardman</i> 89% of 3&4 Year Olds taking up a place based upon September Headcount and PCT October 2023 data.						
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)	91%	N/A	98%	 Q3 22-23 95%	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Karen Hardman</i> 98% of PVI settings are currently Outstanding, Good or Met, 96% of Early Years settings including maintained schools and academies are good or outstanding.						
PED05 04	Monitor the percentage of Primary schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding	76%	Dependent on Inspection dates	81%	 Q3 22-23 79%	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> Based on the latest data published, 100% maintained nurseries and 81% primaries are graded good or outstanding. There were fewer inspections during Q3, following a high number in Q1 and Q2. All maintained schools receive support and challenge from their Associate School Improvement Advisor, but this will move to a traded service model from April 2024.						
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%	N/A	50%	 Q3 22-23 67%	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> 50% of secondaries, 100% special schools and the Pupil Referral Unit are graded good or outstanding. None were inspected during Q3 2023/24.						



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	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> Associate School Improvement Advisor (ASIA) Link Officers to maintained and faith schools, as part of their termly visits, hold leaders to account for educational outcomes and progress of all pupils, especially disadvantaged and SEND. Guidance is provided to school governors through the director's briefing and through governor briefings to enable them to fulfil their duties. The Virtual School tracks the outcomes for Children in Care. Schools have also engaged with Peer to Peer SEND Reviews, including those with SEND resource base provision.		
PED05c	Review the process of risk assessment for schools and settings to target support and drive improvement	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> The School Improvement Team risk assess schools termly (and after Ofsted visits) and adjust targeted support to meet needs of schools. Due to the termination of the School Improvement, Monitoring and Brokering Grant for LAs, the service will move to an SLA model from April 2024, which will impact on the level of support schools can receive, but this will be tracked closely alongside plans for when urgent, intensive support is required. The SLA model has been developed in collaboration with school leaders and will be signed up to in Q3-Q4. We now have a school improvement website to support our new offer. https://haltonschoolimprovement.co.uk/		

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress				
PED05d	Build engagement, capacity and governors understanding of the strategic roles and responsibilities					
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> School Improvement Team continue to run advertising campaign to attract new governors. The Chief Executive of Halton – Stephan Young- has recently created a You Tube video to promote this. Local businesses in Halton are also being contacted to encourage governor uptake such as The Innovation Centre, Sci-Tech Daresbury. We are also working with the Inspiring Governance Service in this area. Halton’s School Improvement team have delivered new to governance workshops and collaborated with Ofsted/HMI to deliver inspection training, also. During Q3 2023/24, the governor briefing also engaged governors in the consideration of school improvement support with the move to a working as a traded service.</p>						
PED05e	In partnership with schools, review and design an effective educational vision for the region that meets pupils needs whilst raising ambitions					
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> We have a continued focus on the work of the Priority Educational Investment Area plans. Key priorities include Early Years development, improving outcomes in reading and maths through all key phases and improving attendance. A focus of inclusion runs throughout all key priority themes. 3 of the 4 strands are now well into the delivery phase of the work, with engagement and impact of activity being closely monitored, reviewed, and evaluated. Following successful appointment to relevant posts, the attendance work with move into delivery phase in Q4 2023/24. 94% of schools who have been invited to engage in the projects signed up and enrolled, with 100% of spaces filled within all work streams. We are working with The Innovation Centre, Sci-Tech Daresbury, to create overseas links with schools. We have successfully connected a couple of Halton schools with schools in China through this partnership.</p>						
PED05f	Launch Halton Learning Alliance (HLA) Strategic Partnership to develop an inclusive, ambitious approach developing contributing, successful citizens locally, nationally, and globally. All educational stakeholders and community members acting with moral purpose for Halton children, young people and community members					
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> The HLA has been paused for 23/24 to enable focus on the priority education improvement areas (PEIA) across the authority. Schools have been clustered to ensure all benefit and develop greater collaboration between neighbouring schools.</p>						
Objective: Improve participation and skills for young people to drive Halton’s future (PED06)						
Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	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)	4.4%	4.4%	5.3%	 Q3 22-23 4.4%	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> Across the last academic year, we saw an increase in the number of young people who were not in education, employment or training in Halton. In 2022/23 there was an increase in young people who were not available due to illness including mental health related illness. This has reduced in the first term of 2023/24 academic year. However, there are a greater number of young people who are not in education, employment or training, with the increase all due to young people who are 17 and 18 year old i.e. in the second year of post compulsory education. The number has grown from 75 young people in 2022/23 to 108 young people in 2023/24. All young people who are not in education, employment or training are offered support via a Young People Caseworker. Due to team illness the current caseloads for Young People Caseworkers are higher than operational expectations, limiting the speed of support available to young people. In addition, the lack of provision in the borough affects the opportunity for young people to progress into education or training mid-way through an academic year.</p>						

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED06 02	Maintain the percentage of 16–17 year olds whose activity is not known (snapshot end of quarter, end of year information February)	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	 Q3 22-23 0.5%	



Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell

Progress has been made in contacting young people to establish whether they are in education, employment, or training. There are only 12 young people in Halton who we've been unable to establish contact with. A quarter of those have moved out of borough, where we know the forwarding Local Authority, we have informed them and are processing the transfer of information. Where we don't know the forwarding address there are no other services in Halton working with the family to allow us to gain a forwarding address so we have made those young people known to the National Caseload Management System, which all LAs in England can access. A small number of young people and their families do speak to us but refuse to disclose the young person's activity, which they do have a right to do. There are also young people and their families who we've visited their homes, tried to contact via phone, email (if we have contact details), social media and via postal letter who do not answer or reply. These young people are not known to other services in Halton, therefore no other professional we can work with to gain access. We keep these young people on a review cycle, and will continue trying to make contact and checking if any other service begin working with them.

PED06 03	Increase the percentage of 16-17 year olds with an offer of learning (September guarantee)	96.02%	97%	94.7%	 Q3 22-23 96.02%	
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Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell

Whilst the figures for Year 11 pupils has increased from 97.7% in 2022 to 99.1% in 2023, the figures for Year 12 pupils has decreased from 94.3% in 2022 to 90.6% in 2023. This has brought down the overall outcome. The figure for Year 12 is in line with the increase in those who are not in education, employment, or training.


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)	88.6%	90%	91%	 Q3 22-23 91.2%	
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Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell

Whilst we have seen an increase in the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training since last year, there are fewer young people in jobs without training, which impacts positively on this measure.

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	


Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell - Ongoing analysis takes place to respond to need and ensure the resources available are being targeted appropriately. Work continues to raise the lack of access to in year provision for young people within the combined authority and with the Department for Education.

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.	
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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	
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Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell

Data from the college and training providers in the borough submitted in a timely manner. Analysis to take place next term of the time to identification post the first term of the academic year, where increased drop out from courses is seen.

PED06d	Work with Post 16 education and training providers in the borough to support the development of provision that does have clear progression opportunities	
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Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell

Lack of in year progression an issue within Halton and being discussed with the Combined Authority and Department for Education.

5.0 Financial Summary

Sent on e mail and embedded here



Q3 2023.24 Children and Families Final.doc



EIP Q3 23.24 Final.doc

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.

KA Katherine Appleton, Operational Director, Children and Families Service.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES DEPARTMENT**Revenue Budget as at 31 December 2023**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000
Expenditure					
Employees	11,469	8,539	11,369	(2,830)	(3,616)
Other Premises	476	342	231	111	147
Supplies & Services	1,085	830	1,758	(928)	(1,185)
Transport	113	18	214	(196)	(261)
Direct Payments	1,016	705	696	9	12
Commissioned services to Vol Orgs	224	116	105	11	15
Residential Care	13,704	9,588	12,260	(2,672)	(3,563)
Out of Borough Adoption	30	23	0	23	30
Out of Borough Fostering	3,148	1,834	2,603	(769)	(1,024)
In House Adoption	461	252	243	9	12
Special Guardianship Order	2,221	1,580	1,781	(201)	(269)
In House Foster Carer Placements	2,670	1,961	1,943	18	24
Lavender House	230	146	146	0	0
Home Support & Respite	394	397	368	29	39
Care Leavers	286	209	209	0	0
Family Support	53	40	63	(23)	(32)
Contracted services	3	2	3	(1)	0
Early Years	275	297	476	(179)	(239)
Emergency Duty	124	0	20	(20)	(89)
Youth Offending Services	255	107	153	(46)	(66)
Total Expenditure	38,237	26,986	34,641	(7,655)	(10,065)
Income					
Fees & Charges	-31	-430	-377	(53)	(4)
Sales Income	-4	-7,720	-7,720	0	(3)
Rents	-76	-56	-53	(3)	(4)
Reimbursement & other Grant Income	-594	0	0	0	(70)
Transfer from reserve	-47	-4	-1	(3)	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-50	-4	-2	(2)	0
Government Grants	-7,883	-47	-47	0	0
Total Income	-8,685	-8,261	-8,200	(61)	(81)
Net Operational Expenditure	29,552	18,725	26,441	(7,716)	(10,146)
Recharges					
Premises Support	339	254	254	0	0
Transport Support	15	10	10	0	0
Central Support	3,290	2,467	2,467	0	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-1,124	-843	-843	0	0
Net Total Recharges	2,520	1,888	1,888	0	0
Net Departmental Expenditure	32,072	20,613	28,329	(7,716)	(10,146)

Financial Position

The net departmental expenditure is £7.716m over budget profile at the end of quarter three, with the majority directly relating to Social Care Services. Additional growth budget was provided in 2023/24 of £6.054m, with the majority £4,052m allocated to residential care placements. A savings target of £0.058m leaves a net growth of £5.997m. The expected outturn position at the end of financial year 2023/24 is £10.146m over budget.

Employee Expenditure

Employee costs are £2.830m above budget profile at the end of quarter three. There continues to be a heavy reliance on agency staff to fill vacancies across the structure including Social Worker and Practice Lead positions. This combined with a number of agency staff recruited in addition to the current staffing structure is the cause of this overspend. Social Worker recruitment is proving difficult due to an extremely competitive market and highly inflated agency payment rates. Spend on agency staff at the end of quarter three is £4.598m or 54% of employee budget to date. The final outturn for employee costs is expected to be £3.616m overspent. This is £0.177m more than was forecast at quarter two and is due to the increased numbers of agency staff, including Senior Manager roles and the agreed pay award for 2023/24 being higher than had been initially budgeted.

The forecast assumes there will be reduced reliance on agency staff as the year progresses and take-up of the recruitment and retention scheme takes effect.

There are various workstreams currently in place to target the difficulties in recruitment and to reduce the volume of agency staff, including a Local Offer for employees offering recruitment and retention bonuses for those working in children's social care. It is hoped that these will be able to reduce the spend on employees, however a significant overspend is still to be expected at the end of 2023/24 financial year and further into the next financial year if the recruitment process is unsuccessful.

Supplies and Services

Supplies and Services expenditure is £0.928m above budget profile at the end of quarter three with a forecast outturn of £1.185m. Additional growth was provided of £0.314m to cover the increase in court costs and related legal spend. However, supplies and services is diverse and high levels of spend relating to a number of areas including nursery fees, consultancy, translation costs, equipment and travel are adding pressure to this budget. The outturn position has increased by £0.163m since quarter two.

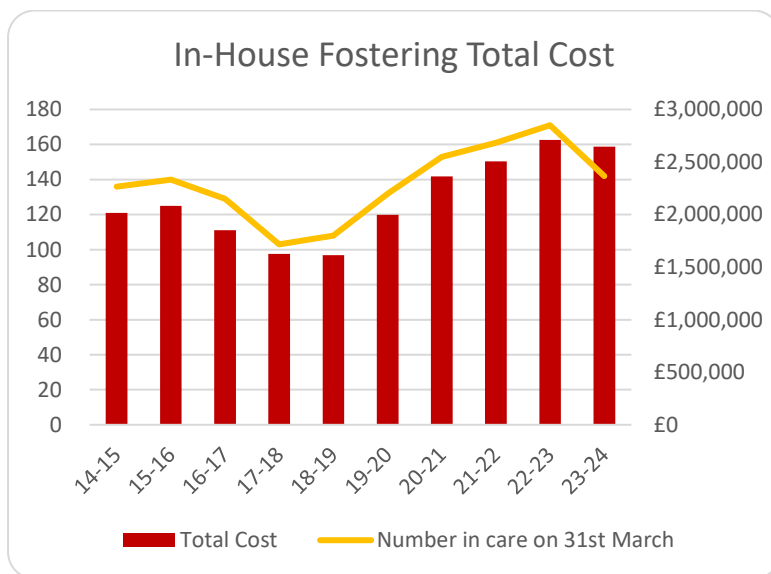
Translation costs are an increasing pressure across the department and current spend at the end of quarter three is £0.112m, with the increasingly diverse population of Halton and the number of Unaccompanied asylum seeker Children (UASC) and Leaving Care (LC) children, there is an expectation that the translation costs will increase further throughout the remaining quarter.

Transport costs are currently £0.196m over budget profile with an anticipated outturn of £0.261m over budget. The majority of these costs relate to the contracted transport of young people to their education provision. These costs can fluctuate in year dependent on the placements made, but transport costs and proximity to education are considered when arranging placements for young people.

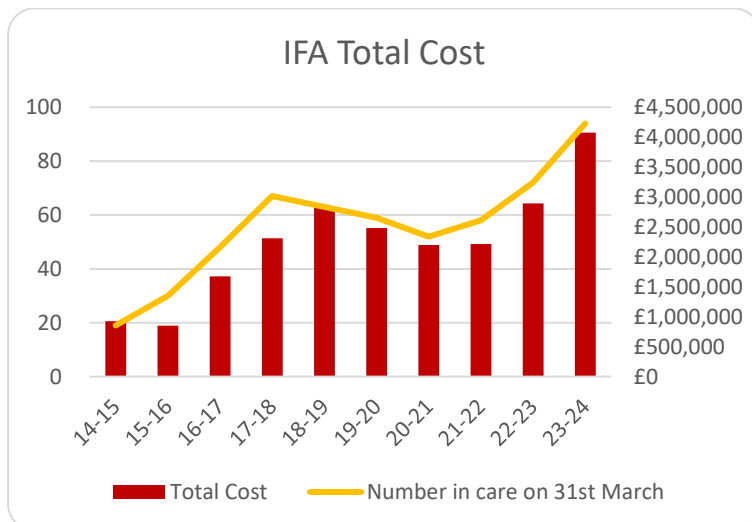
Fostering

In House Fostering is £0.018m under budget profile with an expected outturn of £0.024m under budget. Growth of £0.268m was added which has reduced pressure in this area. Along with the growth provided to reduce the pressure, the number of children placed within in-house provision has reduced. The underspend relates to a number of children that have moved to either a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or residential care placement, as the inhouse placement has become unstable.

Work continues to recruit and retain Halton’s In-house foster carers, along with training to develop carers enabling them to accommodate more specialist placements and support and mentor each other. This therefore means that costs could increase. However, the ability to accommodate young people within in-house provision provides a substantial saving in comparison to IFA or residential care.



Increasing numbers of children in care and insufficient in-house fostering provision has meant increased reliance on IFA. Higher numbers of children placed within IFA provision and increased IFA rates has resulted in an outturn forecast overspend of £1.024m. There has been an additional 16 children entering IFA placements between Q2 and Q3 which has increased the forecast overspend within this area.



Special Guardianship Order

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) costs are currently £0.201m over budget at the end of Quarter three, with an expected outturn of £0.269m over budget. Growth of £0.340m was added to this budget, but the increasing number of young people placed under an SGO and an expected uplift in the payment rates means that it still remains a significant pressure.

These are long term placements for young people, where the carers are granted parental responsibility for the young person in their care. This is a positive outcome for the young person as these are stable placements and the children are no longer classed as a 'child in care'. They are also less expensive than other placements so they are financially beneficial too.

Residential Care

Out of Borough Residential Care continues to be the main budget pressure for the Children and Families Department as the costs of residential care have continued to rise year on year. This budget was given an additional growth of £4.052m for this financial year to alleviate the pressure, however residential care is £2.672m overspent at the end of quarter three with an anticipated outturn of £3.563m over budget at the end of the year.

The high increase in spend can be attributed to the rise in costs of individual packages and the increase in numbers of children that are accommodated in residential care. The table below illustrates the trend towards numbers of children accommodated in residential care and the cost of packages.

Provision	Weekly Costs	31 December 2023		30 September 2023	
		No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year	No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year
Residential	£2000 - £3000	6	853,613	4	768,400
Residential	£3001 - £4000	11	1,959,602	9	1,606,255
Residential	£4001 - £5000	6	1,473,015	7	1,549,874
Residential	£5001 - £13720	30	10,611,463	29	10,381,554
Secure	£6397 - £8137	0	0	0	0
Leaving Care	£443 - £7175	17	1,922,334	16	1,750,828
Parent & Child	£2000 - £5500	6	562,071	5	393,882
Total:		76	17,382,099	70	16,450,793

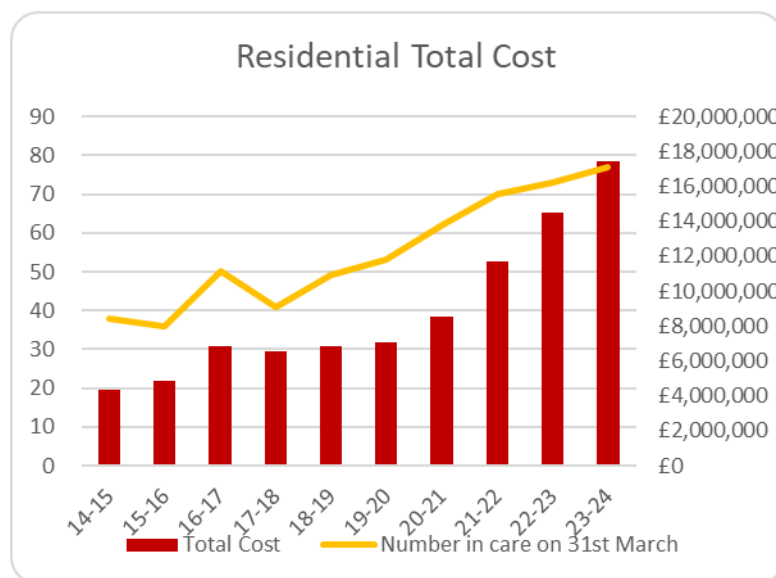
UASC Residential Care

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) currently placed in care remains high but fairly stable. Home Office funding has been agreed for the majority of UASC placed in Council care and is currently sufficient to cover the costs of those UASC accommodated. Unfortunately, there is a significant delay in receiving payment for UASC and Leaving Care (LC). To date we have only received one payment from the Home Office for

UASC and LC for the period April to August with no indication of when the funding for the remaining year will be received.

Provision	Weekly Costs	31 December 2023		30 September 2023	
		No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year	No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year
UASC	£300-£500	50	683,521	58	729,235
UASC	£500-£5000	4	462,996	2	456,468
Total:		54	1,146,517	60	1,185,703

The graph below illustrates the rising costs of Residential Care, for consistency this does not include the costs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as these costs were not included in previous years.



Residential Care continues to be a persistent pressure on the budget. The numbers of young people in residential placements remains high and the cost of placements is rising significantly. This is a national issue and market factors such as low supply and high demand have resulted in the costs of residential care packages rising significantly over the last year, meaning that the level of spend is unsustainable at the current rate.

The new in-house Supported Lodgings service is working well and still recruiting for carers, with four young people now placed. The costs of this service are far less than the costs of current leaving care provision, and as well as the financial benefits, the service will provide a much more home like and supportive environment for young people.

The Care Leaver provision at Lavender House, has four young people currently accommodated and is operating at full capacity.

There are currently two training flats for care leavers which are occupied with support packages in place. There are plans to increase the number of training flats available to be able to accommodate care leavers in-house at a lower cost than current leaving care provision.

Early Years

The Early Years net divisional expenditure is £0.179m over budget at the end of the quarter three, with a forecast outturn of £0.239m over budget. This is due to the underachievement of parental income due to income targets being based upon the Early Years provision having high occupancy levels. Due to the inability to become self-sustaining and the consistent budget pressure the Early Years Centres have now closed and therefore will no longer be a pressure in future years.

Further expenditure has increased at the end of quarter 3 due to redundancy payments being issued and a backdated pay award increase that was agreed in November.

Income

Income is underachieving by £0.061m at the end of Quarter three with an estimated outturn of £0.081m under budget. The majority of this relates to an income generation target for the Leaving Care provision, Lavender House of £0.053m for renting a room to a neighbouring authority. Due to high demand from Council own care leaver numbers, there are no plans as yet to rent one of these bedrooms out to a neighbouring authority and therefore this income target will not be met.





Overall the financial picture for the Children and Families Department continues to be one of serious concern. The main issues relate to the difficulty in the recruitment of Social Workers and the subsequent extortionate agency costs, along with the spiralling costs of residential placements. This has been an ongoing problem for a number of years. Urgent action to reduce these costs should now be taken as a priority as this level of spend cannot be sustained without resulting in significant financial harm to the Local Authority.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

Please see Appendix A for full details

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
C1	Ditton and Warrington Road Daycare Centres	52	Closure of Ditton and Warrington Road daycare centres, given the significant on-going net losses at both centres. Sufficient alternative provision exists nearby, as well as in the adjoining nursery schools.	26	26	0		The daycare centres closed in August 23. The daycare centres will continue to be overspent in 23-24, however the savings should be realised in 24/25.
C2	Children's Centres	1,293	Reduce the opening hours of Children's Centres.	12	0	0		Initial indicators suggest saving unlikely to be made, but awaiting further clarification from Divisional Manager
			Review the operation of Windmill Hill Children's Centre, where there is the potential to save on premises and staffing costs.	0	0	22		Initial indicators suggest saving unlikely to be made, but awaiting further clarification from Divisional Manager
			Target to generate at least 5% additional income by increasing a range of charges at Children's Centres.	20	0	0		

C3	Children with Disabilities and Inglefield	858	Explore the potential for selling Inglefield and then purchase two bungalows within the community to provide a more appropriate setting.	0	112	0	u	Initial indicators suggest saving unlikely to be made, but awaiting further clarification from Divisional Manager
Total Children & Families Department				58	138	22		

Education, Inclusion & Provision Department**Revenue Budget as at 31 December 2023**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)	Forecast Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	7,495	5,239	5,079	160	160
Premises	28	21	9	12	0
Supplies & Services	1,218	650	638	12	18
Transport	64	48	32	16	0
Schools Transport	1,530	1,148	1,563	(415)	(1,130)
Commissioned Services	1,654	526	454	72	72
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	10	0	0	0	10
Independent School Fees	6,756	5,074	5,074	0	0
Inter Authority Special Needs	604	453	453	0	0
Pupil Premium Grant	215	162	162	0	0
Nursery Education Payments	7,467	4,500	4,500	0	0
Capital Financing	1	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	27,042	17,821	17,964	(143)	(870)
Income					
Fees & Charges Income	-101	-154	-200	46	119
Government Grant Income	-856	-428	-428	0	0
Schools SLA Income	-445	-319	-319	0	66
Reimbursements & Grant Income	0	0	-40	40	40
Transfer from Reserves	-192	-94	-94	0	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-18,728	-9,364	-9,364	0	0
Inter Authority Income	-483	-207	-207	0	0
Total Income	-20,805	-10,566	-10,652	86	225
Net Operational Expenditure	6,237	7,255	7,312	(57)	(645)
Recharges					
Premises Support	281	140	140	0	0
Transport Support	441	330	393	(63)	(140)
Central Support	1,609	807	807	0	0
Asset Rental Support	17	0	0	0	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	2,348	1,277	1,340	(63)	(140)
Net Departmental Expenditure	8,585	8,532	8,652	(120)	(785)

Financial Position

The net Departmental expenditure is £0.120m over budget at the end of quarter three, based on available information. However, the forecast outturn for 2023/24 is currently estimating an overspend against budget of £0.785m. This is broadly in line with the forecast overspend of £0.767m forecast at Q2.

Core funded employee expenditure is forecast to be £0.160m under budget at year end. There are a number of vacant positions across the department that are being acted-up/covered by agency staff. It is envisaged that most of these vacancies will be filled by the end of this financial year.

The Q1 report provided a forecast that supplies and services costs would be over the available budget, but since that point revisions have been made to the forecast spend for the year and it is now estimated that costs will be under the available budget by £0.018m.

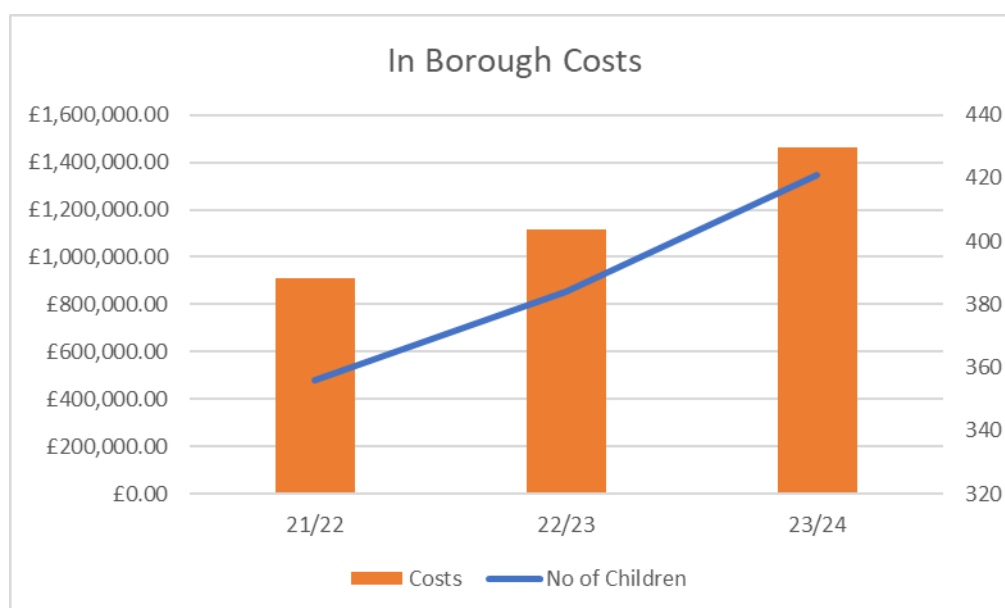
All spend in this area is essential spend only and the budget holders across the Department closely monitor all spend.

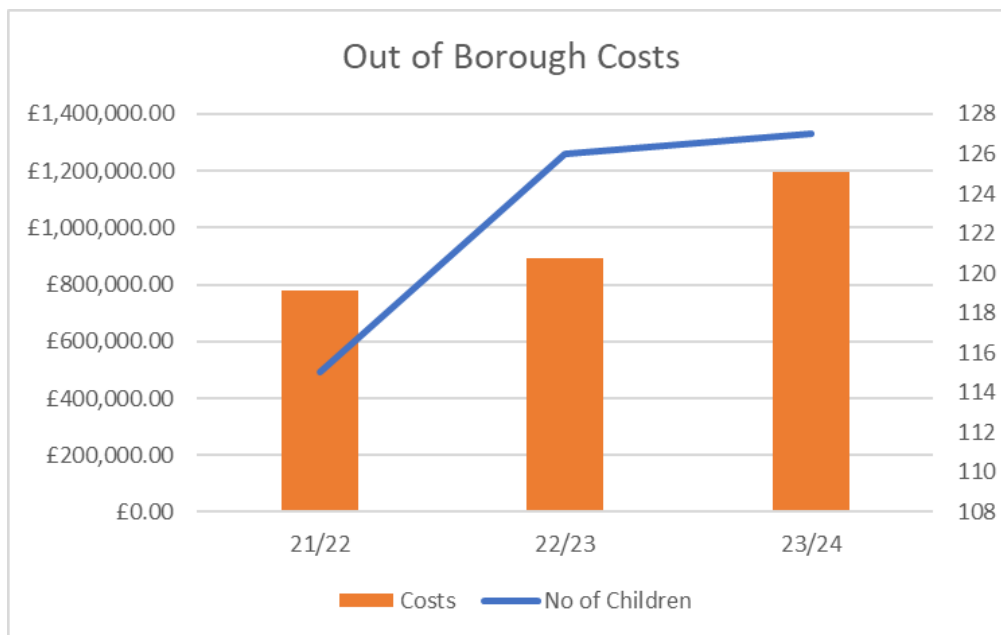
Schools Transport is the main budget pressure for Education, Inclusion and Provision. The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils with transport. The budget can be split into two main areas: between SEN pupils attending schools within the borough and those attending out of borough schools.

The table below breaks down the split between the different areas, and how each areas spend compares to budget.

2023-24 as at Q3					
Area	No. of Users	Budget £'000	Projected Spend £'000	Variance £'000	Average Cost per User
In Borough	421	1,104	1,465	(361)	£3,480
Out of Borough	127	426	1,195	(769)	£9,409
Total	548	1,530	2,660	(1,130)	

At Q3 there are currently 548 service users, an increase of 30 from Q2. The majority of which attend schools within the Borough, 421 compared to 127 out of the Borough. As can be seen both areas are overspending compared to budget. However, the out of borough forecast overspend is far greater than that for in-borough. The demand for the School Transport service is increasing in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough. The graphs below show that the number of SEN children using this service has increased year on year, which has driven the costs up.





It is worth noting though that this situation is not unique to Halton, it is a pressure across all Councils nationwide.

Fees and Charges income is forecast to generate £0.119m above the budgeted target. This is due to increase in usage of the Careers Education Service and non-school attendance fines.

Reimbursements and other grant Income has generated income £0.040m above the budgeted income target at Q3. Presently this forecast consists of contributions from the CCG towards Integrated Youth contracts. However, in previous years there has also been other income such as reimbursements from parents for school's transport costs for elected placements. This type of income is demand/service led and so there is no target/forecast for it presently.

School SLA income is forecast to generate £0.066m above the income target for the year, with the possibility of services such as Educational Psychology and Education Welfare generating higher levels of income than initially targeted as both are in high demand from schools. As a result, they generally achieve higher levels of income than initially targeted.

Approved 2023/24 Savings

Please see Appendix A for full details

Risks/Opportunities

Cost of out of borough transport is increasing year on year, due to demand and high fuel costs. The average cost for out of borough users has increased from £7,079 (2022/23) to £9,409 in the third quarter of the current financial year.

Supporting Families has a large surplus reserves balance (£0.745m as at 31.03.23), which is expected to increase to £0.788m by the end of 2023/24. It has been suggested that this be used to fund core activity.

Capital Projects as at 31 December 2023

	Annual Capital Allocation	Allocation to date	Actual Spend	Total Allocation remaining
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Repairs	1,089	783	783	306
Asbestos Management	17	1	1	16
Asset Management Data	6	6	6	0
Small Capital Works	139	80	80	59
Access Initiative	44	9	9	35
SEMH Free School	239	239	239	0
Cavendish School	605	223	223	382
Astmoor Primary RB	300	175	174	126
Ashley School	500	37	37	463
Kingsway Academy RB	30	0	0	30
Oakfield Primary	352	303	303	49
St Basil's Primary RB	250	0	0	250
St Peter's & Paul High School	356	0	0	356
The Brow Primary RB	103	89	89	14
Victoria Road Primary RB	268	133	133	135
Westfield Primary RB	220	190	190	30
Woodside Primary RB	350	176	176	174
Brookfields School	300	0	0	300
High Needs unallocated	21	0	0	21
Basic Needs unallocated	601	0	0	601
Total Capital	5,790	2,444	2,443	3,347

Comments on the above figures

Many of the Capital repairs and SEND works have been completed over the summer holiday.

Cavendish School remodelling started on site in August, with completion planned for February 2024.




SEMH Free School is now complete.

Fairfield project is still at feasibility stage.

Asbestos management surveys are updated annually, and remedial work conducted where necessary.

EDUCATION, INCLUSION AND PROVISION DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX A

Ref.	Service Area	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Proposal	Savings Value			Current Progress	Comments
				23/24 £'000	24/25 £'000	25/26 £'000		
EIP1	Education Psychology Service	339	There is excess demand from schools for the Education Psychology Service. The service is valued and there is opportunity to expand our offer and generate additional income.	0	52	0		On target to be achieved
EIP2	SEN Assessment Team	82	Consideration will be given to funding the full service costs from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.	0	80	0		To be reviewed
EIP5	Commissioning	148	Review with Health colleagues how the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Carers could instead be provided by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as they are commissioned by the Integrated Care Board.	0	148	0		To be reviewed

EIP5	Commissioning	291	Additional funding for Youth Grants has been confirmed for three years from the DfE Holiday Activity and Food Programme grant, therefore core budget can be released.	40	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On target to be achieved
EIP9	Education Welfare Service	396	There has been increased buy-back of this service from schools and as a result the income budget can be increased.	60	0	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On target to be achieved
Total Education, Inclusion and Provision Department				100	280	0		

REPORT TO:	Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	15 July 2024
REPORTING OFFICER:	Acting Director of Education
PORTFOLIO:	Children, Young People and Families
SUBJECT:	Performance Management Report for Quarter 4 2023/24
WARD(S)	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the first quarter period 01 January to 31 March 2024.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2023/24 were agreed by Members and included in the Business Plan, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Education, Inclusion, Provision Services
 - Children and Families Services

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 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

- 1) Receive the third quarter's performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; 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 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Have a strong and robust framework for identifying and responding across all agencies is key to supporting children and young people, and partners are clear about their responsibilities and role in working together.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Having a strong and robust framework to ensure that children, young people and families are supported in their learning and future employment and skills development.

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 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.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable.

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

10.1 None within the meaning of the Act

Children and Young People Priority Based PPB Report

Reporting Period: Quarter 4 2023-24

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 6).
- 1.2 Please note names 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 6).

2.0 Key Developments

2.1 **Mockingbird Programme Fostering**

Halton now have a robust 6–8-month Implementation Plan, funding from DfE to recruit Practice Lead secured and post to be advertised by the end April 2024. **(KA)**

2.2 **Leaving Care Service**

Experienced Principal Manager and Practice Lead now in post. Care Leaver offer under review and initial discussions held with Mark Riddell MBE, Mark is the DfE National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers to conduct a two-day visit that will assist shape Halton's offer and ambition for its Care Leavers. **(KA)**

2.3 **Participation & Inclusion Officer**

We have appointed and successfully onboarded Participation & Inclusion Officer. This has resulted in improved engagement with our children in care and care leavers i.e. increased membership of Children in Care Council, Care Leaver Forum. **(KA)**

2.4 **Corporate Parenting Board.**

Delighted to report we have identified a care leaver who has agreed to become the co-chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, this will commence from 25th April 2024. **(KA)**

2.5 **Young People Caseworker appointment**

Following successful recruitment, a new Young People Caseworker will join the 14-19 Team on 1st June 2024. This will go some way to relieve the significant increase in caseloads for the Young People Caseworker team whilst long term illness and a resignation had left them short staffed. **(CF/BH)**

2.6 **Supporting Families**

We have successfully achieved 100% again from targets set by the Department of Education for the Supporting Families programme. 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 to claim against a payment by results framework. Halton has successfully achieved 100% PBR for 23/24 with funds contributing towards front line delivery of services in early help and social care. **(CF/BH)**

- 2.7 **Family hubs:** Halton has launched first Family Hub with Kingsway Family Hub which was launched in July 2023 and In October 2023 we launched Runcorn Family Hubs. Warrington road and Ditton hubs will be launched towards the end of September 2024.

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. Early help leads coordinate the hub offer and working closely with all partners to deliver the new model. A steering group has been set up and will progress the different work streams and feed into the group.

Branding is now in place which was coproduced with children and families Governance structure of accountability has been suggested and ready for management sign off. The vision is that a starting well strategic governance 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. Halton Family Hubs has been recognised nationally due to the innovative practice and progress made on the family hub offer. We have been commended for the infant feeding work and the perinatal baby showers, In January 2024 we had a visit from the Secretary of State of Education the right honourable Gillian Keegan MP. This highlights the dedication and hard work of all the partnership working. **(KA)**

- 2.8 **PAUSE Project**

Pause Project in Halton is now well established, with 16 women already graduated and a further cohort engaging. The programme works with women who have previously had two or more children removed from their care. In September 2023 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. After a sustainability report and constant persistence funding was finally secured in March 2023 for another 12 months for the programme. Currently being funding 50/50 by LA and ICB. Head of service for early help and PAUSE practice lead are meeting with partners over the next few months for further discussions. None of the participants have gone on to have more children and two children have returned home to their mother as a consequence of the work completed and the changes made. Pause has also resulted in savings across agencies, including Mental Health services, A&E department, Police, housing and drug and alcohol services totalling up to £209,914. The cumulative cost savings are £3,256,537, equating to a cost benefit ratio of £4.49 for every £1 spent. **(KA)**

- 2.9 **The Halton Lea 'Right to Succeed' Project:**

This project is part of the Steve Morgan foundation and working with Liverpool city region. Halton Lea was the ward that was identified 18 months ago to work in to improve outcomes for children and families. A hub model approach will be delivered and aligned with Halton's family Hub model. The Multi-Disciplinary team (MDT) will work from Halton lea library. The programme has completed the discovery phase and has now moved into dedicated steering groups looking at education and wider services. The Right to Succeed education strand continues to make good progress, with services and activities commissioned and agreed with all schools and delivery successfully underway in 100% of identified schools within the region. **(KA)**

- 2.10 **Childcare Expansion**

The childcare expansion for children for working parents of 2-year-olds will come into effect from April 2024, this extends to working parents of nine months olds from September 2024. Our current forecast shows we have sufficient places for 2's and 3 and 4-year-olds across the borough, thereby not negatively impacting the availability of spaces for disadvantaged eligible 2-year-olds. To monitor the uptake of the expansion and ensure sufficiency of places we will be

looking to collect occupancy and vacancy numbers termly as the expansion rolls out. Communication resources from childcare choices have been sent out to Early Years Providers, put on social media, and shared with Family hubs to promote the childcare expansion to working parents. Currently code validation in Halton is 82.44% which has risen from 41.18% at the beginning of March. **(CF/BH)**

2.11 **Wraparound Care Programme**

In line with the national wraparound care programme, we are working to expand the provision of wraparound care from September 2024. The government's ambition is that all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm. This could be provided by schools or PVI providers (including childminders and early years settings). We have submitted a supply and demand analysis to the DfE and are currently recruiting for a Wraparound care coordinator to take a lead on this project. **(CF/BH)**

2.12 **SEND- Delivering Better Value**

Delivering Better Value (DBV) is a programme primarily working to identify and implement local opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND across 54 LAs, and aid local systems (alongside existing local and other DfE programmes) in their objective of achieving financial sustainability. Halton was one of the LA's identified as eligible to apply for DBV grant funding. Our application was submitted on the 20th December 2023 and requested £1m of grant funding, primarily to build resilience across all educational systems to support and include learners with Social, Emotional Mental Health Needs. The initiatives outlined in our bid are designed to allow schools and settings to support SEND children effectively, without necessarily having to request an Education Health and Care assessment, alleviating the demand for specialist placements, and reducing both the risk of out of borough placement and permanent exclusions. We were notified in March that our bid was successful and that we had been awarded the full £1m grant. This additional resource presents a significant opportunity to positively transform inclusive practices across Halton.

We are now entering the implementation phase of the action plan. We will launch our ambitious delivery plan at a briefing for Headteachers and SENco's at Halton Stadium on 30th May 2024. **(CF/BH)**

2.13 **SEND Sufficiency- MIME Data Projections**

The placement of complex children remains a significant challenge across the borough. The development of 100 additional in-borough placements in specialist resource bases has alleviated this situation to an extent, but we are still finding it a challenge to keep pace with the demand for specialist places. We are currently drafting the second phase of our SEND Sufficiency Strategy. In order to progress this piece of work, we have commissioned extensive data projections from MIME Consultancy. MIME use data and technology to help complex organisations make effective decisions for positive change and are particularly concerned with supporting change for social benefit. Mime have extensive experience working with local authorities, regional and national government on SEND data and analysis. They have been commissioned to provide an EHCP cohort projection modelling tool for Halton Borough Council. The modelling tool uses a range of data, including pupil level SEN2 datasets and population projections, to provide a robust understanding of the future makeup of Halton's EHCP cohort, including by primary need type and provision type. This will therefore support the Council to develop robust plans for sufficient provision, including being able to easily complete the specialist section of the SCAP DfE return, compare supply to projected upcoming demand for different provision, and inform financial including specialist provision capital investment decisions. Mime will be using their updated EHCP modelling tool, developed and tested with local authorities, which will allow the Council to see the projected EHCP cohort under different

scenarios over time by adjusting the underlying EHCP assessment request rate, refusal rate, speed of ceasing of EHCPs, and early identification rate. The tool also allows Councils to model the impact of moving to England average rates.

MIME are currently analysing our raw data and will use this to generate a report, which will show growth projections across all types of SEND at all age phases. This data will allow us to plan sufficiency with more accuracy and confidence than we ever have previously. We will receive the data projections by mid-May 2024, and we can then use this information to complete phase 2 of the SEND sufficiency strategy.

(CF/BH)

2.14 **Department for Education High Needs Provision Capital Grant Allocation**

Members will recall that in 2022 Halton Borough Council was awarded circa £3.3M of High Needs Provision Capital Funding and used that to increase existing Special Educational Needs (SEND) Provision and offer new SEND in the borough. By September 2024 over 100 new places will be available for use in Halton for SEND placements. On 26th March 2024, the Department for Education wrote to Halton and advised that a further allocation of circa £2.1M had been allocated to Halton. This will allow for the progression of a number of further capital projects that were discussed/agreed when the original funding was received, but due to the budget limitations and priorities at that time, were unable to proceed. Colleagues have reinvigorated those conversations, and discussions are underway to continue to expand and enhance Halton's in-borough SEND place availability. This will help to offer in-borough SEND places to Halton residents, and help to reduce costly out of borough SEND placements and associated out-borough transport costs. Colleagues will also discuss further opportunities for High Needs capital spend in line with the second phase of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, and the findings from any MIME reports (item 2.13 above refers). **(CF/BH)**

2.15 **SEND- Priority Action Plan**

Between 6th and 24th November 2023, Halton SEND Local Area Partnership were inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the effectiveness of the area's partnership SEND arrangements in improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including the extent to which: children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed. The Inspection Outcome, published in January identified widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently. A monitoring inspection will be carried out within approximately 18 months. The next full reinspection will be within approximately three years. As a result of this inspection, His Majesty's Chief Inspector required the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND) to address the identified areas for priority action. The priority action plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders from across the area, which was subsequently approved by Ofsted and the CQC and is now at the point of implementation. The Local Area has installed a Strategic Improvement Board and appointed an independent chair. The first meeting of the board took place on 17th April 2024. Stakeholders from across the area partnership were joined by representatives from the Department for Education and NHS England, who fed back that the meeting was productive and effective and that they are encouraged by our shared approach and our progress to date. **(CF/BH)**

2.16 **Eligible 2-year provision**

We are reviewing the current process of placing eligible 2-year-olds into provision. This is to ensure the Early years team are deployed and working in the most effective ways to impact on the quality of provision and early years education for children and to improve the efficiency for

parents in sourcing childcare. This may mean working in partnership with Family Hubs to maintain uptake of eligible 2-year-old places. **(CF/BH)**

3.0 Emerging Issues

3.1 Young People who are not in education, employment, or training

The number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) continues to rise in Halton. Extremely limited provision choices for mid-year starts have impacted on progression for young people who are NEET. The rise seen in Halton is greater than seen in other Local Authorities, and the gap between Halton's performance and National outcomes is growing:

Annual 3-month average results:

	Halton	National	Statistical Neighbours
2020/21	4%	5.5%	5.2%
2021/22	3.3% -0.7% from previous year	4.7% -0.8% from previous year	5.3% +0.1% from previous year
2022/23	4.9% +1.6% from previous year	5.2% +0.5% from previous year	5.3% No change from previous year
2023/24 (draft fig.)	5.8% + 0.9% from previous year	5.4% +0.2% from previous year	6% + 0.7% from previous year

An application has been made in March 2024 to the Department of Education requesting the commissioning of new Post 16 provision in Halton that will allow learners to join part way through an academic year. **(CF/BH)**



3.2 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency Placement Challenges


The placement of complex children remains a significant challenge across the borough. The development of 100 additional in-borough placements in specialist resource bases has alleviated this situation to an extent, but we are still finding it a challenge to keep pace with the demand for specialist places. We have commissioned data projections to allow us to effectively plan for the placement of these learners going forward. We will need to continue to develop in-borough provision and are working particularly with the secondary sector to develop further resource bases, and are optimistic that our high schools are increasingly open to developing additional resources. Until we can develop more in-borough provision however, we continue to depend on expensive Independent Non-maintained Specialist Settings, to accommodate these learners. This dependency places excessive burden on both the high needs block and the home to school transport budget. **(CF/BH)**

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	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr. Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED01 01	Increase the number of early help assessments (MAP) health/education and other partners are leading on	613 MAP	N/A	526 MAP (prov)		N/A
<p>Supporting Commentary: Val Armor Work is continuing with regards to the roll out programme for training health and education in accessing the system and taking the lead professional role. Runcorn Locality manager is the lead officer in driving this forward however we are yet to see the impact of this on number of health and schools in the lead professional role. We are also going to develop a team around the school approach in collaboration with education colleagues. This will focus on increasing attendance but will also help to support school colleagues with MAP's. Support clinics and weekly working together meetings will oversee the increase in partnership uptake in the borough. Head of service and performance team are currently looking at data collection as the way that data is interpreted for early help is not a true picture of early help offer in the borough and across the partnership. New OD now in place and will establish an early help partnership board to offer scrutiny and accountability for partners.</p>						
PED01 02	Improve overall attendance at schools: Primary –Pri PRU – PRU Secondary – Sec Special – Spec Total	LA - 92.12% Pri - 93.86% Sec - 90.38% Spe - 87.62% PRU - 54.61%	95%	LA - 92.25% Pri – 94.28% Sec - 90.14% Spe - 87.59% PRU – 56.69%		N/A
<p>Supporting Commentary: Debbie Houghton /Scott Middlehurst The session attendance data covers the period 04/09/23 to end of Spring term 2024. It excludes data from 3 secondary schools, Ormiston Chadwick Academy, Ormiston Bolingbrook Academy and Sandymoor Academy due to these schools being in the process of migrating their data to a new School Information Management System (SIMS) server.</p>						






Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED01a	Work with schools to maintain the level of attendance at Primary and Secondary Schools. Debbie Houghton (March 2024)	
<p>Supporting commentary: Debbie Houghton From April 2024 we have received Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) funding from the DfE to employ five School Attendance Support Officers (SASO) who will be working with schools, families and pupils to reduce persistent absence at Halton schools where persistent absence is higher than national. In addition, DfE funding has been used to run an Attendance Matters Campaign which aligns to the national campaign. The Education Welfare Service is continuing to support schools with the increased statutory duties in relation to attendance in line with the Government's Working Together to Support School Attendance alongside the offer of additional traded support and supporting the work of the SASOs.</p>		


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.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Val Armor PAUSE in Halton is now over 18 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. Funding for a further 12 months have finally been secured in March 2024. A plan is now in place to secure further funding from partners for 3-5 years. The new cohort of women for 24-25 have been contacted and are in the engagement process of the programme 90% of the women have already signed up to the programme.</p>		
PED01c	Revise Halton's parental offer that will include further developmental of reducing parental conflict training.	
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Val Armor The Parenting officer has been in post since January 2022 and now all referrals for parenting go to one central point. This has made it much easier for partners to understand. There have been three parenting events so far in June 2022, January 2023, April 2023, January 2024, 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 two 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 Amity (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. This funding will be aligned with Family Hubs transformation and two scale five parenting assistants have now been recruited to, this will enhance the reducing parental conflict agenda. The borough continues to embed nurture principles through all of our parenting work across the workforce.</p>		

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

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	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)	617	500 (full year)	591.2 (prov)		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Sarah Ellison</p>						
PED02 02	Monitor the rate of children in need (open cases including care leavers) per 10,000. 0-18-year-olds (snapshot at end of quarter)	499	500	457 (prov)		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Jamie Pope, Andrew Jones Children in Care numbers are high in Halton. This is now stabilising with a slight reducing trend.(JP)</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)	70	45	54 (prov)	Is lower positive?	Is lower positive?
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Sarah Ellison, Andrew Jones</p>						
PED02 04	Monitor the rate of children in care per 10000 0-18-year-olds (snapshot at end of quarter)	133	90	139 (prov)		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Jamie Pope Halton's rate of children in care has remained above all comparators for the past 18 months. The number of children in care has been impacted by the need of general population and number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) which is currently equivalent to 6%.</p>						


Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED02 05	Reduce the number of children and young people who enter the care system (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter)	147	68	203 (prov)		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Andrew Jones</p> <p>There has been a reduction this quarter compared to previous quarter. Work is underway in terms of supporting teams and practitioners in the effective use of Pre-proceedings, this includes head of service review and scrutiny and legal gateway to help embed a new culture. This should help divert the need for the number children entering the care system and for help ensure that for those that do need to come into care we make timely permanence decisions.</p> <p>Additionally, we are guiding practitioners in refining our approach to families where concerns persist. We are building and embedding a culture that gives significant consideration to the potential negative impact entering the care system might have on some children and weighing this up against the concerns home. Similarly, we are supporting practitioners in thinking about how we hold and work with risks, when court intervention is not likely to result in separation. By doing so, we can ensure that our actions are balanced and consider the best interests of the families involved.</p>						
PED02 06	Reduce the average caseload in Children in Need Teams (snapshot end of quarter)	21	18	19		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Andrew Jones</p> <p>There continues to be stability in our caseloads, there is some work to do to ensure cases transfer to our CIC teams in timely way which will help with this area of work. There is currently a review underway of the transfer process to support with this. We also need to improve the numbers of step-down cases to early help; this has been discussed in recent aiming high meetings.</p>						
PED02 07	Increase the proportion of missing incidents where a return interview is completed (financial year, cumulative to end of quarter)	70%	85%	60%		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Clare Hunt</p> <p>For this period, there have been 96 return interviews completed with 63 young people by the commissioned service. 60% of all incidents have had a return interview and 77% were completed within 72 hours, this is an increase from the previous quarter. The Declines for return interviews were 87 incidents by 37 young people.</p>						
PED02 08	Reduce the number of children who repeatedly run away in Halton (in last 12 months, snapshot end of quarter)	21	N/A	23		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Clare Hunt</p> <p>For this reporting period, there has been a total of 220 notifications from the commissioned service. There have been 23 young people with repeat missing incidents. These three young people have made three or more incidents during the quarter, accounted for 59% of all missing incidents in the quarter. The repeat cohort was made up of 12 males and 11 females. 19 of the 23 young people received a return home interview. The repeat cohort continues to have good engagement with the MFH service and will mainly engage with Return Home Interview's (RHI). For those who continue to decline RHI's, With You case workers have identified alternative ways to engage CYP including joint visits with social workers/lead professionals and offering alternative locations/methods of completing RHIs. The repeat cohort are known to Children's Social Care and other services due to having trigger meetings to discuss their individual circumstances and a plan of support for these CYP. Where RHI's have been declined, the attempts made have been clear on the decline form and a request for social worker to complete instead.</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)	357	N/A	100		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Clare Hunt</p> <p>The total missing incidents this quarter are the same as last quarter, however the total missing individuals has increased by 20% from 82 to 100. The gender of CYP being reported missing remains equal in both age cohorts. This increase is down to children from home cohort. Despite the increase of total missing individuals, caseworkers were able to complete 37% more return home interviews with individuals than quarter 3. The total missing incidents has increased by 18% compared to Q4 2023. During this quarter, caseworkers have focussed on completing return home interviews within 72 hours, which is shown</p>						

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
	<p>by 14% increase from Q3 2023/24. The main reasons young people said they went missing this quarter was due to boundary issues at home or care, family conflicts or relationship issues. Caseworkers also identified further reasons of substance misuse, peer pressure, older peers, or mental health. The main things that young people said they experienced while away was poor safety planning, which is consistent with caseworkers' views along with substance misuse and ASB. For Young People who said that substance misuse or mental health was their reason for going missing, onward referrals were offered to support. For any young person with Child Criminal Exploitation/Child Sexual Exploitation indicators, the appropriate screening tools have been completed/contributed to and discussed in risk meetings. Advice & information has been given to young people following RHI's around these factors to prevent further missing incidents, including the use of portable chargers or the risks and dangers of having their phones switched off.</p>					
PED02 10	Record the number of young people flagged as at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (snapshot end of quarter)	13	20	7 (prov)		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Andrew Jones/Jamie Pope</p> <p>Multi-agency meetings are in place and are attended regularly by partner agencies. Social Care is the co-chair for this meeting. We need to ensure that all relevant cases are reviewed by this panel, actions addressed. And where required social workers are to provide a detailed and current risk assessment. All cases are heard at the monthly meeting with a targeted risk management plan for each child. Police and Social Care need to work closely over the next few months to establish good working relationships. Additionally, we have reviewed high risk cases within the service and continue to monitor them regularly. Attendance at this meeting by social workers with updated assessments has improved considerably over the past few months, this results in partners having a good picture of the risk and management of it.(JP)</p> <p>Children identified as at medium or high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation are reviewed and recorded via the monthly multi-agency contextual safeguarding operation group (CSOG), offering multi-agency oversight and scrutiny of those identified as being at most risk. An issue regarding timeliness of tools being updated and reviewed has been identified and is being addressed to ensure that this improves. We have identified that there is work to be done to ensure consistency between the lists held by children's service and CSOG – this is progressing. In addition, funding has been secured to recruit to a Contextual Safeguarding Co-Ordinator, this will help offer additional scrutiny, challenge and oversight to work in this area. (AJ)</p>						
PED02 11	Record the number of young people flagged as at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) (snapshot end of quarter)	34	12	39 (prov)		
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Andrew Jones/Jamie Pope</p> <p>Children identified as at medium or high risk of Child Criminal Exploitation are reviewed and recorded via the monthly multi-agency contextual safeguarding operation group (CSOG), offering multi-agency oversight and scrutiny of those identified as being at most risk. An issue regarding timeliness of tools being updated and reviewed has been identified and is being addressed to ensure that this improves. We have identified that there is work to be done to ensure consistency between the lists held by children's service and CSOG – this is progressing. In addition, funding has been secured to recruit to a Contextual Safeguarding Co-Ordinator, this will help offer additional scrutiny, challenge and oversight to work in this area.</p>						
Ref:	Milestones					Quarterly Progress
PED02a	Embed a systemic model of social work practice across the whole service, social workers, managers, and senior leaders.					
<p><u>Supporting commentary:</u> Katherine Appleton</p> <p>Halton currently has a high rate of Agency Social Workers (although reducing) and therefore the embedding of systemic practice model is complex. In preparation for this in the longer term agreement was made that Halton would pause the roll out of the systemic model and move to systemic practice principles whilst we continue to increase permanent staff group. SLIP are supporting the systemic principle approach.</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.	
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Supporting commentary: Katherine Appleton

The CSC workforce board is now in place and the sub groups of the board, Staff wellbeing, Recruitment and Retention are also in place. The recruitment subgroup have written the workforce strategy and it is currently going through quality assurance and governance checks. The progression pathway is formalised and promoted by the Social Work Academy and senior leaders.

PED02c	Implement redevised structure for children and need service to ensure better resilience and management accountability to provide a safe and structured environment for social workers.	
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Supporting commentary: Katherine Appleton

The service re-design of CSC has started and is supported by TDU. The wholesale re-structure of CSC will be reviewed following the completion of the pilot programmes being implemented. This staged approach to the re-structure is required in Halton as the future structure should be considered when the number of children currently supportive is more reflective of Halton need.

PED02d	Implement redevised quality and assurance framework to monitor improvements in practice.	
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Supporting commentary: Susanne Leece

Our Quality Assurance (QA) & Learning Framework enables us to robustly relate performance management data with quality assurance with three simple interrelated questions:

How much did we do? (Service activity),



How well did we do it? (Quality),

Did we make a difference to children lives? (Is anyone better off?).

Measuring the impact of our work at all levels across children’s services is crucial in closing the quality assurance loop and demonstrating the difference our services make to improving children’s outcomes. Each month we present the findings of our QA activity in an overview report, the purpose of this report is to support each service area to develop effective practice improvement responses and to provide measurement of previous improvement activity. There is peer scrutiny of service responses via our Aiming High meetings and findings are also presented to the Improvement Board to offer assurance about the quality of our practice.







The information within these reports do evidence that during 2024 there has been incremental improvement in the quality of our practice across all service areas.

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






Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED03 01	Reduce the number of children who are placed in residential care (snapshot at end of quarter)	40	20	50 (prov)		

Supporting Commentary: Jamie Pope

Review of those children and young people who are placed in a residential placements continues to ensure that only those children and young people who require this type of placement remain in such placements. Monitoring meetings take place to ensure appropriate timely plans are in place for young people moving towards independence as well as reviewing progress. Newly formed cross departmental Resource Panel has been established and High-Cost Placement Meeting chaired by Director of Children’s Services is now in operation.

PED03 02	Reduce the number of children who are placed in independent fostering agencies (snapshot at end of quarter)	71	35	94 (prov)		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jamie Pope</i> Placement requests are authorised and tracked through a range of forums i.e. Resource Panel / Legal Gateway where sourcing Halton's mainstream foster carers is a primary focus. The current level of sufficiency due to increase of children in care is resulting in the use of Independent Fostering Agencies, and in some circumstances residential, however as foster carers approvals are also tracked this provides opportunity to consider in house carers. All requests for a fostering placement on Eclipse go to the internal fostering team to ensure best use of resources as well as tracking against new applicants at an early stage and only after this is a referral made to the independent sector. This remains an ongoing area of focus and the fostering team are looking to strengthen their fostering recruitment for in house carer.						
PED03 03	Maintain the percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (snapshot at end of quarter)	94%	95%	96% (prov)		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jamie Pope</i> The Care leaver accommodation group (CLAG) continues to meet monthly and track young people alongside sourcing appropriate accommodation for them to transition into.						
PED03 04	Increase the percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET) (snapshot at end of quarter)	57%	65%	59%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jamie Pope</i> Halton's Leaving Care Service now has experienced Principal Manager, Practice Lead and full complement of permanent personal advisors which going forward will allow more focus in working with the virtual school in sourcing appropriate EET opportunities and supporting Care Leavers to access them.						
PED03 05	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)	Residential 42% Leaving Care 94.7%	N/A	Refer comment	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves</i> Over the past 6 months there have been resource constraints in the placements team that has impacted on the ability to complete some planned quality monitoring visits. As a result, the team have prioritised accordingly and have scheduled in as many visits as possible on a rota basis and in relation to any specific need or issues. In addition to the planned visits there have been a number of responsive visits that have taken place linked to quality concerns from Professionals and in addition to the result of OFSTED inspection outcome reports. In March 2024 the vacant post of Placement Officer was successfully recruited which will provide the capacity required to deliver a more consistent quality monitoring function across a larger cohort of placements. By the end of Qtr.1 2024/25 these developments will have started to become embedded as the new placement officer starts to deliver this new way of working.						
Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual		Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED03 06	Report on the budget spent on independent and out of borough placements for Children in Care (Forecast end of year) (Sarah Riley/Lucy Freaney)	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	Refer comment	N/A	N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves</i> Several initiatives are being implemented to effectively manage and reduce spend on placements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive market development exercise being undertaken to test the feasibility of new models of care across supported accommodation, children's homes & UASC provision. Focused interrogation of the highest cost placements via a targeted cohort approach whereby an agreed selection of young people can be tracked in relation to spend and interventions at review. Greater engagement with providers to understand the cost base of placements and how this is matched against need to determine best fit. Staff training 						

- Supported Lodgings, Commissioned Care Leavers Group and Training Flats
 - Reviewing 'CARE Cubed' model alongside Salford colleagues in peer support group.
- Consistent work being carried out with support from the Transformation & Delivery Unit to review cost.

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress				
PED03a	Ensuring all children in care achieve permanency in a timely way.					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Sarah Ellison</i>						
PED03b	Ensure that Safeguarding Unit escalate any delays or concerns using escalate policy.					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Jamie Pope</i> The Safeguarding Unit use the dispute resolution process to ensure timely and effective planning for our Children in Care and Children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan. The IRO's raise escalations through this process when more informal discussions with the Social Worker and Practice Lead have not led to satisfactory resolution/progress in planning for an individual child.						
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					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves</i> The children's commissioning team are visiting all existing providers as part of a targeted review programme to ensure value for money and adherence to performance indicators and quality assurance. In addition to this and as part of a new 'sufficiency approach' several new providers are being engaged who are new to Halton to develop greater choice in the market, drive down cost and improve quality. This work is being used to inform the development of the HBC Commissioning Strategy.						
PED03d	Through the quality assurance of Personal Education Plans (PEP), identify areas of need and support to improve outcomes for individual Children in Care					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> At the end of the Spring term, 93% of PEPs were completed, this is slightly lower than the previous term, Autumn 2023. Following our first multi-agency moderation during the Spring term, PEPs continue to be graded consistently, however, due to the completion rate for the term being slightly lower, the number of PEPs graded green or above, has also dropped for the term. The multi-agency moderation process will continue in the summer term, alongside a regional Virtual School network moderation, this will ensure that we are inline or better than our regional partners. Overall, the PP+ spend continues to be mostly focussed on 1:1 tuition or social and emotional support. An analysis of PP+ spend linked to outcomes has been completed for the financial year and the academic year so far. This evidences that the identified areas of need are being supported through PP+. It also evidences that our year groups of most need, also have the highest spend, with progress being made in their outcomes. The roll out of the 2-year-old PEP has begun, and whilst in its infancy, we are beginning to see the benefits of the Virtual School being included in care planning meetings to identify areas of need earlier.						
Objective: Improve the offer for children and young people with disabilities and those with Special Educational Needs (PED04)						
Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED04 01	Increase the percentage of Education Health Care Plan assessments completed within 20 weeks (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	25.8%	75%	20%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Charlotte Finch</i> The trajectory of improvement in this area continues. Our 12-month rolling improvement figure is actually 65%, which is in line with national average. We are confident we will hit our 75% target, unless unexpected external factors impact on service.						

Delivery. All indicators are positive, and performance is improving on a week-by-week basis. Weekly monitoring and strong oversight and management supports this improvement.

PED04 02	Reduce the number of incidents of fixed term Suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	1218	500	1489	N/A	N/A
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Supporting Commentary: Debbie Houghton/ Scott Middlehurst

The data covers the period 04/09/23 to 31/03/24. The number of suspensions has increased from 1218 to 1489 this quarter.

PED04 03	Reduce the number of children subject to fixed term suspensions (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	552	350	635	N/A	N/A
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Supporting Commentary: Debbie Houghton/ Scott Middlehurst

The data covers the period 04/09/23 to 31/03/24.



The data covers the period 04/09/23 to 31/03/24. The Team around the School meetings are taking place each week to discuss children with multiple suspensions at risk of exclusion. These meetings are attended by school and other partner agencies including Education Psychologist, Education Welfare Service, Mental Health Support Team, Early Help etc. The aim of the meetings is to provide support and advice to schools to reduce suspensions and exclusions. Common themes raised by school are around persistent disruptive behaviour and internal truancy.

PED04 04	Reduce the number of children subject to a permanent suspension (academic year cumulative to end of quarter)	39 (but 40 PERM Exc. One child excluded from 2 schools)	30	44	N/A	N/A
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Supporting Commentary: Debbie Houghton/ Scott Middlehurst

The data covers the period 04/09/23 to 31/03/24.

The data covers the period 04/09/23 to 31/03/24. The number of permanent exclusions has increased to 44. The Team around the School meetings are taking place each week to discuss children at risk of permanent exclusion. These meetings are attended by school and other partner agencies including Education Psychologist, Education Welfare Service, Mental Health Support Team, Early Help etc. The aim of the meetings is to provide support and advice to schools to reduce suspensions and exclusions. Common themes raised by school are around persistent disruptive behaviour and internal truancy. The main reason for permanent exclusion is persistent disruptive behaviour followed by physical assault on an adult and verbal/threatening behaviour towards an adult.

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
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	8% As of Q3 2022/23	3.6%	7.6% As of end of Q4		






Supporting Commentary: Charlotte Finch




Our Delivering Better Value action plan is targeting this particular work stream, and we hope to see a reduction in this area by 2026, but realistically it is not likely to start to reduce before then.




PED04 06	Report on the budget spent on independent and out of borough (OOB) provision for SEND (Forecast end of year)	Total year projected spend £6,726,000	£250000 reduction	Refer comment	N/A	N/A
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Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves



114 pupils are placed at 32 non-maintained and independent schools, no change since Q3 2023/24. In Q4 2023/24 – 18 new non maintained independent special schools Search requests were received and there are currently 38 active searches, of these 14 are parental requests to consult with a None Maintained Independent Special School. The average placement cost has risen to £60,572. Of the children on-roll their Primary Needs are: - 38 Cognition and Learning or have ASC as a primary need, SEMH – 64, Speech, Language and Communication - five and Visual Impairment – seven, the children are in Key Stages are: - KS1: 5, KS2: 16, KS3: 40, KS4: 41, KS5: 12.







PED04 07	Increase the percentage of children subject to EHCP placed in mainstream provision (snapshot end of quarter)	51% As of Q3 22/23	65%	55.2% 668 of 1210 school aged as of Q4		
<i><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Charlotte Finch</i> The number of children with EHCPs in Halton placed in mainstream settings is growing. We are not yet in line with our statistical neighbours, with a disproportionate number of children attending specialist settings, both in and out of borough						
PED04 08	Monitor the percentage of Special Schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding	100%	100%	100%		
<i><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Ben Holmes</i> This continues to be an area of strength within Halton, with 100% of special schools graded good or outstanding.						
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)	N/A	75%	100%		N/A
<i><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Charlotte Finch</i> We continue to maintain our significant improvement in this area. Whilst we are unable currently to monitor assessment data for Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan children, we are closely monitoring the assessment performance of children in care. Performance has significantly improved in this area.						


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.	
<i><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Charlotte Finch</i> SEMH remains the second highest area of need in Halton. The Strategy on SEMH requires revision following the successful establishment of additional resource bases for SEMH and the opening of the new Free School. In addition to this, we recently secured a Delivering Better Value (DBV) grant of £1m, and our action plan focusses heavily on SEMH, and contains many new initiatives to support this group of vulnerable learners. We believe our DBV work will transform the offer for SEMH learners exponentially. This will need to be reflected in a refreshed SEMH strategy		
PED04b	Review the current framework of support for children and young people with disabilities, including short breaks provision	
<i><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Claire Gurney</i> Short Breaks – monitoring visits to Short Breaks funded providers have started in collaboration with Short Breaks for Disabled Children’s Service. One provider was visited in Q4 2023/24, and we were able to gather positive feedback from both children and families during the visit. Delivery has maintained through Q4 2023/24, and providers are submitting their completed Q4 2023/24 quarterly performance information during April 2024. Eight of the nine Short Break activities have been extended into 2024/25: - Halton Play Council – Play Services, Vibe – Friendship Groups and Positive Future Consultancy - PA Support. These are supported by small grant awards to Everton in the Community – Trips and Visits, Vibe – Outdoor Activities, Sport Works – Splash Play and Swimming Lessons and Mako Create – Digital Media Workshops and will continue to provide support to children and families to April 2025. Motiv8 Sports Dance, Drama and Art Workshops ended in Q4 2023/24.		
PED04c	Review direct payments with all recommissions co-produced with parents and young people.	
<i><u>Supporting Commentary:</u> Val Armor</i> This has been reviewed in terms of commissioning to get the best offer and value for parents and carer.		





Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED04d	Improve quality and timeliness of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Charlotte Finch</i> The trajectory of improvement in this area continues. Our 12-month rolling improvement figure is actually 65%, which is in line with national average. We are confident we will hit our 75% target, unless unexpected external factors impact on service Delivery. All indicators are positive, and performance is improving on a week-by-week basis. Weekly monitoring and strong oversight and management supports this improvement. We are now launching Invision 360, which adds a robust level of Quality Assurance to the EHC assessment process and EHCPs. We are confident this will allow us to accelerate our improvement in this area and also will provide data which will allow us to evidence the improvement in quality.</p>		
PED04e	Quality assure all provision currently being utilised to ensure that provision meets the needs of our children and young people.	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Kevin Greaves</i> Monitoring visits for Independent non maintained special school continue with visit's taking place in Q4 2023/24 and of the 32 schools commissioned 14 have been monitored covering 60% of children placed. Short Breaks - a new monitoring document has been developed to use during provider monitoring visits, and this has continued to be rolled out in Q4 2023/24.</p>		
PED04f	Review in borough specialist provision and revise to meet the needs of Halton's children and young people	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Charlotte Finch</i> The first phase of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy has been delivered. Phase two of the strategy is now being coproduced with stakeholders. An additional 117 specialist places have been developed in partnership with our schools and settings. A new SEMH Free School will open its doors in September 2024, providing up to 36 additional specialist school places across Halton and St Helens. This will increase to 64 places in total by Sept 2026. Phase 2 of the SEND sufficiency strategy will look at the development of additional resource base places at secondary phase, in order to provide smooth transition from primary aged resource base. We are currently liaising with School Place Planning analytics company, MIME, to secure accurate SEND Forecasting data, to allow more forensic planning in the next phase of the sufficiency strategy.</p>		



Objective: Raise achievements across Early Years and all key stages, and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers (PED05)











Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	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 census)	98%	100% of eligible	93%		
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Sarah Campbell</i> 443 eligible children 2-year-olds out of 475 were placed in Early Years settings based on January headcount 2024. Sufficiency for eligible 2-year-olds is not currently predicted to be impacted by childcare expansion from April 2024. Uptake of the expansion programme will be closely monitored to ensure sufficiency.</p>						

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	23/24 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED05 02	Increase the take up of Early Years Entitlement for 3- to 4-year-olds.	93.9%	96%	89.9%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Sarah Campbell</i> 3- & 4-Year-old uptake is currently 89.8% based upon January 2024 headcount and GP Registrations from October 2023.						
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)	91%	N/A	97%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Sarah Campbell</i> 97 % of Early Years Providers are good, outstanding, or met. Out of these, 9 settings are outstanding, 74 settings are good and 11 are met. 1 setting and 1 childminder have received a requires improvement judgement following inspection and are being supported by the Early years team.						
PED05 04	Monitor the percentage of Primary schools with overall effectiveness of Good or Outstanding	76%	Dependent on Inspection dates	81.6% As of 29th Feb 2024		N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> The number of primary schools graded good or outstanding continues to increase across Halton. The 18.4% of schools graded as inadequate or requires improvement are receiving support through the LA, via DfE 'Priority Education Investment Area' funding and through Multi-Academy Trust support.						
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%	N/A	50% As of 29th Feb 2024		N/A
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> The number of secondary schools graded good or outstanding remains at 50%, with the 4 below this grading receiving intensive support through their Academy trusts.						

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.	
<i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> ASIA Link Officers to maintained and faith schools, as part of their termly visits, hold leaders to account for educational outcomes and progress of all pupils, especially disadvantaged and SEND. The Vulnerable Learners Partnership Board has been established, which is a multi-agency board chaired by the Director for Education alongside education leads and wider partners to ensure there is strategic scrutiny and challenge to removes barriers to learning for our most vulnerable children and young people. Guidance is provided to school governors through the director's briefing and through governor briefings to enable them to fulfil their duties. The Virtual School tracks the outcomes for Looked After Children and during 23/24 will continue to expand this to also track Children with a Social Worker. Schools have also engaged with Peer to Peer SEND Reviews, including those with SEND resource base provision.		

Ref:	Milestones	Quarterly Progress
PED05c	Review the process of risk assessment for schools and settings to target support and drive improvement.	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> The School Improvement Team risk assess schools termly (and after Ofsted visits) and adjust targeted support to meet needs of schools. In Q4 all school gradings were reviewed ready for implementation of a new Service Level Agreement, due to the termination of the School Improvement, Monitoring and Brokering Grant for Las. This will impact on the level of support schools can receive, but this will be tracked closely alongside plans for when urgent, intensive support is required. The SLA model has been developed in collaboration with school leaders and will launch from 1st April. We now have a school improvement website to support our new offer. https://haltonschoolimprovement.co.uk/</p>		
PED05d	Build engagement, capacity and governors understanding of the strategic roles and responsibilities.	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> Governor training and briefings were well attended in Q4. During workshops the governor roles and responsibilities were promoted in relation to being confident about their roles in relation to safeguarding, PEIA actions and around school finances. Further training from Ofsted is scheduled for 24/25 for Governors. Peer reviews are being carried out in partnership with school leadership teams and SEND governors. Governors were also encouraged to attend SEND Roadshows and EHCP assessment workshops.</p>		
PED05e	In partnership with schools, review and design an effective educational vision for the region that meets pupils needs whilst raising ambitions	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> We have a continued focus on the work of the Priority Educational Investment Area plans. Key priorities include Early Years development, improving outcomes in reading and maths through all key phases and improving attendance. A focus of inclusion runs throughout all key priority themes. Halton's Children's Services and working with wider partners, school communities and residents to create a new Children and Young People's Plan which will be published in 24/25 and shape our educational vision for the next 3 years.</p>		
PED05f	Launch Halton Learning Alliance (HLA) Strategic Partnership to develop an inclusive, ambitious approach developing contributing, successful citizens locally, nationally, and globally. All educational stakeholders and community members acting with moral purpose for Halton children, young people and community members	
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Ben Holmes</i> The HLA has been paused for 23/24 to enable focus on the PEIA across the authority. Schools have now been clustered to ensure all benefit and develop greater collaboration between neighbouring schools. The HLA will be considered in the creation of the CYP Plan.</p>		
Objective: Improve participation and skills for young people to drive Halton's future (PED06)		

Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	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)	4.4%	4.4%	5.5%		
<p><i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> The number of young people not accessing education, employment or training continues to grow in Halton. This growth is greater than seen in other local authorities. Lack of post 16 provision in the borough impacts this. Conversations are taking place with the Department for Education about commissioning new post 16 provision. All young people who are not in education, employment or training are offered support via a Young People Caseworker. Due to a vacancy in the team the current caseloads for Young People Caseworkers are significantly higher than operational expectations, limiting the speed of support available to young people. Whilst recruitment to the vacant post has taken place, the scale of growth in the NEET cohort means the team caseloads will still be too high to support individuals in a timely manner.</p>						




PED06 02	Maintain the percentage of 16–17-year-olds whose activity is not known (snapshot end of quarter, end of year information February)	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> Good relationships with other services and making home visits to young people has allowed us to maintain contact with the cohort, resulting in a very small number of young people whose activity is not known to the local authority.						
Ref:	Measure	22/23 Actual	22/23 Target	Current	Direction of Travel compared to same Qtr Prev Year	Quarterly Progress
PED06 03	Increase the percentage of 16–17-year-olds with an offer of learning (September guarantee)	96.02%	97%	94.7%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> This is the September 2023 reported figure as figures leading up to September 2024 are not currently available. The outcome is a result of the increased number of young people in academic Year 13 who are not in education, employment or training.						
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)	88.6%	90%	89.4%		
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> Whilst we have seen an increase in the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training since last year, there are fewer young people in jobs without training, which impacts positively on this measure.						
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					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> Ongoing analysis takes place to respond to need and ensure the resources available are being targeted appropriately. Work continues to raise the lack of access to in year provision for young people within the combined authority and with the Department for Education.						
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.					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> Successful outcome achieved for those who were in learning.						
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					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> Data from the college and training providers in the borough submitted in a timely manner.						
PED06d	Work with Post 16 education and training providers in the borough to support the development of provision that does have clear progression opportunities					
<i>Supporting Commentary: Háf Bell</i> Lack of in year progression an issue within Halton and being discussed with the Combined Authority and Department for Education. Looking for an external solution by bringing a new provider into the borough.						

5.0 Financial Summary

To follow




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:

CF/BH Charlotte Finch/Ben Holmes, Acting Assistant Operational Directors, Education, Inclusion and Provision Service – in Jill Farrell's absence.

KA Katherine Appleton, Operational Director, Children and Families Service.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES DEPARTMENT**Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Employees	12,101	15,195	(3,094)
Other Premises	476	421	55
Supplies & Services	2,078	3,280	(1,202)
Transport	113	376	(263)
Direct Payments	1,048	871	177
Commissioned services to Vol Orgs	224	198	26
Residential Care	14,993	19,075	(4,082)
Out of Borough Adoption	30	0	30
Out of Borough Fostering	3,194	4,274	(1,081)
In House Adoption	461	453	9
Special Guardianship Order	2,221	2,523	(302)
In House Foster Carer Placements	2,740	2,621	119
Lavender House	230	219	11
Home Support & Respite	530	553	(23)
Care Leavers	286	308	(21)
Family Support	53	75	(22)
Contracted services	3	4	(1)
Early Years	275	440	(165)
Emergency Duty	124	184	(59)
Youth Offending Services	255	326	(71)
Capital Financing	0	0	(0)
Transfer to Reserve	106	106	0
Total Expenditure	41,540	51,501	(9,961)
Income			
Fees & Charges	-34	-23	(11)
Sales Income	-4	-2	(2)
Rents	-84	-84	0
Reimbursement & other Grant Income	-1,134	-1,086	(48)
Transfer from reserve	-193	-193	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-50	-50	0
Government Grants	-10,488	-10,488	0
Total Income	-11,988	-11,926	(62)
Net Operational Expenditure	29,552	39,575	(10,023)
Recharges			
Premises Support	392	392	(0)
Transport Support	15	13	2
Central Support	3,290	3,290	0
Asset Rental Support	0	0	0
Recharge Income	-1,134	-1,134	(0)
Net Total Recharges	2,563	2,561	2
Net Departmental Expenditure	32,115	42,136	(10,021)

Financial Position

The net department expenditure is £10.021m over budget at the end of financial year 2023/24 with the majority relating to Social Care Services. Additional growth budget was provided in 2023/24 of £6.054m, with the majority £4,052m allocated to residential care placements. A savings target of £0.058m leaves a net growth of £5.997m.

Employee Expenditure

Employee costs are over budget by £3.094m at the end of financial year 2023/24. There continues to be a heavy reliance on agency staff to fill vacancies across the structure, including Social Worker and Practice Lead positions. This combined with a number of agency staff recruited in addition to the current staffing structure is the cause of this overspend.

Total agency spend for 2023/24 across the division was £6.123m or 51% of the employee budget.

There are various workstreams currently in place to target the difficulties in recruitment and to reduce the volume of agency staff, including Social Work Academy, a recruitment work group and a Local Offer for employees offering recruitment and retention bonuses for those working in children's social care.

It is hoped that these will be able to reduce the spend on employees, however a significant overspend is still to be expected in financial year 2024/25 as the work continues to look at options to reduce agency reliance.

Supplies and Services

Supplies and Services expenditure is £1.202m over budget at the end of financial year. Additional growth was provided of £0.314m to cover the increase in court costs and related legal spend. However, supplies and services is diverse and high levels of spend relating to a number of areas including nursery fees, consultancy, translation costs, equipment and travel are adding pressure to this budget.

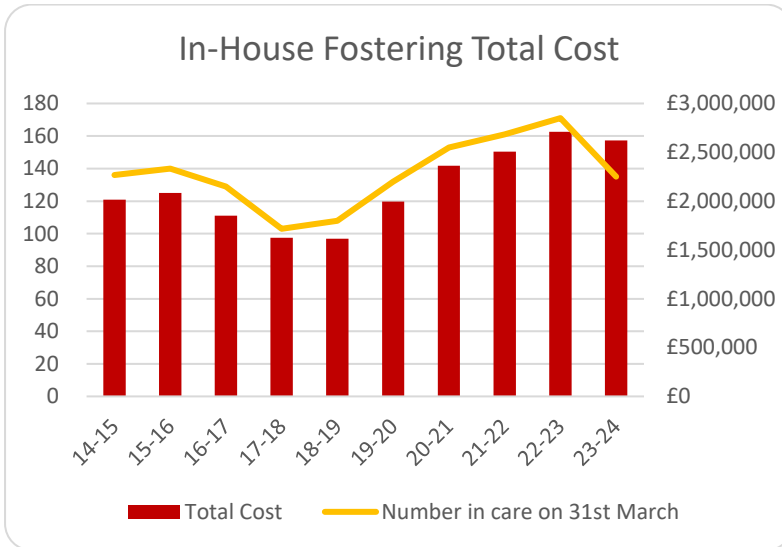
Translation costs have been identified as an increasing pressure to the service, £0.137m has been spent in 2023/2024. With the increasingly diverse population of Halton and the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) and Leaving Care (LC) children, there is an expectation that the translation costs will increase further in financial year 2024/25.

Transport costs are £0.263m over budget at the end of financial year 2023/24. The majority of these costs relate to the contracted transport of young people to their education provision. These costs can fluctuate in year dependent on the placements made, but transport costs and proximity to education are considered when arranging placements for young people.

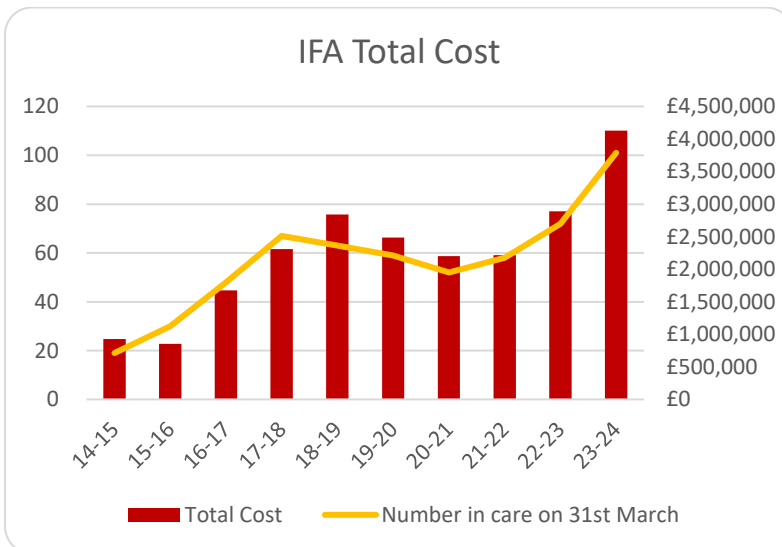
Fostering

In house fostering placements is £0.119m under budget profile. Growth of £0.268m was added which has reduced pressure in this area. Along with the growth provided to reduce the pressure, the number of children placed within in-house provision has reduced. The underspend relates to a number of children that have moved to either a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or residential care placement, as the inhouse placement has become unstable.

Work continues to recruit and retain Halton’s In-house foster carers, along with training to develop carers enabling them to accommodate more specialist placements and support and mentor each other. This therefore means that costs could increase. However, the ability to accommodate young people within in-house provision provides a substantial saving in comparison to IFA or residential care.



Increasing numbers of children in care and insufficient in-house fostering provision has meant increased reliance on IFA. Higher numbers of children placed within IFA provision and increased IFA rates has resulted in an outturn overspend of £1.081m.



Special Guardianship Order

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) costs at the end of financial year 2023/24 were over budget by £0.302m. Growth of £0.340m was added to this budget, but the increasing number of young people placed under an SGO and an expected uplift in the payment rates means that it still remains a significant pressure.

These are long term placements for young people, where the carers are granted parental responsibility for the young person in their care. This is a positive outcome for the young

person as these are stable placements and the children are no longer classed as a 'child in care'. They are also less expensive than other placements so they are financially beneficial too.

Residential Care

Out of Borough Residential Care continues to be the main budget pressure for the Children and Families Department as the costs of residential care have continued to rise year on year. This budget was given an additional growth of £4.052m for this financial year to alleviate the pressure, however residential care is £4.082m overspent.

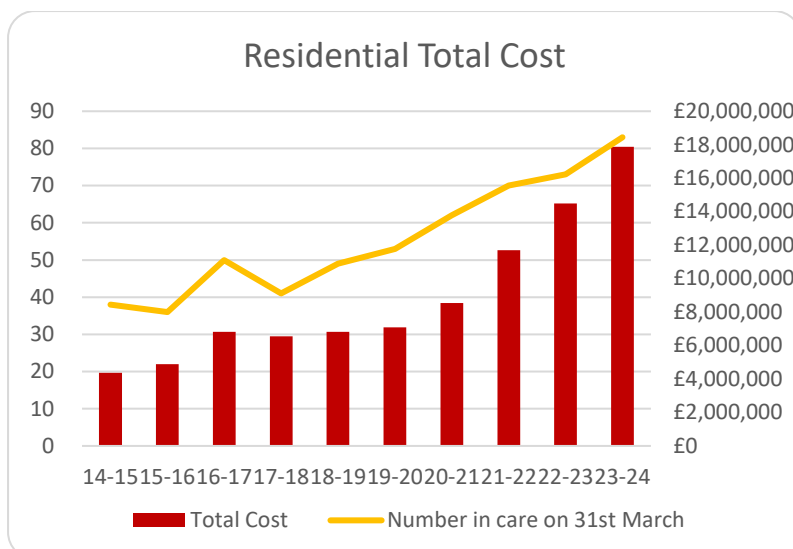
Provision	Weekly Costs	31 March 2024		31st December 2023	
		No.	Estimated cost	No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year
Residential	£2000 - £3000	7	1,220,918	6	853,613
Residential	£3001 - £4000	8	1,477,688	11	1,959,602
Residential	£4001 - £5000	6	1,401,013	6	1,473,015
Residential	£5001 - £13720	35	10,886,809	30	10,611,463
Secure	£6397 - £8137			0	0
Leaving Care	£443 - £7175	18	2,260,385	17	1,922,334
Parent & Child	£2000 - £5500	8	628,230	6	562,071
Total:		82	17,875,043	76	17,382,099

UASC Residential Care

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) currently placed in care remains high but fairly stable. Home Office funding has been agreed for the some of UASC placed in our care and we expect for payment to be sufficient to cover the costs of those UASC accommodated. Unfortunately, there is a significant delay in receiving payment for UASC and Leaving Care (LC). To date we have only received one payment from the Home Office for UASC and LC for the period April to August with no indication of when the funding for the remaining period of 2023/24 will be received.

Provision	Weekly Costs	31 st March 2024		31st December 2023	
		No.	Estimated cost	No. Placed	Estimated cost for the year
UASC	£300-£500	47	666,796	50	683,521
UASC	£500-£5000	7	508,303	4	462,996
Total:		54	1,175,099	54	1,146,517

The graph below illustrates the rising costs of Residential Care, for consistency this does not include the costs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as these costs were not included previous years.



Residential Care continues to be a persistent pressure on the budget. The numbers of young people in residential placements remains high and the cost of placements is rising significantly. This is a national issue and market factors such as low supply and high demand have resulted in the costs of residential care packages rising significantly over the last year, meaning that the level of spend is unsustainable at the current rate.

A number of initiatives are taking place to try and address the issue including a High Cost Placement Panel where high cost packages are individually scrutinized to ensure the placement is the right for the young person and at the best available cost for the placement.

Early Years

The Early Years net divisional expenditure is £0.165m over budget at the end of financial year 2023/24. This is due to the underachievement of parental income due to income targets being based upon the Early Years provision having high occupancy levels. Due to the inability to become self-sustaining and the consistent budget pressure the Early Years Centres have now closed and therefore will no longer be a pressure in future years.

Income

Income is underachieving by £0.062m at the end of the financial year 2023/24. The majority of this relates to an income generation target for the Leaving Care provision, Lavender House of £0.053m for renting a room to a neighbouring authority. Due to high demand from our own care leaver numbers, there are no plans as yet to rent one of these bedrooms out to a neighbouring authority and therefore this income target will not be met.

Overall the financial picture for the Children and Families Department continues to be one of serious concern. The main issues relate to the difficulty in the recruitment of Social Workers and the subsequent extortionate agency costs, along with the spiralling costs of residential placements. This has been an ongoing problem for a number of years. Urgent action to reduce these costs should now be taken as a priority as this level of spend cannot be sustained without resulting in significant financial harm to the Local Authority.

Education, Inclusion & Provision Department**Revenue Budget as at 31 March 2024**

	Annual Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance (Overspend) £'000
Expenditure			
Employees	7,206	7,028	178
Premises	13	9	3
Supplies & Services	2,545	2,529	16
Transport	6	1	5
Schools Transport	1,645	2,651	(1,005)
Commissioned Services	1,636	1,626	11
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	35	94	(59)
Independent School Fees	8,131	8,131	0
Inter Authority Special Needs	1,043	1,043	0
Pupil Premium Grant	129	129	0
Nursery Education Payments	7,843	7,843	0
Capital Financing	2,705	2,703	1
Total Expenditure	32,937	33,787	(850)
Income			
Fees & Charges Income	(202)	(217)	15
Government Grant Income	(5,938)	(5,938)	0
Schools SLA Income	(389)	(410)	22
Reimbursements & Grant Income	(1,172)	(1,162)	(10)
Transfer from Reserves	(255)	(255)	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	(20,430)	(20,430)	0
Inter Authority Income	(373)	(373)	0
Total Income	(28,760)	(28,786)	27
Net Operational Expenditure	4,178	5,000	(823)
Recharges			
Premises Support	281	281	0
Transport Support	441	614	(173)
Central Support	1,609	1,611	(2)
Asset Rental Support	2,495	2,495	0
Recharge Income	0	0	0
Net Total Recharges	4,826	5,001	(175)
Net Departmental Expenditure	9,003	10,001	(998)

Comments on the above figures

The net departmental expenditure for EIP is £0.998m over budget at the end of 23/24. Throughout the year it had been forecast to be over budget by approximately £0.785m at year end. The main variance being school transport and staffing.

Core funded employee expenditure is £0.178m under budget at year end. Throughout the year there have been a number of vacant positions across the department. It had been previously forecast that the majority of these vacancies would be filled by the end

of this financial year but there are still a number of vacant positions, which will be filled early 24/25, resulting in a small one off saving.

Schools Transport continues to be the main budget pressure for Education, Inclusion and Provision. The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils with transport. The budget can be split into two main areas; between SEN pupils attending an In Borough Schools and those attending Out of Borough Schools. The demand for the School Transport service is increasing in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough.

The table below breaks down the split between the different areas, and how each areas spend compares to budget.

	2023-24				
Area	No. of Users	Budget £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Variance £'000	Average Cost per User £
In Borough	422	1,186	1,470	(284)	£3,483
Out of Borough	125	459	1,181	(722)	£9,448
Total	547	1,645	2,651	(1,006)	

As at 31 March 2024 there were 547 service users, largely unchanged from Q3. The majority of which attend schools within the Borough, 422 compared to 125 out of the Borough. As can be seen both areas are overspending compared to budget. However, the out of borough forecast overspend is far greater than that for in-borough. The demand for the School Transport service is increasing in line with the increasing number of pupils with SEN within the Borough.

In setting the 2024/25 budget, growth has been added to increase the annual budget to £2.100m, despite which this is still significantly short of actual spend incurred during 2023/24. There is a workstream within the Transformation Programme set-up to look at this, clearly this needs to be looked at with pace to ensure the Council start to see a reduction in costs against this area.

Reimbursements and Other Grant Income has underachieved the budget in 23/24 by £0.010m. The majority of income represents Inter Authority school transport reimbursement.

School SLA income has over achieved by £0.022m in this financial year. Certain services such as Educational Psychology and Education Welfare are in high demand from schools. As a result they are generating higher levels of income than initially targeted.

Capital Projects as at 31 March 2024

	Annual Capital Allocation	Allocation to Date	Actual Spend	Total Allocation Remaining
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Repairs	1,040	904	904	136
Asbestos Management	22	1	1	21
Asset Management Data (CAD's)	15	0	0	15
Small Capital Works	142	102	102	40
Accessibility Projects	44	22	22	22
SEND Capital - SEMH Free School	239	239	239	0
Cavendish School	605	451	451	154
Astmoor Primary RB	300	243	243	57
Ashley School	500	37	37	463
Kingsway Academy RB	30	26	26	4
Oakfield Primary	370	353	353	17
St Basil's Primary RB	250	0	0	250
St Peter's & Paul High School	356	0	0	356
The Brow Primary RB	115	103	103	12
Victoria Road Primary RB	250	142	142	108
Westfield Primary RB	220	216	216	4
Woodside Primary RB	340	307	307	33
Brookfields School	300	0	0	300
SCA unallocated	19	0	0	19
Basic Need Projects	601	0	0	601
Childcare Expansion Grant	315	0	0	315
Total Capital	6,073	3,147	3,147	2,926

Comments on the above figures

Many of the Capital repairs and SEND works were completed over the summer holiday 2023.

Asbestos management surveys are updated annually, and remedial work conducted where necessary.

Asset Management (CAD plan updates and Condition Surveys) works, kitchen gas safety works and small capital works will continue in response to or in line with any emergency Health and Safety issues.

The SEND allocation comprises of two funding sources: Special Provision Capital Fund (SPCF) and the more recent allocation of High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA). The balance of the SPCF allocation will be used to support the SEMH Free School project, which is being procured by the DfE.

Cavendish School remodelling started on site in August, with completion planned in 2024.