

REPORT: Executive Board

DATE: 16 December 2010

PRESENTED BY: Strategic Director, Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Ofsted's Annual Children's Services Assessment

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Executive Board of Ofsted's statutory Annual Children's Services Assessment (see Appendix 1 – letter from Ofsted)

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1) That Executive Board note Ofsted's judgement that Children and Young People's services in Halton continue to be performing well.

2) That Executive Board notes that the large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 In reaching the assessment of Children and Young People's Services, Ofsted has taken account of all inspected and regulated services for Children and Young People; arrangements for Child Protection; along with performance against national performance indicators. This is a highly exacting inspection process.

3.2 The overall judgement that Halton is performing well is derived from a wide ranging assessment of services. These include:

- Child Protection and Children in Need Services
- Children in Care Services
- Early Years, Primary and Secondary education and their performance
- Post 16 Education
- Private and Voluntary Sector provision that is used by the Council
- Special Educational Needs
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Child Health Performance
- Partnership working
- Management practice and leadership

- The involvement of children and young people in planning and reviewing services
 - Progress with young people in Education, Employment and Training
- 3.3 The Ofsted letter (see Appendix 1) will be the subject of detailed consideration and action by both Halton Safeguarding Children Board and Halton's Children's Trust.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Ofsted Annual Assessment concludes that Halton continues to perform well. Sustaining this level of performance will be a critical focus for our work as we move into a period of significant economic hardship.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this Ofsted letter.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

The Ofsted Annual Assessment demonstrates strong performance overall. This reflects both the Council's and its partners' commitment to young people in the borough.

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

Figures for NEET young people show significant improvement.

6.3 Healthy Halton

The Council is committed to improving child health. It is anticipated that the Council's future lead role in Public Health will strengthen this area.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Safeguarding in Halton is assessed as strong. The Youth Offending Service has been rated as strong in its recent inspection.

6.5 Halton's Urban Regeneration

The Children and Young People's Directorate is to be strengthened through the incorporation of services disaggregated from the Employment and Environment Directorate in April 2011.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The areas of Child Protection and overall educational performance in the Borough are critical to receiving a positive future Ofsted Assessment.
- 7.2 The Council has maintained a consistent and improving level of performance in the inspected areas. Sustaining and improving the performance by the Council and its partners will be a critical activity over the next year.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Halton's Children's Trust has recently approved a comprehensive Equality and Diversity strategy for Children and Young People in the Borough. This will ensure that the Council and its partners fully respect the interests of all those young people who are regarded as having "Protected Characteristics" as detailed in the new legislation.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Ofsted's regulatory framework for inspection: Ofsted Website