



Cllr. Mark
Dennett
Chairman
Children &
Young People
PPB

ANNUAL REPORT

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

APRIL 2010 – MARCH 2011

"I always like to start by looking back over the previous twelve months. In May 2010 there was a change in government and along with it a reversal of the decision surrounding Halton's Building School's for the Future (BSF) Programme. Removing investment of £100 million to renew all of our high schools and instead providing investment to renew only two, The Grange in Runcorn and Wade Deacon in Widnes. Construction of both of these new schools will start later this year.

Halton's funding from the Government for Children & Young People Services was also cut severely, providing Halton with large challenges in how it provides it's services to the people of the borough.

But, against this background of cuts and turmoil, Halton continued to provide good services. This was borne out by the recent Ofsted's and Care Quality Commission Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services that took place on the 7th February 2011 through to the 18th February 2011.

The final report was published on the 25th March 2011 and said that, "The local authority and its partners demonstrate excellent self awareness and commitment to achieving outstanding outcomes. A very strong and established senior management team, which includes senior health managers, is in place and demonstrates clear vision and focus on priorities. Partnership working, quality assurance and performance management arrangements are outstanding. Effective workforce planning and user engagement contribute to an outstanding capacity to continue to secure improved outcomes for children and families." The overall judgement was that our services were good with outstanding capacity to improve; one of the best scores in England.

Once again the educational attainment of our children and young people was fantastic. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our students who did so well, and also thank the parents, carers and teachers who supported them in achieving these fantastic results. The results show Halton's commitment to drive up standards and improve the opportunities available to all of our young people as they move into adulthood.

Looking back I think it has been a good, but difficult fifth year for the board and I would like to thank all of the members of the board, as well as all of the officers involved for their continued support and contribution.

Finally, I would like to conclude this report by thanking all of the officers and members (of all parties) involved in all of the 'additional duties' that take place to make sure that the children and young people receive that best care and support. Duties such as being a school governor with all of the responsibilities that that entails, statutory inspections of our care homes (Regulation 33) or of our social worker teams (Climbié visits), membership of the Local Safeguarding Board, the Adoptions Panel, the Children and Young People's Trust, to name but a few of the 'extra duties' that both members and officers perform to support and improve the lives of the children and young people of our Borough."

Councillor Mark Dennett

Chairman, Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2010/11 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors M. Dennet (Chairman) Cllr M Horabin (Vice Chairman), P. Balmer (who replaced D. Findon in December), P Browne, M Fry, R Gilligan, M Hodge, P Lloyd Jones, K Loftus, M Ratcliffe and a Co-optee Miss E. Lawler.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the work of the Council (and its partner agencies within Children's Trust Arrangements) in seeking: to ensure that children and young people in Halton have the best possible start in life and opportunities to fulfil their potential and succeed; and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year, and set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during the year.

Diocesan Representative Information.

Under a direction issued by Secretary of State, authorities must appoint diocesan representatives to Scrutiny Committees under s499 Education Act 1996 and DfE circular 19/99 all as amended. The representatives would have voting rights in relation to any decision regarding the following:

- Schools maintained by the Local Authority (LA)
- Pupils who attend school maintained by the LA or are education in some way but not the other business of the Committee.

Elizabeth Lawler was appointed as a voting co-optee on the Board for a period of four years.

Children Young People Plan Review

A review had been undertaken of Halton's Children and Young People Plan 2009-2011, and a multi agency task group had been established in April 2010 to focus on a number of developments. Members considered actions required to improve areas that had been identified as a result of the review.

Social Work Referral and Workload Analysis

Completion of Initial Assessments within timescales was 80% and for Core Assessments the figure was 95%. It was agreed that the Halton Safeguarding Children Board would continue to scrutinise and support the work of the Children's Trust in relation to the development of Team Around the Family (Localities) and the progress of the CAF Action Plan. Halton Safeguarding Children Board would scrutinise the response to Domestic Violence across the levels of need within Halton.

Inspections

Ofsted's and Care Quality Commission Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services, took place from the 7th February 2011 to the 18th February 2011. This rigorous three yearly inspection, focuses on the Council and its partners services; and judges how the whole system works together to protect children in Halton.

The inspection judged the overall effectiveness of Safeguarding Services in Halton to be good with outstanding capacity to secure further improved outcomes for children and families, the overall effectiveness of services for Children in Care is also good, with outstanding capacity for further improvement; and leadership and management; ambition and prioritisation; along with performance management and partnership working for children and young people is outstanding in Halton. The outcome places Halton Council and its partners as one of the most consistently high performing areas in England. This is the result of exceptionally high levels of partnership working within the Borough the role of Councillors in the protection children and meeting the needs of Children in Care was positively endorsed by the Inspectors. All areas for development are being addressed

Summary of Educational Attainment and Progress 2010

School performance was discussed in relation to the successes specifically at Key Stage 2 and 4 and also in terms of progress in narrowing the gap for achievement for vulnerable pupils including those with special educational needs. In relation to Key Stage 4 the percentage of students gaining 5+A* including English and Maths had increased to 50% which was a rise of 5% from last years results. Halton continues to perform well in comparison to national outcomes as a result of the gains made and maintained over the past few years.

Regulation 33 Visits.

There are three Children's Homes in the Borough requiring 36 visits a year, to make it easier to complete the visits the Board agreed that a revised rota be introduced where visits were undertaken alternately by Members and Independent Reviewing Managers from the Safeguarding.

In addition a training session was provided for all Members regarding all aspects of the Corporate Parenting Role.

Service Plans

This year the Board continued to take significant steps forward in the way it engaged with the service planning process. The PPB Members identified issues and activities they hoped could be prioritised in the service plans for 2011/2014.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

2009/10 saw the important, high level outcomes for children and young people in Halton coming more under the scrutiny spotlight. The PPB raised its sights to focus attention on key, strategic indicators of performance e.g. as set out in the Local Area Agreement and in the service's work with partners. Through the LAA a suite of targets was agreed for Halton with Government and local partners. It emphasises the requirement for named partners to co-operate in striving to achieve those targets. There were 34 indicators in the LAA, together with statutory education and early years targets. The LAA reflects the priorities in Halton's community strategy for improving the quality of life in Halton, including the need to tackle high teenage pregnancy rates in the Borough.

RESTRUCTURING OF THE CYPD

The Council's efficiency programme has resulted in a restructuring of the Children and Young People's Directorate to be implemented from 1st April 2010. The CYP Directorate will reduce from four Departments to three:

- Children and Families Services
- Learning and Achievement Services
- Children's Organisation and Provision

The Children's Safeguarding Unit will report directly to the Strategic Director in order to separate the delivery of Safeguarding Services from a review and auditing function.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2010/11

The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2010/11) it will carry out Topic reviews examining the following area:

- Young Carers

This topic area will be completed in 2010/11.

In 2009/10 the following scrutiny topic was completed:

- Health of Young People

SAFEGUARDING

Members regularly considered matters relating to Safeguarding, particularly in the areas of monitoring of racist incidents, anti-bullying, private fostering arrangements and the work of the Halton Safeguarding Children's Board.

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work, please contact Gill Bennett on 0151 471 7545 or e-mail: gill.bennett@halton.gov.uk