

ANNUAL REPORT  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD  
APRIL 2011 – MARCH 2012



Cllr. Mark  
Dennett  
Chairman  
Children &  
Young People  
PPB

“I always like to start by looking back over the previous twelve months. The pace of change introduced by the Coalition Government has not diminished and this has led to two schools looking to attain Academy Status and the possible creation of a Free School. These schools will operate separate to the Local Authority drawing funding from the family of schools within Halton and possibly putting other schools in precarious positions.

The austerity measures introduced by the government have once again bit deep into the Council’s budget, with cuts in excess of £2.7m to Children and Young People’s Services. Already schools and other clients of the Council’s services are feeling the effects of the diminished levels of staffing and the subsequent knock on effect to service provision.

Against this backdrop the board has continued its focus to maintain the standards of provision in safeguarding, knowing all too well that you can never be complacent.

The Child and Poverty Family Strategy for Halton have also been launched in the year. This is a multi-agency strategy to co-ordinate and target services across the whole borough with the vision, “To create and sustain an environment in which **ALL** children and their families living in Halton are supported in achieving emotional wellbeing and prosperity to fulfill their potential through the elimination of child and family poverty by 2020.” This is a bold vision whose key driver, Councillor John Swain; the Executive Board Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People’s Services, brought to life by bringing together all partners both big and small, from within Halton and outside to fulfill this singular vision.

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.

During the year the board undertook two pieces of scrutiny topic work. The first examined the support provided across the borough to Young Carers and resulted in the creation of a multi-agency strategy ensuring the all Young Carers receive the support for their own needs, while they are providing support within their families. This strategy went to the board for approval in February. The second piece of work was a joint scrutiny topic with the Employment, Learning and Skills PPB, examining how Apprenticeships can be increased and supported across the borough. This piece of work will return to both boards with recommendations for approval in the new Municipal year.

Looking back I think it has been a good and varied sixth 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.

Looking forward, I intend for the board to look at the impact the changes brought about by the Coalition Government has had on the education provided in the borough.

There is an increasing amount of anecdotal evidence that child self harm is increasing in the borough, that is why I also intend for the board to scrutinise the topic of self harm by our children in the borough, and the services available to support and help them.

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 2011/12 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors M. Dennett (Chairman) Cllr M Horabin (Vice Chairman), M. Bradshaw, A. Cole, F. Fraser, M Fry, M Hodge, P Lloyd Jones, K Loftus, J. Lowe, N. Plumpton Walsh 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.

##### **Compass Steering Group.**

As a result of the Youth Crime Action Plan, which set out a comprehensive package of measures to prevent and tackle youth crime through a triple track approach of tough enforcement, non-negotiable support and prevention. A Compass Steering Group was established and joint planning commissioning framework was essential in progressing projects.

As a direct result of the projects the Steering Group had implemented Halton could report a significant reduction in youth-related anti-social behaviour and police recorded incidents relating to youth anti-social behaviour had been reduced by a staggering 48% when compared to the period of the same time before the projects began.

## **Halton's Children and Young People Plan**

In July 2010 the Government announced its intention to reform Children's Trusts, however the future of Halton's Children's Trust was discussed at both the Executive Group and the Children's Trust Board where it was agreed by all partners for the Trust to continue in its current format as the overarching multi-agency body that contained all children and young services in Halton

A new Children and Young People Plan has been developed and new priorities have been agreed to:

- Improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support;
- Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning; and
- Improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people by targeting services effectively.

### **Summary of Education Attainment and Progress 2011**

The main headlines for Halton were excellent again this year, in particular the following points were highlighted:

- for Early Years Foundation Stage the Profile Total Score was down 3% from 2010 but was higher than in 2008;
- for Key Stage 2, English and Maths at Level 4+ was above the national average with 77% attaining national expectation in English and Maths at age 11;
- Children in Care in Key Stage 1 attainment was in line with national expectation with level 2 achieved in reading, writing, speaking, listening and maths;
- for Children in Care in Key Stage 2 it was noted that there were only 6 children in the cohort but results exceeded the prediction of 50% achieving Level 4+ in English and Maths;
- In relation to Key Stage 4, 56% of Halton's children achieved 5+ A\*-C GCSEs including English and Maths;
- performance has significantly improved in comparison to last year for Children in Care at Key Stage 4 with 44% of Children in Care achieving 5+A\*-C GCSEs.

### **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.

## WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2011/12

The Board decided that during the current municipal year (2011/12) it would carry out Topic reviews examining the following areas:

- joint scrutiny topic on Apprenticeships with the Employment Learning, Skills and Communities PPB;
- Transition from Young People to Older People's Services;
- Provision for Young People with Special Educational Needs in relation to preparation for independent living
- Young homelessness provision.

In 2010/11 the Young Carers Scrutiny Topic was completed producing a new strategy and an action plan to implement and deliver the new strategy. This will be revisited in 12 months time.

## 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.

### **Children in Need, Contract, Referral and Assessment Analysis**

Members have scrutinised referral and assessment activity and In relation to referrals it there was an increase of 15% in comparison to 2009/10. The performance in relation to completion of Initial and Core Assessments within timescales was 79% for Initial Assessments within 10 days and 84% for Core Assessments. The department is in the process of moving to the new Carefirst 6 system which provides more effective working and streamlines processes.

There had been a 2 day unannounced inspection of Front Door Services, by Ofsted, the results of which were positive and a number of strengths had been identified.

### **Climbie & Regulation 33 Visits**

There are two Children's Homes in the Borough requiring 24 visits a year, carried out by Members, who are enhanced CRB checked and fully trained. Regulation 33 Visits also take place enabling scrutiny of care homes for children.

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](mailto:gill.bennett@halton.gov.uk)