



Cllr. Mark Dennett  
Chairman  
Children &  
Young People  
PPB

**ANNUAL REPORT  
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES  
POLICY & PERFORMANCE BOARD  
APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021**

“My final year as Chair of Children, Young People, and Families PPB has been unlike any other, as COVID-19 has presented huge challenges for all aspects of Children’s Services. The breadth of services that the pandemic has affected is astounding and yet our staff have risen to the challenge and provided second to none service across the board, whether it be in social care or in educational services.

This year has also presented our parents, and children in schools and colleges with unforeseen challenges as they have had to adapt to virtual school life, and have sacrificed many of the ordinary highs of school life, like the school prom and school trips. The uncertainty that the government gave our children last Summer around exams and exam results only added to the burden of the pandemic. Fortunately, our schools supported by the education staff rose to the challenge and our children are back in school and getting supported for any gaps in their education.

I would like to thank all of our staff for their dedication, hard work, and selflessness in dealing with the challenges that have arisen in supporting our children in care, our foster carers, our care leavers, and our children in schools during the still ongoing pandemic.

Finally, I would like to thank the board (past and present) for supporting me over the past fifteen years, and I’m sure they will support the new Chair, Cllr Logan, equally as well as they have me.”

***Councillor Mark Dennett  
Chair – Children, Young People & Families Policy and  
Performance Board***

**MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

During 2020/21 the Board comprised Eleven Councillors – Councillors M. Dennett (Chair) Cllr G. Logan (Vice Chair), M. Bradshaw, C. Carlin, L. Cassidy, P. Hignett, R. Leck, P. Lloyd Jones, J. Stockton, A. Teeling and L. Whitley.

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 four times during the Municipal Year, however, due to Covid each of the meetings took place virtually. Detailed below are some of the main areas of scrutiny the Board has considered at these meetings.

### **Inspection of Authority Children Services**

The Board received the findings of the recent Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Services (ILACS) which took place just prior to lockdown on 2<sup>nd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Members were advised that the judgement across four main areas was that Halton was deemed to 'require improvement to be good". A full explanation of the findings with each area was provided to members, along with their recommendation. The LA Action Plan detailing its response to the Ofsted recommendations was shared and discussed by the Board.

Members have continued to scrutinise the Action plan and there has been discussion on the progress made and challenges faced.

### **Support for Children and Families during Covid 19**

The Strategic Director for People has reported to the Board on the support provided to children and families during Covid 19.

The reports have provided summaries for each service and included updates on each of the following service areas:

- Early Help Services;
- Disabled Children's Services (DCS);
- Daycare at Warrington Road and Ditton;
- Safeguarding and children in care;
- Children in care and care leavers;
- Fostering Service;
- Inglefield;
- Placements Team;
- Educational outcomes and effective practice for

- children in care and care leavers;
- Personal Education Plans; and
- Safeguarding Unit.

### **Education, Inclusion and Provision**

The Operational Director for Education, Inclusion and Provision has provided the Board with summaries of the support provided by the Department during Covid 19.

Members have received updates on the infection rates in education settings and an outline of the advice, guidance and support early years, schools and the college were being provided with.

Service summaries were provided on the following key service areas;

- Early Years and School Improvement;
- School Improvement and Governance;
- Behaviour Support Service;
- Halton Virtual Schools;
- Placements;
- Policy, Provision and Performance;
- Inclusion (0-25); and
- Broader Council support.

### **Educational Performance, Attainment Summary 2020**

The Board received its annual report on educational performance, along with a summary of some of the challenges within the borough.

Members were reminded that many of the statutory assessments had been cancelled nationally and no individual schools data would be comparable to previous year's data.

Discussion during the meeting covered Statutory Assessment and exam results, educational challenges for September 2020 onwards, key changes in 2020/2021, The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) and The Catch Up Premium.

### **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Review Autumn 2020-2021 (CSA)**

Members received an update on Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA). An update was provided as to how the Local Authority were meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare. The achievements made since the review last year was outlined and discussed along with Halton's current position. Gaps in provision were highlighted and it was explained how these were being addressed. An update to the

response to Covid 19 in the early year's sector and the impact it was having on the sector was explored.

**Annual Report – Comments, Complaints and Compliments Relating to Children's Social Care Services from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.**

This annual report is presented and discussed by members with a focus on the learning from any complaints. An opportunity is also taken to celebrate the compliments many individuals and services receive.

**Halton Local Area SEND Strategy 2021-2025**

The Board were presented with a detailed presentation on the SEND Strategy consultation for 2021-2024. Members were advised that the draft strategy had been produced in partnership with other statutory bodies across education and health, including schools, the CCG, parents and carers representatives and children and young people representatives. The vision, principles, priorities and governance were shared as well as the draft of the single page summary.

**Headteacher of the Virtual School's Annual Report for Halton Children in Care**

Finally, the Board considered the annual report from the Virtual School Headteacher for Halton Children in Care (CIC). This report covered the impact of Covid and change in provision following the lockdown and the support provided. Members were advised that despite pandemic the work of the Virtual School has continued and an outline was provided on the measures taken to mitigate the impacts of the Covid.

As part of its overview, the Policy and Performance Board also considers the Council's Executive Board minutes and Children's Trust minutes as well as the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports.