

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

Executive Board Draft 2009

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified [6 key priorities](#), and a number of associated key Areas of Focus, which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**
- **Halton's Urban Renewal**
- **Halton's Children & Young People**
- **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
- **A Safer Halton**
- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

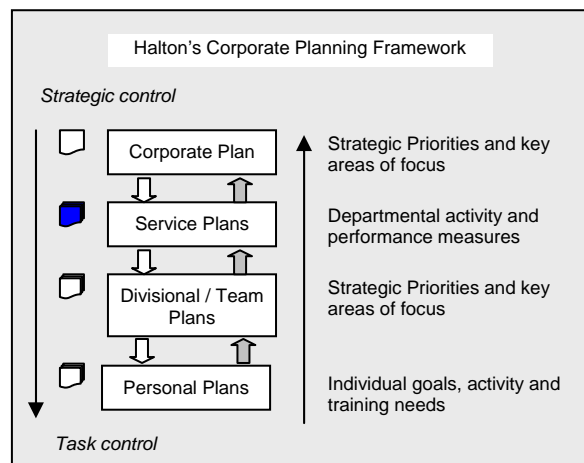
Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.

Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.
- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.
- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.
- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users



The Strategic Priorities and associated Areas of Focus that have been most influential in the development of the service plan are;

Children & Young People in Halton

Area of Focus 14

To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.

Area of Focus 19

To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

2.0 SERVICE PROFILE

2.1 Purpose:

The children and families we work with have complex needs, have experienced compromised parenting and are the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in Halton. The services we provide are designed to support and protect children, ensuring that they are safe, have the opportunity to reach their potential across the five outcomes and together with partners, we narrow the gap in outcomes for these most vulnerable children. For the majority of children this will be with their families and we will provide services and support to families to achieve this. When this is not possible we provide services to ensure that children live somewhere that is safe, caring and appropriate to their needs.

Many of the services the department offers and the way it works are set out in law, for example the Children Acts 1989, 2004, including the Every Child Matters programme, and Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Department offers a range of services to families who are failing to manage or are having difficulty caring for their children. We also look after children whose parents are unable to care for them.

The Department's main responsibilities, which are all primarily customer focussed, are summarised in the work of the 3 divisions detailed below. However, much of our work is closely linked with the work of other services including Health, Schools and third sector Agencies.

Services to Children in Care

- Care Leavers services
- Recruitment, assessment and support for adoptive and foster carers
- Provision of Residential Children's Unit
- Support to Looked After Children
- Intensive Support Services
- Inter Agency Working

Safeguarding

- Child Protection co-ordination
- Independent review of services to children in care
- Inter agency working
- Foster Carer Reviews
- Adoptive Carer Reviews
- Provide capacity and support to Halton Safeguarding Children Board

Services to Children in Need

- Assessing promptly the needs of children and families in need
- Planning and delivering integrated services for vulnerable children and families across the levels of need
- Inter agency working via Children Trust and Service Delivery Partnerships
- Support, monitoring, training for parents, carers and children
- Crisis and emergency intervention in families

- Child Protection Services supporting much earlier targeted interventions with the most vulnerable children and their families

Services are provided for all those children in Halton who are assessed as needing support, care or protection. It is particularly focussed on those children and families who may be at the most risk or are the most vulnerable. Specialist Children’s Department does not offer universal services to children but endeavours to provide services to children in need based on the assessment process contained in the Assessment Framework

2.2 Key Messages

Joint Area Review

Children’s Services received an excellent report following the Joint Area Review (JAR) of services to children and young people in spring 2008. The JAR graded the performance of children’s services in Halton across 5 areas rating performance from 1 - inadequate to 4 – Outstanding and the grades are shown below;

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	4
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Service management	3
Capacity to improve	4

JAR inspectors stated that the partnership approach to improving outcomes for children and young people was key to Halton’s success. They commented on the high quality of staff they encountered and were impressed with their calm, committed approach.

The main findings included:

- Safeguarding children in Halton is outstanding, with sustained high performance, including child protection, underpinned by very strong joint working, robust policies and procedures.
- Local services for looked after children are good – children live in safe, stable placements and receive good care. However there are low numbers in education, employment or training or in permanent accommodation.
- The Council and its partners have made rapid progress over the last three years in developing a well-planned inclusion strategy for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- The local authority and its partners are very responsive to young people’s views and opinions.
- Service management is good, with outstanding capacity to drive further improvement. Highly effective leadership provides clear direction.

A Halton JAR Improvement Plan has been produced which describes how we, in Halton, are to deliver on the issues noted in the JAR report. There were two key action identified for Specialist Services;

- Increase numbers of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training
- Increase permanent accommodation for all care leavers

An apprenticeship scheme for care leavers is being established as part of the Working Neighbourhood Fund programme. Opportunities for work placement and apprenticeships are also being identified across the Council and it's partners.

A review of current accommodation and support provision for care leavers is underway and a commissioning plan is being established in order to increase options for care leavers.

Annual Performance Assessment

Children's services are also subject to an annual performance assessment by Ofsted. The results were released in December 2008 and performance was judged as outstanding across 4 of the 6 outcome areas. The grades are shown below;

Area for Judgement	Grade Awarded
Overall Effectiveness of Children's Services	3
Being Healthy	3
Staying Safe	4
Enjoying and Achieving	4
Making a Positive Contribution	4
Achieving Economic Well-Being	2
Capacity to Improve (Including Service Management)	4

The assessment process identified areas for development against each of the Every Child Matters outcomes, however none fall within the lead responsibility of Specialist Services. We are one of the few authorities national to be classified as outstanding for Safeguarding and service development is systematically reviewed to ensure that we continually strive to improve further.

2.2.3 Priorities

The original priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan are currently subject to review as the Plan expires at the end of March 2009. The strategic engagement meeting with Government Office North West (GONW) held

in December 2008 agreed the following priorities for the Children's Trust in the coming year;

- Reduce health inequalities
- Improve sexual health
- Improve placement choice and quality of care for Children in Care
- Narrow the gap in educational attainment for vulnerable children
- Reduce offending and anti-social behaviour
- Improved learning opportunities 14-19 and participation post 16

These priorities will shape the work of the Children's Trust and also reflect the targets agreed in the Local Area Agreement.

2.2.4 Local Area Agreement (LAA)

The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute. There are 16 statutory targets relating to educational attainment and attendance and in addition there are 34 mandatory targets based on the National Indicator Set. 9 of the 34 are particularly relevant to Children's Services and include our priority areas Teenage Pregnancy, Health Inequalities, NEET and post-16 attainment. All LAA indicators are included in the service plans and are highlighted in Section 5.2 of the relevant plan by ^{LAA}

2.2.5 Children's Trust Arrangements

The Children's Trust is the key delivery mechanism for integrated Children's Services in Halton and work towards the priorities set out in Section 2.2.4. The Every Child Matters programme for implementation of the 2004 Children Act provides the basis for partnership working, and section 10 of the Act provides the statutory basis for the establishment of the Trust. In Halton considerable process has been made to establish integrated governance, strategy and service delivery with the Children and Young Peoples plan providing the framework for the work of the Trust.

The key developments that are driving our work in this area are;

- Alignment of PCT service delivery with the Operational Director joining Senior Management Team and services including health visiting, school nursing and midwifery being delivered in partnership through the Children's Centres.
- The development of a Joint Intelligence and Commissioning Unit to provide an integrated support function for the Children's Trust. The Unit will operate across 4 strands; Workforce Development, Commissioning, Intelligence & Data, and Children's Trust Management & Integrated Processes. The Unit will provide the information required to facilitate the deployment of resources and inform planning of integrated services. It will also pull together good practice and drive standards across all agencies up to the highest common denominator.
- Locality working pilot to embed multi-agency preventative services in the community via a core team of professionals with additional support as required from virtual partners'. The common assessment framework (CAF)

will be used to facilitate this work and bring a consistent approach to our work with children and their families. This work will be further enhanced with the roll out of the lead professional process.

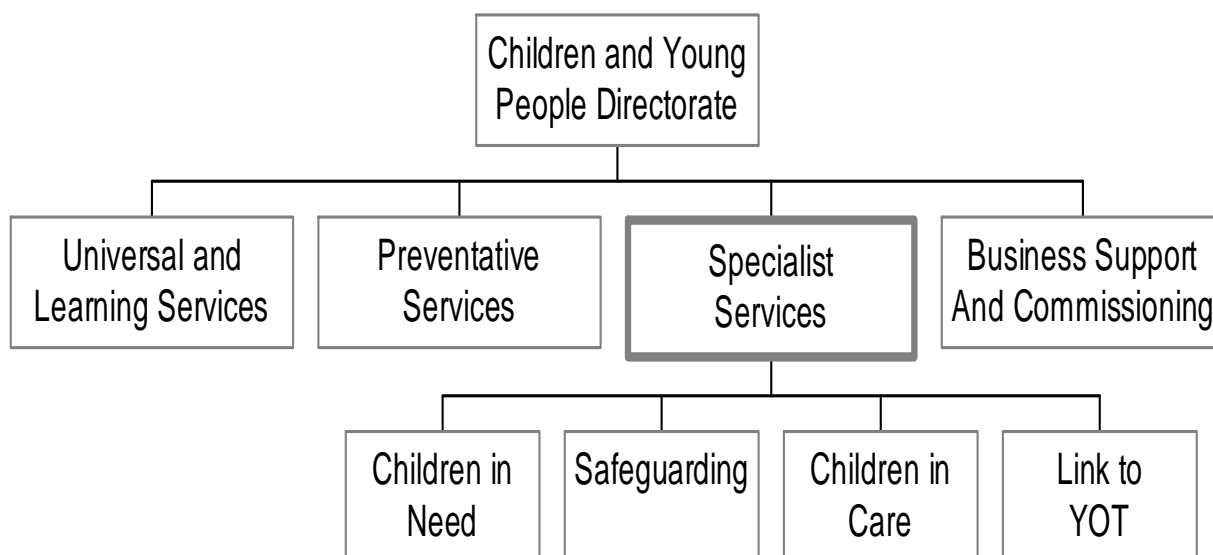
2.2.6 Economic Climate

The current economic climate is starting to impact across our services. In some areas such as work to reduce the numbers of young people not in Education, Employment or Training there is a very direct link. We also need to be aware of the indirect links as there is a well established correlation between deprivation levels and the demand for social care services, poor educational attainment and increasing levels of substance misuse, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. The impact on all of these areas will be monitored closely and reported through the quarterly monitoring process.

2.2.7 Consultation and Participation

Children and young people are at the heart of all of our activity and we ensure that there is a strong customer focus to all of work. We are currently participating in the development of a Customer Excellence Model for the authority and as part of that process have audited ourselves using the tool provided by the Cabinet Officer. The Children's Trust have adopted the 'hear by right' standard for engaging with children and young people and we are embedding good practice across the organisation. Details of consultation and participation activity is outlined in Section 3.2 Service Developments.

2.3 Organisation Structure



3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE:

3.1 External Factors

Political

Every Child Matters:

The Every Child Matters: Change for Children Agenda introduced a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

The Agenda promotes early intervention and co-ordinated service provision delivered through stronger partnership working and children's trusts.

Children's Plan:

The Children's Plan, published in December 2007, sets out the government's plans for the next ten years under each of the Department for Children, Schools and Families' strategic objectives under the following chapters:

- Happy and healthy – secure the wellbeing and health of children and young people
- Safe and sound – safeguard the young and vulnerable
- Excellence and Equity – individual progress to achieve world class standards and close the gap in educational achievement for disadvantaged children
- Leadership and collaboration – system reform to achieve world-class standards and close the gap in educational achievement for disadvantaged children.
- Staying on – ensure that young people are participating and achieving their potential to 18 and beyond
- On the right track – keeping children and young people on the path to success
- Making it happen – vision for 21st century children's services.

The Plan will have major policy implications across Halton Borough Council and partner agencies, and will stretch beyond children's services. In order to ensure that we are prepared for implementation of the Plan, an audit is being undertaken of the current situation in Halton and actions required to ensure we are ready for the changes which the Children's Plan will require. The findings from the audit will be used to inform strategic planning and act as a basis for the review of the Halton Children and Young People's Plan.

Halton Community Strategy:

This strategy outlines goals that the Halton Partnership wants to achieve to help build a better future for the Borough. It concentrates on the fresh challenges, priorities and achievements planned over the next four years to help improve the

quality of life for people in Halton. The Halton Strategic Partnership Board was formed in 2001 and is the Local Strategic Partnership for the area. It brings together Halton's main service providers and agencies from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

A Community Strategy was drawn up for Halton to provide a framework in which the many different organisations and groups of the Partnership can work together. The strategy sets out a plan to tackle five priority areas to improve quality of life in Halton, which are

- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Halton's Children and Young People
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton

Halton Children's Trust

The Children's Trust is responsible for strategic planning of services to children and young people, including developing and implementing the Children and Young People's Plan and Children's Trust arrangements. The work of the Children's Trust Board is underpinned by the Halton Multi-Agency Compact, which sets out the responsibilities of Halton Borough Council and its Partner agencies on the Board.

The Children's Trust was developed from **The Children and Young People's Alliance** Board following a review, and structural changes have been made to strengthen local arrangements and accountabilities.

Halton Safeguarding Children Board

The Board was established in April 2006 in line with the requirements of the Children Act 2004, and links into the Halton Children and Young People's Strategic Planning arrangements and the Halton Children and Young Peoples Plan. The Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of those arrangements

Economic

There are some additional potential demands placed upon services due to the current economic climate, which are referenced in Section 2.2.6. This section provides contextual information about the general economic position of the borough.

Deprivation:

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2007 suggests that deprivation has improved in the Borough. In 2007 the IMD ranked Halton as 30th most deprived Authority in England compared to 21st in the 2004 Index and 16th in 2000. However, it still ranks as one of the most deprived districts in England. Although located in Cheshire, Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. Halton is ranked in the IMD as the 3rd highest authority in terms of deprivation on Merseyside, behind

Knowsley and Liverpool, and 10th highest in the North West. Neighbouring authorities St Helens (47th overall), Wirral (60th) and Sefton (83rd) are well down the table compared to Halton.

Halton has some of the most deprived wards in the country in terms of child poverty. Several parts of Halton are amongst the poorest in the country. In Widnes, the most deprived areas are Kingsway, Riverside and Appleton. In Runcorn, the most deprived areas are Castlefields, Halton Lea and Windmill Hill. However, there are many affluent areas of the borough as well. These are located mainly on the outskirts of both towns and comprise of several new housing estates.

Child Poverty:

The Government has set itself a challenging target to half the number of children in poverty by 2010-11, and end child poverty by the year 2020. Halton has an open ended target to reduce child poverty by 40%, and so far has managed a 10% reduction.

- The 2007 population estimate for children (0-15 year olds) is 24,200
- 27% (6,825) of children live within households defined as living in poverty in Halton (2007).
- This figure has fallen since 2004 when 30.2% of children lived in poverty.
- In 2007 Halton has the 6th highest proportion of children in poverty in the North West. In 2005 it had the 5th highest
- The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation identified 17 lower super output areas that fell within the top 10% most deprived areas nationally for income affecting children. These 17 areas contain a quarter of Halton's child population.

Employment:

There are 54,000 employee jobs in Halton (2006). Halton residents who are full time workers (not necessarily working in Halton) currently have an average earning of £462.2 per week. This compares to the North West figure of £512.9. People who are full time workers in Halton (not necessarily living in Halton) have an average weekly earning of £520.7 per week. This figure is in fact higher than the North West average of £515.2. This demonstrates the gap between the jobs within the borough and the skills within the borough.

- 63% of Halton's population are of working age, this is an estimated 75,300 (2007). This is a slight drop from 75,600 in 2006.
- There are 54,400 employee jobs in Halton (2006). This is a slight drop from the 2005 figure of 54,600.
- The current Job Seekers Allowance claim rate is 3.2% (July 2008). The JSA rate has consistently been above the North West rate.
- Full time workers from Halton have an average earning of £462.2 per week (2007).
- The largest employment occupation for Halton residents is elementary occupations. Elementary sector job listings are wide ranging and encompass many disciplines including: farm workers, storeman, warehouse assistant,

hotel porter, postal workers, waiters, traffic wardens and bar staff etc.

- The “out of work” benefit claim rate for the worst performing neighbourhoods in Halton was 30.8% (May 07 – Feb 08).
- The largest proportion of “out of work” benefit claims are for incapacity benefits.
- Over 50% of incapacity benefit claims are classed as long term claims (Feb 2008).
- The percentage of working age with level 2 qualifications or above is 57.4%.

Research shows that the skill base of the local area is relatively poor compared to the United Kingdom as a whole and surrounding local economies. Halton has a low percentage of adults with further education qualifications and low rates of numeracy and literacy. All told, there is a mismatch between skills in the local workforce and jobs available in the borough, and it is anticipated that in the future over 95% of new jobs will need qualifications of at least NVQ 2 level and over 70% at NVQ 3 and above.

Social

Demographic changes:

The mid-2006 population of Halton stood at 119,500 (rounded to the nearest 100 people). This is up from the mid-2005 population of 119,200. Halton has a larger number of people in the 5-24 age categories than the national average, and a lower proportion of population over age 65+. However Halton’s proportion of over 50s is increasing at one of the highest rates at 4% higher than the national average.

Halton has some endemic and systemic problems that drive demand for safeguarding and particularly child protection interventions. There are high levels of compromised parenting, often inter-generational. This is where ‘poor’ parenting becomes a threat to the safety and welfare of children. Sometimes this is life threatening. That compromised parenting is most visible in levels of domestic violence, substance misuse, adult criminally, mental health problems along with vulnerable and unsupported families. “Families” being a generic term for a vast range of personal circumstances.

The result of such ‘compromised’ parenting is a very high demand for social work support and assessment services. This is increasing. In 2006/7 there was roughly 1000 assessments of such circumstances, with a predicted number of 1400 in 2009. The number of ‘live’ social work cases has risen from 640 to 780. This has resulted in the second highest rate of children with a social worker in the Northwest (2.9%).

The high proportion of NEET young people in the borough is also reflected in the care leaver population, where there is now a clear focus on encouraging care leavers into some form of education, training or employment. Additional support will be provided to them to help them to access opportunities and the range of apprenticeship and employment opportunities will need to be enhanced.

The next ten years will see a reduction in teenagers by 20%. This presents new risks for social exclusion and shifting demands for services. Single person households will rise, and single parenthood will become even more common. One result is likely to be a marked increase in social isolation, which will have profound effects on people's health and involvement in their communities.

Despite a small increase in the proportion of non-white population between 2001 and 2006 from 1.2 to 1.85 %, other areas have increased by a greater amount as Halton's rank has changed from 301 to 334 in Great Britain.

Health:

The health of people in Halton is generally worse than the England average, including breastfeeding initiation, the estimated percentage of adults who are obese and hospital stays related to alcohol. Some indicators are not significantly different from, or are better than, the England average, such as the rate of road injuries and deaths, which is similar to the England average.

There are health inequalities by gender, level of deprivation and ethnicity. For example, people from the most deprived areas have between 6 and 8 years shorter life expectancy than those from the least deprived areas. Over the last ten years, the death rate from all causes has decreased. However the early death rate from heart disease is above the England average.

There are a number of indicators which are among the worst in the country, including life expectancy for women, which is third worst in England and the early death rate from cancer, which is the worst in England. The teenage conception rate is significantly worse than the England average.

Technological

ContactPoint

ContactPoint will be the quick way for a practitioner to find out who else is working with the same child or young person, making it easier to deliver more coordinated support. This basic online directory will be available to authorised staff who need it to do their jobs. It is a key part of the Every Child Matters programme to improve outcomes for children. Halton has been designated as an early adopter authority, with a "go live" date for Halton and other early adopters commencing in February 2009.

Electronic Common Assessment Framework

The electronic CAF system (eCAF) for Halton has been piloted with practitioners from a range of voluntary and statutory agencies between February 2007 and February 2008. A new eCAF system within Halton is available for testing and has been built on the Children and Young People's Database. In 2007 the DCSF announced the decision for the implementation of a national eCAF solution, in which implementation will commence in 2009 for opting Local Authorities and will be operational across England in approximately 2010. Halton is currently in the decision making process as to whether to pursue the local or national eCAF solution. A business case will be documented to support such decisions.

Integrated Children's System

Halton currently has an in-house ICS System but is in the process of moving to CareAssess. We have implemented 27 electronic forms these are fully, live across all 9 Halton Children's Social Care front line teams. We will be developing and implementing all phases of ICS in CareAssess including Phase 1c, and will have a fully implemented ICS System within CareAssess in line with the anticipated DCSF deadline of October 2009

14 to 19 Online Prospectus & Common Application Process (CAP)

Halton has implemented a searchable Online Prospectus of 14-19 learning opportunities available within the borough and also opportunities across greater Merseyside. The online prospectus was launched to Year 11 learners in November 2007 where pupils attended an opportunities event for a hands-on demo of the prospectus. In October 2008 Halton launched an online post-16 application system; also known as the Common Application Process (CAP). The CAP is an integral part of the online prospectus, allowing young people to browse for courses and apply online directly to a provider.

Halton Virtual Learning Platform

As outlined in the DCFS e-strategy a key objective is for every school learner in England to have access to a personalised online learning space (Learning Platform) with the potential to support e-portfolios. A phased roll out of the Learning Platform is currently taking place, with all schools receiving training by September 2009. Halton's Learning Platform is currently being developed and promoted within the Authority, with a number of collaborative projects beginning to take place.

Building Schools for the Future

Key to the success of BSF is the integration of learning and teaching, physical environment/buildings, infrastructure and technologies. Our vision is for an ICT enabled learning community, which covers not just the students and teachers but also extends the provision of learning across to the community, and therefore builds on our current ICT strategy. Through BSF, ICT will transform the way that education is delivered in Halton ensuring it is a real tool for the delivery of education and is embedded across all schools.

Legislative

Children Act 2004 provides the legislative spine for the Every Child Matters agenda. It aims to minimize the risks and improve outcomes for children and young people by transforming the way children's services are organised and improving joint working between agencies. The Children Act is supported by a wide range of guidance regarding strategic planning, safeguarding, service delivery and local engagement.

The Every Child Matters agenda arising out of the Children Act provides the framework for the development of integrated service delivery for children and moves towards Children's Trusts. The act also established the key strategic roles of Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services. It also introduced a single Children & Young People's plan covering all services to children to focus strategic planning.

Children's Trusts: Section 10 of the Children Act provides the statutory basis for Children's Trusts (the duty to cooperate). Revised Children's Trust guidance on the 'duty to cooperate' was published on 18 November 2008. The 'relevant partners' currently under the 'duty to cooperate' are: district councils, the police, the probation board, the youth offending team, the Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Trusts, Connexions partnerships, and the Learning and Skills Council. The relevant partners are placed under a 'duty to cooperate in the making of arrangements to improve well-being' and have a power to pool budgets and share other resources.

The Government will also introduce new legislation to ensure that multi-agency Children's Trust Boards are operating in every local authority area. Under the new law, for the first time, every local authority will be required by law to have a Children's Trust Board with responsibility for improving the safety and well-being of all children and young people in the area. Each Board will be asked to publish an annual review of progress against their Children and Young People's Plan so that safeguarding remains a priority. It will soon be a legal requirement for Children's Trust Boards to work together to agree and deliver a Children & Young People's Plan. The legislation will strengthen co-ordination of services at a local level and improve accountability by:

- Requiring LA's, Primary Care Trusts, schools, colleges, health services and others to work closely together to jointly own local children's plans
- Putting effective early intervention for children at risk central to those plans
- Requiring individual members to be held to account for delivering their agreed part of the shared plan

Childcare Act 2006: From 1 April 2008 local authorities have had a statutory duty under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 to secure sufficient childcare to enable parents to work, or to undertake education and training leading to work. To fulfill this duty, local authorities need to facilitate and shape local childcare markets which are responsive to parents' needs and provide sufficient high-quality, accessible and sustainable childcare.

As a preparatory step towards meeting the Sufficiency Duty fully, Section 11 of the Childcare Act, requires local authorities to undertake a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. The assessment is a measurement of the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare within each local area. Local authorities have to repeat the full assessment process at least every three years, and should keep their assessments under review in the meantime. Section 13 of the Act, which came into force on 1 October 2007, placed a further duty on local authorities to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gained Royal Assent in October 2007 and enacts many of the provisions in the White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities". The Act introduces measures designed to:

- Empower communities, such as devolving power to create parishes (and other forms of community governance) to principal authorities, and introducing a community call for action;

- Make local government more effective and accountable through, for example, revised leadership and electoral arrangements, provision for restructuring in two-tier areas and a move to a more locally-based standards regime;
- Strengthen the community leadership role of councils;
- Simplify the performance framework and reduce the burden of inspection on councils.
- Provide a statutory framework for Local Area Agreements (LAA) including a list of partners who have a duty to cooperate with LAAs.
- The Act also provides for a Valuation Tribunal for England and it contains a number of measures designed to enhance patient and public involvement in health and social care.

Children and Young Persons Act 2008 received Royal Assent on 13 November 2008. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 will reform the statutory framework for the care system, to ensure that children and young people receive high quality care and support and to drive improvements in the delivery of services focused on the needs of the child. Key areas of focus within the Act include improving placement stability, educational experience and attainment and the transparency and quality of care planning, and ensuring that young people are not forced out of care before they are ready, by giving them a greater say over moves to independent living and ensuring they retain support and guidance as long as they need it.

The Children and Young Persons Act enacts proposals detailed in the White Paper “Care Matters: Time for Change” which was published in June 2007, and will have a far-reaching impact on the way services to children and young people are delivered.

Education and Skills Act has now received Royal Assent, and means that all young people will be required to continue in education or training post-16. This is a historic Act, raising the minimum age at which a young person can leave learning for the first time since 1972.

The participation age is being raised in two stages, to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015. The first cohort to benefit from these changes began Year 7 this September.

This is not about raising the school-leaving age — young people will not be required to stay in school and will be able to participate in a range of ways, through full-time education, an apprenticeship, or part-time education/training if they are employed full-time.

The DCSF aims to ensure that:

- there is a suitable, worthwhile post-16 learning opportunity for every young person — including Diplomas, general qualifications, Apprenticeships, and accredited training as part of a job
- young people get the support they need to access these opportunities — including good quality information, advice and guidance; financial support; and support for young people facing additional barriers
- every 16 and 17-year-old participates — either in full time education, in an Apprenticeship, or part-time (about a day a week) if working or volunteering for 20 hours a week or more.

A culture of high expectations of young people is crucial to this and other agendas — and raising aspirations of all young people will be particularly

important, so that they are thinking about their futures and post-16 options as early as possible.

14-19 strategy: In response to the Government's 14-19 Education & Skills White Paper, which emphasises the need to raise attainment levels and retain young people in learning, there is a local 14-19 Education implementation plan which will reform education for 14 to 19 year olds. At the centre of this reform is the implementation, by 2013, of a new national curriculum entitlement introducing 14 specialised Diplomas that combine classroom education with workplace experience, and the introduction of functional skills in Maths, English and ICT GCSEs. Other areas of reform include an extended project to stretch A Level and Diploma learners, the next development to the electronic prospectus published in 2007 is the launch of a common application process for 14-19 provision in January 2009. From 2010 the responsibility and funding for the commissioning of post for post 16 provision transfers from the Learning and Skills Council to the Local Authority, 2009/2010 will be the a key transition year for the authority as it prepares for commissioning from September 2010.

Environmental

Protecting our environment:

Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A corporate Climate Change Action Plan is being prepared, but each department can make its own contribution.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of the Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions.

The Council joined the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

3.2 Service Developments

Children and Young People's Plan: In line with the Children Act 2004, the Halton Children and Young People's Plan brings together all agencies and services within Halton, not just those delivered by the Council, and sets out joint priorities and joint activities to improve outcomes for children and young people. All Council Directorates, local Health Trusts, Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire

Probation Service, The Youth Offending Team, Connexions, Learning and Skills Council, Education Business Partnership and a range of voluntary sector services contributed to the Plan. Most importantly, it takes into account consultations held with children, young people and their parents and carers across Halton and reflects their aspirations and views. A review of the Plan was published in June 2007, which reported on progress against the targets in the original Plan, and this set the key priorities and activities for 2007-09.

The Children and Young People's Plan also sets out a clear local strategy for child safety arrangements, and sets the framework for the operation of the Local Safeguarding Children Board which leads work on safeguarding children.

Consultation Activity: A participation strategy was produced in 2004, revised in 2006 and adopted by the Alliance Board. This ensures that children, young people and their families are given the opportunity to be fully engaged in strategic planning and shaping services. In line with the strategy, a process of consultation has been undertaken in respect of the changes to the design and delivery of children's services and the Children and Young People's Plan.

During October/November 2008 Halton Youth Voice organised Voice Weekends for young people aged 11-19. 98 young people took part in consultation activities around children's rights, understanding democracy and equality & diversity issues.

From January-December 2008 Sexual Health consultations were held with young people aged 12-23. Approximately 100 young people took part in consultation regarding the shape and future of young peoples sexual health services in Halton.

In November 2008 the Powerful Voices event consulted with children, parents and professional about the vision and priorities for improving support to children with disabilities and their carers (Michelle may want to add to this)

There are also plans within CYPD to set up apprenticeship/internship type positions for a small number of young people as a means of further promoting the ideas of active participation and partnership in decision making.

Halton Borough Council and Connexions supported this years '11 MILLION Takeover Day' - where 14 young people from Halton, took over from their adult counterparts in Senior Management roles. This was held on the 7 November 2008 to coincide with the climax of The National Youth Agency's Youth Work Week 2008.

One young person went to a meeting with Gerald Meehan, Director of Children's Services, and assisted in delivering a presentation, then chaired a meeting in the afternoon

2 of Halton's children in care were Operational Directors for the day. Both attended meetings and actively participated, and came up with lots of ideas that the Operational Directors are considering implementing. They also accompanied

the Gerald Meehan to take part in a video conferencing link to America, which was arranged by Research in Practice.

Another young person undertook a one to one with a member of staff with their consent, and attended various health meetings. This young person along with 2 others also helped plan a consultation event for children and young people with additional needs.

At the close of the day a meeting was held to sum up what was good and bad about the day, and one of the ideas is being developed further to see if it can be achieved in relation to formalising how the voices and views of YP can be heard more regularly within the senior management team. The group have met since then so Senior Management Team can report on progress.

All are eager to take part again next year and are hoping it will be an even greater success. Managers reported that it was one of the best days in work they have had for a long time, and the young people involved all reported how much they enjoyed it, how hard the jobs were and how much there is to do.

Halton Parent and Carers continues its development. Parents across Halton are encouraged and supported to participate effectively. All existing Parent Forums and Groups in Children's Centres have been visited with the view of recruiting new members. The structure of the group has been discussed at length and they have agreed not to have a chairperson or other officials at this stage; but to work as a group and the CDO to facilitate and co-ordinate. Numbers of parent's attending have improved significantly and there are currently 15 members. Training has been organised for parents in Child Protection, Committee Skills and Baby Welcome Award with a view to becoming Community Parents.

On the 6th February 2009 Halton Parent and Carers will be hosting a celebration event, which will be an opportunity for parents to gain a clear insight into the work of services and organisations providing support to families in Halton. A Working Group of parents has been formed and will be involved in the planning, organising and running of the day. It is hoped to engage families who are seen to be "hard-to-reach" and those who do not access children's centres. The Event will ensure that parents and carers have an understanding of the breadth of services available and will enable them to respond to consultation on the development of services more effectively.

3.3 Efficiency Improvements:

The Council has commissioned KPMG to assist the authority in developing a long term efficiency programme given the financial challenges it will be facing over the next three years. KPMG will be working with the Council to identify ways of making cashable efficiencies in such a way to ensure that service reductions are avoided.

Six work streams have been identified where as a consequence of doing the business differently the Council would be able to meet the challenge of achieving cashable efficiency savings but also maintaining and enhancing service standards. These areas are:

- The potential to reduce overheads through a rationalisation of current management structures.
- To improve the Council's approach to the provision of its administrative support services.
- To take the opportunity to refine the balance between corporate and directorate roles in a number of core areas and improve resource deployment.
- Review the Council's third party spend and develop its procurement expertise.
- To deliver a programme of option assessments to determine the most suitable form of delivery for all services.
- To use the opportunities provided by technology and the Council's infrastructure to make services more efficient.

Individual projects are being developed to address each of these areas to run over the next three to four years.

Within the Directorate efficiency reviews have been undertaken in specialist services with regard to administrative support and children in need services. These reviews have resulted in the realignment of administrative support to support the introduction of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) and the reallocation of resources into the Children in Need service to increase capacity in Widnes to better manage the demand for assessments and service delivery.

Following the death of Child P in Haringey, the Directorate has undertaken a stock taking exercise and identified the need for additional resources in social work services and in the fostering Service. These additional resources have been agreed by the Executive Board.

3.4 National Regional and Sub-regional Focus

Phase 1c of the integrated Children's System will continue to drive social work practice and require the service to again change its business processes quite significantly. The Corporate IT network will need to be able to support the changes. The service will need to implement electronic case records this year which will be one of several major IT products commencing this year.

Whilst considerable progress has been made in the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers in the frontline and children in care teams, having reached a position where vacancy rates are extremely low, there remains a major challenge in our fostering and adoption service, including a long standing management vacancy. A strategy has been developed to address market forces and reduce the cost and reliance on agency staff. Our ability to recruit and retain social workers presents a significant risk to the delivery of safeguarding services and to meet the requirements of Every Child Matters

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 introduces a number of requirements for local authorities in respect of the current delivery of services to children in care and for work force development. In addition, Care Matters introduced a further range of expectations for local authorities, which are all aimed at improving the life chances and outcome of children in care. Implementation of both has commenced and will require continued work over the coming years.

At a regional level, Placements North West is now established as a regional commissioning unit for residential and foster care placements for children in care. It is anticipated that this will increase the knowledge we have of the local placement market, will allow for more quality focussed monitoring and will reduce some of the very high costs in the sectors

3.5 Equality and Diversity

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

Children and Young People has an Equality and Diversity group that includes partner agencies and leads on all E&D issues for the Children's Trust. There is a systematic programme in place for the completion and review of Equality Impact Assessments and the quality assurance of EIA's is carried out by the E&D group. There are close links with the corporate equalities agenda and Children's Services played a significant role in the successful IDEA peer review to confirm Halton's assessment of Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard.

A lot of work has been undertaken to profile the key groups subject to inequalities in Halton and these relate to deprivation and locality rather than the more traditional equalities strands. The Directorate has developed an Equalities Strategy and action plan using the learning from EIA's and the profiling of our population. The high priority actions identified from this process are outlined in section 5.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report ‘by exception’ to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur. Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council’s website at <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/>

4.0 Resources

4.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

To Follow

4.2 Human Resource Requirements

	CIN	CIC	Safeguarding	
2009-10	52	85.5	11.5	Number of FTE's
2010-11	52	85.5	11.5	

An integrated workforce strategy for the new Children's Trust and was implemented from April 2008. The strategy sets out a framework for integrating the children's workforce to enable progress towards the priorities set in the Children and Young People's Plan. Integrating staff from different professional backgrounds to provide a seamless service to children and young people brings with it a number of challenges.

A review of the Strategy is to be carried out with the implementation of the Children's Workforce Development Council's 'One Children's Workforce Tool'. This will be done in conjunction with the development of the Joint Intelligence and Commissioning Unit (JICU) to provide an integrated support function to the Children's Trust. There are four key strands to the JICU of which Workforce Development is one.

The recruitment, retention and continuing professional development of social work staff who are able to meet the needs of children, young people and their families in addition to the demands of current legislation and local policies remains an ongoing challenge. Therefore it is important for us to be creative by considering how we can make social work a viable long-term career option in Halton in order to protect and develop these frontline services over the coming years.

To date we have signed up to take part in the NQSW pilot, run by the CWDC as a means of supporting the difficult transition between qualification programmes and working as a social worker. We also have a comprehensive training programme within the Directorate supporting the day-to-day work of staff working directly with children and their families.

Additionally we are creating a progression structure able to take account of the revised PQ framework, the professional development needs of social workers, the challenges to recruit and retain experienced frontline professionals as well as being able to offer the scope to remain in frontline practice as an experienced, highly competent practitioner

4.3 ICT Requirements

The ICT Development Plan looks forward to developments over 3 years 2007-2010. The most significant developments centre around the continuing developments to the Halton Children and Young People's Database, the Social Care system - Care First 6, the Integrated Children System (ICS), increasing amount of tracking data and the need to provide comprehensive analysis and reports. We also have on going developments with the Halton Virtual Learning Platform and its move to becoming the Halton Managed Learning Environment and the ICT developments to support BSF - Building Schools for the Future

CYP Database

Tribal Software Solutions are developing a new web based version known as Synergy Gateway which has been purchased by Halton as an 'Early Adopter' primarily to host the Tribal E CAF module and provide full integration to Contact Point. This also allows web based access to core pupil information and will be developed to replace existing modules allowing wider and more flexible access opportunities. An implementation plan needs to be developed and put into place in line with module development rolling out to users as appropriate.

OLM Carefirst 6 Software

An overall project team has been identified to implement Carefirst 6 with resources being deployed to work collaboratively with both ICT Services and Health and Community Directorate. Additional resources will need to be identified within the Directorate to manage CareFirst 6 / ICS and ESCR once all systems go live. For the ESCR, there is a statutory requirement for the authority to store electronically all letters/reports etc. relating to Children Social Care records. This will involve all current, archived and future records. The process will require new IT infrastructure, scanning and new working arrangements to be introduced - in particular a new content management process will be need to be adopted. Resources will be required to work on all current and historical records.

JNA Connect - Children Centre MIS

JNA- Connect is a flexible database allowing develop its components depending on the service provider's engagement or to tie in with local or national requirements. Tribal Group is currently working on developing JNA- Connect and the CYP Database to enable both systems to exchange information on the regular basis. Locally, the initiative of working with Halton Health Visiting Service has progressed - all nationally required health information will be gathered and held on person record. After the trial period, all the processes around data collection and collation will be revised in order to provide more structured data sharing protocols.

Building Schools for the Future:

Key to the success of BSF is the integration of learning and teaching, physical environment/buildings, infrastructure and technologies. None can be considered in isolation. Information and communications technology (ICT) is a core part of the programme with specified and ringfenced funding provision. Our vision is for an ICT enabled learning community, which covers not just the students and teachers but also extends the provision of learning across to the community, and

therefore builds on our current ICT strategy. Through BSF, ICT will transform the way that education is delivered in Halton ensuring it is a real tool for the delivery of education and is embedded across all schools.

ICT Issues

Due to the developments outlined above and also in Section 3.1 under Technological Factors there is an increasing reliance on ICT. This has caused some difficulties in particular in relation to the use of the Integrated Children's System by social care staff. These difficulties have included downtime and a slowing down of the system which has increased the amount of time practitioners spend recording information on Carefirst and completing ICS forms which are the main method of case recording. CareFirst implementation and ICS downtime have been addressed as a high priority issue by ICT Services and from 30th October to present there has been a significant improvement. However, there are still issues about resourcing this implementation programme and with the Citrix system. The impact on frontline social care staff could have potentially serious consequences as it increases the time they are office based and reduces the level of direct contact with children in need and at risk.

4.4 Accommodation and Property Requirements

A comprehensive review of future accommodation needs of the Directorate will be undertaken. Opportunities will be explored to increase flexible working for staff and where appropriate deploy staff to deliver services locally.

Through the Building Schools for the Future Programme and Primary Capital Strategy, along with the investment available for Early Years, Children's Centres, Play and provision for young people it is aimed to transform the learning environment for all Children and Young People within the Borough and provide 21st century learning environments at the heart of the local community with a range of services within the reach of every family.

5.0 Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

- **Objectives and Key Milestones.** These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2009–12, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.
- **National Performance Indicators.** This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.
- **Local Performance Indicators.** These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.
- **Local Area Agreement Targets.** The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at [http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa final \(march 2007\).pdf](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa%20final%20(march%202007).pdf)

Progress against the achievement of LAA targets is reported to all stakeholders at regular intervals. Following the establishment of the LAA, plans are being formulated to ensure that in future years the LAA and the Council's service plans are completely aligned.

5.1 Service Objectives

Objective SS1

Corporate Priority:	Halton's Children and Young People
Key Area Of Focus:	14 - To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Achieve Economic Well Being; CYPP BH3, SS4, EA3, MPC1, AEW2

Service Objective:	SS1: Improve Education and Employment Opportunities for Care Leavers (Objective cross-referenced to other CYPD plans ULS1, ULS5, PS3, PS5, PS6, PS7, BSC1)					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a designated officer to manage care leaver employment by September 2009 • Implement an scheme that provides 10 apprenticeships for care leavers per year by March 2010 • Fully implement the Council's employment scheme for care leavers by March 2010 • Introduce a bursary for care leavers going on to higher education by September 2009 • Develop the role of the Education Support Service/CSW (EET) to support the ongoing learning needs of care leavers up to the age of 21 by March 2010 • Increase the availability of permanent accommodation for care leavers by 4 units by March 2010 					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully establish the apprenticeship scheme across the Council and LSP to ensure that all care leavers are offered an apprenticeship by September 2010 • Ensure all children in care and care leavers are offered work placement opportunities within the Council and LSP agencies by March 2011 • Ensure that the work placement and apprenticeship scheme has sustainable funding by March 2011 • Increase the supply of permanent accommodation by a further 4 units by March 2011. 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review take up and effectiveness of the work placement and apprenticeship scheme by March 2012 • Review the effectiveness of the accommodation arrangements for care leavers by March 2012. 					
Risk Assessment	Initial	8	Responsible Officer	DM CIC	Linked Indicators	SS LI1, SS LI3, NI147, NI148, NI101
	Residual	4				

Objective SS2

Corporate Priority:	Halton's Children and Young People
Key Area Of Focus:	14 - To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Stay Safe; CYPP SS4

Service Objective:	SS2: Increase Placement Choice and Quality of Care for Children in Care (Objective cross-referenced to other CYPD plans ULS1, ULS5, PS2, PS3, PS7, BSC3)
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a review of the demand for and supply of placements for children in care by March 2009. • Implement a marketing strategy to improve recruitment of foster carers by March 2009 • Increase the number of in house foster care placements by 8 by September 2009 (10% increase) • Review the role of Principal Manager Fostering to secure a permanent appointment by April 2009. • Recruit to the vacant 4 social work posts in the adoption and fostering services by June 2009 • Continue to engage with the Regional Commissioning programme to improve knowledge, quality and competitiveness of local, private provision by March 2010 • Implement and monitor CWDC development standards for foster carers by March 2010
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review effectiveness of foster carer recruitment and consider the need for improved conditions of payment by March 2011 • Implement OOB panel and joint funding of OOB placements with the PCT by December 2010 • Reduce the demand on the OOB budget to bring it back into balance by March 2011. • Implement revised minimum standards for children's homes and fostering by June 2010 • Develop additional support services for foster carers by March 2011 to improve attainment, health outcomes and placement stability (insert targets)
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the demand for foster care and the local supply is in balance and provides sufficient placement choice for all children coming into care • Review and develop the foster care training programme by March 2012 • Further develop the CPD of foster carers by March 2012

Risk Assessment	Initial	16	Responsible Officer	DM CIC	Linked Indicators	SS LI4, SS LI5, NI62, NI63
	Residual	8				

Objective SS3

Corporate Priority:	Halton's Children and Young People
Key Area Of Focus:	19 - To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Stay Safe; CYPP SS1, SS2, SS3

Service Objective:	SS3: To maintain effective Safeguarding processes (Objective cross-referenced to other CYPD plans ULS1, PS2, PS3, PS5, PS6, PS7)					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Safeguarding Unit bringing expertise across the Directorate, health and the Police to improve the co-ordination of professional expertise and quality assurance processes by April 2009. Implement a systematic approach to learning arising from Serious Case Reviews by September 2009 Ensure that all agencies understand their responsibilities with regard to the management of allegations made against adults who work with children by March 2010 Audit the implementation of the neglect protocol ensuring there are interagency minimum standards by March 2010 					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the activities of the Safeguarding Unit with regard to quality of casework in the Directorate by March 2011. Audit the impact of learning from SCR in the Directorate by September 2011 Ensure all staff have been trained in safe recruitment practices undertaken within the Safeguarding Unit by March 2011 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the viability of extending the role of the Safeguarding Unit to include vulnerable adults by April 2011. 					
Risk Assessment	Initial	12	Responsible Officer	DM Safeguarding	Linked Indicators	SS LI2, SS LI7, NI64, NI65, NI66, NI67, NI68
	Residual	4				

Objective SS4

Corporate Priority:	Halton's Children and Young People
Key Area Of Focus:	19 - To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect
ECM Outcome & CYP Plan Priority	Stay Safe; CYPP SS2,

Service Objective:	SS4: To provide effective and efficient services to Children in Need (Objective cross-referenced to other CYPD plans ULS1, ULS5, PS2, PS3, PS5, PS6, PS7)					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot an integrated Targeted Support to Families (TSF) service for children in need by realigning resources in the Directorate to meet the needs of children in need by September 2009. • Roll out of an assessment and analysis toolkit, supported by training for frontline staff with the aim of improving the effectiveness of assessment and care planning by March 2010 • Introduce a system for independently reviewing children in need plans at levels 3b by December 2009 • Ensure that the children in need teams are sufficiently staffed to meet the current demand for children in need services by March 2009. 					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement the TSF locality working model by March 2011 • Pilot an integrated family support service for families experiencing domestic abuse • Pilot an integrated family support services for parents in drug treatment by March 2010 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the impact of locality working on demand for social care services with a view to reducing demand from the 2009 baseline by March 2012. • Evaluate the domestic violence pilot with a view to rolling out the learning across locality teams by April 2011 • Evaluate the parents in drug treatment model with a view to rolling out learning across locality services by March 2012 					
Risk Assessment	Initial	8	Responsible Officer	DM CIN	Linked Indicators	SS LI6, SS LI8 NI59, NI60
	Residual	4				

5.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2007/8 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Cost & Efficiency											
There are presently no indicators of this type identified for the service											
Corporate Health											
SS LI2	% of managers trained in safe recruitment practice	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	New Indicator				N/A		TBA	TBA	TBA
Fair Access											
SS LI1	% of CiC achieving at or above the level forecast using FFT data at KS4	AOF14 CP3; CYPP EA3	New Indicator				N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%
SS LI3	Number of jobs created for care leavers by HBC	AOF14 CP3; CYPP AEW1	New Indicator				N/A		5	15	30
NI148	Care leavers in employment, education or training	AOF14 CP3; CYPP AEW1	0.63				0.67		0.71	0.73	0.75

¹ Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type**.

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2007/8 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
SS LI4	% change in the number of foster carers from baseline	AOF14 CP3; CYPP SS4	New Indicator				N/A		10%	20%	30%
Quality											
NI147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	AOF14 CP3; CYPP AEW2	78.6%				80%		82.5%	85%	87.5%
Service Delivery											
SS LI5	% of CiC in Foster Care living with Halton Carers	AOF14 CP3; CYPP SS4	New Indicator				N/A		TBA	TBA	TBA
SS LI6	% of referrals that have previously received a CAF	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	New Indicator				N/A		TBA	TBA	TBA
SS LI7	% of CIN 6+ months independently reviewed with agreed timescales	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	New Indicator				N/A		50%	75%	100%
SS LI8	% change in number of CIN from baseline	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	New Indicator				N/A		-10%	-15%	-20%
NI59	Initial Assessments completed within 7 working days	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	89.3%				90%		91%	91.5%	92%

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2007/8 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
NI60	Core Assessments completed within 35 working days	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	90.4%				91%		92%	92.5%	93%
NI62	Stability of placements of CiC: number of moves	AOF14 CP3; CYPP SS4	8.7%				8.5%		8.3%	8.2%	8.1%
NI63	Stability of placements of CiC: length of placement	AOF14 CP3; CYPP SS4	67.9%				73%		77%	81.5%	83%
NI64	Child Protection plans lasting 2 or more years	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	3.2%				3%		2.5%	2%	2%
NI65	Children subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	7.1%				10%		10%	10%	10%
NI66	Children in Care cases reviewed within timescales	AOF14 CP3; CYPP SS4	100%				100%		100%	100%	100%
NI67	Child Protection cases reviewed within timescales	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	100%				100%		100%	100%	100%
NI68	Referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment	AOF19 CP3; CYPP SS3	95%				95%		95%	95%	95%

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2007/8 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
NI101	Children in Care achieving at least 5 A*-C GCSE	AOF14 CP3; CYPP EA3	8.3%				9%		12.5%	15%	20%
<u>NI111</u>	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System	AOF26 CP5 CYPP MPC2	New Indicator				Baseline TBA		TBA	TBA	TBA

5.3 Data Quality Arrangements

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.

In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review. In so doing the

department will pay particular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- **Accurate** For its intended purpose;
- **Valid** By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;
- **Reliable** By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;
- **Timely** By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;
- **Relevant** For the purpose intended;
- **Complete** In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

Children and Young People Directorate (CYP) views the collection, analysis and reporting of data and information as a co-operative enterprise between schools, partners and the Council, from which all parties will benefit. We always aim to continue to improve the arrangements for managing and exchanging information between the Council and schools and partners to ensure that they are coherent, explicit and well managed.

The Schools/Council Management Information Strategy was recently introduced. It sets out the key principles and practical steps to ensure we have clarity about the use of data and the access to information. The DCSF have stated, and the Authority agrees that, well managed information about schools and individual pupils will contribute to supporting school self-evaluation and the raising of standards in schools by making improvements to the way information about pupils, personnel and schools is defined, collected, analysed, stored and used.

There is also a process established to carry out regular data quality checks on data recorded on the Carefirst database. As this is live data the management of the process has to be thorough with a systematic process used for the identification of any data quality issues. Training is provided on a 1 to 1 basis for any staff that are identified through the process as having difficulties with inputting to the system.

6.0 Performance Reporting

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering it's statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**
- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**
- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**
- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at <http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansandstrategies>

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans

The following plans and strategy documents are relevant to this service plan:

Community Strategy

Halton Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009

Halton Corporate Plan 2006-2011

Halton Community Strategy 2006-2011

Youth Justice Plan

Halton Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan

Building Bridges Strategy for Children and Young People with Disabilities

Children in Care Strategy

14-19 Strategy

NEET Strategy

Emotional Health and Well-being Strategy

Children in Need Strategy

Teenage Pregnancy Strategy

Young Person's Substance Misuse Plan

Business Continuity Plan

Appendix 1 – High Risks and Associated Mitigation Measures

Key Objective Ref	Initial Risks identified	Risk Treatment Measures
SS2	<p>Lack of quality local foster care provision</p> <p>Recruitment and retention of staff</p>	<p>Targeted recruitment strategy to increase numbers of local foster carers Implement CWDC standards for carers Review payments structure and rates for carers</p> <p>Implement actions from Staff Survey Evaluate impact of Recruitment and Retention Strategy</p>
SS3	<p>Further integration of multi-agency staff required to ensure existing outstanding standards are maintained. Impact of error in this service area is extremely high risk.</p>	<p>Development of multi-agency Safeguarding Unit to improve integrated working Sustained high performance in ensuring all safeguarding processes are quality assured and timely</p>

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessments – High Priority Actions

Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Proposed Action(s)	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	
Specialist Services	High	Ensure staff participate in a programme of Equality and Diversity training	X	X	X	OD Specialist Services and all DM's
Specialist Services	High	Participate in programme of Equality Impact assessments on all Strategy, Policy, and Service Areas	X	X	X	OD Specialist Services and all DM's
Specialist Services	High	Embed a system of stakeholder engagement, participation and consultation in all aspects of Service Delivery	X	X	X	OD Specialist Services and all DM's

Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

A Healthy Halton

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Halton's Urban Renewal

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.