



Halton Children's Trust
...Working together to make the difference

HALTON

**Children and Young
People's Plan**

April 2009 – March 2011

Version XVI –26th May 2009

Foreword

Russell Jones
MYP – Halton

This is an exciting time to live in Halton, as young people are finding their voice and service providers are beginning to listen. We're entering a new era of youth provision; we're entering into a relationship of mutual respect and co-operation between adults and young people. In the past, young people would not have been consulted with about plans but times have changed in Halton and young people are being listened to. Services which we, as young people, use must suit the needs of young people and that is why our services constantly need to adapt, hopefully this plan will support young people and allow providers to deliver dynamic services. The work of Halton Youth Cabinet has contributed a lot to young peoples lives, making it possible for young people to have a voice and to be listened to about things that affect them, recently for example youth cabinet was involved in looking at Sexual Health services provision. This allowed young people to have their opinions listened to and to have their concerns taken seriously.

Tom McInerney
Chair Children's Trust Board

On behalf of Halton's Children's Trust I am pleased to present Halton's Children and Young People's Plan.

This plan is for all our children and young people in Halton, and importantly it focuses our thoughts and actions in areas where the Children's Trust believes we need to accelerate progress. This does not mean that those areas and services not directly identified in this plan are not equally important, on the contrary, in these areas we expect it to be 'business as usual' in continuing to improve outcomes in Halton.

We have made great progress recently, but we still have much to do and this plan will set out our ambitions for our children and young people.

There may be some people who are new to the concept of a Children's Trust. The idea, generated from central government, has within it a range of key components. However when I am asked what our Children's Trust is, my response is simple. The Children's Trust in Halton will become the most effective and efficient partnership it can possibly be. As a partnership and as a council we are very clear that we do this with one aim, to ensure that all children and young people reach their full potential.

Gerald Meehan
Strategic Director C&YP and
Co-chair Children's Trust Executive Group

As Strategic Director for Children & Young People in Halton, I am personally accountable for the successful implementation of the Children and Young People Plan. Its contents reflect both the significant progress we have made to date; along with the areas we must improve further. It is optimistic, but challenging.

The Children and Young People Plan comes at a time when we are moving into a new phase of planning and delivery of Children's Services with our partners. We need to accelerate that progress by building on the strong foundations achieved in previous years. This means working as one 'Organisation' to deliver the Children and Young People's Plan intended outcomes. Virtual as that organisation may be, its impact must be real, substantial and enduring.

Our focus is about improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. We have therefore developed and designed it with them; and is yet another example of how we can work together to common purpose.

The partnership we have with the people we serve and the many services that support them is an inclusive one. I therefore have confidence that together we will meet the challenges the Children and Young People's Plan sets out for us.

Cleo Pollard
Parent/Carer Representative on Children's Trust Board

This plan sets out the priorities for children and young people in Halton, and how the Children's Trust Board will make sure that our families get the help and support that they need in order to do well.

Parents, carers and young people can positively contribute to this through involvement with the Children's Trust via the Parent Carer Forum and the Youth Cabinet. In this way, our voices can be heard and we can help shape future services so that they are meaningful and effective.

SECTION 1

Our vision, progress to date and what we plan to do

Our Vision for Children and Young People in Halton

We all want Halton to be a place of opportunity for everyone who lives here and a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families.

We also know that Halton has inherited more than its fair share of challenges, which has sometimes clouded our ambitions for our children and young people.

This is why, in recent years we have changed our approach and made sure we become much more a can do, does do borough which chases the future and ambitions for our children and young people, rather than focuses on the challenges and difficulties history has left behind.

[Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy](#) is the overarching plan, which describes in detail how this change of attitude and approach is now delivering real benefits and new opportunities for the people who live and work here. The Children and Young People's Plan is an integral part of the Sustainable Community Strategy as it sets out in greater detail how improving outcomes for children and young people is everybody's business and needs everyone to become active in building a borough, which has hope for our children and young people.

Our Values:

We know that, in order to make a real difference to our communities and the children and young people who live within them it is essential our can do does do approach is nurtured by an agreed set of values which have been embraced across the range of Partnership arrangements in Halton. This provides the foundations for making things happen for the people that live here. These are:

- Working together in creating a clear vision and ambition about what we want to do for our children and young people and how we are going to get there.
- Working together to create a sense of ownership in building a borough that our children and young people can be proud of.
- Working together to make sure we are accountable to the community by providing services and support, which reflect their lives and needs.
- Working together with integrity to make sure all children and young people in Halton receive and have access to the best we can offer.
- Working together to build an inclusive borough, which values diversity and works hard to promote equality of access and opportunity.
- Working together in an honest and open manner, which appreciates different opinions and welcomes alternative perspectives on the path to finding a way forward
- Working together in ways that demonstrate a professional respect for everybody involved in making a difference to the lives of children and young people in Halton.

All organisations working with children and young people in Halton are committed to these values Our Children's Trust Board has also promised to maintain the highest standards by signing a membership agreement which outlines our partners' roles and responsibilities as members of the Children's Trust Board. This agreement has also been informed by the Nolan Principles for the conduct of people in public life: ([Membership Agreement](#))

Our Vision:

Halton's Children and Young People's Plan is for all children and young people who live, grow and learn in the borough. It is inclusive of all children and young people who will have unique experiences of their world and their communities. It is also a plan to explain how we are going to achieve our vision for children and young people in Halton and which will guide the activity of the Children's Trust over the coming months and years.

"Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer, thriving communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy, healthy and ready to be Halton's present and become Halton's future."

Already we have a strong sense of what it is like to be a child or young person living in Halton today. We have drawn together the wealth of information we have available locally as a way to determine how we are going to focus our attention over the coming months and years and this will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

This plan is an overarching strategic document outlining our plans for the future.

Highlighted in blue throughout are specific planning documents, which can provide more detailed information. These documents are available on the CD that comes with the paper copy of the plan. If you are reading this document online, the highlighted parts of the text act as links to the main planning documents.

This plan has been subject to an [Equality Impact Assessment](#)

Halton – The Place

Halton is a small borough with a population of 119,500 people, who live either side of the Mersey estuary in the towns of Runcorn, Widnes or one of the villages surrounding these towns. The Silver Jubilee Bridge links the towns, but each one has its own identity, history and sense of community. Of these 119,500 people only 2% of the population or 2,390 people are from a Black/Minority/Ethnic (BME) community.

Halton is quite a young borough when compared to its neighbours and other boroughs across the country, with 27% of Halton's population being under 19 years of age. However, the age of our population is changing and over the next few years we expect the number of children under 10 to rise slightly, meaning that there will be more younger children in the borough. Additionally the range of ages of the children and young people who live in Halton varies significantly from ward to ward. For example there are a greater number of children who are under five living in some of the most deprived wards, including Windmill Hill, Riverside and Halton Lea.

As the birthplace of the chemical industry, many of Halton's most challenging problems are rooted in the area's industrial past. With manufacturing and chemical sectors declining, considerable effort has been successfully put into broadening the range of employment opportunities available.

Mia aged 5 from Halton

I like living here because there are lots of fun things to do.

I am learning to cook lots of healthy food at cooking class with my mum. I go after school. When we go home my brothers and sisters eat all the food I've made.

Now I am big I go to school. At school I can play with my new friends. We go to High School Musical theatre when we sing and dance to the music. That's my favourite thing.

I go to Rainbows and have lots of friends who don't go to my school, we have lots of fun and make lots of things for me to take home to mum

Recent changes to the chemical and manufacturing industries has left a positive legacy. The knowledge and expertise, which has been developed over time in these industries, is now being used in highly specialist chemical, manufacturing and scientific and research based employers, which have located to Halton. However this change to the foundation for our workforce in Halton has also brought with it some challenges, particularly relating to the types of jobs available to local people.

A member of our youth cabinet talked about being surprised at how green the borough is and how many trees there are.

Major efforts have also been made to bring the industry's legacy of derelict and contaminated land back into productive use, to help create the right physical and social environment to attract new investment. Our efforts are paying off because today, over 40% of Halton is green space and we can boast 10 Green Flag award winning parks and nature reserves. The children and young people also talk about how they like the parks and the play facilities for young children that local communities are able to use.

Additionally the investment in new Creative and Science based businesses (at Daresbury, Manor Park & The Heath) and Logistics (at 3MG) as well as the development of the Widnes Waterfront are now bringing new employment opportunities to Halton but require new skills, expertise and knowledge which means we need to get better at training our workforce so they are able to take up these opportunities.

Halton is a borough with individual wards identified as particular areas of multiple deprivation, where the families and communities within these areas are more likely to experience higher levels of unemployment, poorer health outcomes, lower educational attainment and access to poor quality housing. However our population is growing after years of decline, crime is falling, our children are leaving school with better qualifications, employment prospects are broadening and ambitious regeneration projects are changing the physical environment.

Social, economic and physical regeneration are creating opportunities for all and these improvements to the fabric of the borough has seen Halton move away from those boroughs assessed as those most deprived in the country. Moreover we are seeing the wealth of the Borough improving overall, particularly during the last 10 years. This as illustrated by rising numbers of detached houses, rising car ownership and increases in professional and managerial households in parts of the borough.

With the proposed £390 million Mersey Gateway Bridge also expected to attract an estimated 1450 jobs and provide new opportunities for investment and regeneration, it is anticipated the opportunities within and for Halton will continue to grow.

So what does this mean for children and young people living in Halton?

For a child growing up in Halton, it is a borough of many challenges, opportunities and influences. Experience of each of these tends to be more significant depending on where the child lives in the borough, but it is a borough that is changing to make sure all children have access to the same opportunities and reduced exposure to those challenges which get in the way of the child or young person reaching their potential. Only recently we have seen our young people achieved the best results ever in 2008 with 71% gaining 5 A* - C GCSEs, this is 6% above the national average.

10 year old boy living in Halton

There are loads of exciting things to do after school and in the holidays now. There was nothing to do last year.

We get to choose from a long list of things that we would like to do during our long school holidays. There is so much choice we can do all of the sports that we like , like football, riding our bikes and skating, as well as lots of arts and crafts and making things like Robot Wars and making masks.

Some of the clubs are at our schools but there are some at other schools like High School up the road. Going to the other schools helps get us ready for when we move up next year. We get to know some of the teachers who work there.

We get to do things with our mum and dad so we all get to do things together. At Easter we are all going to learn about taking pictures of wildlife. This means that I can enjoy learning about the countryside with my mum and Dad and my sister.

For a child growing up in Halton they live with the knowledge that Halton is described as a deprived borough where over half of Halton's children live in wards which are among the 20% most deprived wards nationally. Only 8% of children and young people live in wards, which are among the 20% least deprived wards nationally. ([Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007](#))

For a child growing up in Halton there are many opportunities to take part in creative initiatives such as Halton Youth Bank, which has seen children and young people help spend £300,000 on activities them to take part in. Young people have also been heavily involved in writing the bid and securing money from the Government to help build My Place – a new and exciting venue for services in Widnes.

For a child growing up in Halton, they are growing and developing in a borough where they are more likely to experience ill health as they age, or where friends and family are more likely to

experience long and enduring illness. Halton is a borough where life expectancy is 2 years below the national and regional average

For a child growing up in Halton they sense adults are fearful of young people, and where perception of crime and anti social behaviour feed this fear – [Youth Cabinet](#)

For a child growing up there are many opportunities to become part of our thriving communities. From volunteering through to taking up in activities across the borough that can help children and young people learn about bike maintenance to completing Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

If Halton was a village of 100 children and young people; 2009

- 23 would be under the age of 4
 - 26 would be aged 10 to 14
- 71 would have 5-A*-C-GCSE's
- 74 would be happy about life at the moment

47 would live in the Widnes area

- 23 would be aged 5 to 9

22 would be at university

53 would live in the Runcorn area

- 58 would be living in areas in the top 10% most deprived in England and Wales in terms of health and disability

- 21 would be obese in Year 6
- 4 would have a social worker

- 78 think the information they get about eating healthily is good enough

49 would be girls

- 40 would have been to a swimming pool in the last 4 weeks

- 1 would be affected by drug-using parents

- 11 would have been to a faith or community group in the last 4 weeks

- 60 think the information they get about sex and relationships is good enough

- 32 would be living with a single parent

- 36 would be living in areas in the top 10% most deprived in terms of income

- 52 would like to see better parks and play areas

51 would be boys

0.2 would have a child protection plan

- 22 would have seen some form of domestic abuse at home

- 54 have given time to a charity, local voluntary group, neighbour, community or a developing country in the last year

- 2 would be identified young carers, and as many as another 5 could be hidden carers

- 78 would have given their views about the local area through a questionnaire or school/youth council

- 5 would have a long-term illness or disability which limits what they can do

- 51 would have 2 or more decayed or missing teeth

- 27 would be worried about being bullied

- 18 would like to get a job as soon as they leave school

100 would be full of potential with dreams, hopes and aspirations for the future

Our vision for Halton in 2025 is to make sure all children and young people reach their potential; are seen as important members of our communities and to make sure no one is left out of participating in activities or taking part in opportunities. We will also make sure that we continue to be aspirational and ambitious for our children and young people in Halton, and will try to make sure over the coming years our 2025 vision becomes reality.

So if Halton was a village of 100 children and young people in 2025, we would expect to see the experiences, opportunities and life chances of children and young people changing significantly from today. We accept there is still much to do, which at this time of economic uncertainty will require us to be at our most creative and innovative if we are to achieve our goals. But we do believe that by setting ourselves high ambitions it will inspire us to strive to make every effort to achieve them.

This plan therefore is aspirational, it is ambitious and it is about and for the children and young people of Halton.

So if Halton was a village of 100 children in 2025, this is what they could expect to see.....

Economic regeneration will lead to increased opportunity and employment for young people when they leave school, college or university so children and young people have options and choices that allow them to reach their potential and achieve their ambitions.

No child or young person would be seriously injured or killed on our roads

All children in Halton have the best start in life, which promotes and protects their physical and mental health and emotional well being both now and in their future.

There will be a focus on provision for more vulnerable groups so families will have increased flexibility to make choices that can best meet the needs of their children.

We will have eradicated child poverty, which would mean none of our children and young people will grow and live in areas described as deprived.

Because we will work better together we will not refer to agencies, or teams, instead we will talk about how we are going to support families and children. This will make sure children, young people and their families the right help at the right time.

People would tell young people and children what they can do to help and not what agency they work for

Safeguarding will be the foundation as well as soul of all services and supports in Halton so children and young people feel safe in their homes, communities and in school

There will be different expectations as communities are encouraged to make choices, enabling and empowering families to have a real say about what we do and how we do it. This means more children, young people and their families and communities will be more active in making decisions and working to build a more prosperous borough.

100 would be full of potential with dreams, hopes and aspirations for the future

Getting To Know Our Borough better

Views of parents and carers, children and young people and the professionals working with them have been gathered to inform this plan. They have been collected in a number of ways:

- From consultation exercises and surveys that have been carried out over the past two years, involving children, young people, their families and practitioners working with them.
- From the 6 public consultation sessions held in March 2009
- From an internet survey carried out in primary schools
- From other consultation activities carried out with specific groups, including the “Parents Matter Too” event
- From views sent in by parents and young people in response to the consultation leaflet

Using all of the information from consultations, we have identified some strong themes, which will be listened to as we develop and deliver supports and services across the borough. ([Details of consultations via this link or on CD Rom available with hard copies.](#))

‘Adults judge all young people before knowing them, and are always saying bad things about youth – Try to understand what we like, listen to us, be more involved, be more understanding’

Consultation feedback from young people indicated that sometimes they feel as if they are treated like ‘second-class citizens’. We need to show a positive attitude towards children and young people, believing in them, celebrating their achievements whatever their ability and valuing their contribution to our community.

We need to promote good emotional health for children and young people, helping them to be confident and have good self-esteem. This will help them to reach their potential and become confident and happy adults.

‘I worked really hard to get a D in my GCSEs, but because it wasn’t A-C I feel like I’ve failed’*

There is too much pressure on children nowadays with ‘targets’ for everything – each child should be viewed as individual, not peg-holed’

We need to have good quality services across the Borough, such as health services, schools and colleges and services offering extra support to families. They need to be easy to access and available at times, which are best for children, young people and their families. We also need to make sure that families and children know what is available in their area.

‘Clinics and doctors don’t have enough young people’s services’

‘We need more activities, sports, different sports on different nights, new opportunities and to be more involved in community decisions’

Young people need more things to do and places to go, with positive leisure activities that are affordable and accessible to all. They also want to feel safe when they are there and have adults around who are able to supervise and act if necessary.

We need to make sure that parents, children and young people who need extra support are able to get the right help at the right time. We need to make sure that help is available to those groups of children and young people who tend to do less well than others.

‘Poverty means not having the chances that everybody around has’

'Work experience gives us the chance to interact with adults, get to know what real life is like and start being accepted as an adult'

We need to make sure that children and young people are settled into learning pathways from an early age so they develop life skills and are ready for employment. This will help to raise their aspirations and enable them to achieve them. There needs to be closer working with potential employers, and we need to value vocational and practical skills as well as academic achievements.

We need to make sure that transport is available so that all children and young people and their families can get to where they need to go.

'Buses should have clamps for the wheel chairs to be secure. At the moment we can get on them but can't use them as they are unsafe'

Transport for young people needs improving; better links in the evening so we can travel safely, and help with costs would be good

There is also a range of further information available to us as we attempt to ensure we identify the needs of our children and young people and families. For instance external scrutiny provides us with an objective qualitative assessment of our services and identifies good practice and areas for development.

Hannah is 13 and has been involved with the Positive Futures Programme for over a year. Positive Futures is about enabling young people to become active volunteers in their communities. As a result of offering over 75 hours to volunteering Hannah was nominated for a Heart of Gold Award. The nomination was made in response to Hannah's willingness to help out and support both colleagues and other young people in their communities.

The important work of all young people who assist in these programmes were all commended because it is recognised that with genuine, honest and caring young people, like Hannah other young people are encouraged to take part in positive activities

Halton was the subject of a [Joint Area Review](#) (JAR) during March and April 2008. The Joint Area Review commended us across the range of services and supports we offer children and young people across the borough. The Joint Area Review offered much praise to our safeguarding arrangements. Assessed as outstanding the inspectors commented that in Halton safeguarding is seen as everybody's business. In Halton we are very proud of this assessment as it demonstrates our commitment to embedding safeguarding practice and therefore helping children and young people feel safe. This assessment also places us at the forefront of effective safeguarding practice, nationally and regionally. We are one of only a handful nationally that was assessed as outstanding for safeguarding, and the only authority within the North West. We are proud of our achievements so far and will work hard to avoid becoming complacent by continuing to build on these strong foundations in order to continue to embed the message that safeguarding is everybody's business

The Joint Area Review also observed that there is a strong commitment at every level and across every agency to make a difference. This commitment then promotes the very strong joint working across professionals and agencies in making a difference to children and young people.

The combination of strong engagement from children and young people, a vibrant and committed voluntary and community sector with clear priority setting to improve outcomes is removing barriers to achievement locally.

The Joint Area Review was in many ways positive, although we are keen to continue to progress and improve our services, both in response to their observations but also in response to consultations and our own assessment of progress to date. Therefore an [Improvement Plan](#) was developed to tackle the areas for development identified by the inspection. These were:

- Increase the number of young people in education, employment and training
- Increase numbers of Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training
- Improve breastfeeding and obesity outcomes
- Increase permanent accommodation for Care Leavers
- Ensure children and young people with LDD have a good quality and reviewed transition plan
- Improve quality and consistency of annual reviews for children and young people with LDD
- Implement the detail of integrated youth support and development arrangements
- Improve and co-ordinate systems to monitor and evaluate health outcomes

To support us making a difference to each of these elements it is important we have the best intelligence and information available to base our decisions and programmes of development. This is in part achieved through our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) pulled together a wide range of information about the current and future health and well-being needs of Halton's population. The findings of the JSNA have been used to underpin the health related elements of our needs analysis with the key areas for Children's Services being;

- High rates of infant mortality
- High rates of teenage pregnancy
- Obesity rate
- Low rates of breastfeeding
- Poor dental health

We also welcome external scrutiny to specific areas of our work as a means of making sure we are doing everything we can to provide the best services, support and care available to all children and young people in Halton. For example the National Autistic Society were asked to carry out a review of services and support provided to children and adults with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The review focussed on making sure all resources were being used effectively in responding to the needs identified in the borough. The conclusions of the report offered many opportunities for us to consider as we continue to work hard to develop services, which meet the needs of all children and young people in Halton. [National Autistic Review of ASD Services in Halton](#)

A [Locality Profile](#) has been developed to help us target services, which are needed within specific areas of the borough. The profile gives a picture of what people need in each of the wards in Halton. and has been linked to schools to enable them to have an understanding of need within the communities they serve. The Locality Profile will be particularly useful in helping to reduce geographical inequalities in a range of outcomes (health, education and so on) across the borough.

To find the documents we refer to, and a range of other information in this section, use the CD that comes with this plan or go to our website at [www.....](#)

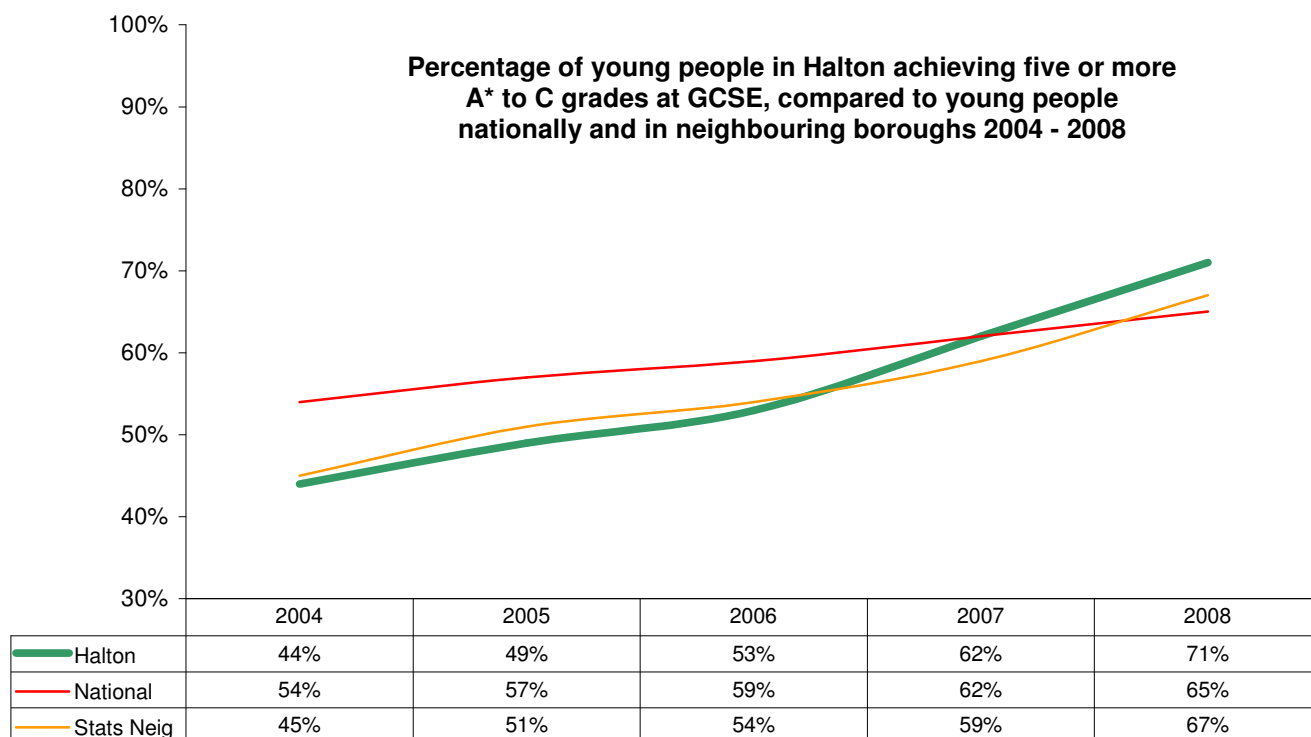
What progress have we made?

Halton has made much progress in recent years. We said in our first plan that we would prioritise a number of areas across all 5 aims of the Government's 'Every Child Matters' Outcomes, and the following give a sense of our achievements to date.

Halton celebrates GCSE success

THE OUTCOME

71% of young people achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSE grades in 2008 - this means a **27%** rise since 2004 compared to an **11%** rise across the country. Halton is now performing at **6%** above the national average for 5 or more A*-C GCSE grades



THE STORY BEHIND THE CURVE

OVERVIEW

For the last 2 years, Halton has been in the top 5 most improved authorities in the country for children achieving 5 or more GCSEs A*-C.

In 2007, Halton was ranked number 1, with an improvement of 9% from 2006. Halton is now performing better than similar areas across the country.

WHAT HAS MADE THE DIFFERENCE

Schools, their teaching staff and the young people themselves all working together has been the most significant factor in these improvements to the attainment rates in Halton in the last 4 years. Their hard work and commitment has paid off. This has been supported by increasingly strong partnerships between secondary schools and the local authority

We have also seen schools working more closely together in sharing information and best practice to support their goals and ambitions for their pupils.

Both the positive engagement by schools with the Secondary National Strategy and the effective, targeted and bespoke support from Local Authority School Improvement Professionals challenging and encouraging practice and management within the schools is making a real difference to the outcomes for young people in our schools

All of this activity we have undertaken in recent years is further supported by regular monitoring and review of progress towards agreed outcomes with training, advice and guidance available to support teachers and heads in their work with young people.

Safeguarding in Halton is outstanding

Source: Ofsted – July 2008

SAFEGUARDING CASE STUDY

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) IN ACTION

(CAF is a process for identifying low level support needs for children and families)

Euan, was at risk from self-harm and thoughts about suicide because he was worried and anxious about the likely impact of family breakdown upon himself and his two siblings. Through a third sector organisation talking to Euan, it transpired that there were a number of issues for the family relating to debt, gambling and addiction, domestic violence and conflict.

His parents consented to a CAF being carried out which identified the family would benefit from a range of support from five service providers, including Youth Offending Team, YISP, Action for Children and Arch Initiatives. Euan also accessed counselling and became involved in some group work, which allowed him to express his worries and concerns about his family and their future.

This multi agency approach helped Euan to get back into school where he was identified as a gifted and talented pupil and a benefactor funded his two week summer school placement at a prestigious university. He is now on track for university and his family are still together.

This family had a range of complex needs and, without involvement and support from a range of service providers; Euan would not have achieved his full potential. He is happy that his family are still together and more able to focus on their children's needs.

OVERVIEW

Since the inception of Halton Safeguarding Children Board in 2006 we have worked hard to build an acceptance across agencies and communities of the importance of the message that safeguarding is everybody's business.

The quality and range of responsive locally based services available for families which are able to intervene early is excellent and we have consistent and prioritised allocation of social workers for children subject to child protection plans and children in the care of the local authority.

Halton has developed a Levels of Need Framework to provide clarity to parents, carers and professionals about the routes into services and support.

WHAT HAS MADE THE DIFFERENCE

Halton Safeguarding Children Board provides very effective strategic leadership, which has developed and maintained a strong framework of scrutiny, quality assurance and training which is respected and supported by both statutory and third sector agencies.

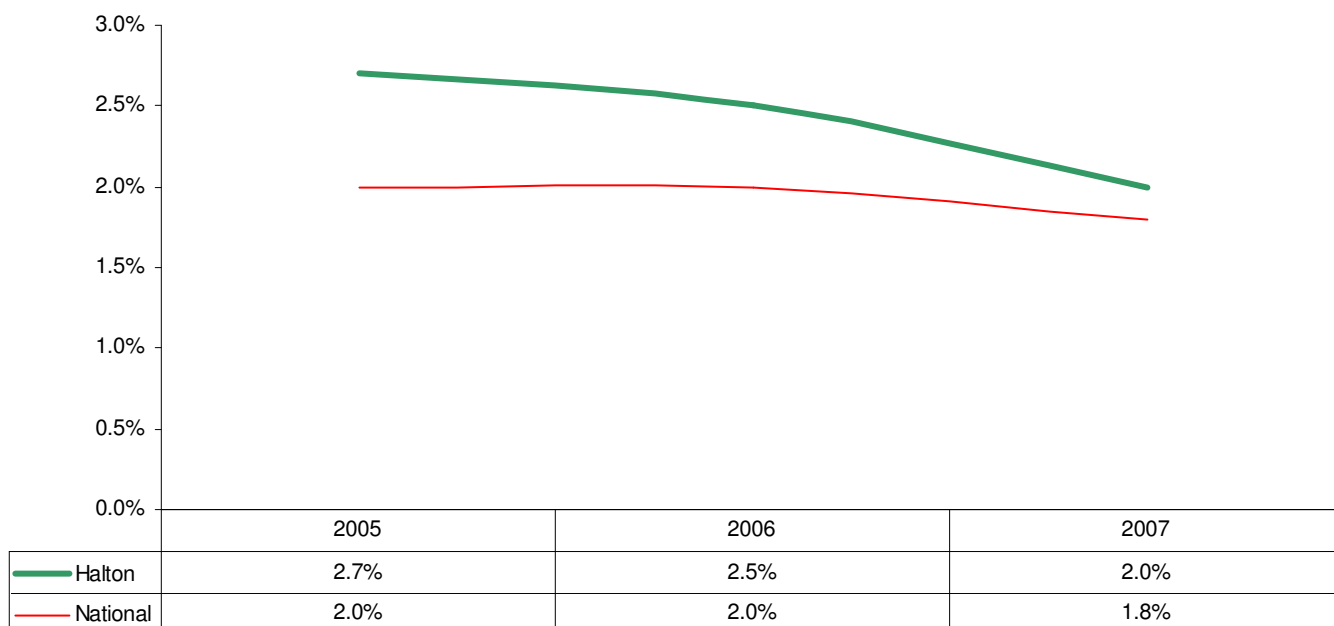
We have established a multi agency safeguarding unit as a way of making effective use of knowledge and expertise across the Children's Trust and continue to build strong relationships between Children's Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children Board to ensure robust challenge and commitment to improvement is maintained across the area.

We recognise that these arrangements could not be achieved without the strong engagement across services and communities in supporting and delivering our hopes and aims for children and young people. Certainly the success in this area has been dependent on an experienced, committed, skilled and knowledgeable team of staff, carers and volunteers across every setting for children and young people. These are our most valuable asset in continuing to embed the message in Halton that safeguarding is everybody's business and will continue to be the most significant factor as we continue to build on our successes to date..

Fewer young people enter the Youth Justice System

THE OUTCOME

**Halton / National comparison percentage of
First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System
2005 - 2007**



THE STORY BEHIND THE CURVE

OVERVIEW

Young people who enter the Youth Justice System tend to have poorer life chances than their peers. Issues such as education, substance misuse, mental health issues, parenting are all frequently identified as contributory factors, which can cause young people to break the law. It is therefore important to ensure that young people who offend in a minor way can be dealt early to avoid their offending behaviour escalating.

WHAT HAS MADE THE DIFFERENCE

The reason for the decline in the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice System is attributable to the many services and support mechanisms coming together, rather than any individual projects working in isolation. The Strategic Director for Children's Services oversees the activity of the Youth Justice Service in Halton and chairs the local Youth Justice Board. The Board has worked hard to interrogate performance and target resources. Through this mechanism we ensure we remain committed to achieving sustained improvements to supporting the non criminalization of children and young people in Halton by maintaining pressure on performance and improving outcomes.

The introduction of the Youth Inclusion Support Panel, which seeks to support children and young people from the age of 8 and address risk factors for offending, has been extremely successful since it was launched in January 2007. Also the principles of restorative justice by Cheshire Constabulary along with the amendment of national policing targets has encouraged a more victim centered outcome driven local approach.

The development of more positive activities for young people and the improvements in educational attendance and outcomes are all contributing to the reduction in youth crime and youth nuisance being experienced in the Borough.

Halton's Youth finds its voice

THE OUTCOME



Picture: Member of Youth Parliament, Members of Youth Cabinet and Council Members from Executive Board

OVERVIEW

Each area in the borough has an area youth forum and each area youth forum elects young person as their representative on the Youth Cabinet. This task takes place every November through a series of Voice events and conferences, and is supported by both the Youth Service and Connexions

The Youth Cabinet is a young people's forum, run by young people, for young people, with 12 members. The job of the representatives is to increase their knowledge of young people's needs, and represent the views of young people in Halton at both a local and national level.

The 12 members of the Youth Cabinet then took part in leadership campaign to become the Member of Youth Parliament and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament. The latest election took place in January 2009. 4864 young people in Halton voted in Russell Jones as the Member of Youth Parliament and Emily Davidson as Deputy MYP for the Borough during the Halton UKYP Election. In total nearly 20000 votes have been cast by young people in the elections in the last 3 years

The MYP and DYP are supported by the Youth Cabinet. The main aim of Halton's Youth Cabinet and Members of Youth Parliament is to improve the lives of young people in Halton.

YouthBank has also been highly influential with young people receiving a budget with which to design and deliver services for young people across the borough. To date they have spent £300,000 on activities and opportunities identified as important to local children and young people.

WHAT HAS MADE THE DIFFERENCE

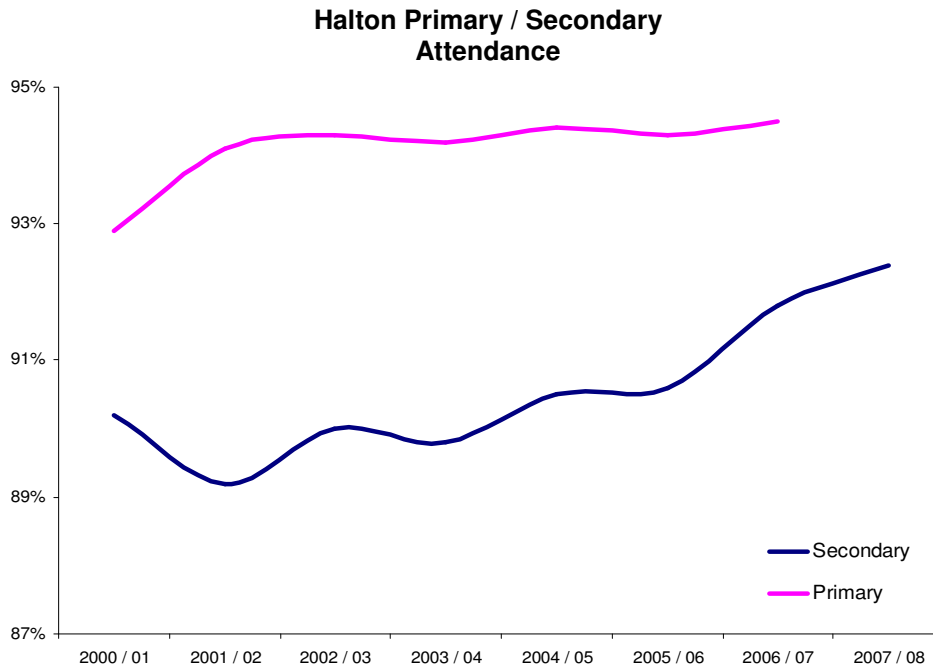
Youth Cabinet have achieved many successes from year to year from advocating on behalf of Halton young people via peer research consultations to enabling the MYP and DMYP to contribute and participate in the borough's decision-making bodies. Other key successes include;

- Improving Places to Go and Things to Do for Young People across the borough.
- Continuation of representation of Halton Young People at high profile national and regional events i.e. Circles of Influence Conference and both National and Regional UKYP sittings.
- Young People Focused campaigns including 'Buzz Off' a national campaign to eradicate Mosquito devices situated across the borough.
- Consistently working towards ensuring young people are consulted to improve services and make changes i.e. Young Peoples Sexual Health Services, Positive Images of Young People in the Media, Anti-Bullying Campaign, Environment issues, Transport, Safety and Equality and Diversity.
- Encouraged volunteering for community cohesion via Youth Cabinet

Attendance in Schools is on the up

THE OUTCOME

Persistent Absence in Halton Secondary Schools has fallen by **4.3%** since 2006 - whereas decreases in figures from across the country are about **2%**



THE STORY BEHIND THE CURVE

OVERVIEW

In addition to the reduction in persistent absence, the national school attendance figures for 2007/8 published by the Department of Children Schools and Families show that the improvement in school attendance in Halton has continued with Halton's Secondary Attendance now having improved consistently over the last four years. Halton's Secondary attendance now stands at 92.46% compared to 89.79% in 2003/4.

The data released 2007/8 for Primary School attendance at 94.78% represents the best primary attendance since Halton became a unitary authority and is the first time that primary attendance in Halton has been above the average for the rest of England (94.74%).

WHAT HAS MADE THE DIFFERENCE

We believe that attendance figures in our secondary schools are going up a combination of reasons.

- Schools with the help of the Local Authority have developed robust systems to detect and follow up unexplained absence in a systematic way using clear escalation processes
- Schools own their attendance and are much clearer about what they can do to influence attendance in their school. A plan involving the parents is put in place with every young person who is absent over the persistent absence (80%) threshold
- There is a strong working relationship between Schools and Local Authorities Education Welfare Service
- Where parents continue to not support the school attendance of their children enforcement action is taken through the courts.

Kenzie's Story:

Kenzie attended his local high school but stopped going to school shortly after the Christmas holidays.

To address this non attendance Kenzie received some support through his local CAMHS team. A meeting was also arranged with Kenzie's family, the Head of Year and Learning Mentor at the High School to find a way forward and to support Kenzie's return to school.

A Support Worker and Learning Mentor worked closely with the family over the coming weeks to begin to establish a routine for Kenzie as a way of getting him back to school. It started slowly by making sure Kenzie was up, dressed and ready for school to slowly re-introducing him to the classroom, his friends and then slowly to his lessons. He also continued to receive support at CAMHS.

The family and Kenzie were supported at every stage of the plan, and the progress Kenzie was making was reviewed regularly and when the new academic year started in September Kenzie was back at school.

Our Priorities

We are trying to adopt a new approach in realising our hopes for children, young people and families in Halton. For too long we have relied heavily on limited definitions of children and young people that taken on their own do not reflect the breadth and variety of a child or young person's life or circumstance. As was noted in one of our consultations we may hit the target, but we are in danger of missing the point, the point being is that we must make every effort to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Adults tell us we need to get better at caring and nurturing children and young people's self esteem

To address this issue we will be using Outcomes Based Accountability as the method behind making a difference to the lives of children, young people and their families in Halton.

The Outcomes Based Accountability approach widens our horizons in terms of tackling some of our more challenging issues in Halton and allows us the freedom and creativity to work with ambition and outcomes. We know certain groups within our communities can get forgotten about but we have made sure that this approach to improving outcomes remembers that additional efforts will need to be made to reach *all* children and young people.

Children with complex needs told us they want to be accepted

Disabled children tell us they want to spend time with their friends, they want to take part in lots of different kinds of activities and they want the type of futures their peers have access to, so a flat they can live in, a job they can enjoy and places to go that they can enjoy with their friends.

Disabled children, children in the care of the local authority, children and young people with caring responsibilities all tell us they want us to work with them to make sure any support or service we provide is what they want and need. They also tell us that working with them are not about focussing on the issue, but focussing on them as a child or a young person first.

Outcomes Based Accountability demands we listen to our communities and makes sure that what we are told becomes part of our reasons and purpose for improving services, so when a child tells us they do not want activities to be too far away from their home, we listen and make every effort to keep their activities local to where they live and go to school.

As a parent told us at a consultation event, you keep telling us what you are going to do, so now just get on and do it!

Young people told us they want us to show we believe in them.

We believe that Outcomes Based Accountability recognises the value of all children and young people and seeks a way to achieve ambitions in a child focussed way. This not only agrees with the sentiment and tone of the many parents, carers, professionals, children and young people who were consulted in the preparation of this plan, it also allows us to focus on the particular difficulties and issues of certain groups of children and young people in Halton.

The Children's Trust, in response to these wide-ranging consultations across the borough and reflection on performance to date has set four specific ambitions,

Parents and carers need better publicity and information about what support and opportunities are available

which better define what we are trying to achieve for children and young people. The four ambitions are:

Every Young Person is successful when they leave school

Children and young people do well wherever they live and whatever their needs

Children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy.

Young people told us they need activities and opportunities to be better advertised and publicised. They want to know what is happening in their area because they will use these activities if they get to know when they are happening.

Young people told us there are a lot of opportunities for them in Halton to take up, but getting to these opportunities is really difficult because the bus is either too expensive or does not go where the activity is.

We believe that each of these statements are conditions of well being for all children and young people that no one single agency can achieve on their own. Rather a coherent partnership approach is vital if we are to succeed in making the necessary difference to each of these outcomes.

Moreover the benefit of identifying these priority areas allows us to structure our approach and developments around the needs of the child which will address the complexities of children and young people's lives today.

Safeguarding plays a significant role in each of our identified areas of work and will be a consistent factor as each priority is addressed but we also consider that it is essential that in order to continue embedding the message that safeguarding is everybody's business we must identify a fourth priority area. This is

Children and young people will feel safe at home, in school and in their communities.

We accept that there remain important issues for the children and young people of Halton, which will be considered in addition to as well as part of our identified priorities.

For example there are many vulnerable groups of children and young people in Halton who tell us they want to be treated as their peers, and this is what we are committed to achieving. However in certain aspects of their care and well being we must make additional efforts as a means of ensuring they experience the same level of access to the many opportunities all children and young people in Halton have access to. This is why for children in care and disabled children and young people we are committed to making good on our pledges.

Halton's Pledge to Children in Care:

The pledge is a promise, to all children in care including care leavers, listing what the council will provide for you in terms of services, support and care. So far the children and young people have said they think the pledge should talk about :

- The amount of rules that govern their lives, there are more for them than for their friends which get in the way of them making friends and being like their friends
- They want more privacy and not so many people knowing their business
- When they leave care they want to be able to find a job and have somewhere safe, secure and permanent to live
- Family is really important, having contact with their own family, and feeling part of a family by being loved, cared for and where they feel safe, secure and know its for as long as they need it.
- They want to feel like they have time for themselves, and time from us as adults so they can make decisions together.

The Launch for Halton's Children in Care Pledge will be Oct 2009

Our commitment and intent to improving outcomes for children in our care can be found in

[Children in Care Strategy](#)

[Placement Strategy](#)

[Employment Policy for Care Leavers](#)

Halton was the first authority in the North West to sign up to the Every Disabled Child Matters Pledge for Local Authorities

- Families with disabled children to have ordinary lives
- Disabled children to matter as much as all other children
- Disabled children and their families to be fully included in society
- All disabled children and their families to get the right services and support no matter where they live
- Poverty amongst disabled children and their families to be cut by 50% by 2010 and eliminated by 2020
- An education system that meets the needs of each child and enables them to reach their full potential
- Disabled children and their families to shape the way that services are planned, commissioned and delivered.

The information that follows describes the progress and efforts made to date in addressing the specific concerns within each of our four ambitions. It also describes some of the plans and ideas we have to achieve our ambitions over the coming months and years. This will assist in demonstrating both the progress we are making to specific areas of the lives of children and young people. It will also describe the areas that collectively we need to address to ensure we continue to make a real difference to the lives and experiences of children and young people in Halton.

This plan sets out the range of key indicators we feel will show we have made progress. However we must also demonstrate that we have considered the detail, which is essential for us to make good on our promises. In our case this detail is in the range of plans and strategies sitting beneath the Children and Young People's Plan, including the Business Plans for our Service Delivery Partnerships.

Children in Care Council

Our Children in Care Council was established in 2008. Since this time we have been working hard to encourage children and young people in our care to become involved in this new opportunity for them to have their say. So far we have had a number of meetings, which are attended by our Strategic Director Gerald Meehan and Lead Member for Children, Tom McInerney. We have also had some fun days as a way to keep children and young people encouraged and excited about becoming involved.

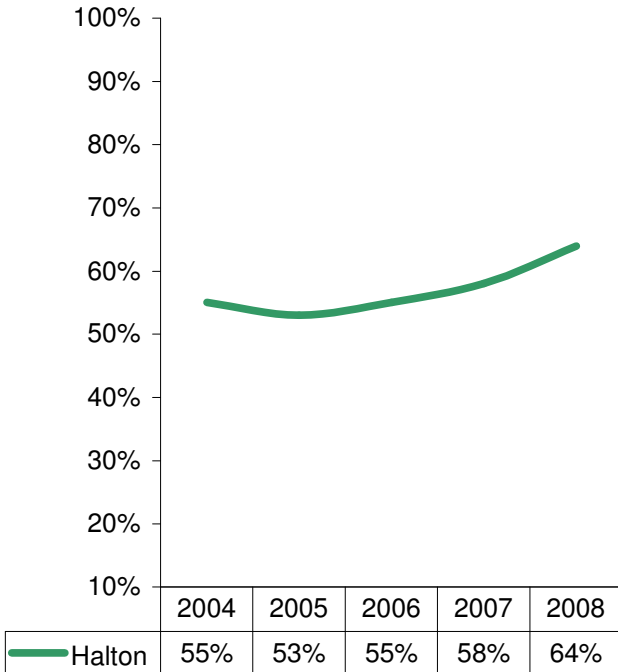
The next step for our council is to arrange for elections to a Children in Care Committee. This will see children and young people in our care elect children and young people who will then be able to represent the views of all children and young people in our care.

The committee is anticipated to function in the same way as our Youth Cabinet whereby the children and young people will offer their views on current practice, aims and strategies in addition to offering challenge to their corporate parents.

The views and ideas will continue to be expressed to the Strategic Director and Lead Member in addition to being fed through to the Children in Care Partnership Board and Children's Trust.

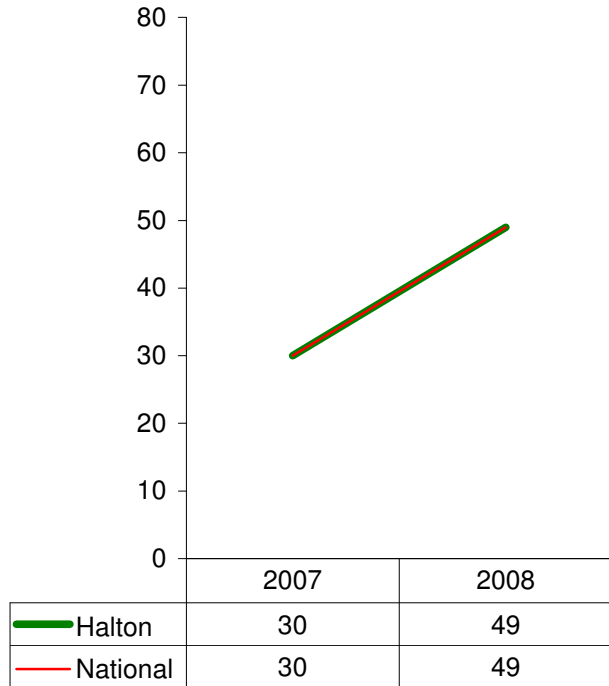
EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS SUCCESSFUL WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL

We want to Increase the percentage of Young People achieving their estimated level of achievement at GCSE

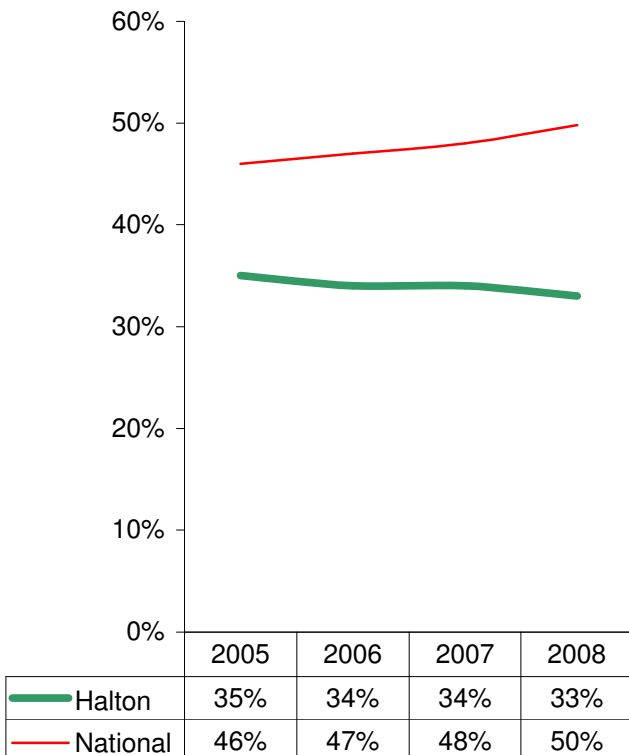


We want to reduce the number of young people worried about their future

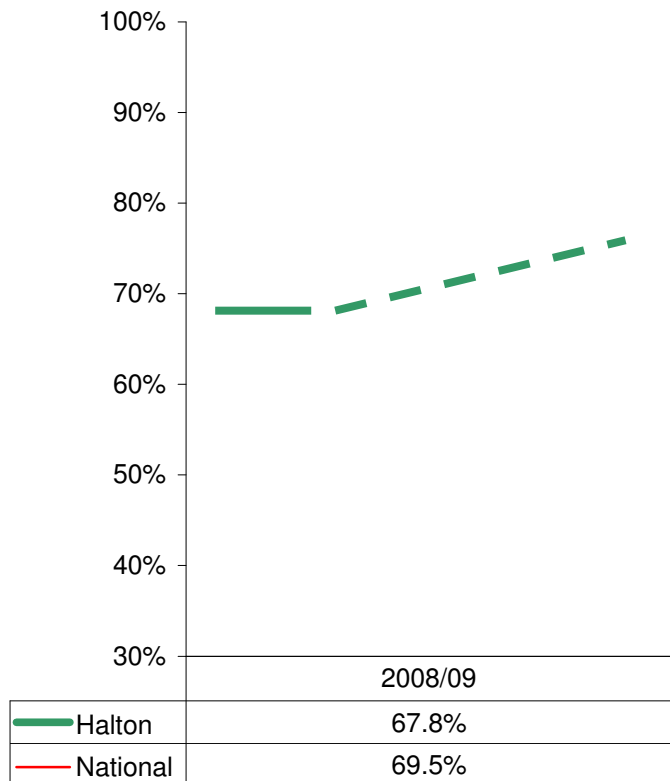
Source: Tellus



We want to Increase the percentage of Young People achieving Level 3 by 19



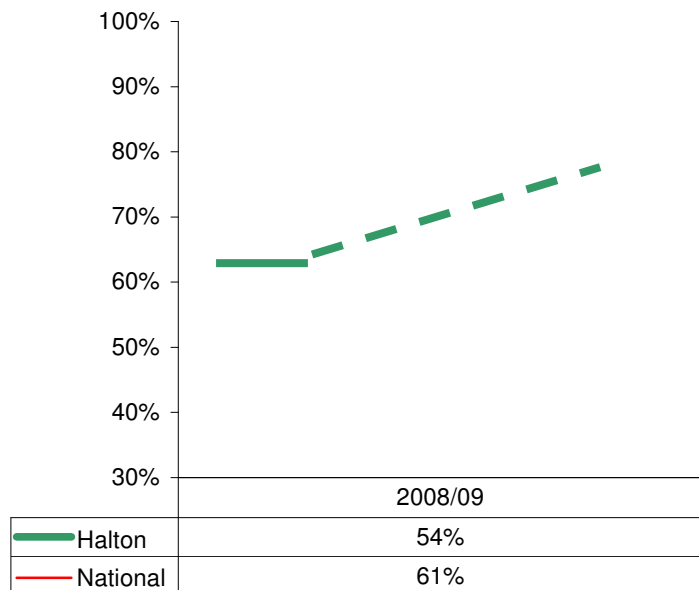
We want to increase the percentage of young people participating in positive activities



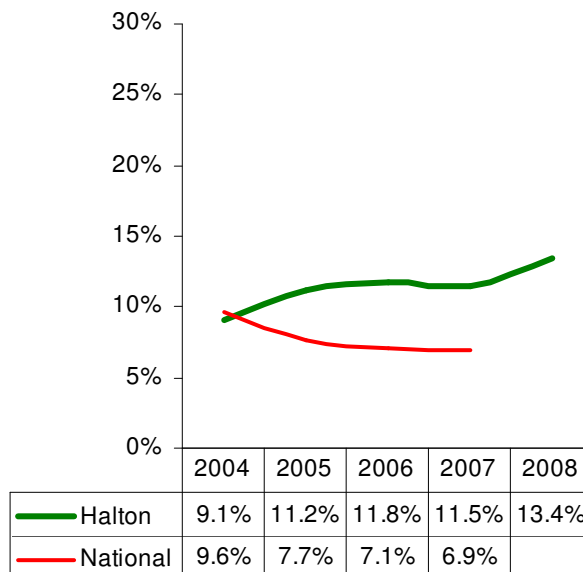
EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS SUCCESSFUL WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL

We want to increase the percentage of young people volunteering

Source: Tellus



We want to Reduce the percentage of 16-18 year olds who are NEET



WHAT WE PLAN TO DO IN ORDER TO IMPROVE

SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP: EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS SUCCESSFUL WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL

A Key Message from the Chair Of The SDP

There are a number of areas we will focus on in the coming months as we make every effort to build a borough where every child can be assured that we will do all we can to support them in achieving their ambitions and goals.

We are acutely mindful of responding to the current need caused by such a severe economic downturn. Our identified key indicators capture the holistic nature of young people's lives. However it is clear that the more employability skills young people possess, both in terms of experience and achievement, the likelier they are to make a successful transition to adulthood. This is particularly relevant for some of our more vulnerable groups

The link to employers is crucial and one example of this is that will ensure that our Education Business Partnership will work with partners to improve the diversity and quality of work experience. Also we will increase the number of employers actively working with all our schools in order to improve our learners' insight into the work of work and to boost aspirations.

We are also aware that there are a range of important accredited initiatives that young people undertake as part of their informal education. These experiences both inspire and provide young people with the opportunities to learn important life skills which significantly improve their life chances. We need to find a way of capturing this information in order to value and understand the breadth on offer.

We want to increase the number of vulnerable young people achieving level 3 qualifications by the age of 19. This requires we tackle the barriers facing this group of young people now and by working closely with vulnerable children to help build the solid foundations necessary for them to reach their full potential

We want to make sure we provide children and young people with a range of opportunities they can learn from. This means we have to provide them with the necessary advice, guidance and information to support their decision making and establishing more creative programmes to build their self esteem through the early years and into primary settings.

We will also build on the successes we have made in recent years and will reflect on the specific work that has made a difference in order to make this practice part of our everyday business. Key mechanisms to support these ambitions will be BSF and the 14 to 19 agenda.

Reaching this ambition is about making the big decisions necessary that support getting the little things right. We must also make sure we empower professionals to use their expertise and knowledge in working with families and children to build a borough of hope and ambition. Making a difference here for Halton will be about transforming hearts and minds.

To help us achieve our goals we have identified a range of performance measures that will assist us to monitor and review our progress. The chosen measures illustrated here are indicators of progress that we consider reflects the detail of this ambition. We accept this may not offer the whole picture and this is why, as part of the action plans accompanying the work of Service Delivery Partnerships, there will be a more detailed range of indicators and actions in order to make sure we are addressing the full range of measures necessary to demonstrate we are making a difference to this particular ambition.

BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE (BSF)

Building schools for the future will be a significant tool for us is making this happen as one of its goals in transforming the learning outcomes for children and young people will be to make sure the learning needs of vulnerable or under achieving groups are more effectively targeted.

BSF will also allow us to provide space and resources to meet specific local needs and provide local children and young people access to the many opportunities which exist in their communities.

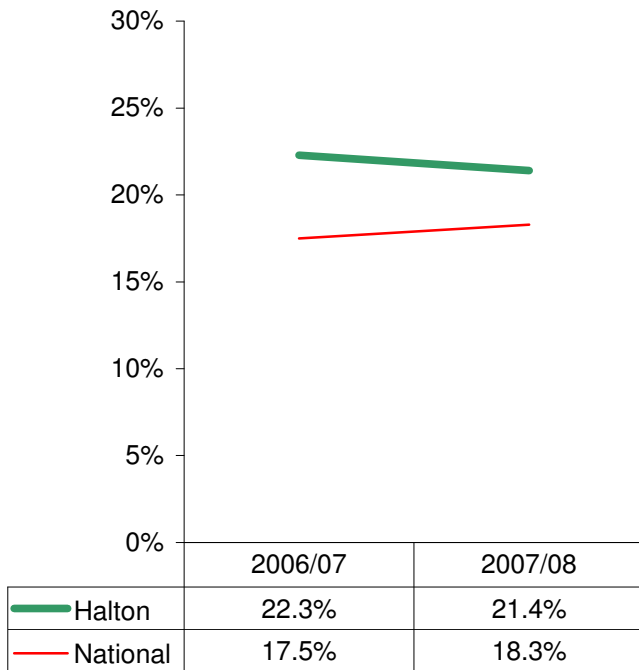
BSF will promote and enable swift and easy access to specialist provision, provide wide ranging support for parents and carers to empower them to better meet the needs of their children and young people.

BSF will allow us to re-establish schools as the heart of their communities and where children and young people's needs are met, where all children and young people are encouraged to meet their full potential so they are able to reach their potential and fulfil their ambitions

[Building Schools for the Future](#)

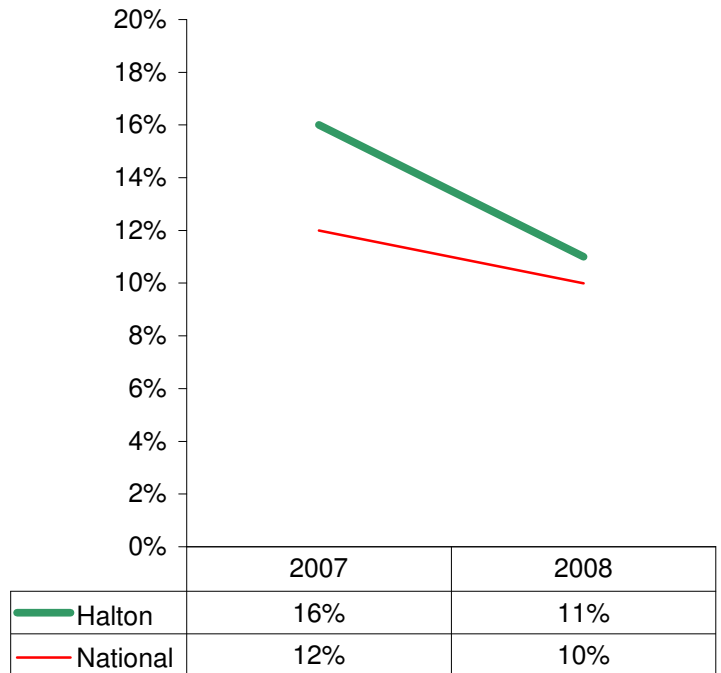
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND SEXUALLY HEALTHY

We want to reduce Obesity amongst primary school age children in Year 6



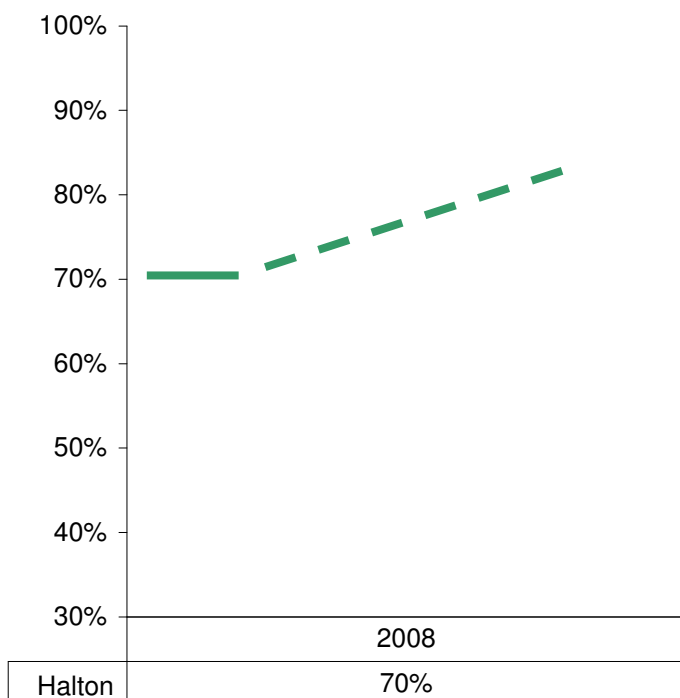
We want to reduce the percentage of young people who consume alcohol

Source: Tellus



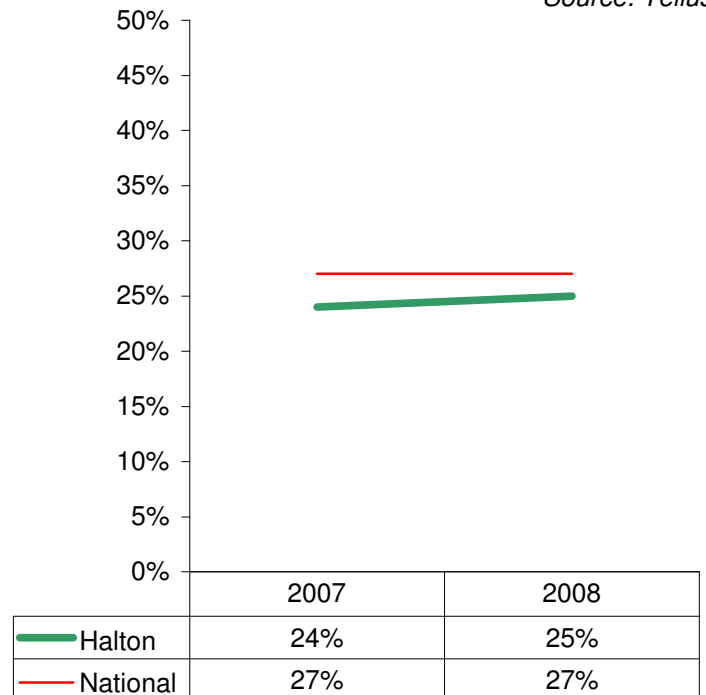
We want to increase the percentage of young people in Halton who are happy

Source: Tellus



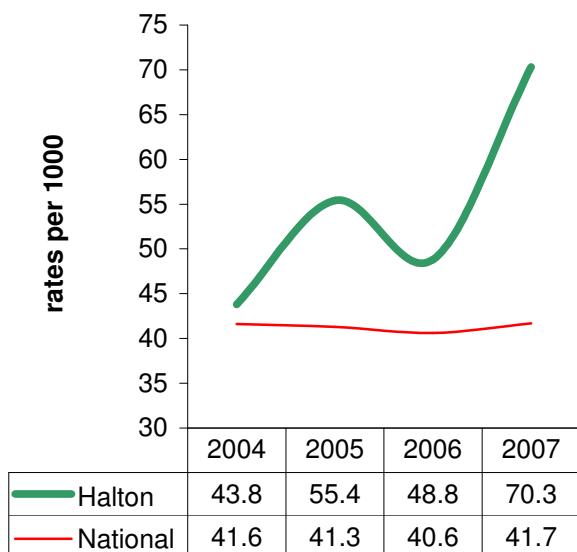
We want to reduce the percentage of young people who worry about being bullied

Source: Tellus

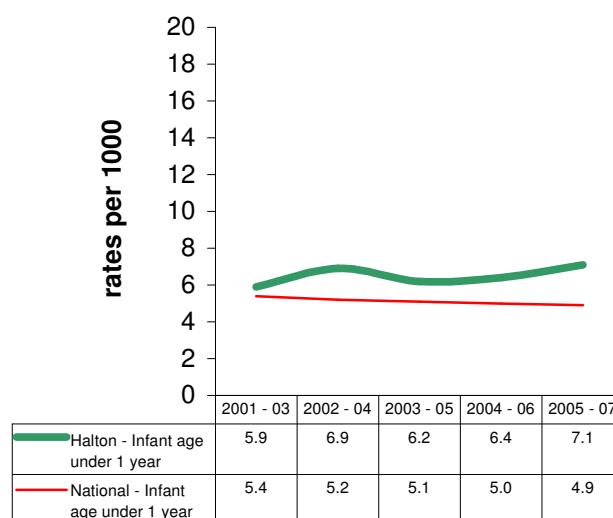


CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND SEXUALLY HEALTHY

We want to reduce the Under 18 conception rate



We want to reduce the infant mortality rate



WHAT WE PLAN TO DO IN ORDER TO IMPROVE

SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EMOTIONALLY, SEXUALLY AND PHYSICALLY HEALTHY.

A Key Message from the Chair Of The SDP

The health and well being of children and young people is essential because by making sure our children and young people live emotionally, physically and sexually healthy lives we provide them with strong foundations upon which they can build a happy and healthy adulthood.

A key part of this will be bringing together representatives from across the children's and adult's workforce to make sure we are joining up our provision in supporting the health and well being of our children and young people.

The emotional, sexual and physical health of children and young people in Halton are part of an overarching agenda which our Service Delivery Partnership will be able to have oversight of, in addition to creating a sense of collective ownership to the specific issues and challenges our children and young people face today such as worries about the sexual health of young people, use of alcohol and levels of obesity in addition to concerns about emotional health and well being.

To help us achieve our goals we have identified a range of performance measures that will assist us to monitor and review our progress. The chosen measures illustrated here are indicators of progress that we consider reflects the detail of this ambition. We accept this may not offer the whole picture and this is why, as part of the action plans accompanying the work of Service Delivery Partnerships, there will be a more detailed range of indicators in order to make sure we are addressing the full range of measures necessary to demonstrate we are making a difference to this particular ambition.

An example of some of our practice locally:

The MEND Programme (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do it!) is a fun course for families with children aged 7 to 13 whose weight is above the healthy range for their age and height.. It helps children and families manage their weight better and lead healthier lives.

With the support of their parents or carers, children learn how to improve their health, fitness and the way they feel about their bodies. This is a joint working initiative as Health Improvement Specialist – Healthy Schools, manages the overall programme

Feedback so far from the children and their parents has been positive and has helped them make changes to their lifestyle.

MESSAGE FROM JOHANNA PICKERING. HEALTH MINISTER YOUTH CABINET. HALTON

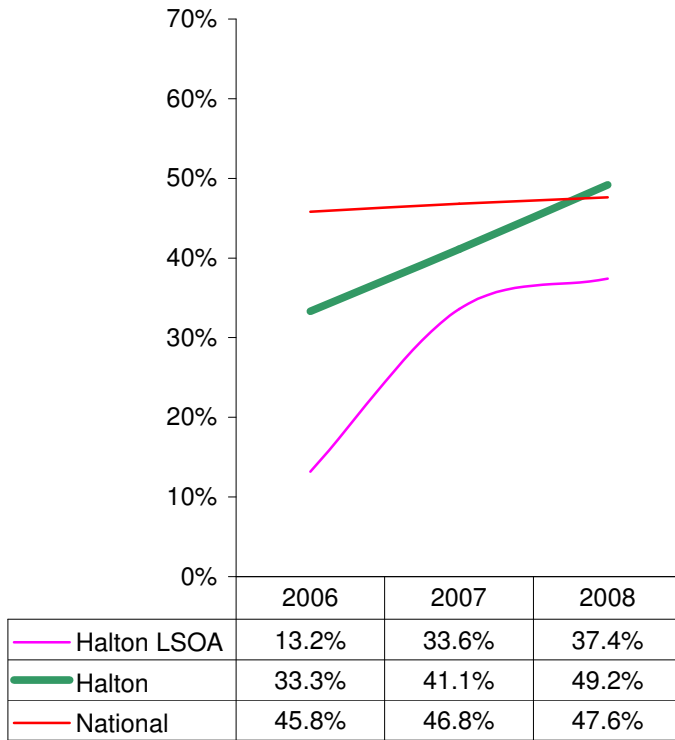
Whenever you begin to think about young people's health, many adults would instantly think of binge drinking and sexual health but the c-card scheme has increased the amount of young people practicing safe sex and both the YMCA and HITs have effective alcohol and drug tackling projects. Healthy eating is a major factor also as diet links to mental health and obesity, and again upcoming plans for a ministry of food style project is in the planning stages

However the health of young people doesn't seem to be improving at the extent that it should be. It is my belief that the projects to tackle these exist but that they are not getting the publicity that they need to be effective to the numbers of young people in Halton and that the successful projects should encompass all young people not just those who attend school in the borough or those who attend youth provisions.

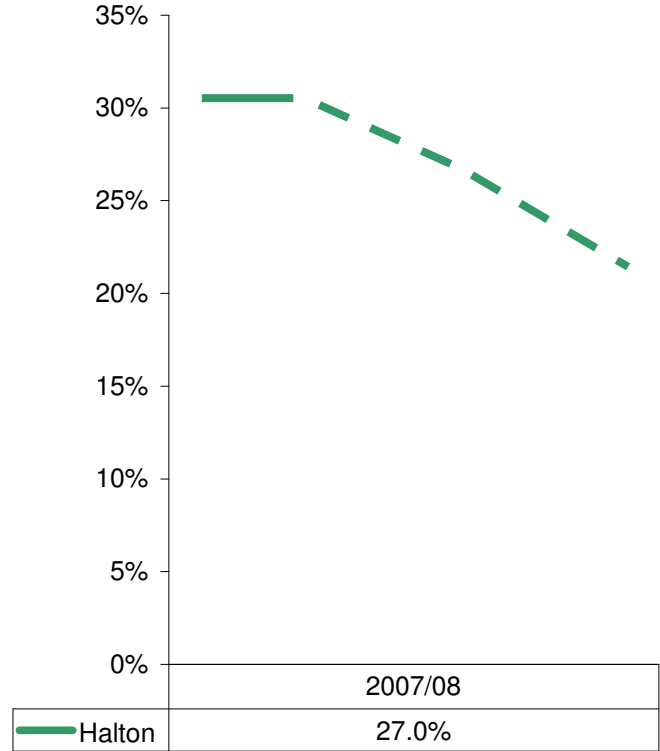
This year, so many projects are taking place. The ministry of food is being planned within the next few months. The c-card scheme is increasing in numbers as more young people learn of it. Not to mention the splash programme which promotes physical activities plus many other projects in the planning stages and will be ready for this summer and hopefully will be continued for years to come.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE DO WELL WHEREVER THEY LIVE AND WHATEVER THEIR NEEDS

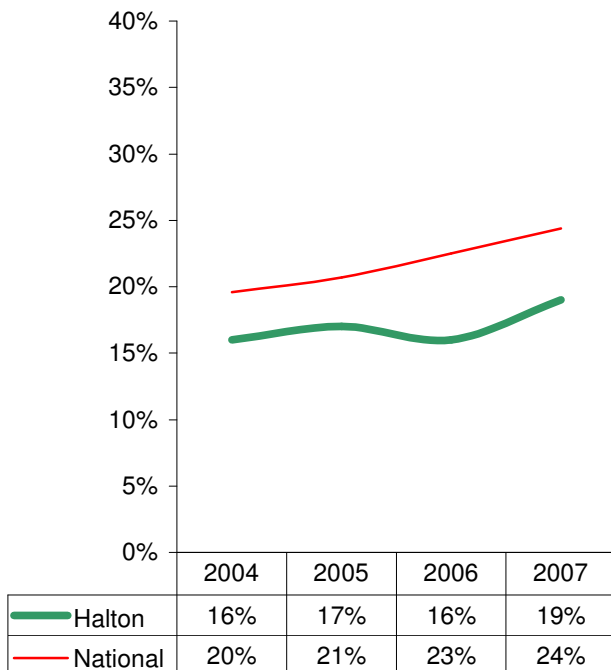
By 2011 We want to reduce the GCSE 5+A*C inc. English & Maths achievement gap by 25% between those in the worst 10% LSOA Nationally against the Halton average



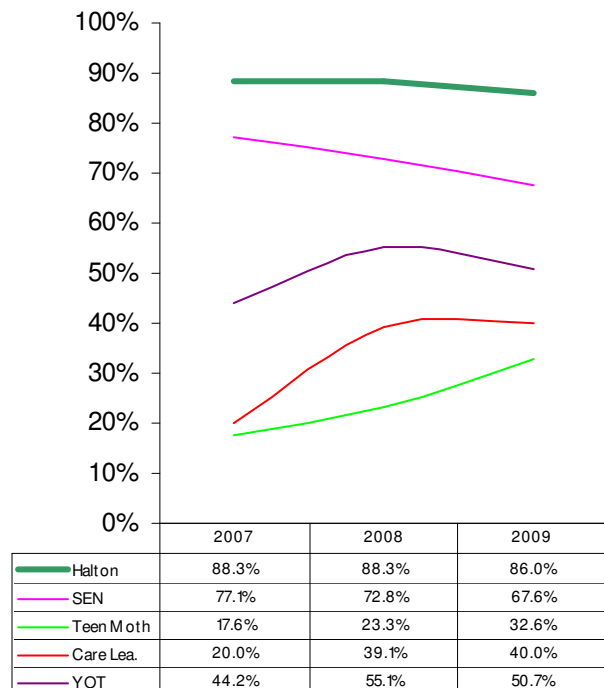
We want to reduce the Proportion of children in poverty



We want to increase the percentage of young people eligible for Free School Meals achieving Level 3 by 19

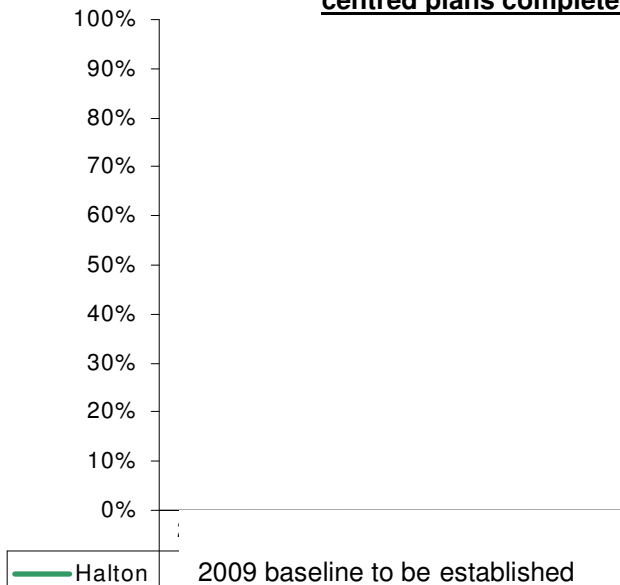


We want to increase the percentage of vulnerable groups in Education, Employment & training (EET)

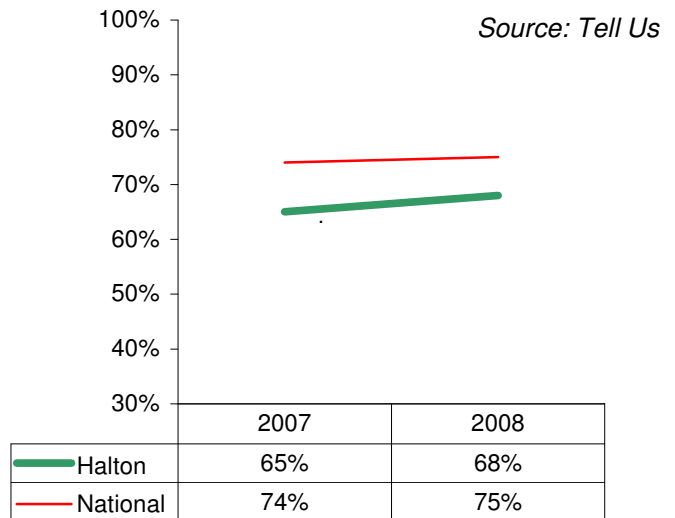


CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE DO WELL WHEREVER THEY LIVE AND WHATEVER THEIR NEEDS

We will increase the number of person centred plans completed



We want to increase the percentage of young people who think their area is a very good place to live



WHAT WE PLAN TO DO IN ORDER TO IMPROVE

SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DO WELL WHEREVER THEY LIVE AND WHATEVER THEIR NEEDS:

A Key Message from the Chair Of The SDP

It may well be argued that the priority of “children and young people do well wherever they live and whatever their needs” is the toughest nut to crack. Whilst great progress has been made in general, with improving outcomes there are some children and young people whose lives and circumstances have meant they have not benefited from the general improvements. It is for these children and young people that we aim to reduce these inequalities.

There are a number of areas we will focus on in the coming months as we make every effort to build a borough where every child can be assured that we will do everything we can to make sure all children and young people have access to the same opportunities and activities in Halton, and that they are supported and encouraged in achieving their ambitions and goals whatever their needs are and wherever they live.

For example the development of school behaviour and attendance partnerships will facilitate even more collaborative working between schools in order to meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners.

In order to make a difference in this area we must work across professional and agency boundaries in order to bring together the agendas so we are better placed to tackle the significant challenges children and young people face today. Moreover to make a sustained difference requires we work with partners outside services for children and young people
Part of our role as a SDP will be joining up our expertise and knowledge with colleagues working across the range of services for adults, in addition to working with organisation in our communities and with employers because to create equality of access and possibility requires we are creative and aspirational for our borough.

14-19 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

This partnership will be essential in delivering on our ambition to make sure all children and young people do well wherever they live and whatever their needs

The work, drive and commitment of this partnership will ensure the sustained participation of young people in education, training and employment through a creative and world class curriculum that is able to respond to the learning needs of young people and for the future needs of local employers.

It has established strong working relationships across the borough to make sure it is responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups within our communities such as disabled young people and young people in the care of the local authority.

Working in tandem with Building Schools for the Future, the Learning Skills Council and local partners, we anticipate the 14-19 Partnership will achieve all its goals and aims by 2013

[14-19 Strategy](#)
[14-19 Action Plan](#)

SECTION 2

We know what we need to do – so how will the partnership meet the challenge

The purpose of Halton's Children and Young People's Plan is to set out clearly how we intend to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families. So far we have talked about Halton and the particular pressures and hopes children and young people have. We must now focus on how we are going to achieve our ambitions, bring to light the hopes and goals of our children and young people and discuss how we are going to tackle the issues and difficulties which can get in their way.

This section therefore will describe how we plan to organise the services and professionals to improve the outcomes of children and young people locally.

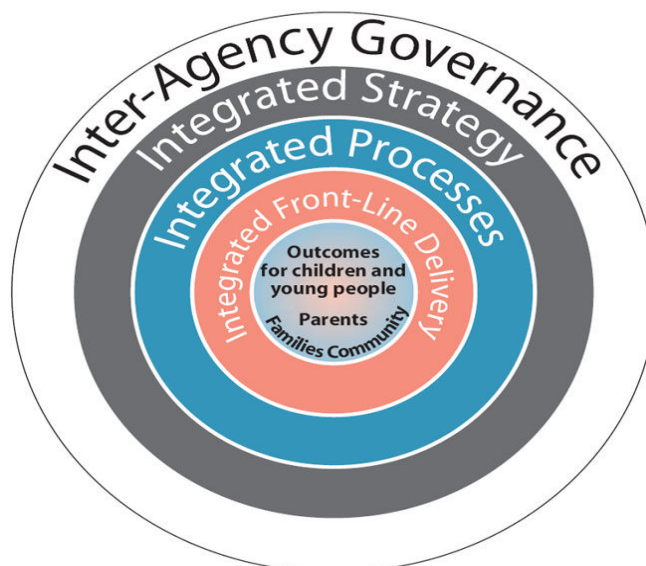
What is a Children's Trust?

The [Children's Plan](#) set out the Government's aim to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. This means making sure that all children, wherever they live, whatever their background, whatever their age and whatever their needs, have access to the best health care we can provide; feel safe at home, in their communities and when they are in school; enjoy life and have fun and achieve well at school and beyond; are able to make a positive contribution to society; and achieve economic wellbeing. It is the role of each Children's Trust in England to turn this vision into reality.

Children's Trusts are local partnerships, which bring together the organisations responsible for services for children, young people and families. They come together because of their shared commitment to improving children's lives.

The Strategic Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children's Services within each local authority lead Children's Trusts. This is a statutory responsibility as outlined in the [Children Act 2004](#). This legal duty also extends to other local agencies who are named partners for each Children's Trust. These are: Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), Police Authorities, Local Probation Boards, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions Partnerships and the Learning and Skills Council. Children's Trusts also include other important local partners like schools, colleges and third sector organisations, as well as other local authority services like adult social care and housing.

The term "Children's Trust" applies to the whole system of children's services, covering the work of partner agencies at every level, from the development of the overall strategy to the delivery of front-line services. But Children's Trusts are not separate organisations in their own right. Each partner retains their own responsibilities, while working together to join up services.



What are Halton's Children's Trust arrangements?

Inter-agency governance and integrated strategy.

For Halton this means we ensure that our thinking and planning (strategy) are joined up and we have in place a system, which brings together all organisations to provide challenge support and accountability (governance) to make sure we are making improvements.

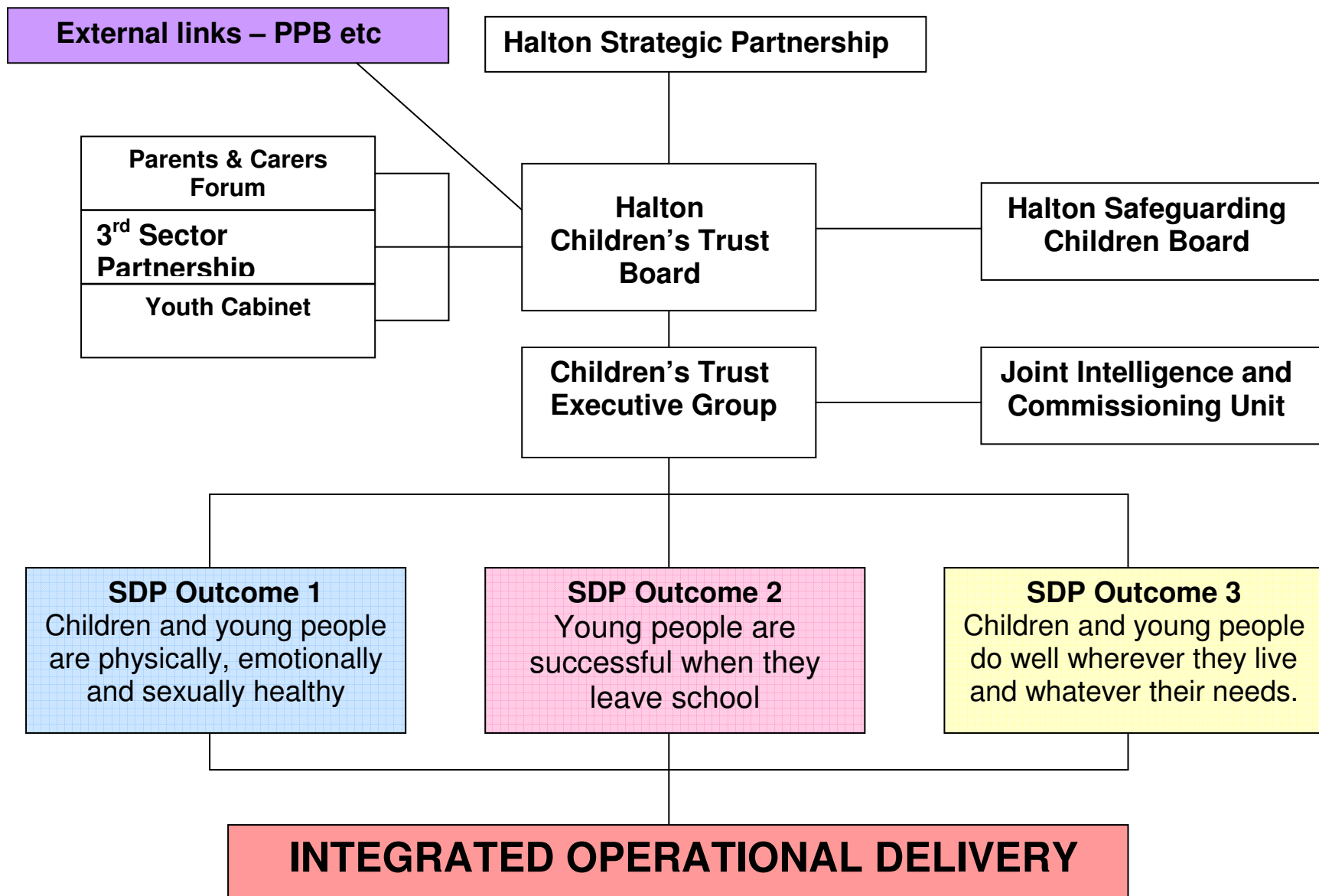
Our Children's Trust brings together a number of senior representatives from a variety of agencies, organisations and professionals that work with children, young people and their families locally. [Children's Trust Members](#). Their purpose is to create a collective and innovative strategic response to meeting the needs of children locally with the explicit expectation that their decision making and drive will improve outcomes and make a difference to the lives of children and young people in Halton.

The importance of building these strong and sustainable relationships across the range of strategic planning arrangements cannot be underestimated in our continued commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people. Therefore the impact and importance to us of this wider planning network in supporting our goals and ambitions for children and young people have to be considered and utilised.

We have reflected on the early manifestations of our Trust Board and developed this final structure, (Fig 1) as we believe it is better able to address the most presenting needs of our communities and the children and young people who are an asset to these communities. We also believe this structure will drive the required actions necessary to build stronger and more tangible ambitions for children and young people locally.

This revised structure illustrates the important links, which exist across the range of local strategic, and operational planning mechanisms, from integrated strategy through to integrated delivery. It has also been informed by the [Every Children Matters Integration Model for Children's Trusts](#), otherwise known as the Onion. It also illustrates better the combined responsibilities of the partners involved across our Children's Trust by making clear their responsibilities to achieving positive change.

CHILDREN'S TRUST PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS (Fig 1)



The structure of the Trust and its relationship to current planning structures which exist across the borough provide the rigour and challenge necessary to build and deliver services and support for children, young people and their families so we deliver services and supports which respond better to the needs and wishes of our children and young people and their communities.

PROMISE: We will make sure that our actions and decisions are guided by a single set of arrangements as this will assist us in being more accountable to our communities and enable children, young people and their families to receive the support and services they need when they need it

Halton's Safeguarding arrangements.

Halton's Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) was formally established in February 2006 and we are proud of our achievements so far in building an acceptance across communities and partners of the importance of safeguarding and in particular disseminating the message that safeguarding is everybody's business.

As parents and professionals caring and working with children and young people safeguarding is part of everything we do. Therefore throughout the plan and throughout our promises and efforts to improve outcomes for children and young people our commitment to safeguarding will be and is an essential aspect in everything we do. We will also continue to embed safeguarding as a crucial aspect to all of our relationships with children and young people.

The key to this will be the role and relationship HSCB has with the Children's Trust. It is particularly important that HSCB has the capacity and ability to challenge and scrutinise the safeguarding practice and planning decisions made with the Children's Trust in addition to making sure the operational demands associated with effective safeguarding practice are considered and acted upon appropriately by all Board and Trust members.

In order to ensure that there is effective joint planning and development of safeguarding and child protection processes across both Boards, the following arrangements are in place: -

- The Executive Groups of both Boards meet on a quarterly basis in order to challenge safeguarding practice
- By having representation from key agencies at a Senior Level on both the Children's Trust and HSCB (with some Senior Managers attending both Boards) ensures that safeguarding is strategically wired into Children Trust's safeguarding arrangements
- HSCB Minutes are routinely presented to Children's Trust and vice versa
- Shared and agreed priorities across partners to ensure a collective ownership of driving the agenda forward.

HSCB provides a comprehensive training programme for all partners including the Third Sector. The quality and range of this Training has been consistently praised by local agencies. The Training Programme is regularly reviewed and updated in order to comply with national guidance, any changes to safeguarding/child protection procedures or learning from serious case reviews.

For information on how to access this training and HSCB Business Plan visit:

<http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk>

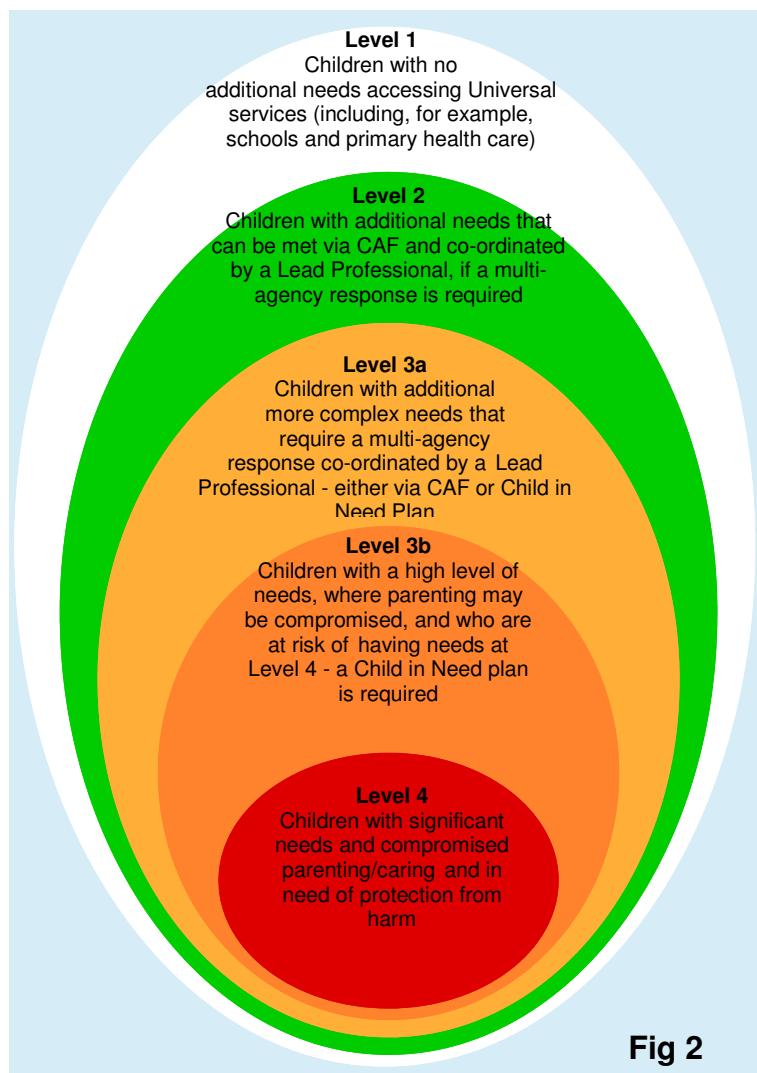
A significant responsibility of HSCB is to share learning across services, agencies and professionals as a way to continue to develop our workforce and the skills they need to carry out effective safeguarding practice. This responsibility includes delivering training and overseeing policy development that meet with up to date guidance and best practice.

A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Unit has been established which includes staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding in Health, Education and Police. This team will strengthen multi-agency working and ownership of safeguarding by making effective use of knowledge and expertise across the Children's Trust. This integrated way of working will also ensure that the important challenge and scrutiny of practice across all professional areas will be applied in a coordinated way. It will also enable public engagement activity to be managed from a "Centre of Excellence" and enable greater coordination and efficiency of work.

The Unit will also develop and administer a formal procedure for managing conflict of opinions between professionals from different services relating to the safety of a child.

The Safeguarding Unit will lead the ongoing development of rigorous auditing processes across the range of multi agency services available for children and young people in the borough. These auditing mechanisms are critical to improving safeguarding practice and in monitoring the quality of frontline service delivery. This will provide an opportunity to scrutinise specific practice issues or themes e.g. resulting from a Serious Case Review. It is also an opportunity to share good practice across agencies in Halton. The Safeguarding Unit will also report on the Audit Findings on a quarterly basis to the Children's Trust and HSCB.

HSCB has also led on the development of the Levels of Need Framework as a way of making sure all agencies and professionals have a shared understanding of their own responsibility in relation to safeguarding practice, and also to recognise when it is necessary to seek help from other agencies, whether that be via the Common Assessment Framework or a referral into Children's Social Care. This has been a significant development locally as we continue to embed the message that safeguarding is everybody's business. Fig 2 identifies our [Levels of Need Framework](#).



PROMISE: We will continue to prioritise safeguarding as an essential part of everything we do in order to continue to embed the values and goals of ensuring that safeguarding is everybody's business

Halton's Approach to Commissioning

We have implemented our [Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework](#) and continue to develop our skill in commissioning. We are also being guided by the key components highlighted in [World Class Commissioning](#), which seeks to transform the ways in which services are commissioned by health bodies.

Halton Your Space

Halton Your Space is a jointly commissioned service developed in response to young people telling us they needed a service which would take better care of their emotional well being. Young People have been heavily involved in the design process and have worked with the service providers to brand Halton Your Space.

Halton Your Space is delivered by the Kings Cross Project and the Catholic Children's Society to address the emotional health and well being needs of children and young people aged from 5 up to 19 years of age at levels 2-3a on Halton's Levels of Need.

Your Space can offer 1:1 sessions and group work to children and young people struggling to cope with change and loss and to support them in managing their feelings.

Integrated commissioning allows services to join up from the earliest stages of planning, through to reviewing the commissioned service. This then becomes the delivery mechanism of the strategic and operational planning decisions. Locally we have worked hard in getting this right, and this commitment sees Halton continues as a regional lead in implementing our unique joint planning and commissioning framework across the range of commissioning activity, which takes place across the borough.

This offers us a solid foundation, based on agreed values and methods of building a borough that is committed to making a difference. However this is just the beginning. We believe it is important our commissioning activity is more effectively targeted against what we know about our borough and in particular our agreed priorities for children and young people.

As part of these arrangements we have seen closer working relationships develop between the Council and the Primary Care Trust. This will help us work together better by focussing efforts on improving health outcomes within Halton. In the coming months we will continue to develop ways expand on how we can build a holistic health service, which truly reflects our determination to offer a supportive and nurturing service for the people of Halton. These developments will also be able to respond swiftly to the immediate needs of children and their families in both a preventative and specialist sense.

Mobile Outreach:

As part of our targeted youth support activity within our Integrated Youth Support Strategy we are funding creative ways to engage our young people, for example

This unique project evolved from a peer research project undertaken by the young people of Halton in response to their concerns about risk taking behaviour, substance misuse and the sexual health of their peers.

The results of the study have led to the development of a Mobile Outreach service. This service will be on board a bus that will travel to areas identified as having the most significant need in terms of substance misuse, risk taking behaviour and teenage pregnancy. The staff on the bus will work with young people out of hours and on weekends to address specific concerns and worries they might have.

The Mobile Outreach will offer a holistic service and will provide assertive outreach workers to make sure all young people are able to access the services including those young people who are described as hard to reach. The bus will also provide advice and guidance, C-Card, healthy eating advice and food for young people to access.

The service will be managed between the lead service provider, Young Addaction, and the young people, and will be staffed by a range of Children's Trust partners. Young people have also been heavily involved in the design, development and delivery of this project. They have also led on the branding of the project so the mobile outreach has truly been a service that has evolved through the hard work and dedication of the young people of Halton and their commitment to making the lives of young people in Halton better

We are currently working hard with our communities who will need to support and engage with the work of the bus as it travels around the borough to make sure it is promoted and accepted as a valuable community resource for our young people.

Joint Intelligence and Commissioning Unit

We have recognised that within our partnership we have a range of systems, skills and expertise that will help us understand our business better. We have agreed to collectively pool this resource within the framework of a Joint Intelligence and Commissioning Unit (JICU). The unit will be resourced by staff from a range of agencies who will work together to ensure that:

- We use the range of data and information available to all partners to ‘intelligently’ plan how we provide services.
- We create opportunities to pool specific funding streams and by using the agreed commissioning framework we will maximise our resources
- We will bring a multi agency discipline of ensuring research and evidence based models influence our developments
- We will ensure that the activity for workforce development is co-ordinated and driven by the unit

PROMISE – We will establish a Joint Intelligence and Commissioning Unit

[Joint Intelligence and Commissioning Document](#)

Commissioning services to support Young Carers

Evie is a young carer and talks openly about her mum. 'Since the operation mum gets out of breath easily. So when she's not well, I do the dishes and the other housework.' Since last year Susan has regular visits from a project worker from our commissioned Young Carers Project at HITS. This gives Evie the chance to talk to somebody, meet with other young carers and to take time out from her caring responsibilities. Evie talks about the work this project does and the support she receives from the worker. 'She is friendly and really understands what's happening with mum. I can talk to her and it's really useful to have someone to talk to outside the family. It gives you a break and someone to talk to, which is brilliant.'

Partnership working has been the cornerstone to improvements in Halton. Our JAR in 2008 commented upon "the high degree of co-operation between partners and stake holders and the strong involvement of the community and voluntary sector. The vibrancy and commitment of Third Sector organisations is key to success in Halton and we will continue to build upon these strong foundations in the coming years.

The Third Sector contributes real added value in terms of bringing additional funds to Halton and has the flexibility to respond to the needs of children, young people and families particularly in times of crisis and where mainstream support is not accessed.

Locally based organisations are uniquely placed to engage families in areas of disadvantage and families who are often marginalised. With these families local providers are delivering significant elements of progress that reflect real and demonstrable improvements in circumstances.

Third Sector representation and their ability to bring a unique sense of creativity and innovation to our inclusive planning arrangements for commissioning of services demands that Third Sector organisations will continue to work with the statutory organisations in Halton to drive improvements in services and outcomes.

However the world moves on and we want to improve. By building on these firm foundations we will ensure that the process of commissioning will be used as a 'tool for improvement'. The development of our Children's Trust means that we are in a healthy position to accelerate progress.

PROMISE: We will develop a Children's Trust Commissioning Strategy for Halton

Strong Third Sector Making A Difference To Young People In Halton

When Jane arrived at the Canal Boat Project, she was 15 yrs old and had not attended school since her father died 18 months previously. She had caring responsibilities within her extended family and was at risk and vulnerable. Initially, she had very low self-esteem, lacked confidence and had very little hope for her own future.

Despite her lack of attainment in school, Jane accepted support from a range of services in Halton. These included Action for Children Butterflies, Action for Children Branches, Kings Cross counselling services and from accreditation programmes delivered by the Princes Trust Team Halton, the Petty Pool Trust and Connexions PAYP programmes.

Jane also got involved as a young volunteer and volunteered in Ghana as a Platform2 volunteer and volunteered in Romania in a Housebuilding project.

By taking part in these projects Jane developed the confidence to take control of her own learning and went on to a NLDC basic adult learning sessions before signing up for a Youth Work Foundation course.

Despite being temporarily homeless during the past year, Jane is proud to have met Gordon Brown, Prime Minister and to have received the High Sheriff of Cheshire's award for volunteering.

Jane has proved a strong third sector can offer young people support and opportunities to turn their own lives around and to achieve their full potential.

Promise

The Children's Trust will continue the strong partnership with Third Sector organisations to develop services for enterprising behaviour and entrepreneurial work and will ensure Third Sector involvement in planning and delivering services.

Commissioning with Young Carers

We are establishing a young carers group that will help to inform both service and strategic development of young carer's services across the borough. This group will also take some responsibility for the allocation of carers break grants so service providers can begin to develop breaks that young carers want and can benefit from.

Integrated Governance and Integrated Strategy in Action

One of the themes which came across strongly during our consultations was the need to offer a continuum of support and care throughout the life of the child, into their teenage years and as they move on into adulthood. Participants talked passionately about how early experiences will impact later on, that building a child's self esteem is crucial to reaching their goals and finding their place in the world. So, when planning for a child's future it is imperative we think about their past and their present.

Integrated Disabled Children's Services

We have integrated our health and social care services to disabled children in Halton through the Partnership arrangement between Halton Borough Council and Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust.

This is a formalised arrangement with integrated governance and has been formalised in a Health Act 1999 s31 Partnership Agreement and pooled budget arrangement.

The overall aim of the integrated service is to ensure that families receive a holistic and seamless

Children in Care Partnership Board

The partnership board is a multi agency partnership with the purpose of driving forward our ambition for children in our care.

The work of the partnership board is determined through the [Multi Agency Children in Care Strategy and Action Plan](#), which is primarily focussed on promoting and addressing our Corporate Parenting responsibilities to the children and young people in our care. This will ensure we deliver the best for the children and young people we care for, so that when we are asked the question would this care be good enough for my child, we can say wholeheartedly, yes it is.

It is leading on the local implementation of the good practice noted in Care Matters and the Children and Young People Act 2008 with the aim of making sure we do everything we can to care for children and young people who are in our care and to support them in achieving their potential.

Integrated governance and strategy allows us to effectively plan for this perspective as it allows us to join up our strategic planning mechanisms in such a way that promotes a child-focussed perspective. It also identifies clearly the areas where we need to focus our attention to make sure any support or service offered to children and their families reflects their current situation as well as their hopes for the future. The following provides the details as to how this joined up approach has enabled us to start thinking more creatively about how to build our services and supports around the needs of the child now and their futures.

A child's future will depend on their past, and this is why we have worked hard to build a number of Children's Centres in some of our communities that have the most significant challenges before them, where economic hardship, poor quality housing, low educational achievement and attainment and high unemployment are factors they face every day. Our Children's Centres have become part of these communities and are building both parental and child self esteem through a range of activities and programmes as a way of overcoming some of the barriers these communities face.

We value the importance of these early years for our children and this is why we have made sure our Children's Centres offer high quality child care, with early years teaching professionals supporting the care our youngest children receive in addition to benefits and employment advice and parenting classes, services that are key in areas of great challenge to families. We have also worked hard to develop an extensive range of registered child minders and private and voluntary sector providers of childcare as a means of making sure parents and carers have a choice of arrangement for their child(ren). So far in Halton this sector employs approximately 650 people.

These services become ever more significant as we enter a period of economic instability, where jobs become less stable and families become increasingly worried about their children and their futures.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Our Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2008 demonstrated that in most geographical areas and age ranges there is sufficient high quality childcare. However there are some gaps, which will be filled, in the coming months.

These are:

- After school provision for children aged 5-14
- Provision outside the traditional 8am-6pm time period
- Increased amounts of consultation with employers in determining the childcare needs for employees.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will be reviewed annually but already we are seeing progress being made in some of the areas noted above during our 2009 review.

For more information please see

<http://hbccms.halton-borough.gov.uk/content/educationandlearning/childcare/>

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and 14-19 Strategy

BSF and the 14-19 strategy will be key tools in delivering our ambitions for children and young people in Halton. Both will provide the innovation, standards and services to offer children and young people 21st century facilities and world-class standards that will enable them to achieve their ambitions and goals.

The BSF building programme and the 14-19 strategy have been determined by the needs of our local communities, and the needs of employers both now and in the future.

BSF and 14-19 strategy will be significant in reducing the inequalities we see between communities, further promote the sense of inclusion for disabled children and children with special educational needs and support efforts to promote the participation of young people in education, employment and training by providing a flexible and responsive curriculum.

In tandem with the 14-19 strategy we are working together to build learning communities where all our learners, young and old can develop a real and lasting enjoyment of learning which in turn will shape the ambition we have for our borough and its children and young people.

We believe that the supports and services we have developed in these early years will start to pay increasing dividends for us and our children make the transition into primary and then onto secondary education. We have already seen significant improvements to both our attendance and achievements at primary and secondary level and we expect these improvements to continue as continue to develop and embed these plans into frontline practice.

The transition into secondary and the many challenges young people face during this time makes this period of their lives full of choices and uncertainties. This is why we are building our 14-19 agenda around the needs and wishes of our children and young people while making sure it links into the needs of the borough in terms of the skills, knowledge and qualifications to build on Halton's growth in recent years.

Primary Strategy for Change

Halton has been highly successful in achieving a significant and above national average rise in attainment at the end of the primary phase. The percentage of children attaining national averages at age 11 years has increased in English from 76% to 83% and in mathematics from 75% to 81% over the past 3 years. This has resulted in Halton being identified as the 4th most improved local authority nationally!

The good improvement in English and Mathematics has resulted in Halton meeting the 2009 target a year early. This improvement indicates a positive trajectory towards the Children's Plan target *to ensure that every child is ready for secondary school with at least 90% achieving at or above the expected level in both English and mathematics by age 11.*

Working in partnership with schools the ambition is to further improve to achieve excellent standards for our children, particularly in relation to addressing the attainment gap across different groups of children and young people including Children in Care, children eligible for free school meals and underachieving boys.

In Halton we see the Primary Strategy for Change (Primary Capital Programme - PCP) as a key tool to accelerate progress by providing the opportunity to develop 21st century facilities and enable world class standards and services for children and their families to be delivered. This specifically supports those families in the most deprived areas facing the most challenging circumstances.

The vision for the PCP is aligned to the Building Schools for the Future programme as we see this as a 0-19 transformation of learning in Halton:

"To further develop learning environments which are innovative, flexible and dynamic where every learner is valued and has the opportunity to achieve and realise their individual potential"

There is a responsibility to develop the strategy with partners and to act as a commissioner of local services that both reflect the needs and develops the aspirations of the local community and contribute to the national and local priorities for Halton. This is a challenging role and will require a comprehensive evaluation and re-alignment of the primary estate to ensure that investment is targeted to areas where it will have the greatest impact.

[Primary Strategy for Change](#)

The aim of our [Sustainable Community Strategy](#) is to create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth, and improves the education, skills and employment prospects of our residents and workforce so that all of Halton's population can share in the opportunities our borough affords. This again is why it is essential we continue to join up our strategic planning arrangements to make sure the children and young people of today become the talented and skilled workforce that can make the most of these opportunities in the future.

We know this will be difficult given the multiple challenges Halton's history has left us, in addition to the anticipated effects the economic recession will have on our growth as we move into the next decade of this new century. This is why we are making sure our strategic planning arrangements reach the organisations, businesses and agencies that will provide the employment opportunities for the future.

The Youth Crime Action Plan

The Youth Crime Action Plan sets out a comprehensive package of measures to prevent and tackle youth crime through a triple-track approach of tough enforcement, non negotiable support and prevention.

At the heart of this action plan is a recognition that the factors, which contribute to offending behaviour, also contribute to many other poor outcomes for young people. If we tackle these we will prevent youth crime and cut re-offending, but also deliver improvements in wider outcomes for children and young people. There are 7 elements that Halton is required to deliver upon:

- Operation Stay Safe
- Street based teams
- After School Patrols
- Reparation in leisure time
- YOT workers in custody suites
- Crime Prevention Family Intervention Project
- Implementation of 'Think Family' reforms

There are a range of initiatives in Halton currently taking place, these include

- Using child protection legislation to remove young people from the streets at night and take them to a safe place, building on lessons from initiatives such as Operation Staysafe;
- Using street-based teams of workers to tackle groups of young people involved in crime and disorder
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and disorder at school closing time by increasing after-school police patrols where needed.
- Placing Youth Offending Team workers in police custody suites so that young offenders can be assessed and directed to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity;
- Making young offenders feel the consequences of their actions by expanding YOT reparation schemes during their leisure time, including on Friday and Saturday nights;
- Developing Family Intervention Projects to work with the most vulnerable and problematic families with children at risk of offending, with non-negotiable elements and sanctions for a failure to engage;
- Implementation of the 'think family' reforms to provide an integrated and appropriate service response to all families at risk by the end of the funding period.

Within Halton we will be delivering on the Youth Crime Action Plan elements in conjunction with the refresh of the action plan within the local Anti-Social Behaviour – Promoting Positive Behaviour.

Youth Crime Action Plan

Housing:

Having a safe room over your head is one of the fundamental issues that makes you feel secure and confident enough to access a range of opportunities on offer

Locally we are slowly seeing significant improvements to some of our housing stock. This will continue over the coming years as we make every effort to improve the quality and type of accommodation available for families in Halton. The challenge for us will be to ensure all vulnerable groups have choices about where they live and to make sure we are able to provide any supports, which are necessary, to ensure they are able to enjoy a barrier free environment.

This is particularly true for disabled children and their families, disabled young people as they leave home and become independent and young people leaving the care of the local authority. It is imperative we get the accommodation needs of these groups right as this is the most significant factor in securing improved outcomes for these groups of young people.

We also are aware that we need to provide more general support and awareness to all young people who are moving into their own accommodation for the first time

Promise: We will continue to work hard across organisational and professional boundaries to make sure disabled children and young people live in barrier free environments and communities

Promise: We will continue to work with partners to establish a range of secure, safe, stable and permanent accommodation, which young people leaving our care can move into, and stay for as long as they need it.

Transport:

Children, young people and their families have commented throughout this plan about their concerns they have about getting around our borough safely using their own and public transport.

This will be supported by an increasing commitment across all sectors to develop creative ways of assisting and enabling all children and young people to access activities, leisure opportunities, school, college and training.

Building on good practice established to date such as the Independent Travel Training scheme for young people with learning difficulties to support independent bus travel, new and improved bus routes and discounted travel for learners in partnership with Connexions, we are determined to provide a transport network fit for the future of our borough.

We will also make the following promise:

Promise:

To set up a Young Persons Travel Forum to enable the voice of young people to be heard by those planning and providing transport for young people across Halton.

Further detail about our plans and commitments can be found in the following places.

[Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy](#)

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pdf/pgr/inclusion/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeoplesneeds>

Mid Term Review of the Local Transport Plan

In Halton it is believed that years of road safety education, training and publicity, engineering and school travel plan work has produced a progressive decline in the number of children killed or seriously injured. We have seen the numbers of children and young people killed or seriously injured significantly reduced from a yearly average of 33 to 4 in 2006 and 11 in 2007.

However it is recognised that even one child death or injury is one too many, and our vision for 2025 would be to eradicate child deaths or serious injuries on our roads completely.

Actions taken which have and are continuing to contribute towards safer roads include:

- Casualty and collision reductions are continuing to be sought through a wide range of initiatives including traditional engineering work, the use of safety cameras and road safety education, training and publicity
- As a high proportion of the Borough's schools now have Travel Plans in place, it is possible to place greater emphasis on implementing the measures recommended in the adopted Plans, some of which are aimed at reducing the risk of child involvement in road accidents.
- The Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership, through an initiatives fund is able to sponsor innovative road safety education, training and publicity projects to build on existing work in this area. The work focuses on engagement with communities to change road safety attitudes and behaviour, and thereby reduce the casualties incurred by vulnerable groups. It is complimentary to that undertaken at a local level by Halton officers.

In future years these initiatives will be continued and developed, as will the shift of emphasis of recent times towards carrying out a larger number of smaller local safety schemes to ensure that further progress is made in reducing road casualties in Halton.

[Mid-Term Review of Local Transport Plan](#)

Core Strategy

The Halton Core Strategy represents a major mechanism for the delivery of the spatial elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and will be the central document within the Halton Local Development Framework, the folder of plans and strategies, which will direct and support the development of Halton.

The Core Strategy seeks to establish the development principles, which will improve the physical, social and economic environment of the Borough over the coming years and is being prepared in consultation with the public, the Council's partners and other interested parties, ensuring that the views of those living and working in Halton are being taken on board.

Within the Core Strategy, planning policies give emphasis to the needs of children and young people throughout its important themes. The themes covered are wide-ranging and thus relevant to many of the components of the Children and Young People's Plan. Priority will be given to ensuring everyone can live in a decent home and neighbourhood, where the accommodation needs of all individuals are met.

Maintaining and improving the diverse network of green spaces in Halton will provide opportunities for children and young people to access and participate in physically active, healthy lifestyles. Priority is also given to the creation of inclusive and sustainable communities, where all residents can enjoy integrated community services and facilities, which are conveniently located in relation to their home, work or school. Educational establishments will be a focus for activity within our local communities, with support given to the programme of remodelling currently underway. Linking in with employment opportunities that arise in the borough, emphasis will be given to providing jobs, which local people can access, and encouraging firms to deliver initiatives which provide training for their workers.

The Halton Lodge Fishing Club

Halton Lodge Children's Centre Fishing Club has been awarded an Equality Award for recognising diversity (2009). The fishing club received the award for the excellent work it does in bringing together the local community to take part in an activity, which brings together adults and children from a variety of backgrounds. This includes those children and young people identified as likely to become involved or are involved in not risk taking behaviours.

The club is supported by a number of local agencies who have recognised that such intergenerational work breaks down barriers and promotes a sense of community and partnership across ages and backgrounds. This club has proved positive and we are now seeing similar clubs popping up all over the borough

[Halton Equality and Diversity Strategy](#)

PROMISE – We will produce a Children's Trust Equality and Diversity Strategy

The Arts

We have a strong and vibrant Arts and Culture philosophy in Halton. This is evidenced by the fact that:

- Halton has almost one third of the borough's schools involved in transformational school improvement programmes. This forms a potent and critical mass of school communities engaged in cultural change through national and regional partnership work and work with external 'creative agents' to transform their curriculum and offer new and exciting opportunities to engage children and young people. One of the Halton themes for new Halton Schools of Enquiry is 'The role of Parents/Carers as Co-Educators'
- A family, cross-age Arts and Crafts Club has successfully engaged children and young people from 3 years to 21 years on a weekly basis running from the warden's caravan on the site. Over the years, the young people have experienced a wide range of arts and cultural opportunities and regularly participated in the annual Midsummer Arts Festival at Norton Priory Museum and Gardens

Integrated processes and front line delivery

Integrated processes and front line delivery will describe how our partnership will join up the way we do business to improve how we deliver services and supports to children and young people. This section will also offer a description of how we are going to continue to develop our workforce in ways that promote integrated working and integrated delivery, again so we can continue to make sure children and families are receiving the help and guidance in the most responsive and flexible way

Integrated Workforce Strategy

We know that our local workforce is the most significant tool that will improve outcomes and assist children and young people in achieving their goals and ambitions. We are currently using innovative ways to develop our teams and the skills of our workforce around the needs of communities. Using the Organisational Development Services (ODS) model of Population Centric Workforce Planning, we are thinking beyond qualifications and professional labels and addressing how real improvements can be offered by matching skills and knowledge to the needs of our children and young people. (For more information see the [Children's Integrated Workforce Development Strategy](#))

Developing and implementing such creative approaches to strategic and operational planning arrangements offers a significant opportunity, but the ambitions we have for our children and young people demand we tackle the challenges within our communities using the means and talents we have available to us.

Co Location of Staff to meet the needs of children in care

On our Permanence Team we have co located professionals from CAMHS and Substance Misuse services as we have found these issues tend to be the most predominant concerns and worries for our children and young people in care. By locating this expertise within the Permanence team our frontline social workers are able to access the specialist support and advice that enables them to support children and young people better, and improve their overall outcomes.

Working With Transitions

The transition planning process started for Rose as she got closer to her 17th birthday. Rose has complex needs so to support her making the transition in adulthood multi agency meetings were arranged in order to provide the necessary foundations to work with Rose and develop her own transition plan, using the Person Centred Planning Framework.

By using this approach it allowed Rose and her family to work with the range of professionals involved to explore the options and empower the family to make positive choices and maintain those positive relationships which had been built up over Rose's childhood.

Due to the extensive planning and preparation Rose was able to move into her own supported tenancy where she was supported by staff and where her family were confident in the care and support she would receive.

[Transition Protocol](#)

[Multi Agency Transition Strategy for Young People with Complex Needs](#)

Our current activity includes a wide ranging partnership approach to understanding our workforce better, so we are better prepared to develop their skills and knowledge in the future. To assist us in this task we are currently undertaking a comprehensive needs analysis as part of a research exercise developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council. It is expected this will enable us to understand those areas within our workforce, which may need further development as well as focussing activity on the areas that are likely to have the greatest positive impact on both our priorities and the Every Child Matters outcomes.

PROMISE: We will support our workforce to be the best they can be by offering opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in supporting our ambition to make a significant difference to children and young people.

The plans we have to make sure services identify and intervene as early as possible:

Halton's Children's Trust partners are fully committed to ensuring that we concentrate on preventing issues escalating rather than storing up problems for the future.

TARGETED FAMILY SUPPORT

TSF is one example of a number of initiatives currently being developed in Halton to ensure that a continuum of family support and parenting is embedded right across the levels of need. To ensure this happens the children's workforce in Halton will receive appropriate training and support to enable them to meet the needs of all children and young people in Halton.

The TSF project aims to integrate the pathways for identifying children in need to ensure the most vulnerable children receive responsive, robust, well coordinated and targeted early intervention and support, delivered through children's centre Family Support Workers.

We have major plans to introduce needs led locality working. For Halton our goal is to have Children's Trust Teams based in locality areas across Halton. It is expected these teams will be able to respond quickly, sensitively and flexibly to the calls of families or professionals for extra support to enable families to receive the help when they need it.

The teams will also provide professional advice and support for professionals already working within our communities.

We are currently piloting this approach in one community and anticipate the values, goals and approaches we have built into this pilot will not only secure its success but also allow us to roll out the new way of working across the whole of Halton.

We are still in the early stages of learning from this pilot and will continually review and assess the most appropriate methods and skills necessary to support families before their concerns or issues escalate and require more significant measures. So far we have made sure the composition of the teams is based upon what we know about the needs and issues within each community.

As we roll this pilot out across the borough we expect there will be a core team of staff from a range of professional backgrounds, who will work as part of a team located together within one of our local communities. There will also be a virtual team of specialist workers who can be called to provide specific support depending on assessed need. It is this virtual team that we anticipate will differ across communities and locality teams, as this team will offer the specialist care, knowledge and support families may need in specific circumstances.

PROMISE: We will introduce locality working across the borough in April 2010

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will be an integral part of this work, both in terms of supporting practitioners who are undertaking CAF's and in identifying those children and young people who may benefit from a CAF.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

The Common Assessment Framework has been established as part of our early intervention service for children, young people and their families. We are continuing to embed its principles and practices across service areas and these include all services working with adults in Halton.

CAF is also supporting the development of closer working relationships across services and professionals working with children and young people and which means we are able to get better at making sure families receive the care and support they need at the earliest opportunity. This is a particular focus as we make every effort to safeguard the welfare of children and young people and to build preventative services, which tackle the early indicators of harm within families.

We know that intervening early to support children and their families is a key feature that secures the long-term outcomes for children and young people. We also know that we need to balance this work with making sure those professions which are responsible for protecting children from significant harm have the skills, knowledge and capacity to carry out these responsibilities effectively and safely.

This balance is a necessary one to get right as it will make a significant difference to the lives of children and young people who may require additional support. Already external scrutiny is recognising CAF is making a difference for example our Joint Area Review commented on our excellent progress in developing CAF in Halton.

This excellent work to date now provides us with solid foundations to take CAF forward. So in reflecting on these comments and on our progress to date we now consider it important to consider how best to expand the range and purpose of CAF across the borough as a means of further embedding the importance of early intervention and identification for families across the borough as a means of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people..

PROMISE: Review and expand the use of CAF as a key mechanism in supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention.

How will we manage performance?

The JAR recognised that we had robust performance management processes that have been identified as good practice by external agencies including the Audit Commission and Government Office. A Performance Management Framework (PMF) has been implemented to systematically report against identified priorities on a regular basis to the Children's Trust and the Directorate's Senior Management Team. The framework has taken the principles of Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) to establish a model that ensures the intelligent use of performance data alongside consultation and feedback information and the knowledge and experience of front line staff.

The [Children's Trust PMF](#) splits performance management into population accountability, which focuses on conditions of well-being and performance accountability, which relates to the impact of services. The Children's Trust has responsibility for population accountability as it is recognised that to impact on these high level outcomes a range of partners will need to be involved. The Directorate service planning process which links to the Council's Corporate performance reporting is focused on performance accountability and the impact of our services.

A major area for development in our performance management processes has been the development of locality profiles. This has allowed the identification of need at a local level, which has then informed the commissioning and development of services within localities. An essential part of performance management in Halton is to know our communities and understand what the performance data is telling us. It is this story behind the indicators that provides the rich qualitative information that allows us to use this data to develop our services and support, which meet the needs of our children and young people.

Geographical needs analyses are also used to identify areas for development, with funding targeted to these areas. The JNA Connect web based system is utilised in all Children Centres as it holds core data on all individuals accessing services and projects. Through this system we are able to identify service take up along with any gaps, which may exist in provision. The system has already assisted in identifying the needs of differing communities, for example it showed that in some areas there is a greater need for Family Support Services than in others, therefore we have redeployed staff accordingly.

We mentioned earlier that we value the challenge and ideas that external scrutiny can bring and this is reflected in our relationship with Government Office North West. We welcome support in trying to improve and because we readily accept guidance and support we have been fortunate in securing cross cutting support from our network of external supports across the region and nationally in order to guide our service developments for those issues that locally we are finding hard to address.

This has led to the agreement of our [Joint Improvement Support Plan for Halton](#). The specific areas for support within the JISP include

- A cross field force support package which challenges our approach to tackling young people who are not in education, employment or training.
- Specific activity in developing an Obesity Action plan.
- Comprehensive support and challenge in reducing under 18 conception rates.
- Support in the implementation of Service Case Reviews.
- Support in developing our workforce.

How we will target our resources:

Halton Borough Council and its partners are committed to providing the resources required to deliver effective children's services and improving outcomes for children and young people.

The Children and Young People Directorate budget is over £29.4 million. This does not include the Direct Schools Grant and other Grants we receive from Central Government. Most of these resources are already invested in existing service provision, so we have embarked on a programme of service re-design as a means of providing opportunities to re-align funding to meet priorities and ensure the best use of the resources available. For example a comprehensive review of attendance and behaviour support resulted in increased investment, which led to a significant improvement in secondary attendance. Additionally we have also re-engineered the resources available through Children's Centres to release sufficient resources to allow the authority to commission additional debt counselling services, which we have identified as important for our communities at this time of economic uncertainty.

In addition, to the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Core Funding, Halton will receive additional grant support of £12.6 million revenue to support Children's Services. Capital grant funding has also been approved to transform primary provision, a business case has been submitted to transform secondary provision and further resources have been allocated to improve early years and youth provision within the authority.

Halton and St Helen's PCT is responsible for the planning and funding of all health services across the two boroughs. The estimated PCT budget for the range of services provided for children and young people in Halton using a population weighting to arrive at a split between St Helen's and Halton is in excess of £11.1 million.

We will continue to be review our service provision to ensure better alignment to priorities and allow resources to be targeted to need.

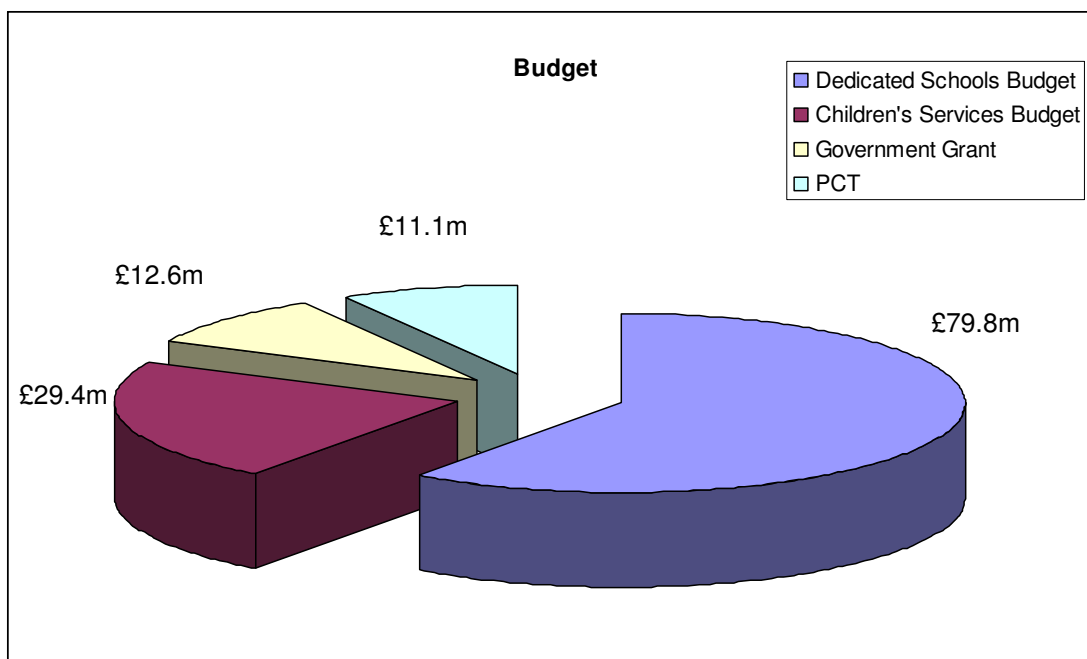
Of the funding available to support the delivery of the Children and Young People’s Plan £79.8 million is ring fenced to the Dedicated Schools Budget. To try and mitigate the high levels of deprivation within the authority, for the multi-year period 2008-2011 the level of funding to support the most deprived pupils in Halton has increased each year by over £2.5 million. In addition the budget available to support pupils entitled to a free meals in 2009/2010 has been increased by over £250,000.

There has been a detailed review and revision of the special educational needs provision for schools aimed at increasing inclusion, this has enabled us to re-cycle resources by enabling us to develop earlier support for pupils with special needs. In addition, March 2009 School Forum agreed to support increased funding for Education Support for Children in Care.

To ensure that funding is targeted to the greatest area of need Working Neighbourhood Funding will be used to resource and support the four key ambitions in Halton.

Joint commissioning of services and increased investment in prevention and early intervention measures will continue to be supported particularly through the development of the locality project.

Promise – We will develop a Children’s Trust Resource Strategy



The Framework To Make This Happen For Children And Young People:

The lives and worlds of children and young people are affected by a number of different factors both inside and outside the immediate walls of their homes, schools and communities. It is therefore important to recognise and work with the range of plans and strategies currently underway in Halton. We have mentioned some of these documents throughout this plan, many others also exist, and each will play either a major or a minor role in delivering better futures for our children and young people.

It is therefore essential we join up the values, plans and aims of each of these documents to firstly make sure we are planning for our borough in a systematic, flexible and responsive way, where we avoid duplication and promote outcomes. Secondly to recognise that there are also a number of additional pressures operating outside the remit of individual plans or outside the control of agencies and professionals. Each will impact on our communities and the activities undertaken by support services so it is imperative we build a framework to make sure no stone is left unturned and that each element is considered.

The following illustration then describes how we see these processes and mechanisms coming together, where we are able to represent the unique relationships, which exist across the range of planning mechanisms to enable each professional, organisation and agency to recognise their responsibility to improving outcomes for children and young people. This responsibility may be indirect, but as we have seen throughout this plan everybody shares a responsibility to improving the outcomes and lives of children and young people in Halton.

These concerns and issues will be tackled and will not prevent us from setting our sights high and working with partners to realise our aspirations for children and young people in Halton. To assist this coordination a Children and Young People's Priorities Framework has been developed as a way to demonstrate not only the links between strategic planning arrangements but also how each aspect is interrelated and cannot be tackled in isolation. It is the purpose of the framework to illustrate this partnership approach to addressing our challenges and achieving our ambitions.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy sets out steps to be taken to make real improvements in the lives of people in the Borough. The 5 strategic priorities in the Strategy are:

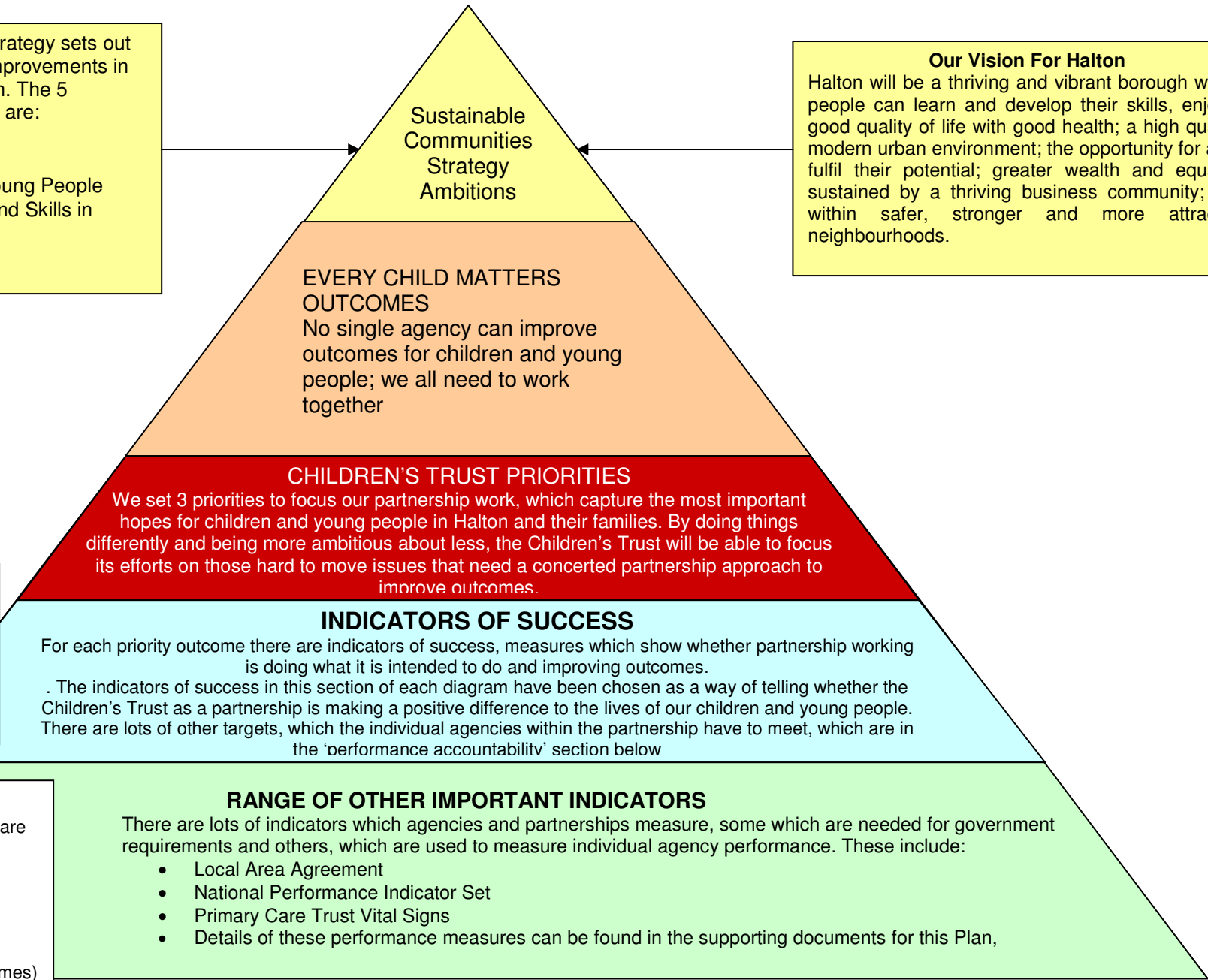
- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Halton's Children and Young People
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton

Our Vision For Halton
 Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.

Population Accountability
 Concerned with improving outcomes for whole populations at community, city or national levels. The focus is on partnership groups who have an interest in a particular outcome, EG, "we want our children to be healthy".

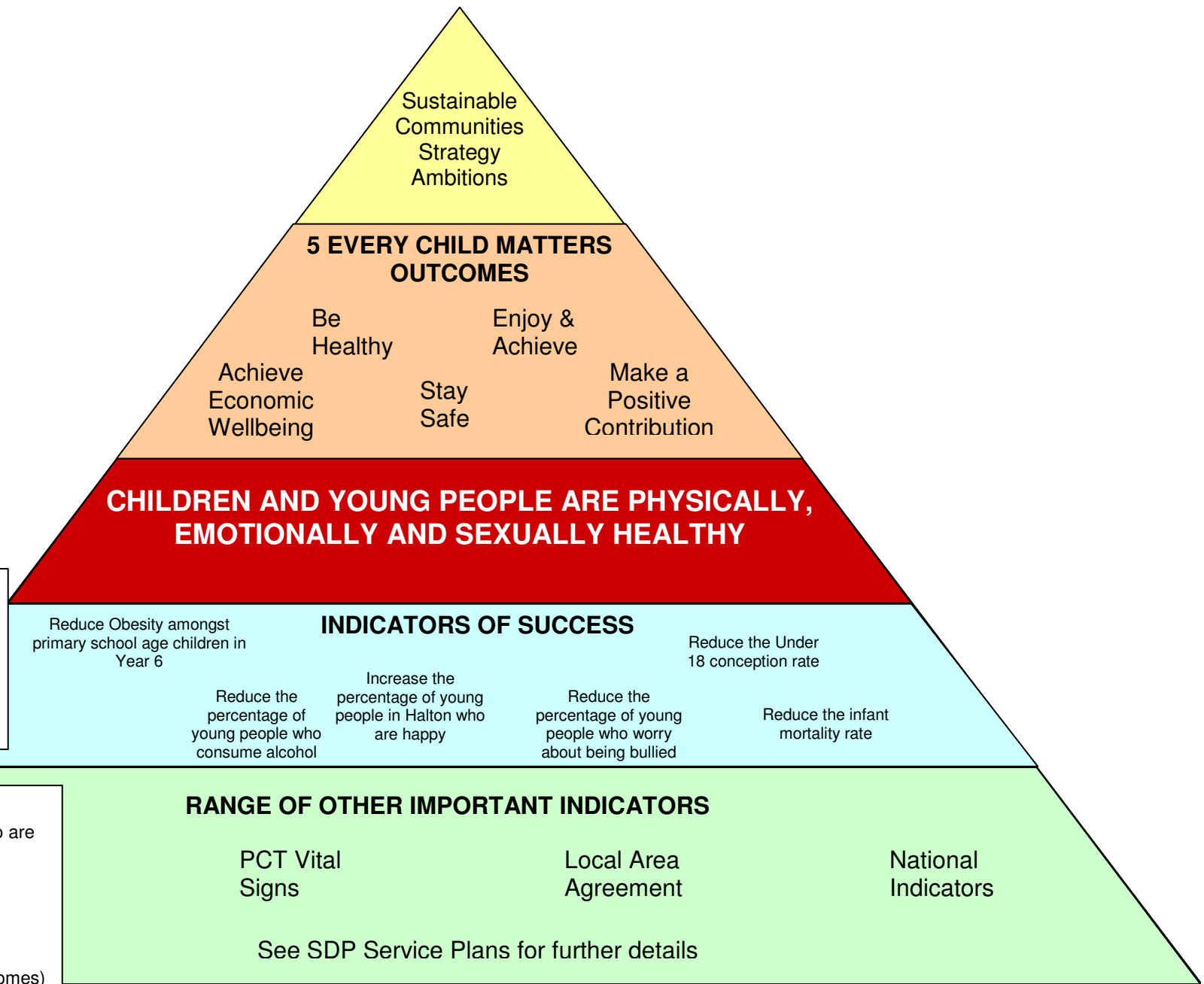
Performance Accountability
 Concerned with managers and staff who are responsible for improving outcomes for service users. It focuses on three key performance measurement areas:

- How much did we do (quantity)
- How well did we do it (quality)
- Is anyone better off (customer outcomes)



The frameworks for each of our priority areas:

The next 3 diagrams offer more information relating to the detail of how the many requirements placed on local; areas and their partners will be brought together as a means of making sure our Service Delivery Partnerships are able to work within the wider context of our priorities and the relationships our priorities have with the wider strategic planning and delivery mechanisms we have in Halton.



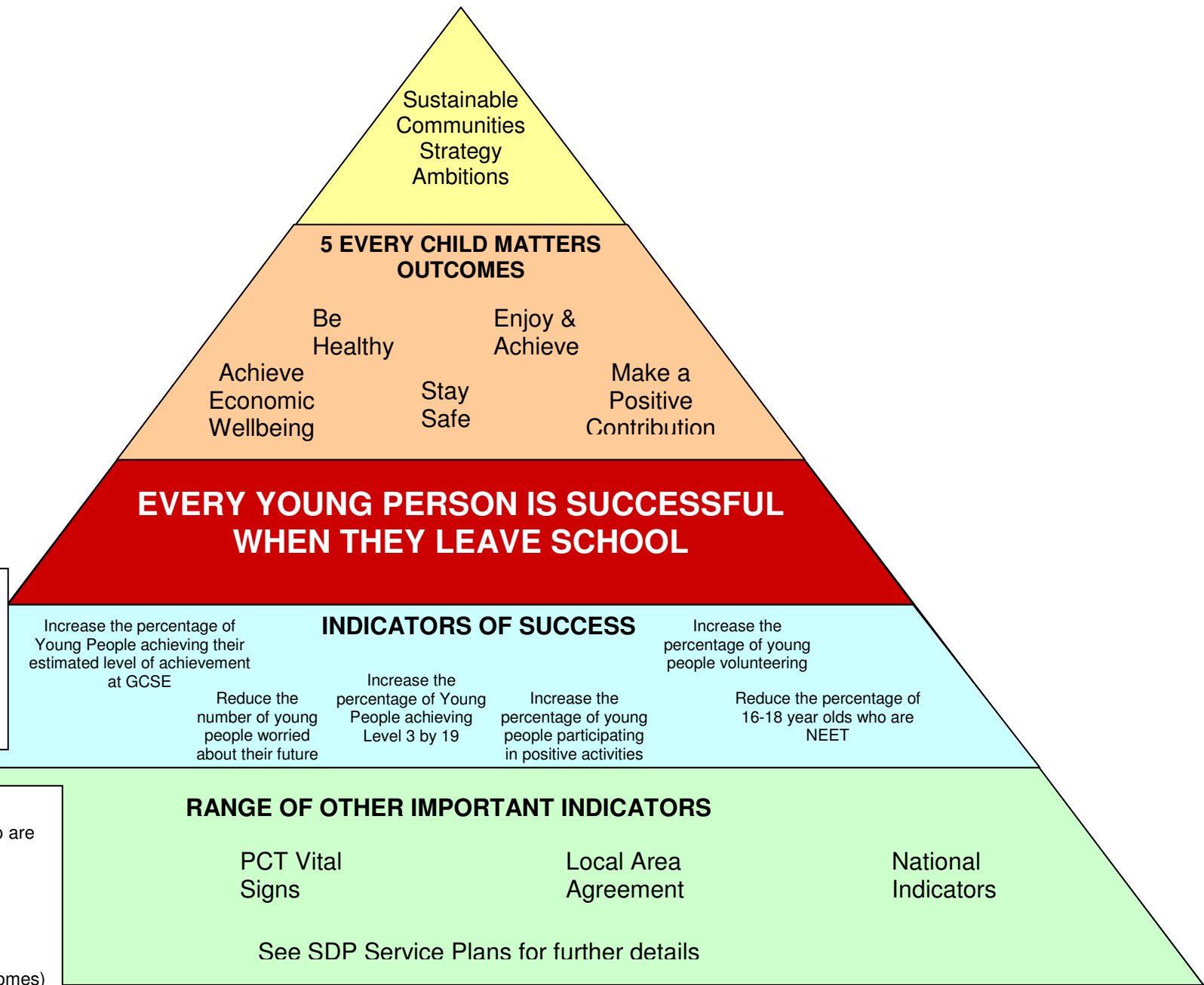
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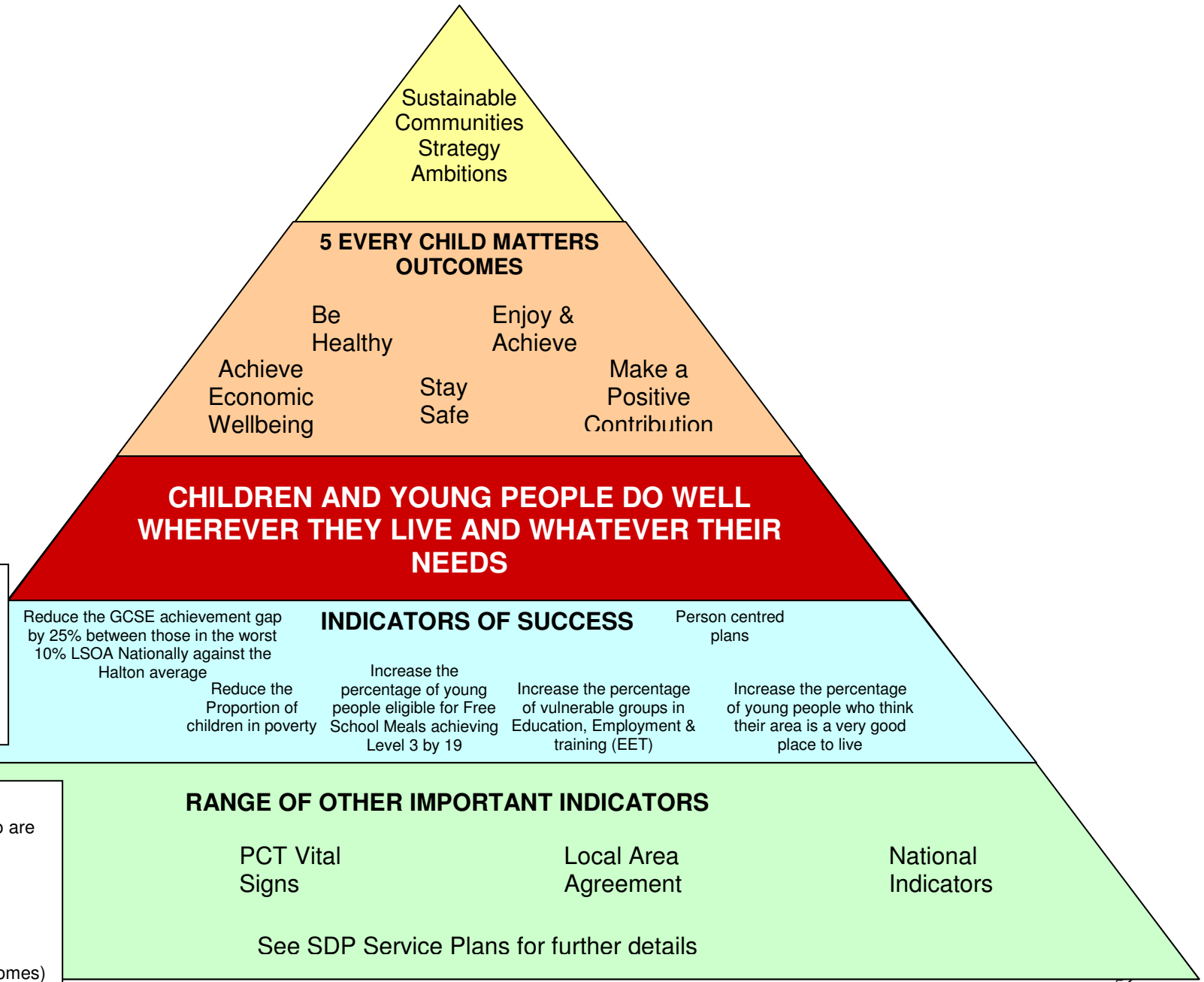
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Sustainable
Communities
Strategy
Ambitions

**5 EVERY CHILD MATTERS
OUTCOMES**

Be Healthy Enjoy & Achieve
Achieve Economic Wellbeing Stay Safe Make a Positive Contribution

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DO WELL
WHEREVER THEY LIVE AND WHATEVER THEIR
NEEDS**

Reduce the GCSE achievement gap by 25% between those in the worst 10% LSOA Nationally against the Halton average

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Person centred plans

Reduce the Proportion of children in poverty

Increase the percentage of young people eligible for Free School Meals achieving Level 3 by 19

Increase the percentage of vulnerable groups in Education, Employment & training (EET)

Increase the percentage of young people who think their area is a very good place to live

RANGE OF OTHER IMPORTANT INDICATORS

PCT Vital Signs

Local Area Agreement

National Indicators

See SDP Service Plans for further details

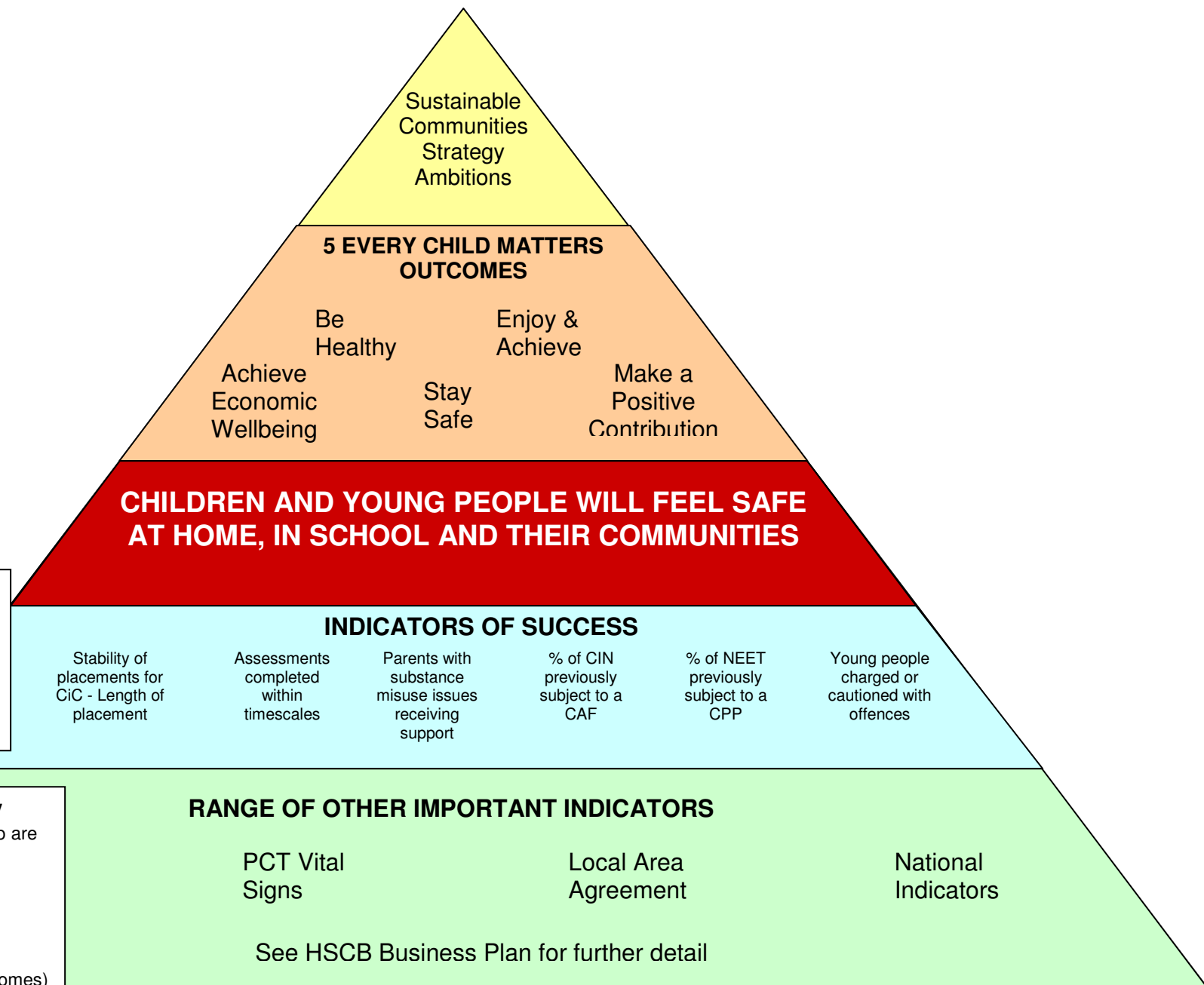
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Sustainable
Communities
Strategy
Ambitions

**5 EVERY CHILD MATTERS
OUTCOMES**

Be Healthy Enjoy & Achieve
Achieve Economic Wellbeing Stay Safe Make a Positive Contribution

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WILL FEEL SAFE
AT HOME, IN SCHOOL AND THEIR COMMUNITIES**

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Stability of placements for CiC - Length of placement

Assessments completed within timescales

Parents with substance misuse issues receiving support

% of CIN previously subject to a CAF

% of NEET previously subject to a CPP

Young people charged or cautioned with offences

RANGE OF OTHER IMPORTANT INDICATORS

PCT Vital Signs

Local Area Agreement

National Indicators

See HSCB Business Plan for further detail

Population Accountability

Concerned with improving outcomes for whole populations at community, city or national levels. The focus is on partnership groups who have an interest in a particular outcome, EG, "we want our children to be healthy".

Performance Accountability

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HALTON CHILDREN'S TRUST – PROMISES TEMPLATE

PROMISES	RESPONSIBLE	RELEVANT STRATEGY/ METHOD
1. We will make sure that our actions and decisions are guided by a single set of arrangements as this will assist us in being more accountable to our communities and enable children, young people and their families to receive the support and services they need when they need it	Children's Trust Board	Children's Trust Business Plan in place July 2009
2. We will continue to prioritise safeguarding as an essential part of everything we do in order to continue to embed the values and goals of ensuring that safeguarding is everybody's business	Halton Safeguarding Children Board	HSCB Business Plan
3. We will develop a Children's Trust Resource Strategy	Children's Trust Board	Children's Trust Resource Strategy in place Dec 2009
4. We will support our workforce to be the best they can be by offering opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in supporting our ambition to make a significant difference to children and young people.	Children's Trust Board	Halton Workforce Development Strategy
5. We will produce a Children's Trust Equality and Diversity Strategy	Children's Trust Board	Strategy in place Dec 2009
6. We will develop a Children's Trust Commissioning Strategy for Halton	Children's Trust Board	Strategy in place Dec 2009
7. The Children's Trust will continue the strong partnership with Third Sector organisations to develop services for enterprising behaviour and entrepreneurial work and will continue to ensure Third Sector involvement in planning and delivery services.	Children's Trust Executive Group	Children's Trust Commissioning Strategy
8. We will establish a range of secure, safe, stable and permanent accommodation, which young people leaving our care can move into, and stay for as long as they need it.	Children's Trust Executive Group	Housing Strategy

9. We will actively seek resolution to young people's many concerns about transport across the borough by setting up a Young Persons Travel Forum to enable the voice of young people to be heard by those planning and providing transport for young people across Halton.	Children's Trust Executive Group	Halton Local Transport Strategy
10. We will introduce locality working across the borough in April 2010	Children's Trust Executive Group	Integrated Working Strategy
11. We will review and expand the use of CAF as a key mechanism in supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention.	Children's Trust Executive Group	Review undertaken and recommendations implemented Sept 2009
12. We will work hard across organisational and professional boundaries to make sure disabled children and young people live in barrier free environments and communities	Children's Trust Executive Group	Building Bridges Strategy
13. We will develop a Children's Trust Business Plan within which a range of protocols will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify and define the relationship between the Children's Trust Board and Halton Safeguarding Children Board • Clarify and define how conflicts between Children's Trust partners will be addressed 	Children's Trust Board	Children's Trust Business Plan in place July 2009
14. Each Service Delivery Partnership will develop and implement a business plan	Children's Trust Executive Group	Plans in place July 2009