

Early Years

in Halton

Working together to give every child the best start



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Introduction

Halton's Early Years Strategy is a three year strategy that aims to improve the life chances of children in Halton by addressing inequalities, narrowing the gap and improving outcomes for all children including disadvantaged children and families.

From the point of conception through to the end of reception year, parents, babies and young children have regular contact with a range of different services including midwifery, health visiting, GPs, children centres, childcare and early education provision.

Every baby and child deserves the best possible start in life and the best support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five, their early years; have a major impact on their future life chances.

What do we mean by Early Years?



For the purposes of this strategy, we are defining early years as pre-birth to 5 years old. This broad definition of early years is recognition of the importance of pregnancy in influencing outcomes and that the move into primary school is a critical period in all children's lives. Many aspects of this Strategy are equally relevant to children beyond the age of 5.

Why have a strategy?

The most effective interventions are often those that are preventive instead of reactive. Preventive interventions address risk factors likely to result in future problems for particular families, without waiting for those problems to emerge. Such interventions are also less stigmatising. This strategy does not exist in isolation, Halton Health and Well-being Plan 2017-20 describes what we will do together in Halton to ensure that regardless of their circumstances, every child and family can thrive. We will with parents, carers and families take a collective responsibility for improving the outcomes for every child.

The importance of Early Years

The Marmot Report on health inequalities cited evidence that development begins before birth and that the health of a baby is crucially affected by the health and well-being of the mother.

Michael Marmot said in his report on health inequalities:

'The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being.'



Pregnancy is a particularly important period during which the physical and mental wellbeing of the mother can have lifelong impacts on the child. For example, during pregnancy, such factors as maternal stress, diet and alcohol or drug misuse can place a child's future development at risk.

After a child has been born, physical health is promoted through good nutrition and immunisation. Physical and emotional health is interlinked and interdependent.



Much of the baby's environment, from the baby's point of view, consists of relationships with his or her parents or carers. The quality of this environment influences the development of the brain and social behaviours in ways that form a foundation for the child's future experiences and their responses to them. Secure relationships promote emotional health and have a direct effect on later emotional, social and physical health, both in childhood and in the longer term. Secure relationships at this early stage effects cognitive development, language development and other learning.



Parenting behaviour and the quality of the parent - child relationship are strongly associated with children's outcomes. Effective loving and caring parenting gives children confidence, a sense of wellbeing and self-worth. It also stimulates brain development and the capacity to learn.

The early years are crucial to the development of communication and language hence the importance of providing an environment rich in quality interactions, (both verbal and non-verbal).



Halton is committed to providing high quality educational provision across a range of sectors including Private, Voluntary and Independent settings (PVI), maintained schools, childminders and Out of School Clubs. This is achieved by teachers, Early Years practitioners and multiagency professionals working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure the best start in life for Early Years children.

The quality of early years' services and the settings that children and their families experience can have a significant impact on their outcomes.

National Context

This Strategy is also underpinned by a range of key national documents including: the Early Years Foundation Stage, (EYFS) Statutory Framework 2017 Marmot report into health inequalities; the Graham Allen independent reports into early intervention; the Frank Field independent report into child poverty; the WAVE report “Conception to 2 years: “The 1001 Critical Days” Cross Party Manifesto. These documents present a wealth of evidence about the factors which impair optimal health and development in early life and about the types of intervention which can promote better outcomes.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2017 Statutory Framework sets standards for the learning and development of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes must follow the EYFS Statutory framework

The Children and Family Act 2014, The Care Act 2014 and The Single Equalities Act 2010 form the backbone of SEND reforms, offering simpler, improved and more consistent help for children and young people with SEND. The new system extends the rights and protection to children and young people by introducing education, health and care plans and extending provision from birth to 25 years of age. The reforms came into force in September 2014

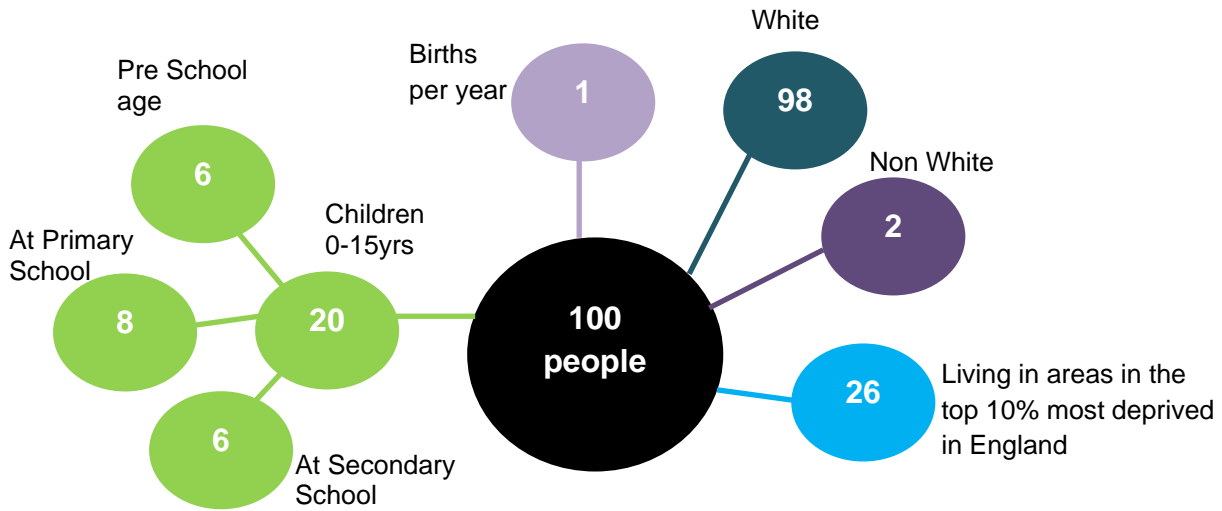
The Early Years Workforce Strategy 2017 sets out how the Department of Education plans to support the early years sector to remove barriers to attracting, retaining and developing the early years workforce.

Childcare Act 2006 makes provision about the powers and duties of local authorities and other bodies in England in relation to the improvement of the wellbeing of young children; in relation to the provision of childcare and the provision of information to parents and other persons.

Healthy Child Programme for early life stages focuses on a universal preventative service, providing families with a programme of screening, immunisation, health and development reviews, supplemented by advice around health, wellbeing and parenting. It highlights the key role in improving the health and wellbeing of children, as part of an integrated approach to supporting children and families.

Local Context

Halton has population of 126,900 (Office for National Statistics 2016), if Halton was a village of 100 people:



Low birth weight (of term babies) **1.9%** (England 2.9%, NW 2.8%)



3 and 4 year olds take up free early education **93%** (England 95%)

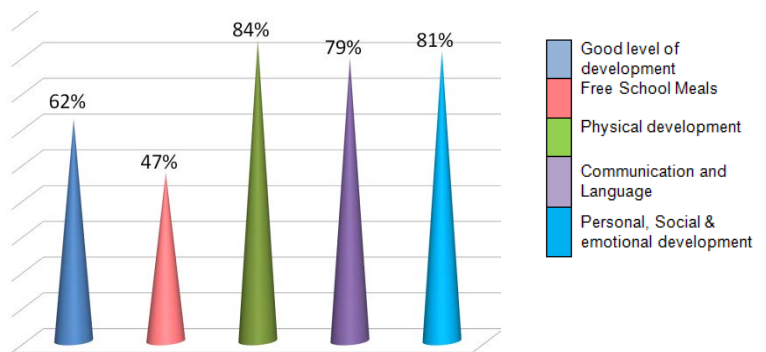


24% children under 16 live in households where at least 1 adult is out of work (England 16%)

1 in 5 children do not reach expected level in communication and language



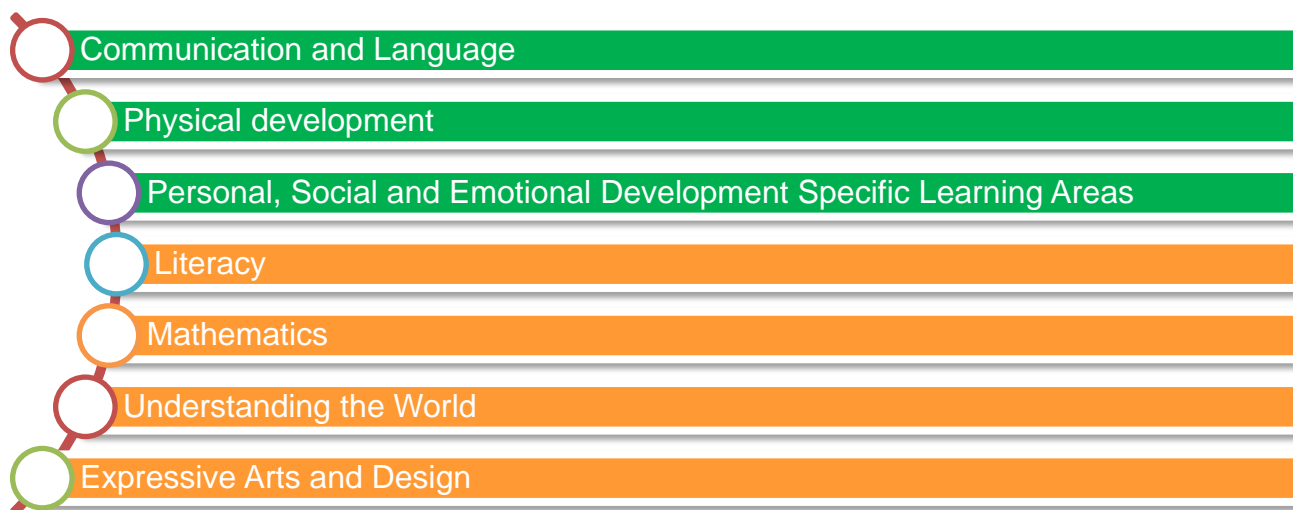
Children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception is **62%** (England 69%; 2015/16 data)



Private Voluntary Independent (PVI) settings with a good or outstanding Ofsted Grade: Pre-school 100%, Day Nurseries 95%, Registered Child Minders 97% and Out of School Clubs 100% (October 2017)

Disadvantage in Halton: 26% of the population live in areas that fall within the top 10% of the most deprived in England.

The Early years Foundation Stage consists of 17 Early Learning Goals across three Prime Learning Areas and four specific areas:



There are three possible assessment outcomes for each of the Early Learning Goals which are:

- Emerging
- Expected
- Exceeding

In order to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) children need to achieve Expected or Exceeding in all Communication and language; Physical development ; Personal, Social and Emotional development ; Literacy and Mathematics Early Learning Goals (ELG).

The percentage of children achieving a GLD at the end of reception in Halton has been on an upward trend with increases being seen over a four year trajectory, rising from 37% achieving GLD in 2013 to 62% achieving GLD in 2016. However improving GLD is a key priority for Halton as we are still; adrift from the national average figure of 69% and adrift from statistical neighbour average figure of 67%.

% achieving expected or above	Halton 2016	National 2016	Gap to National
GLD	62%	69%	7%
All Prime	75%	78%	3%
Reading	68%	77%	9%
Writing	63%	73%	10%
Number	70%	79%	9%
Shape, space and measures	73%	82%	9%

In order to improve the percentage of children achieving a good level of development Halton commissioned and independent review of Early Years across the borough carried out by Early Education. This detailed review and analysis led to a published report outlining recommendations including the establishment of an Early Years strategic board. This has been acted upon and the One Halton strategic board has representation of all stakeholders in Early Years driving forward a shared vision of excellence to ensure better outcomes for all Halton children and a holistic approach to improvement.

One Halton's ambition



The aim to give every child the best possible start in life is a key priority of 'One Halton' and feeds into Halton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017 – 2022

Vision

Halton's vision is for every child in Halton to be given the best start in life, so that they are happy, healthy and ready for learning. **We want children to be:**



H	Healthy
A	Ambitious
L	Learners
T	Thriving
O	On
N	Nurture

One Halton focuses on working across the life course; it has identified and agreed priorities in each age group, for children and young people the priority identified was:



Improved levels of early child development

This strategy also aligns closely with the Halton Children Trust, Children, Young People and Families Plan 2017 – 2020 which focuses on:

- Families getting support at the right time
- Raising educational attainment
- Being healthy and safe



Halton's Priorities

- To develop effective support for both parents to be and parents, so they are healthy throughout their pregnancy. To ensure they are well prepared to become parents, who form good attachments enabling them to become active participants in their child's development and make choices with their baby and children in mind.
- To diminish the difference of early development achievements for all disadvantaged children and improve the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception by raising outcomes for all children.
- To increase the numbers of children 0-5 who are accessing high quality early education and are supported through an effective transition process into school to continue their love of learning
- To diminish the effects of poverty, reduce inequalities and disadvantage through the provision of high quality health services, early education and childcare.
- To strive towards outstanding provision that exists in Halton with continued emphasis on workforce development.



How we will achieve these

We have drawn up a detailed Action Plan. This will take account of where we are now, what we plan to do, milestones along the way and who has responsibility to drive the key priorities forward.

The detailed actions will be developed across the life of the strategy to drive the required improvement under each of the key priorities.

Progress will be measured by focusing on the impact that the plan has on parents and young children health and education outcomes whilst raising aspirations and ambitions.

A performance dashboard and impact review based on the action plan will be reported on a regular basis to assess progress towards our strategic outcomes.



Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis by One Halton and reports in to the Health and Well-being Board, and the Children's Trust, the strategy will be challenged supported and monitored through these forums.

The evaluation of the Strategy will also be informed by regular consultation and engagement with children, young people and families, settings and schools, inspection feedback and feedback from key processes such as annual reviews.



Inclusion and Equality



We are committed to ensuring inclusive education, health and social activities of children and young people, and the removal of barriers to learning and achievement. In producing this Strategy, we have considered the impact its implementation may have on the equalities and needs of all those who might be affected. In addition, there is an expectation that all settings will work to enable all children and young people to develop, learn, participate and achieve their best possible outcomes



