



Cheshire and Merseyside

**Special Educational Needs and/or
Disabilities (SEND)
Joint Commissioning
Strategy 2016-2020**

2023 ADDENDUM

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1. Context and Purpose

This is an addendum to Halton's Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Joint Commissioning Strategy 2016-2020. It reflects important changes made since that strategy was agreed.

This addendum:

- Refreshes key information regarding our children and young people with SEND, using data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment undertaken in 2022;
- Incorporates partners' vision, principles and priorities set out in the SEND Strategy 2021-2025;
- Sets out how this vision, the principles and priorities will be delivered through integrated working across commissioning partners;
- Details key actions and activities set out in Halton's SEND Self Evaluation Framework and Improvement Plan;
- Reflects changes in partners, management and governance arrangements relating to commissioning for children and young people with SEND.

These changes are presented as an update to the existing strategy in advance of work required to produce a new Children and Families Commissioning Strategy, of which commissioning for children and young people with SEND will be a key component.

2. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides an evidence base bringing together intelligence about the health and wellbeing of our local residents and wider social determinants e.g. local economy, deprivation and education. It uses a wide range of numerical and narrative data to build a comprehensive picture of need, telling the 'story' of our Borough. Understanding this story helps us address health and social inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

The JSNA is the first port of call for information about the Borough and is a guide to 'inform', 'question', 'challenge' and 'review' the commissioning process, decisions, policy, strategies and service developments. It is an evidence base to promote cross-service and cross-organisation activity, highlight local priorities and inequalities.

In 2023 Halton updated its SEND JSNA. Key findings included:

- the prevalence of school age children with cerebral palsy (based on a 1:400 school age children) can be estimated at 92 children and young people.
- there will be 523 and 872 children with ADHD.
- there will be a hidden population with learning disability ("those not using services with potentially unmet needs. This is because although about 4.6 people per 1,000 in the population are known to have a learning disability, research suggests there may be around 20 people in every 1,000 with a learning disability")
- 77 Halton males and 86 females aged 0-24 have at least 2 long-term physical health conditions.
- 127 Halton males and 154 females aged 0-24 have at least one physical and one mental health comorbidity.

- of those aged 16-24yrs receiving universal credit or aged under 16 receiving Disability Living Allowance is 1700
- As of 31 March 2022 Halton had 144 Children in Need (CiN) with a recorded disability.
- As of 2022/23 there were more children in Halton with SEN support (14.9%), compared to the North West and England. There were also a greater proportion of pupils in Halton (4.7%) with an EHC plan.
- As at 31 March 2022 144 CiN had a recorded disability.
- there were fewer pupils with SEN support (18.4%) and EHC plans (20.3%) achieving the expected minimum standard at Key stage 2 in Reading, Writing and Maths than seen regionally or nationally.

The 2023 SEND JSNA can be found at:

<https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Documents/public%20health/JSNA/childrens/CTJSNA/SEND.pdf>

3. SEND Strategy 2021-2025

During 2021 Halton's Children's Trust developed a new SEND Strategy, taking a co-production approach that ensured the voice of children and young people with SEND and their families informed and was reflected in the Strategy's vision, principles and priorities. That strategy drives our joint commissioning work, its priorities and approach, and comprises:

Vision

Halton SEND Strategic Partnership believes that every child and young person has a right to thrive, flourish and lead an ordinary life. This should be without being labelled or restricted, no matter what their disability or ability.

We want every child and young person to:

- *feel safe; valued; included and connected;*
- *be given opportunities to be active and for physical and mental health;*
- *be empowered to make choices that shape their lives with appropriate supportive relationships.*

Principles

This Strategy sets out the plans we will put in place over the next five years, so that we can drive forwards our vision, priorities, outcomes and performance indicators to improve our practice.

To do this, we will need to:

- *have improved our culture, ethos and practice with better processes and communication for working better together;*
- *ensure that children, young people and families have access to the right support, at the right time and at the right level to meet their needs;*

- *pave the way for children and young people as they grow up to thrive and flourish in their future life;*
- *offer inclusive education or learning opportunities in an appropriate setting serving their needs.*

Our Priorities

We believe the following priorities will help us to drive the work of Halton Children's Trust to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Working Better Together

By working better together needs are identified early and met at the right time, by services that are fully inclusive in practice and processes.

Preparing for Adulthood

We will maximise young people's ability to thrive, be independent and reach their goals for adult life.

Empowerment (Communication and Co-production)

Professionals will work positively with children, young people and families to provide them with access to the information they need to build provision and services together.

Inclusive Education for CYP with SEND

Children and young people can fulfil their potential supported by educational settings.

4. Joint Commissioning

The Halton Children's Trust Joint Commissioning Strategy states that commissioning is:

“the process for deciding how to use the total resources available in order to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.”

It details the commissioning cycle and our approach to joint commissioning. It also sets out a few key themes drawn from national policy and guidance, these themes being:

- A focus on Outcomes
- Prevention and early intervention
- Collaborations, joint working and responsibility
- Engagement of the wider community
- An important role for the voluntary sector

These themes remain as relevant now as they did when the strategy was written.

Whilst leadership of commissioning for Children and Young People with SEND continues to be led by local government and NHS partners, following disestablishment of clinical commissioning groups, the health responsibility is now led by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board.

The arrangements for joint commissioning have been updated to reflect changes in organisation leadership with the opportunity taken to review partners respective roles and responsibilities, services that are commissioned, the management and continuous improvement of commissioned services and further opportunities for joint commissioning, with a focus on improving outcomes, prevention and early intervention, engagement and co-production and how the role of the voluntary sector.

This is led by the Children and Families Commissioning Partnership, comprising representatives from across health, social care, public health and education with responsibility for commissioning. Its work programme is directed by the Borough's children and families priorities, with a specific focus on SEND to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND through working with partners to identify, scope, prioritise, jointly commission, review and evaluate SEND provision.

Current Areas of Joint Commissioning

Halton Borough Council (HBC) and the Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB) jointly commission:

- Complex care support where appropriate, for those children eligible to continuing care.
- Children and young peoples' Speech and Language Therapy service.

The Council and ICB also jointly fund:

- SEND information and Support Service (SENDIASS)
- Positive Behaviour Support Service (PBSS).
- SEND mediation Dispute Resolution Service
- Elements of the Adoption Service

There are also numerous examples where services, whilst commissioned separately are done so in one another's sight – enabling an integrated view, discussions and plans for those services to better meet the needs of our children and young people with SEND.

5. Joint Commissioning Work Programmes

Children and Families Joint Commissioning Strategy development: contribute to the development of a new children and families commissioning strategy, ensuring that SEND is an integral part of the strategic aims, objectives, principles, priorities and work plans. As described in Section 1, this strategy will replace the SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy and this addendum to it.

Strengthen joint commissioning: part of a wider Children and Families Commissioning Partnership programme:

- Increase understanding of partners respective commissioning roles and responsibilities, who performs them and their approach;
- Set out and analyse who is commissioned (provider), the services they are commissioned to provide and the monitoring and management arrangements to

understand and continuously improve planning and oversight of delivery and outcomes;

- Identify and progress joint commissioning opportunities to drive improvements in outcomes and experience for children and young people with SEND and deliver increase value for money.

Quality and performance management framework: further development of a shared SEND performance framework across education, health and social care. This will be used across a range of services to monitor the effectiveness of:

- The local area in SEND identification and assessment processes;
- Outcomes;
- Feedback from children, young people, their families and professionals;
- SEND commissioning;
- Workforce plan.

This information will inform and support the SEND Strategic Partnership to ensure that future services are responsive to local need at a service and system level.

Service development and improvement priorities: addressing known issues with existing services or gaps in provision. Whilst many of these will be in response to identified issues with existing provision and therefore will change over time, the following are currently areas of focus:

- **Sensory Occupational Therapy (OT):** There is no service commissioned to provide Sensory OT for children and young people. Where Sensory OT has identified been as a need in an Education Health and Care Plan it is funded on an individual basis by either Halton Borough Council or NHS Cheshire and Merseyside. The SEND parent carer forum and individual commissioners have highlighted this as a service gap.

The ICB is finalising plans for a 6 month pilot service, due to launch in Autumn 2023. The evaluation of this pilot will inform any future commissioning of the service;

- **Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy services:** a jointly commissioned service led by Halton Borough Council, this service is being reprocured during 2023, with additional capacity and provision for the youth justice service being procured;
- **Neurodiversity Development Pathway:** as with many other parts of the country, Halton has seen significant increases in the number of children and young people being referred into the neurodiversity development pathway for assessment. This has led to growth in waiting lists and waiting times for assessment. Halton is working with local providers and wider Cheshire and Merseyside partners to address these whilst ensuring availability and signposting of support available whilst awaiting assessment. Actions include:
 - **Neurodiversity MDT Waiting List Initiative:** Bridgewater NHS Health Care Foundation Trust Child Development Centre is commissioned to provide the Children and Young People neurodevelopment service. The service aims to

triage referrals via the multi- disciplinary team within 10 days of receipt of referral.

In response to observed increased waiting times as a result in increasing demand for assessment and as part of a wider set of actions to address increased waiting lists and waiting times, additional capacity is being commissioned, supporting timely triage, waiting list prioritisation and, where assessment is not appropriate, onward referral and signposting to other services;

- **Process improvement and additional capacity:** commissioners and providers are working together to identify and exploit opportunities for improvements in the existing pathway, for example in assessment and referral processes, increased efficiency and better quality supported by information, training and technology, staffing levels and skill mix.
- **Review and redesign of model:** review of the CYP neurodevelopment model with neighbouring ICB places 24 to ensure a model is in place to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families.
- **CAMHS & schools MH support teams:** Commissioners will work with providers to map the current provision for mental health support in schools and if there are any issues with this provision.
- **Annual LD health checks list cleanse:** Halton piloted a list cleanse process in 2022/23 to ensure GP LD registers are accurate and an annual process is in place. GP practice lists will be cleansed in April each year, and there will be a review each year of those children and young people with a diagnosis of global developmental delay to consider if they should have a learning disability diagnosis. Commissioners will continue to work with primary care to ensure this process continues. The process will be developed to ensure the children's development centre has flags in place to identify CYP with an LD diagnosis.
- **Children's community equipment:** review of roles and responsibilities, issues and opportunities to improve provision, outcomes and experience for children and young people with SEND and value for money for commissioning partners. This work will also include adults services to ensure effective transition into adulthood.
- **Continuing health care:** improve awareness and understanding across partners of the process, roles and responsibilities and undertake a self-assessment, identifying relative strengths and weaknesses, process improvement opportunities and training needs.

6. Governance

It is important for the success of any Strategy that there are clear lines of accountability and governance. In July 2023 the SEND Strategic Partnership developed revised strategic governance arrangements. These are set out diagrammatically in Appendix 1.

In respect of joint commissioning, this is overseen by the Childrens and Families Commissioning Partnership, which reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Halton Borough Council and ICB governance via the Quality of Service and Provision Subgroup, via the SEND Strategic Partnership.

SEND GOVERNANCE

