

Weekly update – 24th April 2026

Welcome to this week's update from the Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum newsletter - Our aim is to keep parent carers informed, connected and able to share their experiences so local services can continue to improve.

HSPCF Events and Opportunities

1. Parent Carer Coffee Mornings – 30th of April

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for our first coffee morning in our wonderful new SEND base at Bridgewater Park Primary School. It was lovely to see so many of our regular families, as well as welcome some new faces too.

This week, we are pleased to be joined by Rhona Hobson from Educational Psychology. Please do come along for a cuppa and a chat and feel free to bring any questions with you.

These sessions are always a great chance to come together, sharing experiences, ask questions and make sure parent carer voices are heard. We would also like to thank everyone who has so kindly donated items to help us create a sensory room in our new space.

Date: 30th April

Time: 9.30am – 11.30am

Venue: Bridgewater Park School Runcorn



HSPCF Events and Opportunities

2. Hummingbird Pizza and Craft Night – 8th of May

We are excited to be holding our next Pizza and Craft Night on 8th May at Hummingbird Art Studio with Alison. If you would like to attend, please get in touch with us by email to be added to the list.

It will be a lovely evening in a relaxed and welcoming environment, where children and adults alike can spend time together, connect with other families, and enjoy getting creative in a pressure-free space.

Time: 5pm-7pm

Venue: Hummingbird Studio Runcorn

RSVP Email: info@haltonsendpcf.org.uk



HUMMINGBIRD
ARTS, CRAFTS & PIZZA

join us for our monthly family friendly session at Hummingbird Art studio.

- ✔ Meet other parent carers
- ✔ Life Skills
- ✔ Independence
- ✔ Friendship

5-7pm
08 MAY 2026

Contact us
INFO@HALTONSENDPCF.ORG.UK

Halton SEND PARENT
Carer's Forum
Your voice counts



Halton Borough Council Updates

3. Update from 23rd April Zoom.

Thank you to everyone who joined our recent Zoom session with Michaela Bridge and Kelly Carey. The session revisited key updates from the recent You Said, We Did, We're Doing event, including the SEND monitoring inspection outcome, the SEND Improvement Programme update, Speech and Language Therapy changes, and the Schools White Paper / SEND reforms.

There was also an update on Halton's SEND Reform Plan, including why reform is happening, the local work already underway, and the next steps over the coming weeks. This includes engagement sessions with parent carers, schools, health colleagues and other partners to help shape the local plan.

Parent carers were also encouraged to take part in the upcoming SEND engagement events, which will give families the chance to learn more about the proposed reforms, share their views, and help shape local SEND support, including the developing *Experts at Hand* model. All Slides and engagement posters are attached.

The consultations will take place:

Monday 27th 1pm-3pm DCBL stadium Wednesday 29th 1-3pm - Runcorn Venue
TBC

Tuesday 5th May 9am-11am - DCBL Stadium.

Please book Via this link : [SEND Engagement Events - SEND Reform Plan – Fill out form](#)

4. Disabled Children's Register

Halton Borough Council is encouraging families to complete the Disabled Children's Register. The register helps the local authority better understand the number of disabled children and young people in Halton, along with the kinds of support families may need. This can help with future planning, service development and making sure families are included in relevant information and opportunities.

If you have a disabled child or young person, you may wish to complete the register using the link below.

<https://www.haltonfamilyhubs.co.uk/disabled-childrens-register>

Halton Borough Council Updates

5. Consultation now open on increased SEND capacity in Halton

Halton Borough Council has opened a consultation on plans to increase local SEND capacity through new inclusion bases in mainstream schools across Halton. The proposals would create additional specialist provision for children and young people with SEND, including support for speech, language and communication needs, interaction needs, and cognition and learning.

Parent carers can share their views online or in writing until 13 May 2026. In-person consultation events are also taking place at the schools involved.

Consultation closes: 13 May 2026 **Link:**

<http://www.halton.gov.uk/RBConsultation>

Or if you prefer to attend an in person consultation event these are the available events

- Windmill Hill Primary School – Monday 27 April, 4.30pm
- Gorsewood Primary School – Tuesday 28 April, 4.45pm
- Fairfield Primary School – Wednesday 29 April, 5.00pm
- Hale Church of England Primary School – Thursday 30 April, 5.00pm
- Saints Peter and Paul Catholic High School – Tuesday 5 May, 5.00pm

6. New Edition of Send Newsletter

The latest Halton Borough Council SEND Newsletter is now available and includes videos from the recent “You Said, We’re Doing” event, along with updates on speech and language therapy, Family Hubs, short breaks, and other SEND developments in Halton. If you were unable to attend the event or would like to look back over the information shared, this newsletter is well worth a read.

Link:

https://news.communications.halton.gov.uk/BC6DD929BD48B50E98398B9A675193834F0FD243ECD47346CE75B4B51315AEA9/A16EBCD403A37C8941C1B6AE3CD73BA3/VIB?es_c=A16EBCD403A37C8941C1B6AE3CD73BA3&es_cl=5D91EFB356D30F64D2C82417636B3F4A&es_id=n4e%c2%a329



Cheshire and Merseyside ICB Updates

The team continues to attend the Health Co-production meetings where updates are shared from health partners. Families are encouraged to let services know as early as possible if they need to cancel an appointment so they can be reoffered to another individual. If your child has received an ADHD or Autism diagnosis privately or through Right to Choose can families also get in touch so records can be updated.

7. ADHD and sleep medication repeat prescriptions

Children's Community Medical Services has shared an update about how families should now request repeat ADHD and sleep medication for children and young people in Halton. Requests must now be made by **email only**. Families are asked to email 7–10 days before medication runs out to:

bchft.halton.prescriptions@nhs.net

In the email, families should include:

- the child or young person's name, address and date of birth, details of the medication needed

The team has advised that prescriptions can only be issued if there are up-to-date height, weight and blood pressure measurements available, taken within the last 3–6 months. Families will receive a text message to confirm the request has been received, and requests are usually processed within 48–72 hours on working days.

8. Bridgewater and Warrington hospital Merger

From 1 April 2026, Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust came together as one organisation, now called North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust.

For families, the key message is that there are no immediate changes to care, with services continuing in the same places, with the same staff, contact details and referral routes.

9. Speech and Language Therapy updates:

We know many families are continuing to follow the recent Speech and Language Therapy changes. Previous updates remain available in our recent newsletters, and we will continue to share any new information as it becomes available.

10 . Caudwell Children - Free Family Workshops

Caudwell Children is offering free workshops for families, including Autism: Next Steps Workshops for children, young people and parents.

Sessions are available in person and online and cover areas such as communication, emotions, sensory needs, puberty and friendships. They also offer other virtual workshops, including sleep, eating and nutrition and meeting sensory needs, where a diagnosis is not required.

Find out more / apply here [Workshops | Caudwell Children](#)

11.Smart Bright Training CIC – SEND workshops and parent support

Smart Bright Training CIC is offering a range of SEND workshops for parent carers, along with 1:1 SEND parent consultations. Their sessions aim to help families better understand their child's needs, navigate the SEND system, and feel more confident in supporting their child. They also offer support around parent carer rights, practical strategies, and understanding the SEND process.

They have also shared that free places may be available for some new commissions via their website. For more information, to book workshops, or to enquire about 1:1 consultations, visit:

www.smartbrighttraining.co.uk/workshops and see attached poster.



Halton Send Carers Forum



haltonsendcarersforum

HaltonSendCarersForum.org.uk

To keep up to date with events, consultations, and support for parent carers, you can stay connected with us in the following ways:

 **Website:**

www.haltonparentcarersforum.org

 **Email:**

info@haltonparentcarersforum.org

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HaltonSENDParentCarersForum>

 **Closed Facebook group (for parent carers):**

Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum – Closed Group



HALTON SEND

Important Information



PARENT CARER ADVICE / SUPPORT

SIGNPOST FOR HALTON



1 Halton Send Parent Carer's Forum



A voice to inform families with children with additional needs of the services in our local area which may be beneficial to your child.

www.haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk

1 Bridgewater



Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Here you will find information about all of Halton's Health services

www.bridgewater.nhs.uk/halton/

2 ADDvanced Solutions



An open access offer that supports the emotional health and wellbeing of neurodivergent children and young people, their families and the professionals that work with them.

www.addvancedsolutions.co.uk

2 Sendiass



If you need some advice, guidance or support on any issues that are affecting you or your child then we're here to help. We provide impartial and confidential information and support.

www.sendiasshalton.co.uk/

3 Halton Carer's Centre



Halton Carers' Centre is a network partner of the Carers Trust. We work to reach unpaid young & adult carers and develop services for them across the borough.

www.haltoncarers.co.uk

3 Family Hubs



A one stop digital platform for Halton residents to use to find services, events, support groups and advice

www.haltonfamilyhubs.co.uk/



SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



1 MHST

www.mersecare.nhs.uk

Our Mental Health Support Team provides direct mental health support to 45 schools in Halton. We promote the early detection and prevention of mental health problems, strengthen links with mental health services, providing direct, ongoing support around mental health and wellbeing across the whole school.



2 KOOOTH

www.kooth.com

Kooth is a free digital safe and anonymous platform for support for young people. They have wellbeing activities, journals, discussion boards, tips and a free Chat and messenger option for young people to talk to someone.



3 CAMHS

www.mersecare.nhs.uk

Headz Up Halton drop-in hub
An informal drop-in café where young people up to 18 years, parents and carers can drop by to speak with a mental health professional for assessment, advice and signposting to local services.
Tues- Brookvale / Thursday Warrington Rd

WHATS ON

APRIL 2026



Click & Like



Peer to peer support
and advice



Halton SEND PARENT
Carer's Forum
Your voice counts.

Halton Send Parent
Carers Forum

Informing ♥ *Empowering* ♥ *Engaging*



PARENT CHECK-IN

- Halton Stadium 16th April- 9.30-11.30 am- with Ben Holmes
- Bridgewater Park Hub 23rd April- 9.30-11.30
- Bridgewater Park Hub 30th April- 9.30-11.30

ZOOM

- Zoom with Michaela Bridge 23rd April 8-9pm



NEW HSPCF HUB

After Easter we are delighted to be based in our new Hub at Bridgewater Park school. We will host our parent coffee sessions here and going forward there will be opportunities for you to have 1:1 discussions with HSPCF staff here



EVENTS

- Sync Club 18th April

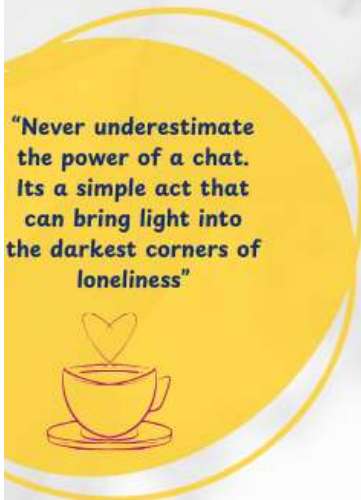
E-MAIL FOR INFO
Info@haltonsendpcf.org.uk

contact
For families
with disabled children

Informing  Empowering  Engaging

PARENT ADVICE, SUPPORT & CHECK-IN

Come and meet other parents on a similar journey to yourself. Get peer to peer advice and support along with a Coffee.



"Never underestimate the power of a chat. Its a simple act that can bring light into the darkest corners of loneliness"



-  Meet other parent carers
-  Help shape local services
-  Share important information
-  Get support & Advice
-  Discuss important topics



CONTACT US

-  Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum
-  info@haltonsendpcf.org
-  haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk

 9:30-11.30am
30 APRIL 2026

 Venue
BRIDGEWATER PARK SCHOOL, WA7 2LW

 Guest
N/A

contact
For families
with disabled children



Halton Local Area SEND Partnership



Halton SEND PCF Evening Zoom

Thursday, 26 April 2026



1

Local Area SEND Partnership



Key Updates Tonight

- 1. You Said, We Did, We're Doing Event** – those not able to attend videos were made of all the presentations which were on:
 - + Halton's SEND Monitoring Inspection Outcomes
 - + Halton's SEND Improvement Programme Update
 - + Halton's S & L Therapy Update
 - + Schools White Paper
- 2. These are all in the SEND Parent Carer newsletter, have you all signed up? If not, please do by emailing me**
- 3. S & L Therapy Update**
- 4. Changes at Bridgewater Foundation Trust**
- 5. SEND Reforms**
 - + Reminder about formal consultation and available dates
 - + Parents / Carers opportunities to shape the Expert at Hands support (Kelly)
- 6. Questions or queries**

2

Local Area SEND Partnership



You Said, We Did, We're Doing Event:

Our second 'You Said, We Did, We're Doing' event took place on 26 March at the Halton Stadium. The event allowed the Halton Local Area SEND Partnership to update parents and carers on the progress being made across SEND services in Halton, as well as what's coming next.

There was an overview of what parents and carers have told us, what we have done so far regarding those suggestions and what is to come next.

After feedback from our first event there was a refreshed format which made sure the session was focused and interactive, including tabletop activities.

For those of you who weren't able to join us on the day, all the presentations from the event were recorded and can be accessed on the latest Halton SEND Parent Carer Newsletter.

Question:

A suggestion is that these events may be more accessible if we were to hold them on a Saturday morning just for a couple of hours with activities for children and young people going on at the same time.

3

Local Area SEND Partnership



Halton Speech & Language Therapy Update

From 1 April 2026, North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust will officially be providing Children's Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Services in Halton.

This change is all about making sure children and young people get consistent, high-quality support — from early speech and language needs all the way through to specialist clinical care. The service will continue to offer:

- Early identification and support
- Access to specialist therapy when needed
- Priority support for children with the highest clinical needs, including swallowing (dysphagia) difficulties

A few key points for everyone to be aware of:

Children already on the Communicates CIC caseload (as of 31 March 2026) do not need to be re-referred. Children supported by other independent Halton providers will continue with their current support.

A new referral form and referral guidance will be available on the Trust's website from 1 April:

<https://northcheshireandmersey.nhs.uk/our-services/children-s-speech-and-language-therapy-service-halton/>

New contact details for the SLT Service from 1 April:

- Referrals: hcft.haltonreferrals@nhs.uk
- General enquiries: hcft.haltonenquiries@nhs.uk
- Telephone: 01928 263253

More general information about SLT can also be found on the [Halton Local Offer](#) website.

The last time there was a change over of provider to Communicate, issues arose regarding the transfer of children's records. This time all children's records have been successfully transferred. This was a key focus of the change of contract as we know how important it was for our parents / carers to be given that reassurance.

4

Local Area SEND Partnership



Update on the New North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust

From 1 April, Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust have formally come together as a single organisation: [North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust](#)

This merger has been in development for some time and has now been approved nationally. The aim is simple: to bring hospital and community services closer together, improving care journeys and making services more joined-up and resilient.

This milestone marks a new chapter for healthcare in Warrington and Halton, and is intended to transform and strengthen healthcare services over the months and years ahead to provide exceptional care. While the organisation's name is changing, there will be no immediate changes to the range of services and care provided. Patients and services users will continue to receive the same care and treatment, with the same medical team, in the same place.

What does this mean in practice?

- No changes for families or referrers — the same staff in the same locations
- Service names, contact details, and referral routes all stay the same
- Around **6,500 staff** are now working together across acute and community services
- Over time, services will be streamlined to improve waiting times and make sure care is delivered in the right place at the right time

5

Local Area SEND Partnership



Department for Education Plans to Reform SEND Support

The Council for Disabled Children and the Department for Education are partnering to host a series of online and in-person engagement events as part of the [SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First consultation](#).

These events are an important opportunity for anyone with an interest in the consultation to share their views on the proposals - including parents and carers, local authorities, schools, early years and further education settings, and social care and health representatives.

You can find out more information and book on an event [here](#).

Here's a link to the information leaflets that the Department for Education have produced parent / carers about the reforms:

[Every child achieving and thriving and SEND consultation supporting information - GOV.UK](#)

6

SEND Reform Plan



1

Why is SEND reform happening?

- Current system is under significant pressure; demand for EHC needs assessments have risen significantly and many (if not all) partnership areas are facing financial pressures
- Inconsistent support in mainstream settings; training for staff is variable and confidence in supporting children and young people with SEND is variable; families are experiencing a 'postcode lottery'
- Rising numbers of children and young people with SEND are travelling long distances to access support and school placements
- The reforms aim to improve inclusion, early support and a system that is sustainable



2

Principles for SEND reform

- **Early.** Children should receive the support they need as soon as possible. This will start to break the cycle of needs going unmet and getting worse, instead intervening upstream, earlier in children's lives when this can have most impact.
- **Local.** Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a school close to their home, alongside their peers, rather than travelling long distances from their family and community. Special schools should continue to play a vital role supporting children and young people with the most complex needs.
- **Fair.** Every school should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs, including as they change over time, without parents having to fight to get support for their children. Where specialist provision is needed for children in mainstream, special or Alternative Provision, we will ensure it is there, with clear legal requirements and safeguards for children and parents.
- **Effective.** Reforms should be grounded in evidence, ensuring all education settings know where to go to find effective practice that has excellent long-term outcomes for children.
- **Shared.** Education, health and care services should work in partnership with one another, local government, families, teachers, experts and representative bodies to deliver better experiences and outcomes for all our children.



3

Who is responsible for delivering reform?

- Local Authority
- Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Parent Carer Forum and young people
- Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts
- Early Years Providers
- Further Education (FE) Providers
- Providers (health, education and social care)



4

What the local area must submit:

- Local SEND reform plan
- Partnership Maturity Assessment
- Reform Data Template



5

What is the SEND Reform Plan?

Local Authority SEND Reform Plan should set out how the authority will implement national SEND reforms locally, improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and create a more inclusive, sustainable system.

- The Plan is structured into five key sections:

1. **Vision** – What the local area partnership is trying to achieve

The vision and goals for your local system in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper.

2. **Strategy** – How the local area partnership plans to achieve it

Where the local system expects to be in the next 3 years, its theory of change, roadmap for the next 3 years and delivery plan for the first year.

3. **Monitoring and Evaluation** – How the local area partnership will know delivery is on track

The processes for tracking progress against milestones and outcomes and reporting to decision-makers.

4. **Governance** – What action the local area partnership will take to stay on track

The governance and processes for monitoring progress and taking action to ensure delivery remains on track.

5. **Central Government Support** – How we can help the local area partnership

An opportunity to identify practical support from central government that will help you deliver your plan.



6

What is the Maturity Assessment?

Tool to identify local partnership area maturity in terms of collaboration and partnership working, providing a shared understanding of opportunities to strengthen the culture and practice of partnership in context. There are 7 pillars within the maturity assessment:

Pillar 1: Co-production with parents and carers, and children and young people

Pillar 2: Effective system leadership and governance

Pillar 3: Accurate understanding of needs and experiences of children and young people through effective use of quantitative and qualitative data

Pillar 4: High quality service delivery at universal, targeted and specialist level to promote inclusion

Pillar 5: Effective partnerships working across education, health and social care

Pillar 6: Skilled and organised workforce across local authority, education settings, health and social care

Pillar 7: Targeted and sustainable use of resources, including sufficiency, place planning and use of capital



7

What have we done so far:

- Theory of Change Day
- Outcome of SEND Local Area monitoring visit
- Updated SEND Improvement Plan
- Draft SEND Strategy
- Initial meetings with DfE Advisers
- You Said, We Did – Focus on Experts at Hand tabletop activity



8

What will we be doing:

- Key group overseeing SEND Reform Plan including Transformation Team, HoS, Deputy HoS, EPS, DCO, DSCO
- Engagement sessions with PCF, schools, MAT leads, ICB/health colleagues
- Focused meetings with key officers across LA and ICB (providers, data, finance, DCO, DSCO, Directors, etc)
- Progress meetings with DfE Advisors
- Meetings with Heads of SEND & Inclusion from across Cheshire and Mersey (9 LAs) are meeting on a fortnightly basis to provide peer support.
- ICB oversight in relation to Experts at Hand and what we do as a Cheshire & Mersey ICB (Specialist posts in relation to SLT and OT)



9

Engagement events – focus & provisional dates

There will be 3 key focus groups for each of the engagement sessions:

- Experts at Hand Offer
- Embedding the Experts at Hand within wider reform strategy
- Strengthening Effective Partnerships and Practice

Dates for engagement events:

- Monday 27th April – 1pm – 3pm (DCBL Stadium)
- Wednesday 29th April – 1pm – 3pm (TBC)
- Tuesday 05th May – 9am – 11am (DCBL Stadium)

We will also liaise with PCF to facilitate an evening engagement session (either face-to-face or online)



10

Key Dates for submission:

- Draft SEND Reform Plan – **15th May 2026**
- Final submission of SEND Reform Plan – **19th June 2026**



11

Risks & challenges

- Timescales for submission; alongside submission of SEND Reform Plan, we also have SEND Improvement Plan to submit and key meetings following monitoring visit.
- Consultation still open in relation to White Paper – will things change following consultation period? Will this impact on what is expected within SEND Reform Plans?
- Lack of detail in relation to Expert at Hand guidance. Acknowledgement from DfE Advisers that we may not be able to fully complete some elements of the plan prior to draft submission on 15th May. No confirmed date from DfE on detail of Experts at Hand

Funding allocation for Halton = £1,090,429



12

Have Your Say on SEND Reforms

SEND Engagement Events – Your Voice Matters

We are inviting parents, carers, schools, and professionals to take part in upcoming SEND engagement events to help shape how SEND reforms are implemented locally.

The Government is introducing changes through a national SEND Reform Plan. We want to hear your views, experiences, and priorities so that local arrangements reflect what matters most to our SEND community.

What are the events about?

- Learn about the key proposals in the SEND Reform Plan
- Help shape future SEND provision and support locally, including the Experts at Hand model
- Strengthening Effective Partnerships and Practice

Your feedback will directly inform local decision-making and planning.

Who should attend?

- Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND
- Schools, settings, and colleges
- Education, health and social care professionals

Event details

There are 3 dates for the SEND Engagement Events (you only need to attend 1 date)

- Monday 27th April – 1pm – 3pm
- Wednesday 29th April – 1pm – 3pm
- Tuesday 05th May – 9am – 11am

Details of venue will be sent once your place is confirmed.

How to book

Please use this link to book your place

[SEND Engagement Events - SEND Reform Plan – Fill out form](#)

Why your voice matters

By attending, you can help ensure changes are inclusive, transparent, and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We look forward to hearing from you. Together, we can shape a better SEND system.



Summer Term Events 2026

7th May
6:30-8pm

Starting Primary
School with SEND

19th May
6:30-8pm

Transition to High
School with SEND

17th June
6:30-8pm

SEND Support in
Education

To book please visit our website at
www.smartbrighttraining.co.uk/workshops

For booking support please email
admin@smartbrighttraining.co.uk



zoom

£20
each
+fees