

# Halton SEND Co-production Charter



# Introduction

This Charter explains how Halton Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Strategic Partnership sets out its expectations, to encourage all children, young people and their families to work with us as we design, develop and review their SEND services here in Halton. 'It should evidence Halton's commitment to listening to each other and valuing the voice of children and young people and families with lived experience'.

This Charter is everyone's business and all partners have the same responsibilities to it. It is set within the context and principles laid out in the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It recognises that all Children and Young People have the right to participate in decision-making, as enshrined in law (Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act 2015).

## **Vision**

We want Halton to be the best place where children, young people and their families can thrive and are supported to be the best that they can be. Children and young people often provide the greatest inspiration and ambition for the future. This Charter recognises that children are citizens in their own right. They have a right to tell us what matters and what works for them and their family.

## **Mission**

- To deliver the best possible education and meaningful employment opportunities for all Halton children and young people.
- To prepare, enable and support all young people with their education, meaningful employment, health, community inclusion, and independence as they journey into adulthood.
- All Halton children and young people to experience the best possible health and wellbeing.

The Halton SEND Strategic Partnership is determined to help promote an environment that encourages engagement and participation of all children, young people and their families, so that through this work the best possible outcomes can be achieved for them.

In Halton, over recent years, we have worked to develop good practice. However, we recognise that we can work better together to improve our inclusive, person-centred approach and ethos.

# Halton SEND Strategic Partnership



Halton SEND Strategic Partnership membership reflects the voice of parents, carers, children and young people alongside the key partners responsible for commissioning/delivering SEND services, education, health and care provision across the local area.

We ensure that children, young people and their families have equal opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them at individual, operational and strategic levels. We work together to understand the needs of local children, young people and their families, so that we can commission and provide services that are inclusive and supportive, whilst keeping children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

Halton has co-produced our new SEND Strategy 2021-2025 which sets out our vision and strategic priorities to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and enable them to thrive and prepare for adulthood.



## **Halton Borough Council**

The Council's aim is to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, and are ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future.

The Children and Young People Directorate delivers Children and Family Service (Children Social Care) and Education, Inclusion and Provision including SEND services 025. The Directorate is committed to ensuring inclusive education, health and social activities of children and young people aged 0-25.

The Council has a statutory role in the development of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and the ongoing development of the Halton Local Offer. Our teams work collaboratively with parents, carers, children, young people and our key partners in delivering these responsibilities.



## **Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum**

The Parent Carer forum is a voice for Families who access services in Halton. The forum is run by and for families of children and young people aged 0-25 who have SEND.

We work independently but in partnership with Local Authorities, service commissioners and providers, sharing knowledge and experience of families to help plan and develop the quality, range and accessibility of provision, creating better outcomes for families through participation and co-production.

# Halton SEND Strategic Partnership

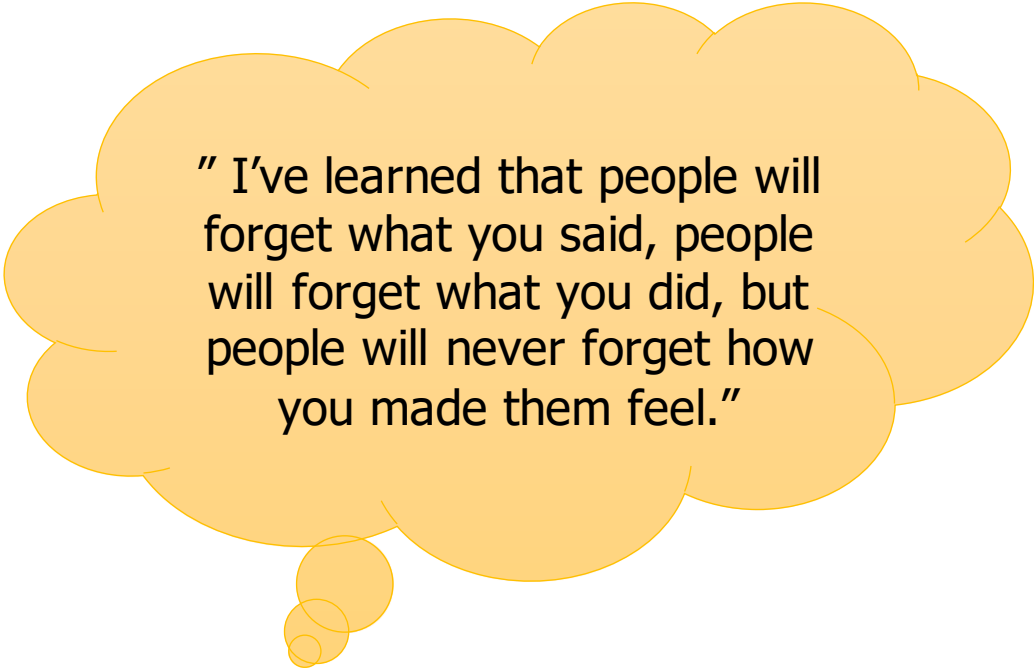


Cheshire and Merseyside

## **NHS Cheshire and Merseyside**

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board has responsibility for planning NHS services, including Primary Care, community pharmacy and those previously planned by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside support NHS organisations and professionals in Halton to understand their statutory duties in relation to SEND, supporting the EHC Plan process and ensure there is health care provision, advice and support as specified within the EHC plan. We work in partnership with Halton Borough Council, Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum, other parent/carer groups and NHS health organisations across the Borough to improve outcomes for children and young people.

A large, light orange thought bubble with a smaller one below it, containing a quote.

" I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

**Maya Angelou**

# Our commitments

## **To continue to improve services and support to children and young people with SEND and their families through co-production, we will:**

- champion children and young people's voice to be involved in their own decision-making, offering help and support where appropriate to make this happen;
- share information between services to inform good practice;
- build trust through good quality co-production and genuine partnership working;
- develop new and existing services from start to finish;
- work together on key decisions regarding the way in which services are provided and monitored;
- agree proposals of changes to services and support;
- feedback on services to improve quality or responsiveness, understanding needs and identifying gaps in provision;
- provide support and advice to Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum as a clear channel of communication;
- support parents, carers and young people to be fully involved in meetings and consultations;
- give advance notice of no less than 1 week of meetings and explain in detail the purpose of the meetings/consultations being requested;
- consider parents, carers and young people's availability regarding work/school/family for planning meetings and consultation exercises;
- organise meetings to be held in accessible locations where possible and give all options for meeting, either online, face to face or telephone, where possible;
- always treat each other with respect;
- respectfully listen to parents/carers and young peoples' views/voices;
- avoid the use of jargon and acronyms on all documentation;
- provide feedback from meetings or consultations to timescale either via direct correspondence or through the appropriate represented groups e.g. Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum, Schools etc.

For those parent/carers and young people that are already known to a Halton service or provider, we will work with families at the earliest opportunity.

**We will deliver on our commitments to each other, our children and young people, and to their families.**

# Halton SEND Strategic Partnership



# Co-production importance and meaning

## Co-production is important because it is

**a way of making sure everyone gets a fair view  
and that voices are heard**

**important to deliver support with young people  
rather than to young people**

**a way of understanding what is important to the young  
people of Halton**

### Meaning

As **equal partners** we share a mutual understanding of the complex and multi-layered challenges that each of our children, young people and their families may experience, and reflect this in the way that we work together to share the expertise that each partner brings and together unlock creative and innovative ways of undertaking these challenges as a system.

**Co-production is a practice that we want to become part of our culture.** It involves parents, carers, young people and professionals across Education, Health and Care in planning and implementing our services and the Local Offer. We will collectively celebrate our successes whilst also tackling our challenges together.

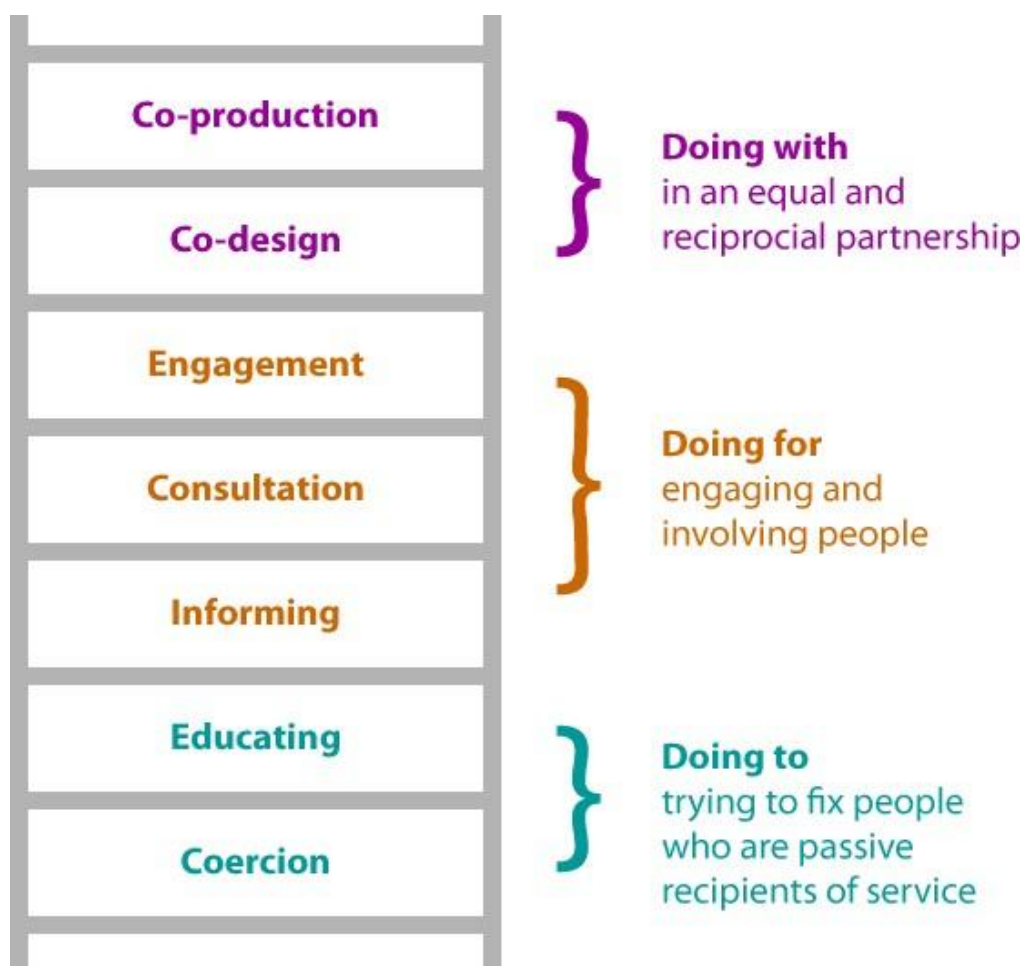
As partners we **each bring different and complimentary expertise.** We strive to communicate with our families together in such a way that children, young people and their families can make use of our information and ensure that their voices are heard.

Every family has a different journey and experience, and we will reflect that both in **the way we listen, and our actions.** Our partnership vision will also reach professionals representing each of our organisations and together we will strive to ensure this is embodied across our partnership.

# Co-production ladder

Co-production can be described on a '**Ladder of Participation**' depending upon how children, young people and their families work with partners.

The Co-production Ladder shows what is and isn't co-production when we work together.



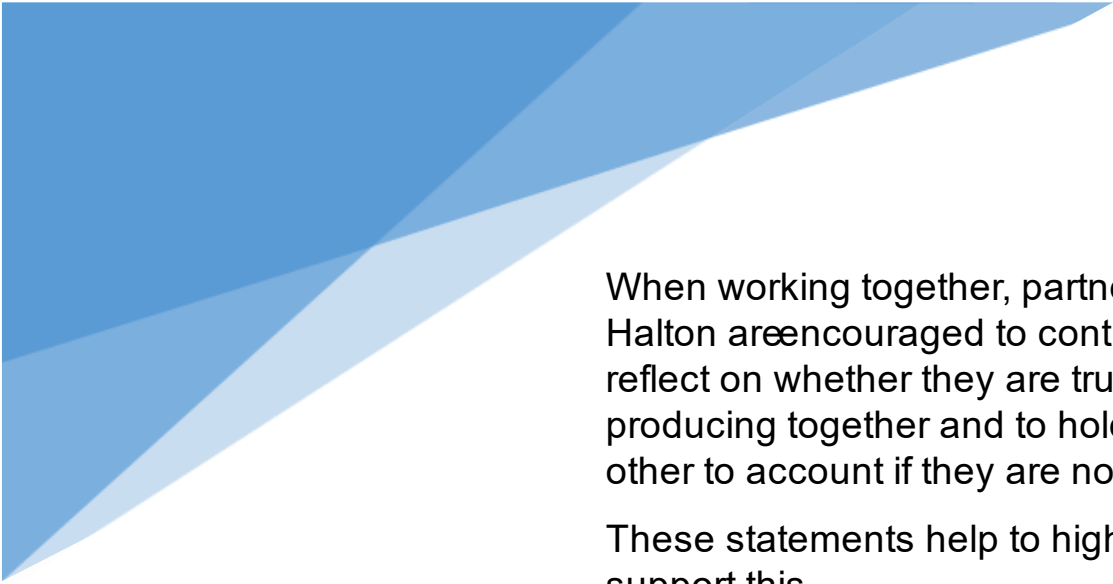
# Participation Jigsaw

The **Participation Jigsaw** pieces show that if there is no engagement, or if you are being given information, you are still not being very involved. If you are offering feedback or being involved, you are having more of a say. If you are on the last piece of the jigsaw, you are co-producing.

Our aim in Halton is that we consistently follow a **'do with' approach** to properly **co-produce together**.



# Co-production with us



When working together, partners in Halton are encouraged to continually reflect on whether they are truly co-producing together and to hold each other to account if they are not.

These statements help to highlight and support this.

## Co-production is:

- ✓ working **together** to produce something that will improve people's lives;
- ✓ working as **equals** to design new projects or services, improve existing services or write new policies;
- ✓ a way of doing things **together** that sees disabled people as having the skills and knowledge to create opportunities and resolve problems;
- ✓ a power shift that sees disabled people as **equal** and respectful partners; achieving **positive** outcomes that improve the lives of disabled people

## Co-production isn't:

- ✗ the same as consultation, participation, involvement or engagement;
- ✗ just about talking and not listening;
- ✗ asking for opinions on something after a decision has already been made or asking for people's views and then not taking them into account;
- ✗ professionals making decisions independently.

# Charter signatures



**Signed by Halton SEND Strategic Partnership  
April 2026**



Benjamin Holmes, Director Education, Inclusion and Provision  
**Halton Borough Council**



Clare Collins, Chairperson, Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum  
**Halton SEND Parent Carer's Forum (HSPCF)**



Cheshire and Merseyside

Josette Niyokindi, Interim Associate Director of  
Quality and Safety Improvement  
**NHS Cheshire and Merseyside**

# Addendum (April 2026)

## Co-production from the outset – Expected practice

### **Purpose of this addendum**

This addendum strengthens the Halton SEND Co-production Charter by clearly setting out what is meant by *co-production from the outset*, and by establishing a shared, consistent approach to be followed across all SEND workstreams.

It supports leaders, staff, partners and commissioned services to translate our collective commitment to co-production into everyday practice.

This addendum should be read alongside the existing Halton SEND Co-production Charter and does not replace it.

### **Co-production from the outset: a shared expectation**

In Halton we are committed to co-production from start to finish.

Co-production from the outset means:

- involving them before priorities are agreed
- involving them before options or proposals are developed

It does not mean:

- asking for views once decisions are largely formed
- testing proposals only after technical work is complete
- using engagement as a final sense-check

Early involvement is essential to ensure work is grounded in lived experience, reduces unintended consequences, and builds trust across the partnership.

Co-production is not an additional step. It is how we begin.

This approach supports better outcomes for children and young people and a stronger partnership culture.

# Our two-stage approach to co-production

## **A useful test of genuine co-production is:**

*Can we point to a moment where lived experience changed the direction, priorities or design of the work?*

## **Our two-stage approach to co-production**

To support consistent practice, Halton uses a two-stage approach to co-production across all SEND workstreams.

Children, young people and families are involved in both stages, but in different and appropriate ways, recognising the different expertise that partners bring.

### **Stage 1: Co-production Framing** (*This is the outset*)

#### **Purpose**

To shape understanding and direction before decisions are made.

#### **Key questions**

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- What matters most to children, young people and families?
- What must not happen as a result of this work?
- How will we know if this is better?

#### **Role of children, young people and families**

- Equal partners
- Sharing lived experience
- Shaping priorities, risks and success criteria
- Challenging assumptions

#### **Role of professionals**

- Listening and learning
- Sharing context and constraints transparently
- Creating safe, accessible spaces for dialogue
- Using lived experience to shape direction

This stage ensures work is grounded in real experience before complexity increases.

## Stage 2: Technical Design and Delivery

### Purpose

To design, test and deliver solutions informed by Stage 1.

### Focus

- Options and models
- Costs and resources
- Risks and mitigations
- Delivery planning and implementation

### Role of children, young people and families

- Ongoing involvement
- Testing and sense-checking proposals
- Exploring impact on lived experience
- Co-evaluating outcomes

### Role of professionals

- Leading technical design and delivery
- Being transparent about constraints
- Adapting solutions in response to feedback
- Embedding learning into practice

### A shared commitment

- Parents, carers and young people are not expected to become technical experts.
- Equally, professionals do not work alone.
- Each brings different but equally valuable expertise.

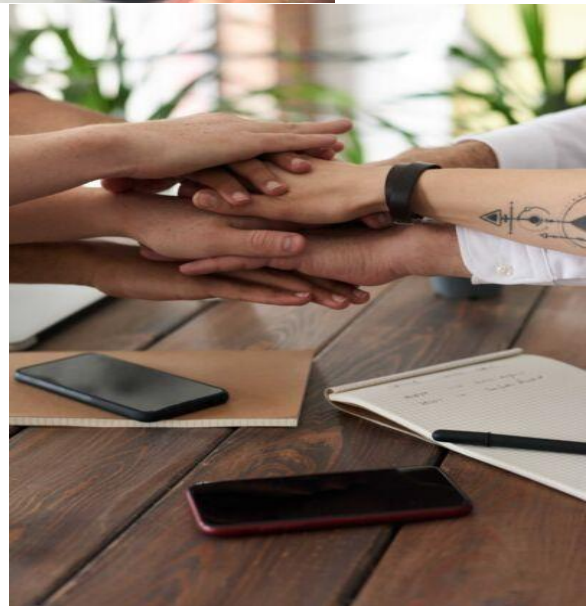
### This approach ensures:

- Professional expertise is respected
- Power is shared appropriately decisions are better informed
- Outcomes are improved

**The attached Co-production Proforma has been developed to support consistency. It should be completed for all co-production activity. The Meeting Toolkit section should be used at every meeting to ensure that co-production principles are embedded as the foundation for all discussions and decision-making.**



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PCF%20Co-production



**Co-production is in our hands**