Chair’s Introduction

Welcome to our 2014/15 annual report.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was the start on the Council contract to manage Sure Start Children’s Centres in North and East Halifax and the Lower Valley. The luxury of having a 3 year contract (rather than uncertain year by year funding) has meant that we have been able to plan ahead and manage change accordingly. It was a challenging first year with the need for a staffing restructure, changes to pay and conditions and against the backdrop of needing to reduce costs by around £1 million over the 3 years.

Despite the challenges we can celebrate the many achievements of last year which are highlighted in the report and on the centre page spread. We have certainly come a long way from 2002 (and some us can still remember those early days) when we started the Sure Start programme in Ovenden and Mixenden and it is an achievement that we are now managing Sure Start services across half of the Borough.

Our Ovenden and Mixenden Initiative (OMI) team has had another successful year and again their achievements are detailed in the report and on the centre spread. The statistics for OMI are really impressive with significant increases in residents engaged face to face on walkabouts, big increases in attendance at Ward Forums, increases in residents attending all meetings and staggering increases in E-subscribers and blog views. The big new piece of work was the development of Staying Well in North Halifax where we are working with other groups in the area to help prevent loneliness, mainly for older people. At the end of the year we were asked by the Council to manage Staying Well in Elland – yet more work for the Partnership in the Lower Calder Valley.

My thanks go to all our staff and colleagues on the Board for another successful year.

Sarah Bedford
Company Secretary
Overview

The winning of the Sure Start Children’s Centre contract has certainly changed the face of the Partnership. We now have over 200 staff employed, an income of around £4 million a year, 12 buildings to manage and services to deliver across half the Borough. Whilst in many ways the day to day service in Centres will have changed very little as far as the customer is concerned, in the background key organisational changes have been taking place.

There have been major changes for how we manage and control finances, how we roll out policies and procedures to all staff and indeed how we communicate with staff. Changes to staff conditions of service have meant major consultation followed by changes to contracts. The management of buildings has presented a steep learning curve in terms of organising repairs and maintenance, health and safety, insurance etc. We have had to become very ‘savvy’ on how we procure services and if the previous year saw us coming to terms with how to submit a tender, 2014/15 was the year when we had to put out to tender a whole host of services from the big ones such as energy supplies and IT down to the smaller ones such alarm call out services. But even on this first attempt to procure various services we managed to achieve major savings on those services previously managed by the Council.

Staff have had to cope with a lot of change over the past year and it must be remembered that for those who were previously employed by the Partnership, including colleagues at Ovenden and Mixenden Initiative, this was the 5th successive year without a consolidated pay rise. We are indeed fortunate that our staff continue to be a loyal and dedicated group without whom the achievements detailed in this annual report would not have happened.

Rob Clegg
Look how we’ve grown!

2014 – 2015 was an extremely busy year for Sure Start Children’s Centres. Following our successful bid to deliver 10 Children’s Centres in North and East Halifax and the Lower Valley, we started the year preparing for taking on the 4 Lower Valley Children’s Centres in July 2015. This involved many meetings with CMBC (Calderdale Council) around the legalities of TUPE law, agreeing contracts and handing over the buildings. On the ground managers were preparing for the induction of the 80 staff being transferred from CMBC to ensure a seamless transfer of services to ourselves.

We started year 1 on 1st July with a deficit budget of around £1 million over the contracted 3 years due to reduced Council funding. A plan was implemented to reduce the year 1 deficit with 2 key components:

- A full staffing re-structure meant new job descriptions for all staff. Staff were aligned onto the same terms and conditions and pay scales were reviewed. New job titles were introduced into the structures to create progression routes throughout the organisation. We also introduced term time posts in two of the day care provisions.

- We undertook a large piece of work around procurement of some of our building costs, for example, photocopiers and buildings check costs. This resulted in substantial cost savings.

As a result of this and some careful budget management from staff, we were able to reduce the deficit and end the financial year in a positive budget position, without losing any staff and maintaining a high quality service to our families. We also increased income by undertaking work to increase occupancy in all our day care provision.

Our performance indicator data from 1st July 2014 to 31st March 2015 demonstrates the effectiveness of our work with families (some of the data is on the key achievement pages).
In July the team grew from 21 staff to 35 across both Ofsted groups. On average we now support approximately 135 families in North and East and 100 in Lower Valley at any one time.

We receive referrals from a variety of professionals with many coming via the Early Intervention Panels, improving multi-agency working; referrals are also received directly from parents.

Parent Link Workers and Family Support Workers offer weekly visits to families with children up to 19 years. They provide a structured and tailored service to meet the needs of the family.

We aim to contact all parents as soon as we have been notified that they have a new child to ensure they are fully informed of the support and various services provided by us.

Twice a year in June and January we try to get in touch with registered families who live within the 10-30% areas of deprivation who have not had contact with the Children’s Centre in the last 4-6 months. In the Holywell Green area this increases to families in the up to 40% areas of disadvantage who have had no contact with our services in the last 4–6 months.

In January 675 families (81% of targeted families) were contacted in North and East generating 53 enquiries for extra support and advice.

Lower Valley contacted 370 families (68% of targeted families) generating 78 enquiries.

What parents say...

“If it had not been for my Family Support Worker, I don’t know where I would have been now”

“[Worker] was very good at listening and understanding and gave us valuable advice on how to deal with our children’s difficult behaviours in a non-judgemental way”

“We received good advice on parenting techniques and controlling our feelings. We played games and enjoyed healthy cooking sessions”

We offer an accredited parenting programme called Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities delivered over 13 weeks at different venues in the community.

Over the year we delivered 4 courses in both North and East and Lower Valley with 24 parents successfully completing.

What parents say...

“I really enjoyed discussing new ideas on how to deal with my girls in difficult times. My parenting skills have improved; I talk more and not shout like before”

“My child listens to me more”
The successful tender bid in April 2014 started a year of change in North & East Halifax Children’s Centres.

Key activities included a reassessment of our team structures, job roles and responsibilities, and how we deliver services for our families.

Our greatest success across all centres has been that services for families and children were unaffected throughout this process and continued to be delivered to the high standard families have come to expect.

Each Centre has worked to develop different areas of service and has a wide variety of successes to celebrate.

At Illingworth Children’s Centre a small group of parents had an interest in setting up their own group at the centre. After first training as Sure Start volunteers they went on to set up a weekly stay and play group called ‘Inbetweeners’ running from the Centre.

Since starting the group has gone from strength to strength and by March 2015, 31 families had attended the sessions. The group leads are also members of the Centre’s Advisory Board.

Over 100 families attended our 10th Birthday Celebration Day on a rainy Saturday in August but we had lots of activities to keep parents and children entertained, from donkey rides to spiders and snakes in a ZooLab.

The day ran smoothly and staff captured comments from current and former parents who came along to help us celebrate this milestone.

“My daughter loved mummy and sister coming to play and plant flowers”
“My child really enjoys coming to nursery. He has progressed so much with talking and understands colours and numbers.

“All the staff are lovely and very helpful. He has made lots of new friends and loves playing.

“We have both enjoyed the activity day, learning new things; I couldn’t ask for a better nursery”

Ash Green Children’s Centre

We ran a number of successfully attended events for young parents, lone parents and 2 year Early Education Funded children over Summer, Halloween and Christmas.

We continued the Get your Grown-Ups Growing events which encourage adults to engage in play and learning activities with their children.

From September to December we spent time evaluating and remodelling the types of day care we offer and brought in some changes from January. Since then the Centre has seen a steady increase in day care occupancy.

Northowram Children’s Centre Hub

Following feedback from parents and partners we began to deliver Tiny Me, a baby and parent stay and play session at St Michaels and All Angels School site targeted at families in Shelf.

This has enhanced our offer in the area and compliments the successful Chat and Play group already based at the Hub.

“Up cycle crafts - brilliant! Lots of different things to do. My child had a brilliant time and didn’t sit still the whole session”.

Creations Community Children’s Centre

Ready Steady School is a programme to help parents prepare children for starting school.

We consulted with schools, health partners, parents, children and children’s centre staff about what readiness for school meant to them and then developed a bespoke programme which was delivered for the first time in June 2014.

8 parents completed the programme and fed back how valuable the programme had been in helping them to understand how to prepare their children for school.

“My child really enjoys coming to nursery. He has progressed so much with talking and understands colours and numbers.

“All the staff are lovely and very helpful. He has made lots of new friends and loves playing.

“We have both enjoyed the activity day, learning new things; I couldn’t ask for a better nursery”
93% of local children registered with their local Children’s Centre in North & East and 73% registered in Lower Valley. In Lower Valley that’s up from 70%!

Day care occupancy has increased from 78% to 85% in N&E and from 69% to 76% in Lower Valley. That’s a total of 888 children attending throughout the year.

107,026 views on the N&E Blog! That’s an increase of 40% and we now have 4,511 subscribers for the Friday Flyer and other online communications.

And we’ve promoted 90 voluntary and community groups and 38 local businesses on our blog this year.

Views of the Sure Start website have increased from 1,963 to 9,985 this year.

15 meetings coordinated with Safer Cleaner Greener partners to look at joint action to tackle local issues, and over 40 weekly information sharing meetings.

35 Neighbourhood Walkabouts generating around 300 enquiries, including 123 referrals for recycling equipment and 77 referrals for a Home Fire Safety checks.

Through positive diversionary activities like Playing Out and MixMatch we engaged directly with over 200 young people this summer. 33 sessions were delivered in total at Ash Green, Dean Field, St Michael and All Angels, and Mount Pellon schools as part of the Junior Wardens programme. That’s almost 1000 young people engaged in the Safer Cleaner Greener agenda this year!

Supported 26 groups to develop, apply for funding and consult with their users, and helped to set up 10 brand new groups.

In the final year of Community First in Warley and Ovenden, 23 groups received a total of £28,942 in Ovenden and £11,300 in Warley ward. Through ward forum grants we’ve given out almost £20,000 to 45 local groups and projects.
841 attendances at job clubs in libraries and we advertised over 900 local jobs on our latest jobs page on the blog.

26 Sure Start volunteers during the year and 9 Breast Feeding Peer Supporters.

55 sessional workers registered with us in the year April 14 – March 15 of which 40 are still on the current active sessional database. 8 have since gained permanent jobs in our Children’s Centres and 4 have gained external jobs.

648 families took part in our consultation. 50% of these responses were from families defined as being ‘in greatest need’ (those families living in the 10% – 30% super output areas)

189 families were on Family Caseloads in N&E and 113 in Lower Valley by March 2015

99.7% of our parents say they are satisfied with the Children’s Centre services they are accessing

This year we’ve supported 51 families with disabled children to access short breaks (35 in N&E and 16 in Lower Valley)

1287 residents engaged on the doorstep – that’s 366 brand new contacts in the year

Children, teachers, support staff and dinner ladies from Dean Field school planted 20,000 daffodils along Cousin Lane in November.

As well as ward forums we’ve organised 70+ public meetings and consultation events for people to have their say. Altogether we’ve logged 800 residents attending these events.

50 enquiries came directly from the OMI hotdesk at Mixenden library

1174 local people attended celebration events we organised across north and east Halifax this year.
The Lower Valley group of Centres joined NHP in July 2014 following the tender process from CMBC.

Although a demanding process for staff the transition was carried out with minimal disruption to service users as backed up by the annual consultation exercise.

The Family Support Team previously based at Elland Children’s Centre, moved to Field Lane to join the Parent Link workers. The move went smoothly and the combined team feels stronger due to a collective range of skills, knowledge and shared management.

We did have concerns about the levels of occupancy within our three nurseries so an action plan was drawn up. Since beginning work to promote the nurseries, including holding an open morning at Wellholme Park we are pleased to see that numbers attending have risen significantly.

Our Centres go from strength to strength. The amount of families we know in our reach areas stood at 87% at the end of March 2015.

As part of the staff restructure responsibility for running our group sessions for families transferred to the Early Years Practitioners who are based in the nurseries.

This new model has worked very well and the number attending on a regular basis has risen dramatically.

“\textit{The baby room is warm and welcoming, the staff are very friendly and approachable}”

The centres have had a huge benefit on my mental health as I have suffered anxiety and depression

One of our priorities for Lower Valley Children’s Centres is to support the worklessness agenda and child poverty.

We were successful in gaining funding for 2 years to start a work club from Elland Children’s Centre.

The club will support parents with their journey to employment, whether that is through confidence building activities, training or access to IT facilities.

The Club started in October 2015.
All Centres have registered for and now introduced **Bookstart Corner** which supports the development of early literacy and communication.

Centres give out the Bookstart packs to families in a variety of ways. At Wellholme Park Centre we held a party themed activity session for families to attend. A further event was held in conjunction with another local childcare provider.

The events successfully achieved the project’s aims as well as promoting the Centre and building links with other childcare providers.

Additionally packs have been given to families through our nurseries and group activities.

In addition to this new home learning resource packs were purchased to lend out to families to help them support their child’s learning.

**‘Home learning’ courses** run by our Senior Early Year’s practitioners are aimed at parents to encourage them to extend their child’s learning whilst at home and to support their child in being ready for school.

**Holywell Green**

In Lower Valley we’ve formed strong relationships with our Health Visitor colleagues.

Earlier this year the link Health Visitor for Elland Children’s Centre suggested holding a **post-natal programme at the Holywell Green Centre**.

The programme supports new parents on subjects such as sleeping, weaning, and looking after oneself.

Plans were made and the programme has now been introduced on a rolling programme.

“I booked myself and children on the Den building course at Holywell Green. It’s an excellent family activity. The children loved making and especially playing in the tents”

“I go to Field Lane Children’s centre a lot; I pop in sometimes for breastfeeding, sometimes my little girl wants to play inside or she's on Tiny Treasures.

“It is so important that staff have time to chat to parents to build a strong and to strengthen the relationship towards the community.

“I receive letters about upcoming courses or anything going on in the centre. The staff are very helpful, they make us feel safe and welcome”
Changing behaviours… At the beginning of the year the focus was on tackling ASB through engaging with local young people.

With Mixenden Stakeholders we identified key individuals causing concern and over the summer we monitored positive engagement with them through a programme of diversionary activities delivered by OMI in partnership with Mixenden Library, Community Wardens, HXRLFC, Pennine Housing, Busoasis and local Police. Activities included games and crafts, Playing Out at Ash Green MUGA, MixMatch Summer Challenge and developing what had started in March with a group of young men who just really wanted to play football (see right)

326 attendances were recorded and overall 94 young people aged 2 – 15 years engaged in positive activities.

From July both Police and Fire Service were reporting lower numbers of ASB calls and the deliberate fires issues which had been concentrated around the library had reduced to zero.
Engage & Inform

Getting the word out...
A volunteer began to help with the Blog and Friday Flyer from August. This proved so valuable we quickly identified funding to offer an apprenticeship post.

The benefit was immediate and by November web views had already outstripped figures for the entire previous year.

We’ve also increased face to face engagements by carrying out even more walkabouts especially before ward forums. We know talking to people on the doorstep tends to have more meaning and gets greater involvement than leafleting campaigns and posters.

We have a strong record of supporting people to have their say on local matters, make improvements in their areas and find new solutions to problems.

This year each ward in Calderdale was awarded £5000 to spend on local projects and activities. Ward Forums decided how the money would be allocated and we were asked to set up micro grants panels for each of the 4 N&E wards.

OMI facilitates the grants panels but decisions on funding are taken by the panel.

By March, of the £20,000 allocated to the 4 wards in N&E Halifax a total of £18,286 was allocated to 45 local groups and projects.

Support & Empower

Against all odds! - Ovenden Phoenix was established from a group of teenagers and young men from North Halifax. It started off as just a bit of fun but with the support of OMI and other partners, their story has really taken off and captured the hearts and minds of the community along the way. The lads attend community events and are developing skills, accessing training and entering employment on the back of the football.

“We didn’t expect this support, we never thought anyone would take us seriously but we’ve had chance to work with a load of people we’d never normally meet.

“It’s been challenging but worth the hard work because now it’s coming together and we can’t wait to start the season!”

Adam, aged 19

“I told them honestly, I know nothing about football, so don’t ask me! But if you’re serious about setting up a team, I can help with that” Karen, Link Worker
**Illingworth Neighbourhood Watch** - Encompassing over 20 individual Watches this new group of coordinators meets 6 weekly and takes a lead role in improving community safety in the Illingworth area.

Police and Crime Commissioner Mark Burns-Williamson was invited to attend to answer questions from the group about the future of Neighbourhood Watch and local policing.

The group have since organised info sessions on restorative justice, scams and loan sharks and attended Crime Prevention events.

A ward forum grant enabled the group to buy key torches to give out to the community to support the Polices’ Dark Nights Project.

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**Celebrate!**

There’s a lot to celebrate in our communities and we promote good news and fun events as we can on our Blog and Friday Flyer.

The Neighbourhood Awards celebrate the people doing great things every day to make life better for other people. They also provide an opportunity for local schools to showcase their talented young people who provide the entertainment at these events.

This year we were also involved in the Council’s Citizen Celebration awards by supporting the nominations process; holding small celebration events in ward forums and we celebrated 10 years of Junior Wardens with daffodil planting on Cousin Lane.

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**Bhangra and Brass...**

In May we held the first Our Communities awards to recognise the individuals and groups whose work strengthens and improves communities in Warley and Park wards, and the lives of the people who live in them.

The event organised with Halifax Central Initiative and Halifax High saw 120 local people attending as well as a whole host of young performers from the school.

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**Economic Resilience**

We continue to work with partners to support people through changes to welfare benefits.

3 Ovenden Phoenix players have now started full apprenticeships with a 4th working towards a placement. 3 joined Talent Match, and 2 have moved into full time employment.

As well as job clubs from libraries we part funded a Together Housing post to provide extra support in Mixenden. 63 people engaged; 29 were supported into work and 26 joined the Mixenden Fencing Programme.

We often find that people asking for help often have much wider needs than just back to work support and we work closely with them to access other help and services.
Sometimes you just want a brew and something to do...

At the end of summer 2014 North Halifax Partnership was invited to be an anchor organisation for the North Halifax Staying Well pilot.

Staying Well tackles loneliness and isolation by getting people involved in community activities. Referrals are contacted by the Staying Well Worker who will talk to them about what they want to do and link them to local groups offering a variety of social activities.

We co-located the Staying Well worker within the OMI team from November, developed our local branding and launched the project in January using existing contacts and networks. Following this we drew up a local delivery plan and a steering group to drive the project forward.

Establishing a virtual ‘North Halifax Hub’ as anyone who lives, works or volunteers in North Halifax has meant we have developed a programme where local people are placed in the centre of decision making and delivery. Our strapline Together we are stronger... encompasses a local commitment to collaborative working and has resulted in the development of the North Halifax Health Alliance able to position itself to deliver even more localised and community led services.

Ward Forum Review - At the beginning of the year the team looked at how we currently publicise the meetings N&E and how we can increase attendance. We then made recommendations to the Councillors, most notably to split the Illingworth & Mixenden ward forum into 2 meetings from September.

In December we trialled ‘Meet the services’ in Mixenden and now before every meeting, local services and Councillors discus issues face to face with residents.

In Ovenden where attendance is lowest we worked with groups and projects to attract new attendees. In Northowram and Shelf an invitation to local groups to present an update has boosted representation from across the area. In Warley we leaflet and door-knock around the venue prior to the meeting.