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Hello & welcome to Halton

Halton is a dynamic and achieving borough

Our busy town centres support a variety of business and employment opportunities, plus our excellent transport and communication links help to make Halton a modern, progressive borough.

Quality parks, retail and leisure facilities, alongside a choice of housing and inspiring places to learn, mean the borough is a great place to live, learn and work – a place where families and businesses can thrive and achieve their full potential.

For those seeking to make Halton their home, we offer all the lifestyle facilities that you would expect in an area that comprises the busy towns of Runcorn and Widnes plus the picturesque villages of Daresbury, Hale, Moore & Preston Brook.

Halton also boasts quite a few things that you might not expect such as a snowsports centre, ice rink, three canals and acres of open space.

We value our heritage, such as our Grade 1 listed Norman castle and Norton Priory, which sits alongside our newer developments, including Catalyst Science Discovery Centre, the Select Security Stadium, and The Brindley arts centre and theatre. For those looking for employment, Halton is situated within the economic triangle formed by Liverpool, Manchester and Chester, and is now home to a vast array and expanding number of small and medium businesses as well as globally significant companies. International logistics operators love Halton because of our prime location for road, rail, sea and air transport links. Likewise, the area is a proving a haven for innovation and enterprise with world-class science companies and high-tech research and development facilities flourishing here.

Looking to the future, further opportunities for regeneration and employment will be supported when in 2017 the Mersey Gateway is completed – a major scheme to build a new six-lane bridge over the River Mersey between the towns of Runcorn and Widnes and one of largest infrastructure initiatives in the UK over the coming years.

The future is bright for Halton, as traditional and modern come together, to create a fabulous location. As you will see from this brochure, Halton has all the amenities required to sustain a happy and vibrant way of life. I hope you will find it useful and it will help you get to know the borough.

David Parr
Chief Executive
Halton Borough Council

www.halton.gov.uk
2.0 Entering and staying in the UK
Many European Union (EU) nationals have the right to enter and live in the UK. Nationals of the A8 and A2 countries that have joined the EU, Asylum Seekers and non-EU nationals, may have restricted rights to enter and live in the UK. You can find out about your rights at:

www.gov.uk in the section on Citizenship and Living in the UK.

Immigration status and how it affects your rights can be complicated and you may need to talk to an independent immigration adviser. Immigration advice can only be given by someone who is registered by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).

Information is also available from Uk Visas and Immigration at;
UK Visas and Immigration - GOV.UK
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration
3.0 Working
Right to Work in the UK
EEA nationals have the right to work in the UK. However, people from outside the EEA must have a valid visa that includes permission to work here. Employers must check that a person has the right to work in the UK before they can offer employment.

Looking for Work
Jobcentre Plus is an organisation that can help you with your search for work.

Jobcentre Plus (Runcorn)
Andrew House, The Link Building, Runcorn Shopping Centre
Tel: 0845 604 3719
Opening hours are 9:00am to 5:00pm

Widnes Jobcentre Plus
2 Kingsway House, Caldwell Road, Widnes, WA8 7EA. Tel: 0845 604 3719
Opening hours are 9:00 am to 5:00pm except Wednesday 10:00am to 5:00pm. Further information
www.direct.gov.uk

Wages and Taxes
National Insurance
Most people in the UK pay National Insurance (NI). This money is paid to the Government and contributes to State Pensions, welfare benefits and the National Health Service.

If you are employed, your employer will deduct the NI directly from your pay. If you are self-employed it is up to you to pay NI direct to the UK Government department.

FURTHER INFORMATION
www.dwp.gov.uk

Income tax
Most people in the UK pay income tax. This is based on how much you earn. If you are employed, your employer will deduct the tax due from your pay every time you get your pay. So that the right amount is deducted, you will need to be given a tax code. If you are self-employed it is up to you.

www.halton.gov.uk
to pay income tax direct to the UK Government department (HM Revenue and Customs).

If you are employed and your employer is not deducting tax or NI from your pay, please seek advice from www.gov.uk in the section on dealing with HMRC

**National Living Wage**
Almost everyone who works in the UK is entitled to be paid the National Living Wage. The amount of the NMW is set by the UK Government. Minimum wage rates vary according to the age of the worker. Your employer may pay you more than the National Minimum Wage.

**Working times and holidays**
If you are employed, your working hours should be set out in your employment contract. Normally these are no more than 48 hours a week on average unless you agree to more.

There is a minimum right to four weeks’ paid holiday; your employer may give you more paid holiday than this.

There are 8 public holidays a year in England. FURTHER INFORMATION www.direct.gov.uk

**Sick pay**
Your contract of employment should state how much you will be paid if you are off work because you are ill. This is known as sick pay. The minimum amount you are entitled to is Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you are away from work for four consecutive days or more. Your employer may pay you more than this. Further information www.worksmart.org.uk

**Health and safety at work**
You and your employer are responsible for keeping you safe at work. There are UK laws to promote health and safety in different kinds of workplaces and jobs. Further information www.hse.gov.uk www.acas.org.uk or helpline 0300 123 1100

**Harassment or discrimination at work**
All employees are considered equal regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, race or ethnic background, disability, religion or belief. www.chawrec.org.uk or call 01244 400 730 www.discriminationhelp.org.uk

Citizens Advice is 0344 477 2121 or www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/

You can find out more about unfair treatment and your rights at work at www.direct.gov.uk in the section about Your Rights at Work and Trade Unions

**Support for workers: trade unions**
Trade unions are associations of workers which exist to support workers and protect their rights. Trade unions usually serve certain types of trade or industry. www.tuc.org.uk

**Where to get employment advice**
Citizens Advice is 0344 477 2121 or www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/ www.worksmart.org.uk www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline or Tel 0300 456 3565
Starting your own business
Get support and advice on starting and running your own business at www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline or Tel: 0300 456 3565

Halton Borough Council
For local advice to businesses in Runcorn and Widnes www.runcorn-widnes.com or by calling 0151 511 7825

Starting a business may affect your immigration status so you should talk to an independent immigration adviser before you do so. You can find your nearest immigration advice provider at direct.gov.uk in the section immigration appeals and legal advice.

Volunteering
You may want to give some of your time free to a good cause.
Being a volunteer can help to improve your language skills and to get work experience and references. Sometimes volunteering can lead to getting paid work. The UK has many local opportunities for volunteering contact Halton Voluntary Action
Tel: 01928 592405
www.haltonstheleansvca.org.uk

Labour providers
Labour providers are sometimes called gangmasters. They supply workers directly to employers. Labour providers must be licensed and are subject to strict standards. If you think you are being treated unfairly by a labour provider you can contact the Gangmasters’ Licensing Authority (GLA).

The GLA producers a pocket sized leaflet called ‘Workers’ Rights’ which sets out the responsibilities of labour providers and of workers, you can visit www.gla.gov.uk
4.0

Somewhere to live
Renting a Home

You should be able to expect your home to be in good repair, warm, secure and free from health and safety hazards.

If your landlord refuses to carry out essential repairs contact Environmental Health at environmental.protection@halton.gov.uk or via phone on 0303 333 4300.

Properties available for rent can be found in a number of ways:

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<tr>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>DETAIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL</td>
<td><a href="http://www.halton.gov.uk">www.halton.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCREDITED LANDLORDS LIST</td>
<td>0151 511 7979</td>
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<td>WEBSITES</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rightmove.co.uk">www.rightmove.co.uk</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.zoopla.co.uk">www.zoopla.co.uk</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.propertypoolplus.org.uk">www.propertypoolplus.org.uk</a></td>
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If you reside within private rented accommodation which is owned by an accredited landlord, and experiencing issues, you can contact the Landlord Accreditation Officer on 0151 511 8394 or email landlordaccreditation@halton.gov.uk.

If you are at risk of losing your home, contact the Housing Solutions Team. Contact the team between 9am and 5pm on 0151 511 7979 or email housing.solutions@halton.gov.uk. For housing emergencies outside of these hours call 0303 333 4300.
Council tax
Council tax is a local tax which pays for services such as the police, fire service, and rubbish collection. The tax is collected by Halton Borough Council. Whether you own or rent a house you are usually liable to pay the council tax. The Council will send you a bill for the tax. You may be eligible to pay a reduced amount if you are on a low income or you live alone; ask the Council about this. You can pay the council tax in instalments.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Ring Halton Borough Council on Tel: 0303 333 4300 or visit www.halton.gov.uk

Water
In the UK, mains water is supplied to all homes except homes that move such as caravans and boats. Heating and cooking is usually powered by either gas or electricity.

Water will be supplied by the local water company United Utilities.
Water out of the cold tap is safe to drink unless there is a sign that says otherwise. If you have a water meter, you will pay for the amount you use. If there is no meter, you will pay a fixed amount called water rates.

Gas and Electricity
You can choose your supply; you can compare their prices at www.uswitch.com. To find out which company currently supplies gas to your home contact Transco on Tel: 0844 448 5699. To find out which company supplies electricity to your home contact Energywatch on Tel: 0845 906 0708 or visit www.energywatch.org.uk. Energywatch can also give you advice on changing your supplier. If you live in rented accommodation, your tenancy agreement should show if your landlord will pay the water, electricity or gas bills. If not, you are responsible for these and you may be disconnected and/or fined if you do not pay these on time. When you move into a new home or leave an old one, you should make a note of the electricity and gas meter readings, and of the water meter reading if you have a water meter. You should contact the suppliers and tell them you are moving house or that you have moved house. Give them the meter readings and your new address and they will send you final bills on the old accounts.

Telephone
If you need a new line, telephone British Telecom (BT) on 0800 783 5378, or contact a cable company. When you move house you should inform the telephone supplier.

Mobile Phones
In the UK it is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while you are driving; if you are caught doing this you could be fined and receive points on your driving licence; points on your licence could lead to you paying more for car insurance.

Television licences
You need a television (TV) licence to use any television receiving equipment such as a TV set, set-top box, video or DVD recorder, and computers or mobile phones that you use to watch or record programmes as they are being shown on TV. You can do this online at www.tvlicensing.co.uk.
5.0 Emergencies and staying safe

www.halton.gov.uk
Fire, police and medical emergencies
The Emergency Services in the UK are here to protect everyone:

In an Emergency Dial 999
For less urgent police matters 101, 24 hours a day.

Citizens Advice has a dedicated service for victims of crime which can be accessed by ringing 0151 257 2440.

You can also visit your local police station:-
The telephone operator can arrange for an interpreter if you need one.

Runcorn Police Station,
Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn WA7 2HG,
Tel: 01928 713456;

Widnes Police Station,
Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QJ,
Tel: 01845 458 0000

Preventing crime
In the UK people are encouraged to report crimes or suspicious behaviour that might be criminal. or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Domestic abuse
Domestic abuse occurs where one family member abuses another, either verbally, physically, sexually, emotionally or psychologically.

Women can get help by phoning Changing Lives on to 0151 294 3395 or Freephone 0300 11 11 247, or the National Domestic Violence Helpline which is open 24 hours on
Tel: 0808 2000 247

Men
Tel: 0808 801 0327

NSPCC
Children
Tel: 0808 800 5000

or Childline free on Tel: 0800 1111. Both services are open 24 hours.

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, you can get free advice and support from Halton Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre on Tel: 01928 477980

www.halton.gov.uk
Hate Crimes
Racial incidents and other types of hate crime can be reported through various means including True Vision and Cheshire Police websites:-
http://www.report-it.org.uk/home
https://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/hate-crime/

You can also report by attending a number of buildings in the Borough such as police stations, libraries, community centres and information and advice points. Information on the locations is available on the Cheshire Police website.

Missing persons
If someone you know has gone missing, you should report it to the Police who can investigate and try to find the missing person.

This service is free of charge. Missing People is the national charity that supports people who are missing someone; they are also a contact point for people who have run away. You can phone a 24 hour free and confidential helpline on Tel: 020 8392 4590 or visit;
www.missingpeople.org.uk

Preventing fires
The Fire Service gives free advice on fire prevention and free fitting of smoke alarms you can contact the Fire Service at;

Runcorn Fire Station,
Heath Road, Runcorn
Tel: 01928 572811 or
Widnes Fire Station,
Lacey Street, Widnes
Tel: 0151 424 3091.

Gas emergencies
If you smell gas, phone free on Tel: 0800 807 060.

Water emergencies
United Utilities is the water provider in the area. Phone free on Tel: 0345 6723 723 (24 hours a day) to report a leak or problems with the quality of the water.

Electricity emergencies
If the power fails or there is an electrical problem, phone free on Tel: 0800 195 4141.
The UK currency is pounds sterling, symbolised by £. One pound (£) is made up of 100 pence. Euros and other currencies are not accepted. You can change money into pounds without charge at Post Offices.

Runcorn Old Town
The Post Office
20 Church Street
Runcorn
WA7 1AE

Widnes
Unit 20
Gossage Street
Albert Square
WA8 6AZ

92-93 Forest Walk
Runcorn Shopping Centre
Runcorn
WA7 2GX

Some travel agents provide a cash transfer system for sending money to another country. Do not send money by post.

Financial help if you are working
You can find out about tax credits and benefits at www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits
You can find out about benefits at the Welfare Rights Service via
Tel: 0151 511 8930
FURTHER INFORMATION

Financial help if you are not working
Universal Credit provides benefit support for low incomes or being out of work. Universal Credit is to be claimed through www.gov.uk

If you are too ill to work or become disabled you may be able to claim Personal Indepedance Payment. You can find out about disability benefits and how to claim them at the Council's Welfare Rights service.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Disability Alliance is a national charity aimed at alleviating poverty and improving living standards of disabled people.

You can visit their website www.disabilityalliance.org.uk or Halton Disability Partnership http://www.haltondisability.org.uk/
Problems with money, credit and buying goods and services

- National Consumer Direct Helpline
  Tel: 0345 404 0506.

Pensions
You may be thinking about saving for your retirement. A State pension depends on you having paid enough National Insurance contributions; it may not be enough for your needs when you reach retirement age. Many people save for their retirement independently of their State pension through a pension scheme. Some employers operate pension schemes. There are private pension schemes operated by financial companies. There are also stakeholder pensions which are run by the Government.

Pensions can be complicated and you should get advice from an independent financial adviser.

Most towns will have companies showing the independent financial adviser sign. You can find out more about pensions at www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/PensionsAndRetirement/index.htm

Information on stakeholder pensions can be found from the Pension Service at www.thepensionservice.gov.uk You can get advice on occupational and personal pensions from the Pensions Advisory Service at www.opas.org.uk

The Welfare Rights Service
The Welfare Rights Service is a Halton Borough Council Service. We provide advice, information and representation on all aspects of Welfare Benefits and debt problems to residents of Halton that:

- Actively promotes the take-up of benefits to ensure that residents are aware of their rights with regard to welfare benefits.
- Ensures that every assistance is given to residents of the Borough to claim their benefit entitlement and there by maximise their income.
- Provides debt counselling

and advice to residents of the borough who are experiencing financial difficulties.

- Fully contributes to reducing poverty and deprivation within Halton

The service is confidential, impartial and free. The service offers representation at Social Security Appeal Tribunals and represents clients in County Court Proceedings involving debt. The service is accessible through Halton Direct Link, Runcorn on:

- Tuesdays 9.30 am - 1pm, 2 - 4.30pm
- Thursdays 9.30 am - 1pm 2 - 4.30pm
- Fridays 9.30 - 12pm

The Thursday and Friday afternoon sessions are for “drop in” only. At other times it is advisable to make an appointment on Tel: 0151 511 8930 to ensure you can be seen. The service is accessible through Halton Direct Link, Widnes (Brook Street) every:

- Monday 9.30 - 1.00pm 2 - 4.30pm
- Wednesdays 9.30 - 1.00pm 2 - 4.30pm
- Friday between 2-4 pm

Telephone advice is available Monday - Thursday 9am - 5.30pm and Friday 9am - 4.40 pm.
7.0 Health
Guide to NHS services
The NHS is made up of a number of different services, which aim to help you stay well. We have listed these services below with some information about when and how you should access them.

Doctor/GP
GPs look after the health of people in their local community and deal with a whole range of health problems. If you want to see a doctor you will need to register with one of the GP practices in Halton (to find out who they are please contact Patient and Advice Liaison Service (PALS) free on 0800 218 2333).

If you think need medical advice on an illness or injury that won’t go away, make an appointment with your GP once registered.

Your GP practice will also provide health education, offer advice on smoking and diet, run clinics, give vaccinations and carry out simple surgical operations.

If you fall ill after your GP practice has closed, ring NHS 111.

NHS 111
111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It’s fast, easy and free. You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it’s not a life-threatening situation. When you call 111 you will speak to a highly trained adviser, who are supported by healthcare professionals. They will ask you a series of questions to assess your symptoms and immediately direct you to the best medical care for you.

Call 111 if:

• you need medical help fast but it’s not an emergency
• you don’t know who to call or you don’t have a GP to call
• you need health information or reassurance about what to do next

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Life-threatening emergencies
Call 999 in a medical emergency - when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.

Pharmacist
Your pharmacist (or Chemist) is available on the high street and offers free advice without an appointment. The pharmacy is a good first point of contact for dealing with the vast majority of health concerns and can provide treatment for minor ailments like coughs, colds, sore throat and rashes. Pharmacists are trained to know when a referral to another health care professional is advisable saving you an unnecessary trip to your GP.

Pharmacies are open until late and you can speak to your local pharmacist in complete confidence, even about very personal symptoms but if you are concerned about privacy, ask to use a private consultation room. If you get free prescriptions, you can get a range of ailments and illnesses treated for free through the Care at the Chemist scheme.

Urgent Care Centres
If you require health care urgently but it isn’t life-threatening then please go to your local urgent care centre. There are two centres in Halton, one in Runcorn and one in Widnes. No appointment is necessary at either site and the service is available every day of the year from 7am to 10pm.

Urgent Care Centre - Runcorn
Entrance 2
Halton General Hospital
Hospital Way
Runcorn, WA7 2DA
Telephone: 01928 714567

Urgent Care Centre - Widnes
Health Care Resource Centre
Oaks Place
Caldwell Road
Widnes, WA8 7GD
Telephone: 0151 495 5000
Textphone: 18001 0151 495 5000
Dentist
Dentists look after teeth, gums and oral health. Everyone in the UK has the right to register with an NHS dentist but if your area is extremely busy, you may have to travel further to seek treatment. Your local NHS England team can advise you about dental practices in your area taking on NHS patients. Phone them on 0151 285 4777

Optometrist or Opticians
Opticians are trained to examine the eyes to detect defects in vision, signs of injury, diseases or abnormality and problems with general health. They also prescribe and fit glasses and contact lenses.

It is recommended you visit an optician for a sight test every two years, or sooner if you’ve been asked to. This is important because an eye examination can detect potentially blinding eye conditions.

Although the majority of patients will need to pay for an eye examination, in some circumstances a sight test will be free. If the test is carried out by a hospital eye department, or at the request of a hospital as part of the management of your eye condition, it will be free.

You’re entitled to free eye sight tests if you’re:

- aged 60 or over
- registered blind or partially sighted
- diagnosed with diabetes or glaucoma
- aged 40 or over and have a close relative (parent, sibling or child) with a history of glaucoma
- you have been advised by an ophthalmologist that you are at risk of glaucoma

You will also qualify for a free NHS sight test and be eligible for an optical voucher (to go towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses) if you’re:

- aged under 16, or under 19 and in qualifying full-time education
- a prisoner on leave from prison
  Your optician is available on the high street.

Having A Baby?
When you’re having a baby, finding what is right for you and your family is very important, before pregnancy, during pregnancy, the birth and after your baby is born. If you are planning to have a baby, or are pregnant, we would encourage you to make early contact with health professionals. Local midwives, GPs and hospitals provide a choice of services to support you through pregnancy and birth.

The following offer a range of services locally including home birth, labour units and specialist care.

- Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals Trust
- Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
8.0

Education

www.halton.gov.uk
Learning English
Improving your English language skills will help you settle in to the UK. You can find out about English language courses at Riverside College, Widnes Campus, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QQ or Tel: 0151 257 2800. Halton has a local community organisation Halton Umbrella which is a minority ethnic network for Halton and they offer pre ESOL and ESOL support. You can contact them via facebook https://www.facebook.com/Umbrella-Halton-304520899742151/

Education for Children
Halton Borough Council: www.halton.gov.uk
To find out more information and guidance on early years providers and childcare in Halton contact the Families Information Service Tel: 0151 511 7375 (email: haltonfis@halton.gov.uk). For help with school places contact the School Admissions Team Tel: 0151 511 7271/7338 and for post 16 education Tel: 0151 511 7255.

Schools
Children aged between five and 16 years must attend school. Parents who do not send their children to school can be prosecuted. If you have a child of school age, visit your nearest Halton Direct Link or your local primary school (ages 5-10) or secondary school (ages 11-16). School staff will help you to apply by completing an admission form. You will be asked for a copy of the passport containing the child’s details, their visa if applicable and proof of your address. Education at State schools in the UK is free; however, parents have to pay for school uniforms and sports wear. Parents on low incomes can get help with these costs and with the cost of school meals. Some schools collect used uniforms which can be reused by others.

Parents of children with a special educational need or disability (SEND) are supported through; Special Educational Needs Team, Rutland House, Runcorn WA7 2GW or Tel: 0151 5117322. Parents may also contact SENDIAS for information, advice and support on 0151 5117733 or email parentpartnership@halton.gov.uk

There is also a ‘Local Offer’ page in the Education and Families section of the Council’s website (www.halton.gov.uk) which provides information, advice and guidance for the parents/carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Bullying in Schools
If your child experiences things like bullying, racism or name-calling. Schools have policies and procedures for dealing with these difficulties. For advice and support on bullying or racism, contact CHAWREC or Tel: 01244 400 730. You can get advice on the curriculum, how to get involved in the school, bullying, discipline, school choice, and exclusion from school at www.parentscentre.gov.uk.

You may need to talk to an education advice provider if your child cannot get a school place, is excluded from school, or is treated unfairly at school. Please contact the Education Welfare Team Tel: 0151 511 7357/8231

Information about home to school transport arrangements is available from the Council’s Transport Co-ordination Service on Tel: 0151 511 7444.

16+ Education
After the age of 16 years, education is not compulsory in England. However, many young people now go on to further and higher education at school, college or university. Students can choose to continue their education or enter the workplace. If they stay on at school they will enter what is known as the sixth form, or they may attend a further education college. Families on low incomes who have a child staying on in education after the age of 16 may be able to claim financial support; contact the Council’s Welfare Rights service on Tel: 0151 511 8930

For further information about opportunities on what to study contact: Riverside College Halton, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QQ or Tel: 0151 257 2800 or www.merseyinteractive.com/

18+ Education
A variety of study courses for adults (18 years or over) take place in local schools, community organisations, colleges and universities. Some courses may be free or you may have to pay for them. contact: Halton Borough Council: www.halton.gov.uk/adult learning www.learndirect-advice.co.uk

www.halton.gov.uk
9.0
Families
Families in the UK
You may have the right to bring your family to the UK. Rights can be complicated and you may need to see an independent immigration adviser. If you are a student, visit the Council for International Education (UKCOSA) website for information, your college or university may also provide information via www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/get-advice

Rights to have children in the UK
If you wish to start a family in the UK you may. There is no upper limit to the number of children you are allowed to have.

If you are pregnant
If you are pregnant, you should make an appointment to see a doctor (see the section on doctors). You will be offered scans, tests and healthy living advice during your pregnancy. In the UK women usually have their babies in hospital, although home births can be arranged. It is common for the father to attend the birth, but only if the mother wishes him to be there.

If you are thinking about terminating the pregnancy (abortion is legal in the UK), you can discuss this confidentially with your doctor.

When your baby is born, you must register your baby with the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths at the Registry Office within six weeks of the birth. The address of your local Registry Office is: The Superintendent Registrar, Register Office, Town Hall, Heath Road, Runcorn WA7 5TN or Tel: 0151 907 8307.

Women who are expecting a baby have a legal right to time off work for antenatal care, and at least 26 weeks’ maternity leave and may also be entitled to maternity pay. Fathers who have worked for their employer for at least 26 weeks are entitled to two weeks’ paid paternity leave when the child is born. It is important to tell your employer well in advance.

Children’s centres provide many different children and family services including activities for parents, parents-to-be, their babies, toddlers, young children and the rest of the family. They are located within your local
community so you don’t have to travel far. Halton Children’s Centres have disabled and wheelchair access. If it is difficult for you to come to a centre, please contact us - we can visit you at home or make other arrangements to suit you. You can also talk to your Health Visitor or your child’s school about Halton Children’s Centres - they can help you to get in touch with us. Information on Children’s centre can be found at http://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/EducationandFamilies/FamiliesInformationService/ChildrensCentres.aspx

FURTHER INFORMATION
The Family Planning Association (FPA) gives advice on contraception and sexual health. Their helpline is Tel: 0300 123 7123 or visit www.fpa.org.uk

The National Childbirth Trust gives information and support on pregnancy, childbirth and early parenthood; their website is www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com

For advice on maternity leave, maternity pay, paternity leave, and financial help associated with having a baby, visit www.gov.uk

Children’s rights
A person is considered a child if they are under 16 years of age. A young person is usually considered to be someone who is between 16 and 24 years of age. Children and young people have rights in the UK. You can find out about children’s rights and responsibilities at; www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

For young people’s rights to work, please see the section on working in the UK.

Looking after children
Advice for parents can be found at www.parentlineplus.org.uk or by phoning free on Tel: 0808 800 2222.

Young babies and children up to five years of age are seen regularly by a health visitor at home or at a clinic. You can ask the health visitor for advice about caring for your child.

You can find out more about parental responsibilities at; www.gov.uk

Children under 16 should not be left at home alone.

It is an offence to leave a child alone if doing so puts the child at risk.

If you need a childminder, you should use a registered childminder or a day-care centre such as a nursery.

Centres and childminders should be registered with Ofsted; you can find out if they are registered at www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Council has a list of registered childminders, nurseries and day-care centres. Contact the Halton Families Information Service on 0151 511 7275 www.halton.gov.uk/fis

You will need to pay for childcare but you might be able to get help with this. Find out more at: www.gov.uk

If you are worried about the safety of a child, you can get advice by telephoning Halton Safeguarding Tel: 0151 907 8305.

If you drive a car and you have a baby or a young child, you should fit a car seat suitable for your child’s height and weight. The seat should meet the safety standards. check requirements at www.gov.uk searching child car seats.

Council’s Road Safety Unit on Tel: 0151 471 7365.

Help for families
You may be entitled to financial support from the Government, such as Child Benefit and/or Tax Credits.

The rules on what you may be entitled to are complicated, so seek advice from www.gov.uk in the section on Benefits

Children’s Centres
Children’s centres provide many different children and family services including activities for parents, parents-to-be, their babies, toddlers, young children and the rest of the family. They are located within your local community so you don’t have to travel far.
10.0 Transport
Cars and motorcycles
People in Britain drive on the left. Every individual must have a licence and insurance to drive legally in the UK. A vehicle registration document and MOT certificate (certificate of roadworthiness) are also required. Some people from overseas can use the licences they were given in their home countries. You will need to have insurance that covers you for driving in the UK. You can find out more about driving legally at www.direct.gov.uk in the section on Driving and Transport.

Drivers in the UK observe rules of the road called the Highway Code; you can find this at www.gov.uk

Trains and buses
It is not legal to smoke in trains or buses, or on a rail station platform as this is seen as an enclosed public space.

To find out about local bus services visit www.halton.gov.uk and look in the section on public transport.

FURTHER INFORMATION
www.nationalrail.co.uk or Tel: 08457 48 49 50.

Public Transport Information
Neighbourhood Travel Team
Tel: 0800 195 3173

Traveline
Tel: 0871 200 2233
www.traveline.info

Children and Student Travel
Children. Within the borough bus operators allow children under 5 to travel free of charge. Children between the ages 5 to 15 are normally charged half the adult fare, those who are sixteen or over have to pay the full adult fare.

If you are aged 16 and over and travelling to school or college on public transport you may be able to get help with your travel costs. Contact the school or college for more information.

People who are aged over 65 and disabled people.

Residents of Halton who are 65 or over or who are disabled are eligible for a concessionary travel pass. This entitles the holders to reduced and free travel on public transport. Applications for passes can be obtained either from your nearest Halton Direct Link or Tel: 0303 333 4300.

Community transport
If you do not have your own transport or you have difficulty getting around, Halton Community Transport might be able to help. As well as door-to-door transport it operates a Community Car Service, Women’s Safe Transport, Post 16’s transport for disabled students and community minibuses and coaches for group hire. Contact Halton Community Transport on Tel: 0151 257 2410.

Cycling and walking
You can cross roads safely at marked crossings; crossings with traffic lights will show a lighted red person for ‘stop’ and a green person when you can cross.
11.0 Information
Halton Borough Council
HALTON DIRECT LINK

Halton Direct Link
Concourse Level
Runcorn Shopping Centre
WA7 2ES
Located in Runcorn shopping centre next to the library.

Widnes Direct Link
7 Brook Street
 Widnes WA8 6NB
Next to the Market in Widnes Town Centre

Runcorn Direct Link
Granville Street
Runcorn
WA7 1NE
Next to the bus terminal

Ditton Direct Link
Ditton Library with Halton Direct Link
11 Queens Avenue
Ditton
WA8 8HR
Next to the library in Ditton

By Telephone
Halton Direct Link Contact Centre is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day and can be contacted on Tel: 0303 333 4300

Online
You can find out about Council services at www.halton.gov.uk

Council Services
Waste Collection and Recycling
Your home will normally have three collection sacks or waste bins. These are coloured as follows:

- Black, for normal household waste, this will be collected every week
- Green, for recycling your garden waste every two to four weeks (depending on the season)
- Blue, for multi-material recycling, usually collected every two weeks.

Timetables for the collection of waste are delivered to each household regularly or can be found online at www.halton.gov.uk

Your bin or sack should be left at the edge of the property, close to the kerbside in full view of the road by 7.00am.

www.halton.gov.uk
The Council also operates two household waste and recycling centres. These are at:

**Picow Farm Road**
Runcorn
WA7 4UB

**Johnsons Lane**
Widnes
WA8 0SJ

Look out for recycling bins on public car parks and car parks on pubs, clubs and stores near you where you can recycle glass, plastics, cans and paper.

**Community Centres**
There are community centres serving neighbourhoods. These centres provide a range of activities which are either free or at reduced cost. You can contact the centres on the following numbers:

**Castlefields Community Centre**
Tel: 0151 511 7474

**Ditton Community Centre**
Tel: 0151 511 8210

**Grangeway Community Centre**
Tel: 0151 511 8610

**Murdishaw Community Centre**
Tel: 0151 511 7910

**Upton Community Centre**
Tel: 0151 511 6161

Programmes of activities can be viewed on Halton Borough Council’s website
www.halton.gov.uk

**Leisure Centres**
The Council operates a number of Leisure Centres at which a wide range of sports and other activities are available.

**Kingsway Leisure Centre**
Kingsway
Widnes
WA8 7QH

Tel: 0151 495 2200
Facilities include: Swimming Pool, Gym

**Brookvale Recreation Centre**
Barnfield Avenue
Murdishaw
Runcorn
WA7 6EP
Tel: 01928 712051
Facilities include: Gym, Swimming Pool
Equipment Hire and Sports hall

**Runcorn Swimming Pool and Gym**
Bridge Street Runcorn WA7 1BY
Tel: 01928 572114
Facilities include: Gym Swimming Pool

**Libraries**
There are four libraries in Halton. Library services are free. You can use the library to find out about your local area, read the newspapers, use a computer and the Internet or borrow books.

Many libraries have books and magazines in languages other than English. All libraries have special books and areas for children and some provide activities for children. If you live, work or study in Halton go to your nearest Library to join.

**Ditton Library**
Queens Avenue
Ditton
Widnes
WA8 8HR
Tel: 0151 424 2459

**Halton Lea Library**
Runcorn Shopping Centre
Runcorn
WA7 2PF
Tel: 0151 511 77411

**Widnes Library**
Victoria Square
Widnes
Trading Standards
If you are experiencing difficulties with goods and services, advice and support for people living in Halton is Tel: 0303 333 4300 or email: trading.standards@halton.gov.uk

Places of worship
People enjoy freedom of worship in the UK. You can find the nearest contact point for your religion or belief at the library, or by searching online.

Voting in Elections
You should apply to the Council to be included on the Electoral Register if you are eligible to vote.

You can register to vote if you are:

- 16 or over (but cannot vote until your 18th birthday)
- A British or Commonwealth citizen
- A citizen of the Irish Republic or other European Union (EU) countries
- A citizen of a EU country other than the UK or Irish republic cannot vote

Parliamentary elections. To contact the Council’s Electoral Registration Section call Tel: 0151 511 7802 or write to:

The Electoral Registration Officer
Municipal Building
Kingsway Widnes WA8 7QF

Election may be held for local councils (councillors), UK Parliament (MPs) or the European Parliament (MEPs). To find out who is your representative look in www.halton.gov.uk

Pest Control
The Council’s Pest Control team will deal with your issue usually within two days. Contact them on tel: 0303 333 4300 or online at www.halton.gov.uk.

Countryside Code
If you are walking or cycling in the countryside you can use public footpaths, which are marked with signs. You can also check them on local maps at the library. You can walk freely on common land and on mapped areas of moorland, heath, and mountain without the need to stick to paths. When using the countryside you should follow the Countryside Code; this explains how you can respect and enjoy the countryside. You can find out more about open access, the Countryside Code, and the activities and walks available in your area at; www.gov.uk and search for the Countryside Code.

Hunting or Fighting Animals
Information concerning UK laws on hunting and prohibiting animal fighting is available at www.gov.uk

Translation
If English is not your first language and would like information about our services please call Tel: 0303 333 4300.

If you visit Halton Direct Link to find out about Council services you will be offered our interpreter service.
12.0 Local services
Support organisations
Community organisations provide information and assistance with everyday problems. There are also places where you can meet other people.

Contact Halton & St Helen’s VCA on Tel: 01928 592405 or www.haltonsthelensvca.org.uk

Sources of advice
Migrant Gateway’s portal is the single route to information, advice and guidance for people moving to live or work in Europe. It is for migrants and people working with them. Although it is being developed in the East of England, much of the information applies elsewhere. It is under development and information is being added all the time, initially in six languages. It is supported by a help line for migrants and an advice line for employers and practitioners.
Visit www.migrantgateway.eu
Other local services
You can get free, confidential and independent advice at:

Runcorn Citizens Advice Bureau
Ground Floor, Grosvenor House, Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn
Tel: 0845 1304055

Widnes Citizens Advice Bureau
Unit 3, Victoria Building, Lugsdale Road
Widnes
Tel: 08451304055

You may need to make an appointment to see someone.

National Debtline is a national service providing free, confidential and independent advice on debt problems. Ring them on Tel: 0808 808 4000 (9am–9pm, Monday to Friday, 9am–1pm, Saturday), or visit www.nationaldebtline.org.uk.

Shelter is a national provider of housing advice. Ring them on Tel: 0808 800 4444 (8am– midnight, seven days a week), or visit www.shelter.org.uk.

The website has advice for EU nationals, and A8 and A2 nationals.
The UK Government website carries information on a wide range of subjects and you can fill in forms and make some applications online through this site; visit www.direct.gov.uk

Interpreters
Because many problems are sensitive and involve using technical terms, it is a good idea to use a qualified interpreter if you need help communicating with professionals. You will usually need to pay for the interpreter unless the organisation you have approached has arrangements for using interpreters.
If there is more information you need which isn't contained in this book, you can contact

**Halton Borough Council**

either via telephone on

**0303 333 4300 (24 hours)**

or at

[www.halton.gov.uk](http://www.halton.gov.uk)