

Calderdale

Area Assessment

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oneplace

for an independent overview
of local public services

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quality of life and economic prosperity between different communities in Calderdale reduce.

Calderdale at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in Calderdale. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from

No green flags have been identified for Calderdale

Red flags - significant concerns, action needed

No red flags have been identified for Calderdale

The local area

Calderdale lies along the valley of the River Calder in West Yorkshire. The main towns are Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Brighouse, Elland and Todmorden. The borough occupies a strategic position between the conurbations of Greater Manchester to the west and Leeds-Bradford to the east; the M62 motorway linking the two forms its southern boundary.

The population of just over 200,000 is projected to grow significantly over the next 20 years. The largest increase will be in older people, with a slight decrease in the teenage population. The ethnic minority population of nine per cent is younger than the Calderdale average.

The next section tells you how Calderdale's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

How is Calderdale doing?

Ensure that people stay in control of their lives and play a full and active role in

society

Most people over 65 in Calderdale are satisfied with their home and area. Care services are generally of a good standard, but it is often not clear whether they are improving people's lives. Local public services need to do more to find out whether what they are doing is making a difference to people.

People are helped well to lead independent lives. Community rehabilitation teams helped older people to stay independent and be well enough to no longer need care services. Fewer people than in similar areas receive 'direct payments' - enabling them to take decisions about the care that they receive.

Partners - including the Council, PCT and service providers - work well together to support older people. There is a co-ordinated approach to tackling health and wellbeing. The Council and PCT have joined up to plan and buy residential and nursing care.

Vulnerable adults are generally kept safe. Safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice help to ensure this. People who use services and carers can get involved in decisions about services through a range of boards and groups. There are some examples of users views being taken into account - such as in the design of care plans. But it is often not easy to see whether these groups have actually changed the way that services are delivered.

Flourish as a place where every child and young person thrives, is safe and happy

Children's health is generally good in Calderdale. Fewer children of primary school age are obese than in other areas, but by the time that they leave primary school levels of obesity have increased significantly. Fewer children are physically active than in similar areas.

Assessments of 'at risk' children are not being completed as quickly as they should be and some of the assessments are not thorough enough. Also, joint investigations involving social workers and the police need to be carried out more effectively. Although the number of care leavers in education, employment or training has risen slightly it remains low compared to other areas.

Most children in Calderdale do well at school. Young children do as well as children of the same age elsewhere. Children at age 11 had been doing better than those in similar areas, but 2009 data shows that performance is now in line with that elsewhere. The performance of white and black pupils is better than average, whilst that of Asian pupils is much lower. Good improvements have been achieved at age 16 by both white and Asian pupils, although black students have done less well.

Fewer teenagers became pregnant in Calderdale. Calderdale's performance in reducing teenage pregnancy was one of the best in England. But, as a result of the economic downturn, progress in reducing the number of young

people not in education, employment or training has slowed down. Fewer young people entered the youth justice system for the first time, although numbers are slightly higher than that found elsewhere. The number of people under 19 who achieved Level 2 and 3 qualifications continued to improve.

Improve the quality of our environment and promote respect for Calderdale's heritage

People in Calderdale are recycling more, helped by fortnightly waste collections combined with weekly kitchen waste collections. Calderdale's streets are also cleaner and there are plans to improve services further by introducing more local services in neighbourhoods.

Local public services are at an early stage in planning for the effects of climate change and setting realistic targets for the future. The Council is only just starting to develop an environmental management system and to measure the effect that it is having on the wider environment.

Some actions are being taken to reduce traffic congestion - a priority for local people - but the effects are unclear. The West Yorkshire-level target will not reduce journey times for local people at peak times and bus usage is not meeting targets. Recent figures show a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents. But rates are falling more slowly in Calderdale than in similar areas.

Housing is a problem in parts of Calderdale. Not enough affordable homes - particularly for families - are being built. A lot of houses are relatively old and are also hard to keep warm. This is particularly important as 17 per cent of Calderdale's residents have difficulty in affording enough heating to stay warm. Prospects for improvement are helped by Calderdale being a 'trailblazer' for new financial, training and employment support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Prosper as a place where people can feel safe and are encouraged to get involved in shaping their future

Crime is reducing, including crimes like burglary and assault which people are most concerned about. This is in part due to good work by public services in integrating offenders back into the community and the introduction of neighbourhood policing. Public confidence in the police has increased.

Fewer people than before see anti-social behaviour (ASB) as a big problem. But there are big differences within the borough. For example, the proportion in Mixenden seeing ASB as a problem has risen from 36 per cent to 46 per cent.

Fewer people in Calderdale than elsewhere feel that people of different backgrounds get on well together. More encouragingly, a relatively high proportion of residents feel that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood. Many groups and networks try to help communities to get on better together. Some of these have only been recently set up. One element of the approach to cohesion is to reduce inequalities, but progress on this has been slow.

Public services do not work as effectively as they could with the voluntary and community sectors (VCS). This is important because these organisations represent and deliver services to many vulnerable people in Calderdale. NHS Calderdale has asked Voluntary Action Calderdale to find out how the public and voluntary sectors can improve how they plan and deliver services.

Public services want to increase the number of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their local area. They plan to improve things through the 'Going Local' programme which will include forums in each of the 17 wards in Calderdale. Plans for locality working are still at an early stage.

Reduce the amount of preventable ill-health across the population as a whole

Depending on your circumstances and where you live, you can expect to live much longer in parts of Calderdale than in others. Public services have set a target to improve life expectancy in those areas where people are dying too early. There are plans in place to improve health, including weight management programmes and better treatment of people suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure.

More mothers than before - just under four in ten - are breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks. This exceeded the local target, but this is still lower than many areas. More needs to be done to improve rates of breastfeeding - providing infants with a healthy start in life. The number of people quitting smoking has increased for the last two years. Death rates from smoking are higher than average and NHS Calderdale is trying to make sure that it provides the right help to those who most need it.

Despite a lot of work by public services, the number of people participating in regular physical activity in Calderdale is not increasing significantly. £11 million is being invested in new leisure facilities across the Borough - with the new Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse swimming pools due to open in November 2010. These developments offer the potential to encourage more people to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Calderdale is one of nine areas that have successfully competed for a share of £30 million of Government funding for a Healthy Towns Initiative. The Healthy Halifax Programme, will promote healthy eating and physical activity and tackle obesity. It is too soon to see real benefits from this work.

Safeguarding Calderdale's future and

fostering economic prosperity for all

Local people and businesses have been supported through the recession by the Council's 'Economic Task Force'. But it is unclear how effective other public bodies have been in joining up to combat the effects of the recession. This is a concern, as Calderdale has been assessed as one of the ten areas in the country that is most vulnerable to the effects of the recession. Calderdale's economy performed well until the recent economic downturn. In part this is due to its heavy reliance on the financial services sector. But the numbers of people claiming benefits has risen sharply.

There are plans to create additional employment and support business growth. These include the Piece Hall leisure and retail development, Broad Street retail and leisure facilities and town centre improvements in Todmorden, Sowerby Bridge and Halifax. These plans provide promising prospects for improving the local economy.

Although skill levels are improving, on average people in Calderdale have low levels of skills and qualifications compared to similar areas. A recent bid to get capital funding for a 'university centre' was unsuccessful. Calderdale College is in the process of approving its higher education strategy. Leeds Metropolitan University has secured funding to develop higher education work with businesses in Calderdale to provide 60 additional places.

Work to ensure that the differences in health, quality of life and economic prosperity between different communities in Calderdale reduce.

Quality of life varies too much depending on where you live in Calderdale. Partners have recognised the need to 'narrow gaps' within Calderdale, but plans need to be brought together better to provide good prospects for improvement.

If you are a young person living in Ovenden, Mixenden or Park, you are much more likely to die before your first birthday, less likely to get good GCSE results or to be in education, employment or training than other young people in Calderdale. People living in the borough's more deprived areas feel much less safe after dark and are much less satisfied with their area as a place to live than those who live in more well-off areas.

Local public services have been working together to better understand the range and extent of inequalities in the borough. They have made progress in narrowing some gaps. But they do not yet have a fully co-ordinated plan to show how individual organisations, and partners working together, will tackle the different issues. It is also unclear how they will assess their progress in tackling these issues.

About Calderdale

A recent survey shows that in Calderdale 78 per cent of people are satisfied with their immediate local area as a place to live. This is broadly the same as the average for similar areas and broadly the same as the national average of 81 per cent.

Calderdale lies along the valley of the River Calder in West Yorkshire. The main towns are Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Brighouse, Elland and Todmorden. The borough occupies a strategic position between the conurbations of Greater Manchester to the west and Leeds-Bradford to the east; the M62 motorway linking the two forms its southern boundary

Calderdale's population of just over 200,000 is projected to grow significantly over the next 20 years. The largest increase will be in older people, with a slight decrease in the teenage population. The ethnic minority population of nine per cent has a younger age profile than the Calderdale average.

Calderdale's economy has done well in recent years. The proportion of the population that is in work and the proportion of them who are managers or professionals is close to the national average. The number of people receiving benefits is also close to the national average. Partly as a result of its reliance on the financial sector, Calderdale has been assessed as one of the ten areas most vulnerable to the effects of the credit crunch

Calderdale has become less deprived. It improved from the 86th most deprived area in England in 2004 to the 107th in 2007. Despite this, there are significant inequalities in Calderdale. Life chances are generally much poorer in the deprived areas of the borough than they are in the more affluent areas. There is poverty in both urban and rural areas. Compared to the national average, more households don't have a car and there are more single parents.

Over half of the private houses in Calderdale were built before 1919. Housing reflects the area's social mix; from the barn and mill conversions in more affluent areas to terraces in the major towns that need considerable investment and repair. There are relatively few detached or semi-detached houses and a far higher proportion of terraced housing. Social housing accounts for 17 per cent of Calderdale's housing.

The Council, NHS, public services such as police, fire and probation, voluntary organisations and businesses, form the Calderdale Forward partnership to improve the quality of life for people in Calderdale. Partners share the vision: "for Calderdale to be an attractive place where people are prosperous, healthy and safe, supported by excellent services and a place where we value everyone being different and through our actions demonstrate that everyone matters".

How well do priorities for Calderdale express community needs and aspirations?

Calderdale Forward is developing its understanding of the big issues affecting people in Calderdale. A wide range of people and groups were involved in agreeing the vision and priorities in the sustainable community strategy, 'Everyone Different, Everyone Matters'. Local public services have used the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to help them decide which things most need improving. The 'Story of Place' sets out partners' ambitions and the opportunities and challenges the area faces. Some of the things that people have identified as important have seen recent improvements, such as waste collection and street cleaning. Others, such as congestion, have not.

The Place Survey showed that overall satisfaction with Calderdale as a place to live has increased by 4.4 per cent to 78.4 per cent in 2009, compared to 2007. Local public services have also analysed the results at local level and have carried out face to face surveys in some areas. This will help them to understand how people in different parts of Calderdale view their quality of life and how satisfaction levels vary.

NHS Calderdale has used postcode profiling to target smoking cessation services. This will be used to decide where resources are spent. Household profiling like this is increasingly being used to help build understanding of local communities. Local public services will not make progress with their priority to 'narrow the gap' until they have a full understanding of inequalities across Calderdale.

Local organisations consult people on a range of issues. For example, NHS Calderdale asked local people for their views on where new health centres should be built. The Council asked people about how they should improve swimming pools. People have also been consulted on recycling and new housing developments. Local public services recognise that they could do more consultation together and that there can be duplication and lack of co-ordination on the ground.

Calderdale Forward is still developing some of the things it needs to in order to be a fully effective partnership. The partnership does not always manage its own performance effectively - actions are not always carried out within the timescales set at partnership meetings or followed up effectively at subsequent meetings. Not all areas of partnership working are supported by robust action plans, resources, milestones and targets. There are some examples of strong joint-working. These include the Council working with health partners to address the needs of older and vulnerable people. However, other areas are less well developed, such as developing the voluntary and community sector. This means that partners are not always working well together to provide value for money for the local community.

Calderdale is a partner in the Leeds City Region. This involves 11 local authorities from North, South and West Yorkshire working together on big shared issues like regeneration, skills and housing. The City Region has been given special status by the government to make changes to the way that councils work with partners to minimise the impact of the downturn and speed up recovery. The challenge for the City Region will be to make sure that these changes have an impact on people's lives.

Ensure that people stay in control of their

lives and play a full and active role in society

Most people over 65 in Calderdale are satisfied with their home and area. 85 per cent said that they were happy - slightly more than the average. The 'Putting People First' programme aims to improve adult social care in Calderdale. People can access services out of hours in a number of ways, and satisfaction surveys indicate that people are generally happy with the service they receive. Care services are generally of a good standard, but it is often not clear whether they are improving people's lives. Local services need to do more to find out whether what they are doing is making a difference to people.

People are helped to lead independent lives. There are specialist day centres for older people with dementia and a talking book service for people with sensory impairments. Community rehabilitation teams helped older people to stay independent and reduced the need for many of them to continue to receive care. No additional extra care housing has been provided since 2004-2005, though 52 places are planned for 2009-2010. People wait less time for minor adaptations to their home than in other areas, but wait longer for major adaptations. Fewer people than in similar areas receive 'direct payments' - enabling them to take decisions about the care that they receive.

People who use services and carers can get involved in decisions about services through a range of boards and groups. There are some examples of users views being taken into account - such as in the design of care plans. But it is often not easy to see whether these groups have actually changed the way that services are delivered. In particular, local public services recognise the need to improve communication with the South Asian community. The voluntary and community sector is involved in delivering some services, for example the Women Centre and all aspects of the Partnership for Older People Programme (POPPs).

The Council, PCT and service providers work well together to support older people. There is a co-ordinated approach to tackling health and wellbeing. The Council and PCT have joined up to plan and buy residential and nursing care.

Over the last two years, more than 3,500 over-55s have used POPPs. POPPs provides practical support like help with housework and gardening to help people stay in their homes when they leave hospital. Work to support older people has also included helping to prevent falls and physical activity programmes.

Vulnerable adults are generally kept safe. Safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice help to ensure this. People who use services and carers can get involved in decisions about services through a range of boards and groups. There are some examples of users views being taken into account - such as in the design of care plans. But it is often not easy to see whether these groups have actually changed the way that services are delivered.

Flourish as a place where every child and

young person thrives, is safe and happy

Children's health is generally good in Calderdale. But fewer children are physically active than in similar areas. Fewer children of primary school age are obese than in other areas, but by the time that they leave primary school, levels of obesity have increased significantly - one in six are overweight. There is a risk that the target to reduce obesity will not be met.

Fewer teenagers became pregnant in Calderdale than elsewhere in England. Calderdale's performance in reducing teenage pregnancy was one of the best in England. Work by the Children's Trust has helped to achieve this reduction. Local public services have taken the problem seriously, learnt from others and invested in a range of actions to tackle the problem.

Fewer children are admitted to hospital because of unintentional and deliberate injuries than in similar areas although the proportion has risen. A recent unannounced inspection found that assessments of 'at risk' children were not being completed as quickly as they should be and that some of the assessments were not thorough enough. The inspection highlighted the need for a more thorough approach to investigating child protection cases. It also found that joint investigations involving social workers and the police needed to be carried out more effectively. The number of young people leaving care who are in education, employment or training has risen slightly but remains low compared to other areas. We will follow up arrangements for keeping children safe as part of next year's assessment.

Most children in Calderdale do well at school. Young children do as well as children of the same age elsewhere, although the rate of improvement has slowed down. Children at age 11 had been doing better than those in similar areas, but 2009 data shows that performance is now in line with that elsewhere. The performance of white and black pupils is better than average, but that of Asian pupils is much lower. Good improvements have been achieved at age 16 by both white and Asian pupils, but black students have done less well. Only a very small number of primary and secondary schools do not meet the targets for achievement set by the government. A below average number of secondary schools have good or outstanding behaviour. Fewer pupils are now absent from secondary school. But as a result of the economic downturn, progress in reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training has slowed down. Fewer young people entered the youth justice system for the first time, but numbers are slightly higher than that found elsewhere. The number of people under 19 who achieved Level 2 and 3 qualifications continued to improve.

Through the Children's Trust, partners have developed a range of ways to talk to children and young people about the issues which concern them. The Youth parliament and Youth area forums have helped to make changes in things that are important to children and young people, such as safety in public places and on public transport.

Improve the quality of our environment and promote respect for Calderdale's heritage

People in Calderdale are recycling more than ever. Public consultation identified significant public support for more recycling, but until recently, Calderdale had not done well in encouraging recycling. Performance has now improved considerably, helped by new fortnightly wheelie bin collections and weekly kitchen waste collection. Figures for the first part of 2009 show that recycling rates increased from 26 per cent to 44 per cent.

Calderdale's streets are also cleaner. There are plans to improve services further by introducing more local services in neighbourhoods. Local public services including the fire service, police and local schools have worked well together on 'community clean ups' in problem areas.

Local public services have set targets to reduce CO2 emissions across Calderdale, starting with a 1.5 per cent reduction on the 2005 baseline. But there is little detail on exactly what public services will do to achieve these reductions. For example, the Council is only just starting to develop an environmental management system and to measure the effect that it is having on the wider environment.

Some actions are being taken to tackle the resident priority of reducing congestion, but the effects of these actions are unclear. Improvements to help promote bus usage have included better ticketing and bus corridors to speed up buses. Despite this, bus usage is not meeting targets. We will monitor progress on this as part of next year's assessment.

Recent figures show a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents. Whilst campaigns such as 'Seat Belt On' seem to be having an impact, accident rates are falling more slowly in Calderdale than in similar areas.

There is significant demand for affordable housing in Calderdale. Not enough homes - particularly for families - are being built to meet this demand. The Borough's housing stock is relatively old with a lot of smaller terraced homes, including back to back housing. Some of this is difficult to heat, with 17 per cent of residents finding it difficult to afford heating. Calderdale needs to continue its energy efficiency programmes including tackling hard to treat homes unsuitable for conventional cavity or loft insulation. A recent private sector housing survey shows good progress on providing decent homes for vulnerable people. The age profile of Calderdale's ethnic minority communities is young and this needs to be considered when planning future housing. Prospects for improvement are helped by Calderdale being a 'trailblazer' area for new 'joined up' services to people in housing need. These include financial, training and employment support to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We will monitor progress on housing next year.

Prosper as a place where people can feel safe and are encouraged to get involved in shaping their future

Overall levels of crime are reducing, including crimes like burglary and assault - which people are most concerned about. This is in part due to good work by

local public services in integrating offenders back into the community and the introduction of neighbourhood policing. The introduction of neighbourhood policing and Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings have also helped communities to better influence policing priorities. Public confidence in the police has increased

Fewer people than before see anti-social behaviour (ASB) as a big problem. But there are big differences within the borough. For example, the proportion in Mixenden seeing ASB as a problem risen from 36 per cent to 46 per cent between 2006 and 2008. Incidents of race crime are above average and too many people are still afraid of being victims of crime. The Place Survey suggest that fewer people than in similar areas believe that the Police and partners are successfully dealing with ASB and crime in their area. More recent information from the police suggests that this may be improving. The Council has reduced anti-social behaviour in some rural areas by using a bus to deliver youth services in areas that do not have suitable facilities.

Fewer people in Calderdale than elsewhere - just under 66 per cent - feel that people of different backgrounds get on well together. This has not changed since 2007 and compares poorly with similar areas. More encouragingly, a higher proportion of residents than in similar areas feel that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood.

Many groups and networks try to help communities to get on better together, such as the Interfaith Council and Black and Minority Ethnic Forum. The Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender network has successfully developed its membership. But some of these groups have only been recently set up - the Calderdale Equality Forum was only established in 2009 - and a Women's Network is still to be introduced. Partners have recognised that how communities get on is an important issue. Following consultation with local people, they have changed their Community Cohesion Plan. One element of their approach to cohesion is to reduce inequalities, but progress on this has been slow. Local public services carry out regular 'tension monitoring' to check how well communities are getting on. We will monitor progress as part of next year's assessment.

Local public services do not work as effectively as they could with the voluntary and community sectors (VCS). This is important because these organisations represent and provide services to many vulnerable people in Calderdale, such as women at risk of domestic violence, ethnic minorities and newly arrived communities. Recently, the Council and its partners have helped the VCS to provide better support and advice to people who have suffered mental health and financial problems as a result of the recession. Some partners are proactive in involving the sector and responding to their needs, such as the Council's Community Services directorate, but this is not consistent across the Council and other partners, such as health services. Partners are trying to improve the way that they work with the VCS. NHS Calderdale has asked Voluntary Action Calderdale to find out how the public and voluntary sectors can improve how they plan and deliver services.

People in Calderdale are more involved in their local communities than average. More people in Calderdale than other similar areas participate in civic activities and volunteering. But local public services want to increase the number of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their local area. They plan to improve things through the Going Local programme which

includes forums in each of the 17 wards in Calderdale. But plans for locality working are still at an early stage.

Reduce the amount of preventable ill-health across the population as a whole

Calderdale residents enjoy similar health to people in other parts of the country. Like people elsewhere in England, they are living longer than ever before. Deaths from smoking and the number of people admitted to hospital as a result of binge-drinking are higher than the national average, but compare well with similar areas.

Depending on your circumstances and where you live, you can expect to live much longer in parts of Calderdale than in others. Men and women in areas like Mixenden and Ovenden can expect to die nearly six years earlier than people in areas like Hipperholme. Partners have identified that this is, in part, due to increased levels of cancer in more deprived areas. They have set a target to improve life expectancy in those areas where people are dying too early. There are plans in place to improve health, including weight management programmes and better treatment of people suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure.

More mothers - just under four in ten - are breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks, but this is still lower than many areas. More needs to be done to improve rates of breastfeeding - providing infants with a healthy start in life. The number of people quitting smoking has increased for the last two years. But death rates from smoking are higher than average and NHS Calderdale is trying to make sure that it provides the right help to those who most need it. It is using post code data to target stop smoking work on those groups who are most likely to benefit from support.

NHS Calderdale has consulted local people on a range of health-related issues, including where new health centres should be built and providing care closer to people's homes. Local public services aim to improve value for money by working together better in the future to plan, buy and deliver health and social care services.

The number of people participating in regular physical activity in Calderdale is increasing - it rose from just over 22 per cent in 2006 to just under 24 per cent in 2009. £11 million is being invested in new leisure facilities across the Borough with the new Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse swimming pools due to open in 2010. The Council has consulted about the new swimming pools at Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge and included gym, sports hall and cafe facilities in response to customer feedback. These developments offer the potential to encourage more people to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Calderdale is one of nine areas that have successfully competed for central government funding for a Healthy Towns Initiative. Local public services in Calderdale, as part of its Healthy Halifax Programme, will match the £2 million awarded to them to promote healthy eating and physical activity, tackle obesity and improve health and wellbeing. These will include a 'grow your own fruit and veg' scheme for social housing tenants. It is too soon to see real

benefits from this work, but we will be monitoring progress as part of next year's assessment.

Safeguarding Calderdale's future and fostering economic prosperity for all

Calderdale's economy performed well until the recent economic downturn. There was a big increase between 2003 and 2009 in the number of creative, digital and tourism businesses in Calderdale. Calderdale has now been assessed as one of the ten areas in the country that is most vulnerable to the effects of the recession. In part, this is due to its heavy reliance on the financial services sector. As a result, the numbers of people claiming benefits has risen sharply.

Local people and businesses have been supported through the recession by the Council's 'Economic Task Force'. This has led on a range of actions, using a £2 million fighting fund from Council resources. The Task Force has recognised the importance of working closely with the business sector and activities have included a 'Meet the Buyer' events with local businesses. It has worked to increase advice services in Calderdale. But it is unclear how effective other partners have been in joining up to combat the effects of the recession. The Economy and Enterprise Board did not meet for four months during the summer and it is not clear whether the Board has had any significant impact on helping local people and businesses. We will monitor how partners are working together to improve economic prosperity as part of next year's assessment.

Partners have plans to create additional employment and support business growth. Plans for the Piece Hall are well advanced - this will create an events arena surrounded by small shops and a boutique hotel. As part of the 'Vision into Reality' programme, work is underway to redevelop Broad Street as a retail and leisure attraction for Halifax. Construction of North Halifax Academy and the Building Schools for the Future programme are expected to get underway in 2010. Development of the Shay stadium is progressing and two leisure centres and swimming pools are currently being refurbished or replaced. Other plans include the redevelopment of Todmorden, Sowerby Bridge and Halifax town centres. A joint waste disposal scheme with Bradford Council is being planned. These plans provide promising prospects for improving the local economy.

Although skill levels are improving, people in Calderdale have low levels of skills and qualifications compared to similar areas. Currently, 30 per cent of the working population do not hold a level 2 qualification - although numbers are increasing. Level 2 skills cover a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications that are designed to help people's employment prospects. Just over 25 per cent hold higher level qualifications - just below the national average. Local public services have recognised the link between poor skills and the lack of higher education provision in the area. A recent bid to get capital funding for a 'university centre' was unsuccessful. Calderdale College is in the process of approving its higher education strategy. Leeds Metropolitan University has secured funding to develop higher education work with businesses in Calderdale to provide 60 additional places.

Work to ensure that the differences in health, quality of life and economic prosperity between different communities in Calderdale reduce.

Quality of life for local people is much poorer in the deprived areas of the borough than in the more well-off areas. For example, if you are a young person living in Ovenden, Mixenden or Park, you are much more likely to die before your first birthday, less likely to get good GCSE results or to be in education, employment or training than other young people in Calderdale.

People living in the borough's more deprived areas feel much less safe after dark and are much less satisfied with their area as a place to live than those who live in more well-off areas.

Narrowing the gap is a Council priority and has also been agreed by partners as a shared priority. Partners have identified 10 key measures of improvement and these link to ambitious targets. For example: by 2020 there will be no significant differences in life expectancy, GCSE attainment, crime and unemployment levels; Residents' satisfaction levels and feelings of safety will be among the best in the country.

An approach to delivering responsive and co-ordinated services at a neighbourhood level has improved residents' views in three of the most deprived areas: Mixenden, Ovenden and Park. But this approach is not yet being applied across the whole of Calderdale.

Some of the inequalities in Calderdale have narrowed. For example, in 2008, the number of children achieving higher grade GCSE passes rose faster in some of the deprived wards than across Calderdale as a whole. And more mothers from deprived areas are now breastfeeding their babies.

Partners have been working together to better understand the range and extent of inequalities in the borough. They have set some starting points and are starting to work on new solutions to tackle some of the problems. But partners do not yet have a plan to show how individual organisations, and partners working together, will tackle the different issues. And further work is needed to clarify what resources partners will allocate to tackling these issues and what timescales they are working to. We will be monitoring progress on this as part of the 2010 assessment.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

Alternative formats - If you require a copy of PDF documents in this site in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call: 0844 798 7070

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