

AGENDA

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: **Tuesday 15 July 2014**

Time: **3.00 pm**

Place: **Council Chamber - Brockington**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board

Membership

Chairman

Councillor GJ Powell

Councillor JW Millar

Helen Coombes

Jo Davidson

Paul Deneen

Dr Andy Watts

Director of Adults Wellbeing

Director for Children's Wellbeing

Healthwatch

Clinical Commissioning Group

Non Voting

Jacqui Bremner

Representative of a Carers' Organisation

(Currently Herefordshire Carers Support)

Shaun Clee

2gether NHS Foundation Trust

Richard Garnett

Herefordshire Business Board

Brian Hanford

NHS England

Claire Keetch

Third Sector Board

Alistair Neill

Herefordshire Council

Richard Beeken

Wye Valley NHS Trust

Supt. Sue Thomas

West Mercia Police

AGENDA

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)	
To receive any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To receive any declarations of interests of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
4. MINUTES	7 - 10
To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2014.	
5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	
To receive questions from Members of the Public relating to matters within the Board's Terms of Reference.	
(Questions must be submitted by midday eight clear working days before the day of the meeting (ie on the Wednesday 13 calendar days before a meeting to be held on a Tuesday.))	
6. HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD BUSINESS PLAN	11 - 26
To inform the Board of the progress of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) Business Plan 2013-2014 at year end and to note the 2014-2015 Business Plan.	
7. HEREFORDSHIRE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP 5 YEAR PLAN	
To receive and approve the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's Five Year Plan.	
8. OFSTED REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES	27 - 66
To receive Ofsted's report of the Inspection of Herefordshire Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the Review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board, undertaken from the 29 April 2014 to 21 May 2014.	
9. UPDATE ON THE CARE ACT 2014	67 - 70
To provide the Board with an update on the progress of the Care Act 2014.	
10 UPDATE ON THE BETTER CARE FUND SUBMISSION (TO FOLLOW)	71 - 72
To receive a presentation on the progress of the Better Care Fund Submission.	
11 WORK PROGRAMME	73 - 76
To receive the Board's Work Programme.	

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Health and Wellbeing Board held at Council Chamber - Brockington on Tuesday 20 May 2014 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor GJ Powell (Chairman)

Councillors: CNH Attwood, Ms H Coombes, Mrs J Davidson, Mr P Deneen, Ms J Bremner, Mr S Clee, Mr B Hanford, Mrs C Keetch, Mr A Neill, Supt S Thomas, Mr A Dawson and Ms J Whitehead

In attendance: Councillor AJW Powers

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr R Garnett, Mr D Smith and Dr A Watts.

38. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Mr A Dawson for Mr D Smith.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

40. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 26 March were signed and approved as a correct record.

41. UNDERSTANDING HEREFORDSHIRE REPORT 2014

The Board received a presentation on the Understanding Herefordshire Report 2014.

It was noted that the report was the overall integrated assessment of the health and well-being needs of Herefordshire's population and provided strategic intelligence for commissioning and business planning, particularly to determine priorities for resource allocation. The emphasis was to focus on a small number of key priorities for the public sector and partners over the next few years, to meet the health and well-being needs of the people of Herefordshire.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- That the Spider chart indicated areas of deprivation, and where an issue was closer to the outside of the chart, the higher the deprivation was.
- That new information had been included in the present Report from the Children's Integrated Needs Assessment and the Community Safety Strategic Assessment. The Director of Children's Wellbeing added that a more detailed Children's Integrated Needs Assessment would be scrutinised by the Herefordshire Children's Safeguarding Board and a report would be brought back to this Board.

The Chairman of Healthwatch welcomed the document, and said that it provided a good

evidence base for the Board, and issues that arose from it should be added to the Work Plan.

- It was suggested that an impact assessment should be undertaken of any documents that arose from this report. The assessments should make it clear as to the gap between what was reported in the Understanding Herefordshire report, and what the experience was locally. Impact assessments should be reported on a quarterly and annual basis, and fed into a five year plan. Consideration could also be given to ensuring that assessments were regularly produced along these lines for Mental Health, and built into the Board's Work Plan.

Resolved: That the report be noted and used to inform future planning, decision making and commissioning.

42. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM

The Board received verbal reports on the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's 5 Year Plan and the Better Care Fund Submission.

The Chief Officer, Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (HCCG) reported that the first draft of the 5 year planning process had been brought to a previous meeting of the Board, and work was in hand to further develop the HCCG's strategic thinking. Engagement had been sought with wider partners and supporters, and there was an appetite for involvement with further development, and feedback from the initial draft plans had been positive. Emerging themes had included: the need to work closer together in order to address the financial implications of change across the health sector; the opportunity to think more creatively as to NHS buildings could be used in the wider community and the need to think about very different ways to provide health care in the future.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- That to have a conversation around where the health and social care sector was in terms of the population of the County would be a useful exercise for the Board, which needed to be providing systems leadership on behalf of the residents of Herefordshire.
- That greater responsibility should be taken by the Board to provide a single step strategic leadership and ensure resources were put into universal health and targeted provision in order to ensure that change benefited all residents of the County.
- That a Community Masterplan was being put in place to establish the important links between infrastructure projects and health and social care redesign.

The Board received an updated report on the Better Care Fund, which was seen as an important vehicle for the commissioning of Health and Social Care. The next update of the Better Care Fund would be submitted on the 20th June and would include draft financial principles.

Resolved: That the reports be noted

43. THE CARE BILL - IMPACT ANALYSIS AND UPDATE REPORT

The Board received an updated impact analysis on the Care Bill. It was noted that the Care Bill would introduce a new legal framework for adult social care which would put the wellbeing of individuals at the heart of an integrated care and support system and

would be effective from 1 April 2015. It would introduce a number of new duties for local authorities and would have significant implications across the whole of adult social care, and beyond – particularly in relation to finance, IT systems and workforce. Table 2 of the report outlined the Council's position on the clauses within the Bill.

Resolved: That the report be noted, and that quarterly updated reports be provided to the Board.

44. ADULT WELLBEING PEER CHALLENGE

The Board received a verbal report on the imminent peer challenge of the Adult Social Care system. The Director of Adults Wellbeing reported that this was not a review in the same manner of that undertaken by Ofsted, but was a sector led external scrutiny that would be of great significance to the Adult Wellbeing Directorate. There was an opportunity to provide them with key lines of enquiry such as the transformational changes around the workforce and the care user workforce. It should be of concern to the Board that the Adult Wellbeing transformation process be judged to be fit for purpose as a result of this exercise.

Resolved: That an updated report be provided to a future meeting.

45. WORK PLAN

The Board noted its Work Plan.

Resolved: That the scheduled bi-monthly Workshops be cancelled.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN



MEETING:	CABINET
MEETING DATE:	31st July 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan
REPORT BY:	Director for Children's Wellbeing Services

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To inform the Board of the progress of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) Business Plan 2013-2014 at year end and to note the 2014-2015 Business Plan.

Recommendation(s)

THAT the Board:

- (a) notes the progress achieved in the 2013-2014 Business Plan at Appendix 1;**
- (b) considers the 2014-2105 Business Plan and notes the identified priorities at Appendix 2**

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options as this report is to inform enable the Board to consider the HSCB Business Plan.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure that the Board are informed of the progress of the 2013-2014 HSCB Business Plan.
- 3 To ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board have the opportunity to challenge the Board's priorities and assure itself that the Business Plan is in line with the Council's Delivery Plan, is sufficient to meet the recommendations from the recent Ofsted review of the effectiveness of the HSCB and will enable the Council to meet its obligations to have well-functioning multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and young people.

Key Considerations

Council's are legally obliged to establish an effective Safeguarding Children Board. Further detail is in paragraphs 12-16 below.

- 4 HSCB Strategic Board reviewed the progress of the 2013-2014 Business Plan at their April meeting. The plan was an ambitious one, and whilst progress has been made in a number of areas, some have not progressed as fully as the Board would wish.
- 5 The following Action Areas have been fully implemented during the year as planned and are therefore fully "RAG" rated green. A number of these are planned for the next stage of development within the Board's 2014-2015 Business Plan in line with the three year strategic priorities:
 - *DA1: Implement changes in safeguarding practices and HSCB functioning to meet the statutory changes within Working Together 2013.* Ofsted stated that HSCB complies with its statutory responsibilities. It also stated that the Board has detailed action plans aimed at increasing the effectiveness of safeguarding activity.
 - 2 *DA3: Domestic Abuse.* Information received confirms previous knowledge that Herefordshire has a higher rate of DA than its regional neighbours and that the increase in reported incidents recorded this year is also higher. HSCB has been proactive in ensuring its strategic partners within the DA multi-agency task and finish group progress the prevention agenda in Herefordshire.
 - 3 *DA3: Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking:* Following key activities to increase awareness across the children's workforce and to build a greater level of intelligence around sexual exploitation in Herefordshire, cases highlighted and reviewed by the SET Case Evaluation Panel have shown that an increased knowledge of SET among the workforce has resulted in some better intervention with young people affected by SET. Ofsted identified the response made to date to this agenda and how we will be taking that forward.
- 6 The following action areas have made significant progress during the year, but have not yet been fully implemented during the year as planned and have at least one action "RAG" rated red in the Business Plan. More detail of the plans for each activity is included within Appendix 1. In brief however:

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Andy Churcher, HSCB Business Manager on Tel (01432) 260278

- DA1: Every agency to ensure the voice of children, young people and their families is captured and used to improve services. This is a two year priority for HSCB in line with the Board's strategic priorities. During the past year all statutory agencies of the Board have developed their processes for capturing the voice of children and young people and have begun to report their mechanisms and their findings to the Board. During 2014-2015 agencies have committed to further development of these which will support the Board in planning its own processes for directly capturing the voice of children and young people and will be able to identify themes across all this work which will inform future strategic priorities.
- DA1: Improve the quality of reflective supervision and the involvement of the appropriate level of management in case decision making. This is an ongoing piece of work in line with the three year strategic priorities. Having championed the need for greater multi-agency accountability for understanding domestic abuse in Herefordshire and the commissioning of generic services during 2013-2014, HSCB is now focussing on ensuring that services that will support children affected by Domestic Abuse are appropriately commissioned along with those that support perpetrators to reduce such behaviour.
- DA2: Improving multi-agency case decision making. This action will be completed once quality assurance work confirms the consistently improving work that is being evidenced through performance data.
- DA2: Improving multi-agency assessments within Children's Social Care. This is a significant piece of work being driven within the Children's Wellbeing improvement agenda – currently being delivered through HSCIB (Improvement Board) and as part of the Directorate's Transformation Programme (CHIPP). Additionally training for practitioners involved in Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) is being developed and is scheduled to be available during the summer to improve multi-agency engagement and accountability for child protection decision making.
- DA3: Children Missing from Care (to include all missing children). Work is progressing through the West Mercia consortium to deliver a regional protocol that will include the outstanding requirements for a greater level of clarity around multi-agency responsibilities to ensure missing episodes are dealt with more effectively and therefore are more able to protect those children involved. This will be carried through to the 2014-2015 Business Plan in line with the three year strategic priorities.
- DA3: Children Placed in Herefordshire by Other Local Authorities. The decision was taken to delay finalisation of the Best Practice Agreement (previously the Contract of Expectations) with providers in order that it is fully conversant with the West Mercia Regional Protocol and will be incorporated into the launch of the protocol by October 2014
- DA4: Develop the culture of constructive challenge within the Board. All Board members have given verbal commitment to prioritise the completion of HSCB's Safeguarding in Leadership e-learning course, procured in response to the identification of development needs of Strategic Board members.
- DA4: Develop an evidence base of safeguarding casework across all agencies to demonstrate and learn from best practice. The rationale for this is two fold: to evidence that the HSCB are meeting and at times exceeding the statutory responsibilities; and to promote a 'learning culture' across agencies. Moving forward this will be delivered via the HSCB's Communications Strategy.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Andy Churcher, HSCB Business Manager on Tel (01432) 260278

- 7 DA4: Develop the Board's knowledge of the children's workforce and its development needs. While the training needs analysis has only given a partial picture of the training needs across the children's workforce, the intelligence gathered has been used in line with other evidence to inform the provision of training during 2014-2015. The 2014-2015 Business Plan is currently being finalised by members of HSCB's Strategic Board and its development has been based upon the Board's agreed 2013-2016 Strategic Priorities. It is pleasing that the Ofsted findings are generally in line with the development agenda already planned by HSCB. The draft business plan has also been developed to include the following additional areas that Ofsted identified for improvement:
- DA3: Private Fostering (3.4); and
 - DA4: The effectiveness of HSCB Training (4.5)

Community Impact

- 8 There are few items within the Business Plan that can yet be successfully measured for impact at this stage. The HSCB Business Unit is currently writing the Board's Annual Report and within this process impact analysis of relevant actions will be undertaken where it is possible to judge at this stage. However, the recent Ofsted inspection confirmed that there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm in Herefordshire. The inspection report evidences ongoing improvements in the delivery of services to children and their families in line with the Council's statutory responsibilities and the statutory duties to cooperate placed on other partners.
- 9 The draft Business Plan (Appendix 2) includes expectations of how and when impact will be measured and what the expected impact will be.

Equality and Human Rights

- 10 Different aspects of the implementation of the Business Plan pay due regard to the public sector equality duty as set out below:

Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out thus:

"A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

Financial Implications

- 11 In order to enable the delivery of the HSCB Business Plan, the Council will need to maintain its current contribution to the Business Unit of £127,016 per annum.

Legal Implications

- 12 Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals (other than the local authority) that should be represented on LSCBs.
- 13 Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the objectives of LSCBs, which are:
- to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
 - to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.
- 14 Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives under section 14 of the Children Act 2004, are as follows:
- (a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:
- i. the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
 - ii. training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
 - iii. recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
 - iv. investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
 - v. safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
 - vi. cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;
- b. communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
- c. monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
- d. participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority; and
- e. undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.
- 15 Regulation 5 (2) which relates to the LSCB Serious Case Reviews function and regulation 6 which relates to the LSCB Child Death functions are covered in chapter 4 of this guidance.
- 16 Regulation 5 (3) provides that an LSCB may also engage in any other activity that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives.

Risk Management

- 17 There are no risks contained within the recommendations as this is an opportunity for Cabinet to consider and challenge the HSCB progress and priorities.
- 18 The main risk is that failing to have a strong and effective Safeguarding Children Board will leave children and young people more at risk of suffering harm.

Consultees

- 19 HSCB Strategic Board
- 20 HSCB Steering Group Sub Group Chairs
- 21 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Improvement Board

Appendices

Appendix 1 - HSCB 2013-2014 Business Plan Monitoring Sheet

Appendix 2 - HSCB 2014-15 Draft Business Plan

Background Papers

- None identified.

DEVELOPMENT AREA 4: Improving the functioning of Herefordshire's Safeguarding Boards.				RAG		Process		An Agreed Process Is In Place		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Completion		Impact		Complete OR On Target		Risk of Missing Timescale		Incomplete & Outside Timescale	
				Process	Impact	Progress as at April 2014, Planned Future Actions and Links to evidence (where appropriate).	Judgement will be made through an appropriate assessment of impact.	Propose additional work needed to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale.	What else can we do to ensure this development work is effective?				
Action area: Develop the culture of constructive challenge within the Board.				Linked to HSPCIB Priority 3.9; 3.10; 3.12; 3.24; 3.30; 3.43									
HSCB, Business Manager Andy Churcher	An effective system for documenting challenge across the Board to capture learning and good practice will be developed and maintained.	Sep 13	Synopsis to be included in Steering Group's quarterly report to Strategic Board.	G	N	Incidences of challenge identified at all Strategic Board meetings and Steering Group meetings and recorded within the Business Unit.		N/A		N/A			N/A
HSCB, Business Manager Andy Churcher	A robust system of communicating qualitative and quantitative safeguarding performance information and analysis is established from the sub groups to the Strategic Board so that it can effectively monitor and challenge the effectiveness of child protection practice	Jul 13	Monthly reports to be presented to Strategic Board members.	G	N	Monthly performance bulletins for members of the Strategic Board in place and delivered within timescale.		N/A		N/A			N/A
HSCB, Chair of T&WD Hazel Blankley	A training needs assessment with Board members will have been undertaken to ensure all members have appropriate training and development opportunities to support their role.	Jul 13	Synopsis to be included in Steering Group's quarterly report to Strategic Board.	G	N	Report presented to HSCB Strategic Board in January (following delays in completing the TNA) and recommendations accepted.		N/A		N/A			HSCB Business Unit have implemented the agreed changes to Board member induction processes, training and further development opportunities.
HSCB, Chair of Steering Group, Paul Meredith	All Board members will have undertaken training identified through the TNA.	Dec 13	Synopsis to be included in Steering Group's quarterly report to Strategic Board.	G	R	3 Strategic Board members have registered for this course.		N/A		N/A			Dave McCallum, Independent Chair, to contact all Board members and ask them to provide reasons why they have not completed the training.
HSCB, Chair of Steering Group, Paul Meredith	Attendance at all Board meetings will be monitored; an action plan to increase level and consistency of attendance of member agencies will have been developed and implemented.	Dec 13	Synopsis to be included in Steering Group's quarterly report to Strategic Board.	G	N	Attendance at all sub group meetings is monitored on a monthly basis. Following the end of Q4 the Independent Chair received a report on all members failing to attend their last three scheduled meetings so that action could be taken.		N/A		N/A			N/A
Action area: Develop an evidence base of safeguarding casework across all agencies to demonstrate and learn from our good practice and show how we are meeting and exceeding our statutory responsibilities.				Monitored by: HSCB Steering Group									

DEVELOPMENT AREA 4: Improving the functioning of Herefordshire's Safeguarding Boards.				RAG		Process		An Agreed Process Is In Place		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Process	Impact	Completion to Timescale		Risk of Missing Timescale		Incomplete & Outside Timescale			
				Completion	Impact	Process	Impact	Judgement will be made through an appropriate assessment of impact.					
HSCB, Business Manager Andy Churcher	A system for documenting cases of good practice and excellent outcomes across agencies will be developed and maintained, and where appropriate anonymous case studies will be published on HSCB website.	Sep 13	Business Unit to provide quarterly update to the Steering Group.	G	N	Progress as at April 2014, Planned Future Actions and Links to evidence (where appropriate).	What difference has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	Propose additional work needed to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale.	What else can we do to ensure this development work is effective?				
HSCB, Independent Chair Dave McCallum	All agencies will have submitted appropriate cases and highlighted learning within their good practice.	Dec 13	Business Unit to provide quarterly update to the Steering Group.	G	N	HSCB's draft Communications Strategy relies on the willingness of partners to provide case studies highlighting successful interagency working. The case studies will then be used to highlight the good work of Board partners and learning for practitioners. The Business unit is ready to receive these. Timescale adjusted (previously July 2013 which was a mistake as it was planned before the above action).	N/A	Engagement of partners in the submission of cases to be led by HSCB's Strategic Board.	N/A				
Action area: Agree a model of SCRs and significant case reviews within Herefordshire.													
HSCB, Chair of JCR Sub Group Paul Meredith	Case reviews using alternative formats will have been evaluated by those involved in the processes and reported to Steering Group.	Sep 13	Report and proposal to be presented to Sept's Steering Group.	G	N	Alternative formats evaluated by JCR sub group and through reporting from regional partners.	N/A	N/A	N/A				
HSCB, Chair of Steering Group, Paul Meredith	The most appropriate format for reviews within Herefordshire will have been decided upon.	Sep 13	Steering Group to report their recommendation to October's Strategic Board.	G	N	The evaluation has resulted in the development of a draft process for learning from case reviews in Herefordshire with multi-agency support.	N/A	The draft process will be developed and progressed through HSCB during Q1 for ratification at July's Strategic Board.	N/A				

DEVELOPMENT AREA 1: Improving the experience of children, young people and families when they are supported in safeguarding systems (i.e. CAF, Social Care)		RAG		Process		An Agreed Process is In Place		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Completion to Timescale	Progress as at XXX 2014.	Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?	Incomplete & Outside Timescale	
Action area 1.1: Every agency to ensure the voice of children, young people & families is captured & used to improve services.											
HSCB, Chair of QA,	All members report to HSCB learning from their analysis of the views of children, young people and their families and the impact of the implementation of this learning into practice, to the QA sub group within all their quarterly reports.	Ongoing from April 2014	Through QA Sub Group's reports to Steering Group.	N	Development need identified through QA's 2013-14 assessment of the effectiveness of the use of VotC.		Monitored by: QA Sub Group Strategic Oversight: Les Knight	HSCB will be able to evidence how all partner organisations (including all statutory partners) have captured the voice of the child appropriately and used the findings of this work to improve the experience of children, young people and their families while supported in safeguarding systems. HSCB will also be able to use the findings of its own work to capture the voice of the child to improve the effectiveness of work to safeguard children and promote their welfare across organisations.			
HSCB, Chair of QA,	HSCB analyses and reports on common themes arising from agencies' collection of the views of children, young people and their families, proposing development actions.	Sep 14	Report to be presented to November 2014's Steering Group meeting.	N							
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	HSCB to develop and implement its own regular mechanisms for capturing the voice of the child with findings presented Quarterly to QA sub group.	Oct 14	Mechanisms to be in place by during Q3 with first quarterly report to be received March 2015	N							
Action area 1.2: Improve the quality of reflective supervision and the involvement of management in case decision making.											
HSCB, Chair of T&WD Hazel Blankley	An agreed set of processes for monitoring compliance with the supervision of minimum standards across agencies will have been developed and implemented.	Dec 14	Inclusion within quarterly reports from agencies to the QA Sub Group.	N	Development need identified in Ofsted's 2012 inspection report and builds upon 2013-2014 work.		Monitored by: T&WD Sub Group Strategic Oversight:	Evidence submitted to HSCB QA sub group will evidence how HSCB's Supervision Standards are being applied throughout partner agencies to ensure management are involved in case decision making. The impact will be evidenced through improvements in outcomes identified through case audit and through the capturing of the voice of the child.			
HSCB, Chair of T&WD Hazel Blankley	Develop HSCB's expectations of partner sectors (i.e. education and 3rd Sector) to provide enhanced assurance and support within their organisations, developing HSCB support mechanisms as necessary.	Feb 15	Through T&WD Sub Group's reports to Steering Group.	N							
HSCB, Chair of T&WD Hazel Blankley	Develop HSCB's expectations of partner agencies to provide enhanced assurance and support within their organisations.	Feb 15	Through T&WD Sub Group's reports to Steering Group.	N							

DEVELOPMENT AREA 1: Improving the experience of children, young people and families when they are supported in safeguarding systems (i.e. CAF, Social Care)			RAG		Process		An Agreed Process is In Place		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Process Completion	Completion to Timescale	Progress as at XXX 2014.	Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?		
Action area 1.3: Partners work together to meet safeguarding needs as the workforce changes due to reduced funding.												
HSCB, Chair of Steering Group Paul Meredith	The planned relaunch of the MASH, Levels of Need Guidance, Multi-Agency Referral Form and supporting guidance will be used by agencies and sectors to embed thresholds of intervention across the partnership to support agencies in making more effective referrals.	Sep 14	Bimonthly reporting to Steering Group on progress.	N	Development need identified as partners have become aware of current organisational change.	Progress as at XXX 2014.	Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?		
HSCB, Chair of Steering Group Paul Meredith	All constituent partners will be required to report to the Board any significant proposed changes across organisations that are likely to impact safeguarding practices to enable the Board to challenge should this be necessary. All agencies will report current situation to September's Steering Group.	Sep 14	Reports to be received and discussed at September Steering Group.	N	Development need identified as partners have become aware of current organisational change.	Progress as at XXX 2014.	Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?	HSCB will be able to comment upon how proposed changes are likely to impact on children, young people and their families within safeguarding systems in the context of simplified referral pathways. HSCB will therefore be more able to influence the commissioning of multi-agency services.	

DEVELOPMENT AREA 2: Improving multi-agency case work.			RAG		Process		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Completion to Timescale	An Agreed Process Is In Place	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?		
Action area 2.1: Improving multi-agency case assessments within Children's Social Care.										
HSCB, Business Manager, Andy Churcher	HSCB expectations for how agencies take responsibility for ensuring that CPC attendees have sufficient knowledge and skills to participate effectively will be agreed.	Jul 14	Report to be received for discussion at July Steering Group.	N		Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?		
HSCB, Chair of T&WD Hazel Blankley	Appropriate support resources and learning opportunities for agencies and sectors with representative at CP conferences will have been scoped, agreed and implemented.	Dec 14	Through T&WD Update to Steering Group in November and December.	N		Development need identified through QA's 2013-14 monitoring of conferences.				
HSCB, Business Manager, Andy Churcher	The necessity of quality case recording will have been promoted through both HSCB communications to the children's workforce and through internal agency communications to managers highlighting the need to support and check this through case supervision.	Nov 14	Bi-monthly communications from July 2014.	N						
Herefordshire Council, Head of Safeguarding and Review, Diane Partridge	A short term multi-agency action plan to improve the quality of decision making at Child Protection Conferences (including ensuring the right people are invited, the rate of attendance and the rate of reports received at conference) will have been developed and implemented by Children's Wellbeing Services.	Nov 14	Bi-monthly reports to Steering Group from July 2014 (presentation of action plan) to November 2014.	N						

DEVELOPMENT AREA 3: Tackling evidenced safeguarding issues in Herefordshire.			RAG		Process		An Agreed Process Is In Place		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Completion to Timescale	Completion OR On Target	Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?	Incomplete & Outside Timescale	
Action area 3.1: Domestic Abuse												
Herefordshire Council, Community Safety Manager, Adrian Turton	Services for children & young people effected by Domestic Abuse (e.g. Crush and Great) will be scoped and recommendations to commissioners to support safeguarding will be made.	TBC - Action Area is dependent upon the work of the CSP's Domestic Abuse Steering Group. Items relevant to safeguarding children will be reported to QA through the quarterly Domestic Abuse report delivered in May, August and November 2014 and February 2015.		N	N	Development need identified through QA's ongoing monitoring of Domestic Abuse.		Monitored by: QA Sub Group Strategic Oversight: Lynne Renton		There will be a reduction in the number of children exposed to domestic abuse and number of children exposed to domestic abuse on multiple occasions.		
Herefordshire Council, Community Safety Manager, Adrian Turton	Services for perpetrators of Domestic Abuse will be scoped and recommendations to commissioners to support safeguarding will be made.			N	N							
Action area 3.2: Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking.												
HSCB, Chair SET Strategic Group Diane Partridge	Undertake a self assessment against the requirement of the National SET Action Plan and develop a new Strategic Plan and Disruption Plan for Herefordshire.	Jul 14	Through SET Strategic Group's Quarterly reports to Steering Group.	N	N	Development need identified through HSCB SET work & expectations of Children's Commissioner.		Monitored by: SET Strategic Group Strategic Oversight: DCI Damien Pettit		Incidences of children being sexually exploited and trafficked will be managed by a workforce knowledgeable about the issue and skilled in dealing with it. HSCB's resulting disruption work will have resulted in prevented opportunities for perpetrators to engage with children.		
HSCB, Chair SET Strategic Group Diane Partridge	Establish a SET Operational Group to drive forward the SET agenda in Herefordshire through the implementation of the Strategic Plan.	Sep 14	Through SET Strategic Group's Quarterly reports to Steering Group.	N	N							
Action area 3.3: Missing Children												
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Ensure the West Midlands Joint Protocol on Missing is completed on target and provides robust interagency responsibilities to ensure incidences of children going missing are adequately responded to.	Jul 14	Through quarterly themed reports to Steering Group.	N	N	Development need identified through multi-agency discussion on Missing practices and new guidance.		Monitored by: Steering Group Strategic Oversight:		Incidences of children going missing will be managed by a workforce knowledgeable about the safeguarding issues and skilled in dealing with it. Missing episodes will be dealt with effectively, in line with the WM Protocol and children will be effectively supported to		
Herefordshire Council, Head of LAC, Jo King	HSCB's Missing Children Action Plan to be fully implemented to ensure a high quality joined up approach to incidences of children missing from care.	Sep 14	Through quarterly themed reports to Steering Group.	N	N							

DEVELOPMENT AREA 3: Tackling evidenced safeguarding issues in Herefordshire.				RAG	Process	An Agreed Process Is In Place	Process Planned But Not Agreed	No Progress In Agreeing Process
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Process Completion	Completion to Timescale	Complete OR On Target	Risk of Missing Timescale	Incomplete & Outside Timescale
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Develop HSCB mechanism for the ongoing strategic oversight of co-ordinated multi-agency responses for children who go missing.	Sep 14	Through quarterly themed reports to Steering Group.	N	Progress as at XXX 2014.	Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured? reduce the likelihood of further episodes.
Action area 3.4: Private Fostering					Development need identified as ongoing risk in HSCB's Risk Register and through Ofsted report.		Monitored by: Steering Group Strategic Oversight:	
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Private Fostering will be included as a risk factor in the relaunched HSCB Levels of Need with appropriate supporting information made available through HSCB's communication channels.	Sep 14	Through Steering Group's governance processes for the Levels of Need (see 1.3).	N				Greater awareness of the need to report Private Fostering Arrangements will provide a more complete picture of these arrangements in Herefordshire and ensure Children's Wellbeing are able to provide suitable support, where necessary, to children and families in these arrangements.
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Promote Private Fostering to the children's workforce by including reference to it throughout appropriate training and communications to ensure they understand the need to notify children's social care services of private fostering arrangements.	Apr 15	Through Steering Group's monitoring of HSCB Communications.	N				

DEVELOPMENT AREA 4: Improving the functioning of Herefordshire's Safeguarding Boards.			RAG		Process		An Agreed Process Is In Place		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Completion to Timescale	Process	Complete OR On Target	Risk of Missing Timescale	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?		
Action area 4.1: Develop the effectiveness of Board meetings through constructive challenge and clear governance.												
HSCB Independent Chair, Dave McCallum	Develop the governance arrangements between HSCB and the Improvement Board, the CYPF and the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure increased influence nurtures purposeful decision making.	Oct 14	Update reports to Strategic Board (July and October 2014)	N	N				Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?		
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Provide ongoing opportunities for HSCB Strategic Board members to develop their understanding of safeguarding and the skills necessary to undertake their roles.	Jul 14	Mid year report to be presented to Strategic Board's October meeting.	N	N							Steering Group will receive regular instruction from Strategic Board to undertake specific work through the Board's sub groups. Evidence of this work will show the Board's ability to respond quickly to safeguarding issues in Herefordshire and influence development.
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Ensure incidences of challenge are clearly marked within all HSCB minutes/ meeting notes.	Jul 14	Monitored when any set of minutes are agreed.	N	N							
Action area 4.2: Develop an evidence base of safeguarding casework across all agencies to demonstrate and learn from our good practice and show how we are meeting and exceeding our statutory responsibilities.												
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	In line with HSCB's Communications Protocol, Strategic Board members will oversee the monthly submission of cases of good practice from all agencies. These will be used as appropriate to support HSCB's communications.	Jun 14	Mid year report to be presented to Strategic Board's October meeting.	N	N							
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	HSCB's Business Unit to maintain a register of good practice cases submitted.	Jun 14	Mid year report to be presented to Strategic Board's October meeting.	N	N							HSCB will be able to evidence its good work and use it to promote the importance of high quality planning, case work and recording, in order to improve outcomes for children across Herefordshire.
Action area 4.3: Develop the resource available to support HSCB by the Business Unit through a review of its functioning and the needs of both HSAB and HSCB.												
Herefordshire Council, Head of Safeguarding and Review, Diane Partridge	Undertake a review of the Business Unit, the expectations upon it, and the resource available to it to ensure it is able to support an increasingly effective Board.	Sep 14	Update reports to Strategic Board (July and October 2014)	N	N							

DEVELOPMENT AREA 4: Improving the functioning of Herefordshire's Safeguarding Boards.				Process		An Agreed Process Is In Place		Process Planned But Not Agreed		No Progress In Agreeing Process	
Lead Org & Officer	How impact and progress will be measured and how we will know when it is achieved	Time-scales	Monitoring Mechanism and Frequency	Completion to Timescale	Complete OR On Target	Risk of Missing Timescale	What impact has the progress made so far made on the lives of children and young people?	What impact is expected once Action Area is completed? How and when will impact be measured?			
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Agree and implement the response to the report ensuring that a the developed Business Unit is in place.	Oct 14	Update reports to Strategic Board (July and October 2014)	N	N	Propose additional work to ensure all priorities are completed to timescale/development work is effective.	Learning and Improvement Framework through changes in practice which have resulted from its learning and improvement activities/				
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Develop mechanisms for ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of HSCB's training offer to ensure value for money for agencies accessing training.	Jan 15	Update reports to Strategic Board (July and October 2014)	N	N						
Action area 4.4: Undertake a peer learning process with another Board and implement highlighted areas for improvement.											
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	Undertaken a LGA Diagnostic/Peer Challenge in Sept/Oct 2014 to assess the readiness of HSCB to take over safeguarding responsibilities from the Improvement Board and to assess initial developments following Ofsted's review of the Board in 2014.	Sep 14	Update reports to Steering Group (Aug 2014)	N	N			Peer review will result in a timely assessment of progress for HSCB and focus continued developments during 2015-2016.			
Action area 4.5: Ensure that multi-agency safeguarding training is sufficient, taken up by partners and is robustly evaluated.											
HSCB, Chair of T&WD Hazel Blankley	Course evaluation processes, including impact evaluations, will have been developed and implemented to provide improved quality of information to HSCB to inform the development of its multi-agency safeguarding training offer.	Oct 14	Through Quarterly Reports from Steering Group to Strategic Board (from July 2014).	N	N						
HSCB Business Manager, Andy Churcher	A standard process for engaging the workforce in the development of HSCB training will have been implemented and used to inform the development of training for the education workforce and then applied to other courses later in the year.	Oct 14 for Education Mar 15 for wider application	Through Quarterly Reports from Steering Group to Strategic Board (from July 2014).	N	N			HSCB training will more effectively meet the needs of the workforce through an increase in the rate of positive feedback received from courses and multi-agency safeguarding practice will be of improved quality.			



MEETING:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
MEETING DATE:	15 JULY 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	OFSTED REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

1. **Classification**

Open

2. **Key Decision**

This is not an executive decision

3. **Wards Affected**

County-wide

4. **Purpose**

- 4.1 To receive Ofsted's report of the Inspection of Herefordshire Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the Review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board, undertaken from the 29 April 2014 to 21 May 2014

5. **Recommendation**

THAT: The report be noted.

6. **Appendices**

- 6.1 Appendix 1 - Inspection of Herefordshire Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the Review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board, undertaken from the 29 April 2014 to 21 May 2014

7. **Background Papers**

- 7.1 None identified.

Herefordshire Council

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

and

Review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board¹

Inspection date: 29 April 2014 – 21 May 2014

Report published: 30 June 2014

The overall judgement is **requires improvement**

There are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. However, the authority is not yet delivering good protection and help and care for children, young people and families.

It is Ofsted's expectation that, as a minimum, all children and young people receive good help, care and protection.

1. Children who need help and protection		Requires improvement
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence		Requires improvement
	2.1 Adoption performance	Good
	2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement
3. Leadership, management and governance		Requires improvement
<p>The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) requires improvement</p> <p>The LSCB is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of good.</p>		

¹ Ofsted produces this report under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This report includes the report of the inspection of local authority functions carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and the report of the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board carried out under the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Review) Regulations 2013.

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Section 1: the local authority

Summary of key findings

This local authority requires improvement and is not yet good because

1. Services for safeguarding children and young people in Herefordshire have only recently improved since they were judged to be inadequate in the Ofsted inspection of child protection in 2012. No widespread or serious failures were identified by this inspection that currently left children being harmed or at risk of harm. However, progress to improve how children are safeguarded has been slow and many improvements are very recent. Too many of the areas for development from the inspection in 2012 continue to be areas that require improvement.
2. Services for looked after children have not improved since they were judged to be good in 2012 and some of the work has got worse because many staff have left and the local authority has found it difficult to recruit experienced permanent social workers and managers. This has meant that many looked after children have experienced too many changes of workers and some have not received good quality support or been able to form relationships with their social workers.
3. In 2013 children's services in Herefordshire experienced many difficulties, such as high numbers of referrals, high caseloads for social workers, many social workers and managers moving jobs and poor electronic recording systems. As a result children and their families often received services that were not good enough.
4. Staffing remains fragile and a major challenge to maintaining improvements in the quality of work. More permanent social work and management staff have been recruited and many of the high number of agency staff who are being employed are on long term contracts. The use of agency social work staff is beginning to reduce from the September 2013 high of 50%.
5. During 2013 the local authority and other agencies joined together to form a multi-agency safeguarding hub to receive contacts and referrals about children and to decide what action needed to be taken. At first this did not function properly, but from the beginning of 2014 it has improved and now assesses the needs of children and families well; it is better managed and improves how staff from different agencies share information. However, the service is still at an early stage of development.
6. The authority's children's services have developed electronic systems to record details about children and families to allow managers and other agencies to understand what services are needed and how well they work. However, the information they contain is not accurate enough and managers often are not able to get the information that they need.

7. Herefordshire has a relatively small number of children and families from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Few services have been developed in the area tailored to their needs. The diverse cultural and ethnic needs of many children and families who are known to children's social care services are not properly assessed or met.
8. Child protection conferences are not well managed and child protection plans made at conference are too vague. Most agencies attend conferences, but few children are invited. People who attend conferences often do not get the reports or minutes quickly enough.

The local authority has the following strengths

9. From the beginning of 2014 the quality of social work and operational management has significantly improved and the morale of staff has risen.
10. Children and their families are able to receive a wide range of early help to prevent any difficulties that they experience from getting worse.
11. Children in need of protection are identified and assessed well. Many more children have been helped through child protection plans than in previous years, and not many are subject to a second or subsequent plan.
12. Most children who are looked after live in stable and supportive foster placements or in high standard residential accommodation that is in or close to Herefordshire. They are supported well by their carers and are helped to maintain positive contact with their families where this is best for them.
13. Where children cannot live with their families, adoption is promptly considered and court proceedings are rapidly completed so that the children can quickly settle into new permanent families. People interested in adopting children are well prepared and supported throughout and following the adoption process.
14. Local authority councillors and senior managers show commitment to improving services for children and families and have secured extensive financial and staffing resources. They have worked closely with partner agencies to improve how staff work together to prioritise the needs of children and young people in the area. The senior staff team in children's social care services is now established and increasingly has gained the confidence and commitment of staff.
15. Social work caseloads are now more manageable because an external agency has been temporarily brought in, until July 2014, to finish off work with some children and families. This has given space for the authority's social work teams to improve their work.

What does the local authority need to improve?

Priority and immediate action

16. There are no areas of priority action.

Areas for improvement

17. Ensure that caseloads in children in need and looked after children's teams remain manageable and reduce caseloads within the Children with Disabilities service so that all social workers have sufficient time to provide children with the level of service they require.
18. Ensure that the electronic case and performance management system in children's social care provides accurate performance information.
19. Ensure that audit and performance management is robustly and routinely undertaken by managers across children's services and is effectively used to develop services and to improve the quality of practice.
20. Ensure that consistent and high quality formal supervision of social care staff is provided and that all staff have regular supervision that provides reflection and challenge.
21. Ensure that regular case file audits and re-audits within social work teams are undertaken and are used to identify areas of strength and development and to measure the effectiveness of actions taken to improve performance.
22. Ensure that thresholds for access to children's services are understood and consistently applied by local authority staff and partner agencies, so that children and families get the right help at the right time.
23. Ensure that the independent reviewing officers effectively structure and manage child protection conferences and develop specific and measurable child protection plans. Ensure that there is effective leadership, practice, quality assurance and capacity within the Independent Reviewing Officer service.
24. Ensure that all children with a disability known to children's services are rigorously assessed to ensure that their needs are met and that the local authority is fulfilling its statutory functions.
25. Ensure that information about children who go missing is effectively shared and robustly analysed between partner agencies.
26. Ensure that the partner agencies and the community are aware of the need to notify children's social care services of private fostering arrangements.
27. Ensure that the Emergency Duty Team effectively supports young people held in police custody out of hours and that appropriate alternative

accommodation is available to prevent young people being held in police custody overnight.

28. Fully utilise Family Group Conferences to inform care planning, particularly where care proceedings are being considered.
29. Ensure that diversity issues and the ethnic and cultural identity of children and their families are thoroughly assessed and addressed.
30. Implement and monitor a robust system for making timely decisions to ensure there are no delays in accommodating children when they need to be looked after.
31. Ensure that plans for permanency are made and clearly recorded at children's second looked after review in line with national guidance.
32. Develop specific assessment methods to inform decisions about whether siblings should be permanently placed together or apart. Record assessments and decisions in detail to reflect the significance of the decision being made.
33. Ensure that regular analysis and reporting from the advocacy service provides an accurate account of emerging themes.
34. Ensure that the virtual school develops and implements a strategy to narrow the gap in attainment between looked after children and all other children in Herefordshire.
35. Ensure that all looked after children and young people make consistently good or better progress at every stage of their education and close the attainment gap between looked after children and all children in Herefordshire.
36. Ensure effective joint working with the police and youth offending services to routinely record and analyse information about looked after children engaged in offending behaviour.
37. Develop and implement working arrangements with local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service providers to enable better access to treatment for looked after children.
38. Ensure that the children in care council is effective, is representative of the range of looked after children and has membership of the council's corporate parenting group.
39. Ensure all local authority elected members understand and effectively undertake their role as a corporate parent.
40. Refresh and re-launch the recruitment strategy to increase the number of adopters for children with complex needs and for larger sibling groups.

41. Ensure that all pathway plans are up to date, are of good quality, are based on a robust analysis of need, with clear and agreed goals and are regularly reviewed.
42. Ensure that all care leavers receive a copy of their health records.
43. Ensure that all looked after children and care leavers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and receive the guidance, support and resources to realise them.
44. Ensure that learning from complaints and representations from children and young people, parents and carers and service users is systematically collated and analysed and is used to improve service delivery and development.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences of children and young people who have needed or still need help and/or protection. This also includes children and young people who are looked after and young people who are leaving care and starting their lives as young adults.

Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children, young people and families. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with families and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the local authority knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

The inspection of the local authority was carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board was carried out under section 15A of the Children Act 2004.

Ofsted produces this report of the inspection of local authority functions and the review of the local safeguarding children board under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The inspection team consisted of seven of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted and an additional inspector (AI).

The inspection team

Lead inspector: Pietro Battista

Team inspectors: Shirley Bailey, Brenda McLaughlin, Susan Myers, Lynn Radley, Judith Nelson, Lisa Williams (AI) and Steven Gauntley.

Information about this local authority area²

Children living in this area

- Approximately 36,000 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Herefordshire. This is 19% of the total population in the area.
- Approximately 10% of the local authority's children are living in poverty.
- The proportion of children entitled to free school meals:
 - in primary schools is 10.5% (the national average is 19.2%)
 - in secondary schools is 9% (the national average is 16.3%).
- Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 6.3% of all children living in the area, compared with 20.2% in the country as a whole.
- The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are White other (1.62%).
- The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language:
 - in primary schools is 6% (the national average is 18.1%)
 - in secondary schools is 4.3% (the national average is 13.6%).

Child protection in this area

- At 31 March 2014, 1,269 children had been identified through assessment as being formally in need of a specialist children's service. This is a reduction from 1,444 at 31 March 2013.
- At 31 March 2014, 237 children and young people were the subject of a child protection plan. This is an increase from 208 at 31 March 2013.
- At 31 March 2014, four children lived in a privately arranged fostering placement. This is an increase from two at 31 March 2013.

Children looked after in this area

- At 31 March 2014, 242 children are being looked after by the local authority (a rate of 67.24 per 10,000 children). This is an increase from 216 (60 per 10,000 children) at 31 March 2013. Of this number:
 - 65 (27%) live outside the local authority area
 - 14 live in residential children's homes, of whom 92.86% live out of the authority area

² The local authority was given the opportunity to review this section of the report and has updated it with local unvalidated data where this was available.

- None live in residential special schools³
 - 148 live with foster families, of whom 11.5% live out of the authority area
 - 11 live with parents, of whom one is living out of the authority area
 - There are no unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- In the last 12 months:
- there have been 17 adoptions
 - nine children became subjects of special guardianship orders
 - 95 children have ceased to be looked after, of whom three subsequently returned to be looked after
 - 19 children and young people have ceased to be looked after and moved on to independent living
 - No children and young people have ceased to be looked after and are now living in houses of multiple occupations.

Other Ofsted inspections

- The local authority does not operate children's homes.
- The previous inspection of Herefordshire's arrangements for the protection of children was in October 2012. The local authority was judged to be inadequate.
- The previous inspection of Herefordshire's services for looked after children was in October 2010. The local authority was judged to be good.
- The previous inspection of Herefordshire's fostering services was in March 2013. The local authority was judged to be adequate.
- The previous inspection of Herefordshire's adoption services was in July 2011. The local authority was judged to be good.
- The previous inspection of Herefordshire's services for private fostering was in March 2009. The local authority was judged to be inadequate.

Other information about this area

- The Director of Children's Services has been in post since January 2012.
- The chair of the LSCB has been in post since February 2012.

³ These are residential special schools that look after children for fewer than 295 days.

Inspection judgements about the local authority

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection requires improvement

45. Children and their families who need early help are able to access a wide range of services that offer support to prevent their problems escalating. The recent reconfiguration of early help services into a more holistic family support service for children and young people up to 19 years of age is enhanced by co-location with children's social care teams.
46. The stability of the workforce in Families First enables children to build relationships with workers and to make positive changes in their lives; for example, to improve school attendance and to improve relationships at home. In the majority of cases seen, age-appropriate direct work with children was undertaken and used to inform case planning. Preventive work with children and young people is appropriately targeted to those at risk of becoming looked after. A large proportion of these children are subject to child protection plans or have recently been removed from such plans.
47. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is embedded across the county and its use is slowly increasing. At the time of the inspection there were 950 active CAFs. A further 400 CAFs had been completed and were waiting to be closed. Practitioners engaged in CAFs understand their roles and staff from many partner agencies take on the role of the lead professional. Information sharing at monthly Multi Agency Meetings (MAGS) ensures that children receive additional support when they need it from a range of agencies.
48. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has contributed to the recent improvement in multi-agency information sharing across the partnership. This enables partners to better identify children in need of help and protection. Currently the local authority and Herefordshire's Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB) are reviewing their thresholds for services as they are not being consistently applied by staff across partner agencies, resulting in some inappropriate referrals to children's social care services.
49. Since January 2014, decisions by managers on contacts and referrals in the MASH are timely and in the majority of cases are appropriate with clear case direction. The process for managing referrals has been clear and most decisions to take action are made within 24 hours. Referrals that meet the threshold for an assessment are allocated to social workers promptly.
50. Assessments of children's needs by social workers in the MASH are prompt in the majority of cases, and most assessments result in the delivery of appropriate services. However, in a small number of cases, assessments focused primarily on mothers and failed to sufficiently consider adult males in the households. A few assessments were overly optimistic about what can be achieved by some families, leading to re-referrals and delay in understanding

the children's experiences. In some cases, inconsistent use of chronologies and recording resulted in key information not being effectively used to inform the analysis.

51. In nearly all cases seen by inspectors, assessments did not demonstrate any meaningful consideration of the religious, ethnic or cultural needs of children or their families. Planning is not informed by the child's diverse needs and children and their families are often treated as having the same needs.
52. Neglect was a major factor in most cases seen by inspectors. Recent improvements in early help services have enabled early recognition of signs of neglect in families and more timely work to tackle the causes. However, in a few cases where management oversight was poor, delay in recognising the impact of chronic neglect on children resulted in an approach that was too focused on the needs of adults or on the presenting incident. The local authority's own audits identify the need to improve the quality of assessment for children and young people who suffer neglect. Staff are beginning to be trained in a variety of methods to measure the impact of neglect.
53. Since January 2014 management oversight of casework has become more robust. This has resulted in some improvement in practice and in the timeliness of work undertaken with children and families. However, inspectors saw many cases where the standards of social work assessment, support and case planning and management oversight were inadequate throughout 2013. This was confirmed by audits undertaken by the local authority, LSCB and partners in that period.
54. Since January 2014 referrals that meet the threshold for a child protection enquiry have been appropriately undertaken by suitably qualified social workers. Child protection strategy discussions that include relevant partner agencies are timely. Follow-up strategy meetings are fully recorded and result in well coordinated arrangements to protect children. No cases were seen of children and families being subjected to child protection investigations unnecessarily and none where children were left at risk of harm. Two cases were brought to the attention of children's social care services by inspectors where necessary child protection enquires had not been undertaken. Appropriate immediate action was taken to ensure that the children were safe.
55. The majority of child protection case conferences are appropriately held within timescales, are quorate and have good multi-agency attendance by partners. This results in the timely progression of child protection plans by core groups. However, conferences observed were poorly managed and meetings were too long and unfocused. Lack of capacity in administrative support for conferences results in unacceptable delays in distributing invitations to meetings, minutes and plans. In one case a parent reported receiving the conference minutes and child protection plan at the review conference six months later.

56. Outline plans made at initial child protection conferences are not sufficiently specific and measurable. They are too long and lack clarity on actions and timescales. However, most core groups are developing more robust child protection plans. Core groups are regularly held and are well attended by a range of agencies. Children subject to child protection plans are seen regularly and are seen alone where appropriate.
57. The local authority has taken decisive action to reduce social work caseloads to a manageable level. Caseloads have reduced from an average of over 30 in October 2013 to an average of 18 at the time of the inspection. This has been achieved by commissioning an external agency social work team to complete some work, provisionally until July 2014. The impact has been positive on staff morale and now social workers have time to spend with children which enables them to improve the quality of direct work with children and families. Improvements in practice are evident, particularly in the last three months, but have yet to be sustained.
58. Management oversight of social work practice and clarity of managers' decision making and direction in cases has begun to improve slowly. However management decisions and the reasons were not recorded well enough in the majority of cases. Supervision of social work staff is improving in regularity, but remains inconsistent in its quality. The local authority has recognised this and has recently provided supervision training to managers.
59. Children and their families have experienced frequent changes in social workers, often at short notice. For example, in two cases seen there had been eight different social workers in a two year period. This negatively affects the development of meaningful relationships with their social workers and has led to drift and delay. Where relationships with social workers have been sustained, inspectors saw examples of effective work leading to good outcomes for those children.
60. Inspectors reviewed 11 cases where children were living in households where there are concerns about parental mental health, domestic abuse and substance abuse. Similar significant improvement was evident from January 2014, with good child-focused direct work and assessment using research-based analysis and risk assessment. Collaborative partnerships working with the Drug & Alcohol Services, the adult mental health service and police in these cases resulted in timely intervention and better outcomes for those families.
61. The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is well established to consider children in families where domestic violence is known, with good representation and input from partner agencies. Inspectors saw evidence of appropriate communication between the police and children's social care services through the MARAC with strong links to the Multi-Agency Public Protection arrangements.

62. Arrangements for identifying and tracking individual young people who are missing from home are now managed and progressed well by the MASH team. A return interview takes place within 48 hours by staff from the early help service. Interviews are recorded and address issues of safety and vulnerability to sexual exploitation. However, information from return interviews is not routinely collated or analysed to understand trends, and is not shared with the police to enable them to develop local intelligence.
63. Effective work is undertaken to identify and respond to individual young people at risk of child sexual exploitation. In most cases seen, strategy meetings and child protection conferences were held where it was appropriate to do so.
64. Children who are missing from care, particularly those children placed in the area by another authority, do not receive a consistent response. Data on the number and type of incident is not robustly maintained or analysed. The number of reported missing episodes of looked after children is rising, as are the number of children who go missing three or more times in a 90-day period. The lack of a robust multi-agency approach means that for most children this is being managed on a case-by-case basis without consistent collaborative information sharing.
65. At the time of the inspection 17 children were missing from education. Clear protocols are in place between schools, the fair access panel and children's social care services. As a result, children missing from education receive a consistent response and any children not found within 14 days are referred to the MASH and are appropriately assessed. There are currently 100 children home educated, who are subject of robust safeguarding consideration.
66. The eligibility criteria for children with disabilities (CWD) lacks clarity and this means that children who have a disability are not always appropriately identified. Some children in receipt of respite care who meet the criteria are not currently being reviewed by the Independent Reviewing service. In one case, a young person in a joint-funded placement had not been reviewed by the local authority for five years. Inspectors reviewed all the current children with disabilities where there were child protection concerns, and recent risk assessments are robust. However, in one case child protection concerns had not been properly considered in 2013, and the local authority acknowledged this.
67. Few children are enabled or encouraged to attend child protection conferences. Advocates are available for children over ten who do effectively represent their views, although this support is not extended to representation at core groups. The voice of younger children is not independently represented as there is no advocacy service offered to children under ten years old.

68. Arrangements to identify and support children who are privately fostered are underdeveloped and issues identified in previous inspections of Herefordshire's private fostering have not been fully addressed. During the inspection the local authority reported they were aware of seven private fostering arrangements. All four cases seen by inspectors had a private fostering assessment and appropriate visits had been undertaken. There is an on-line private fostering training module and a poster campaign in schools and children's centres, but little evidence that awareness raising initiatives are having any impact.
69. Arrangements for managing and responding to allegations of abuse or mistreatment of children by professionals and carers, through the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) have recently been reviewed. All cases seen by inspectors were responded to appropriately. Outcomes of referrals to the LADO are reported to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
70. The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for children is commissioned from a neighbouring authority. Effective systems are in place which ensure good communication between the EDT and the social work teams and access to electronic case files. However, arrangements for young people detained in police custody needing alternative accommodation out of office hours are poor. There is no local authority emergency accommodation for children held by the police. The EDT do not always sufficiently explore all options, resulting in young people being detained in police cells overnight unnecessarily. This was identified in previous inspection by HMIC in September 2013 and has not been resolved.

The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence requires improvement

71. For children where family breakdown is likely, intensive support services provided by the early help team work well and improve outcomes for the majority of children. Targeted youth support working in partnership with social workers also provides help for those at risk of becoming looked after. Edge of care services are located within the children in need service. The placement panel provides routine oversight, case guidance and monitoring of edge of care work.
72. Where legal processes are required to secure a safe future for children improvements have, in most cases, resulted in effective use of the public law outline (PLO) and legal planning meetings. However, in four cases out of six seen children did not become looked after promptly enough as a result of delay in taking assertive action prior to 2014.
73. Family Group Conferences (FGC's) are not used to inform legal planning. The service is under-resourced and poorly developed, and generally staff in children's services are unaware of the benefits that FGC's bring to effective care planning. Early identification of children requiring permanence is

achieved by adoption managers' routine attendance at legal planning meetings.

74. The development of the court team over the last year is positive, and where children need the protection of legal orders work is timely and delays are the exception. Nearly all cases are completed within 30 weeks and performance in the timeliness of court proceedings continues to improve. The Judiciary and CAFCASS report that Herefordshire is raising its practice standards, although they acknowledge that some social work court reports are still insufficiently analytical.
75. Where looked after children are returned to their families, reunification plans are not consistently robust. In three cases out of the 15 seen work was well planned and structured to support children's return home. However, in others children returned home in an unplanned way, without planned support, and in one case a young person moved in and out of care several times in a short period.
76. Enabling children to maintain positive contact with their families is a priority in care planning, and social workers take a flexible approach to ensure that children benefit from and enjoy contact. When contact is being planned or reviewed children's views are sought and taken into account. They are able to influence how often they see their relatives and for how long. Resourcing supervision of contact remains a challenge for the local authority, and recent improvements include the provision of additional staffing and an in-house manager to oversee and co-ordinate arrangements.
77. The vast majority of the 65 children who are placed outside of Herefordshire are not disadvantaged and their needs are currently met. 42 are placed in adjoining authorities. Children are only placed at distance to meet their individual, specific needs, for example to be with family members or because of complex disabilities. Social workers visit children regularly and routine monitoring of provider standards is undertaken by a contracting team. A young person living out of the area reports very good care, access to specialist help and high levels of satisfaction with the support that they receive.
78. Permanence plans are not always made as promptly as they should be. Managers acknowledge that these plans are not always made at the second review and can be significantly delayed. A small number of plans were seen which were not prompt or focused where young people were accommodated on an emergency basis.
79. Care plans are reviewed in a timely way and the views of children and young people are sought and are included. An advocacy service is available and either a young person or their carer can make a referral. The number of times advocacy is used for children looked after appears high at 116 in the last year; no analysis has been undertaken to determine how effective the

service is or what issues it helps to address. In addition young people report there can be a long wait to see an advocate.

80. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) routinely see children prior to their review and very occasionally between review dates. Where plans for permanence are not made promptly enough or use of the PLO is prolonged, IROs do not always challenge practice. Some reviews are chaired well by IROs, who are sensitive to the needs and emotions of children and family members. Managers acknowledge that substantial work is required to fully implement the requirements of the IRO handbook. The quality assurance role of IROs is underdeveloped and currently the IRO team does not have sufficient capacity to progress and develop its work as swiftly as it needs to. The drive and leadership required to ensure the IRO service becomes fully effective is not evident.
81. For some brothers and sisters with permanence plans a specialist therapist within the adoption team provides good quality assessments of whether they should live together or separately. For other children, placement planning meetings make these decisions and the minutes seen were poorly recorded and did not reflect the significance of the decisions made. Where children achieve permanence through long-term fostering the match to their carer is thoroughly considered at Placement Panel. Matching reports are good and the significance of the event is marked by a letter and certificate for the child from the Head of Service.
82. The vast majority of children live in good quality, stable foster care and appropriate use of Independent Fostering Agencies ensures that there is sufficient placement choice. Placement stability is good, with only 7% of children having three or more placement moves in a year in 2012–13 compared to a national average of 11%. Children seen understand why they are in care and what their care plans mean for them. They all say that they feel safe at home and school. Whilst children make meaningful and positive relationships with their carers, often they experience many changes in social worker without any warning or reason being given. Further, they are not always made aware of and sure of their rights and entitlements.
83. Performance in securing permanent arrangements for children through the use of special guardianship (SGO) is good. In 2012–13, 21% of children left care through SGO compared to statistical neighbours at 9%. Currently 65 children are subject to special guardianship and a full review of their placements and support plans is taking place. Plans are well advanced to implement a kinship and special guardians' unit to centralise and improve standards of support.
84. The local authority meets its duty to ensure that there are sufficient suitable placements to meet children's needs through the use of in-house and purchased placements. A well-planned sufficiency strategy is in place and future projections of need are realistic. Placement costs are benchmarked

against both neighbouring authorities and national averages. Managers have appropriate plans to increase their in-house provision and demonstrate success through an additional 14 carers in the last year. Kinship care is routinely used, underpinned by appropriate assessments, and numbers are steadily increasing.

85. Family-finding strategies for children who require permanence through long-term fostering are effective and are informed by a detailed knowledge of children's needs. Placement support is good and meets the child's and carer's needs. Fostering files are clear and well-maintained. Training for carers is good, wide-ranging and easily accessible. Children receive effective individual support when needed from a specific family support worker who is a member of the fostering team. Delegation of day-to-day authority to enable foster carers to make decisions about children is clear. Foster carers receive good management oversight. Routine reviews of foster carers, unannounced visits, and required reference checks are all undertaken and are recorded well in case files.
86. An experienced, independent chair of the Fostering Panel works well with the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) to ensure that safe decisions are made about the approval and review of foster carers. The panel is appropriately constituted, has a measured approach and provides robust quality assurance of the work it oversees.
87. The majority of looked after children are now making the educational progress expected of their age, taking into account their often low starting points when they enter care. In 2012/3, however, progress and attainment at Key Stage 2 dropped well below the national average for looked after children because only 5 out of 15 children achieved as expected. At Key Stage 4, most made good progress and seven out of 14 gained five or more good GCSEs, following improvement on the previous two years performance. Most of the remainder gained at least five A-G grades at the same level. The proportion achieving good grades in English and mathematics remains in line with the national average for looked after children and, therefore, the gap in attainment with all children in Herefordshire is not closing.
88. School attendance of looked after children is good. Those with a history of persistent absence prior to coming into care improve their attendance rapidly. Behaviour of looked after children at school is good and resulted in a low level of fixed-term exclusions that has fallen further this year, with 20 incidences to date. There were no permanent exclusions of looked after children in the two school years to 2013, however, one child has been excluded this year.
89. The virtual school has had a positive impact on raising the profile of looked after children, in partnership with a well-established network of designated teachers. The large majority of looked after children are in schools judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted. Additional support has been put in place

for the 24 children already attending two local schools when they were not judged good by Ofsted. Progress in all education placements is monitored, including for the seven children receiving alternative education or less than 25 hours education for medical reasons. No looked after child was missing from education at the time of the inspection. The virtual school's active involvement in care placement planning enables suitable education to be found swiftly, in or outside the county, and most children enjoy good continuity in schooling throughout their time in care.

90. Good quality personal education plans (PEP) underpin the tracking of individual pupil attendance, behaviour, progress and attainment. Children play an active part in PEP meetings and plans are readily available to social workers and IROs to use in looked after children reviews. Nine of 12 plans seen by inspectors were good, comprehensive and meaningful for all concerned, including children and young people. Suitable attention is paid to personal and social development as well as behaviour and learning goals. However, academic target setting does not always focus sufficiently on rapidly improving the progress of children who are, or are at risk of, falling behind.
91. The virtual school's capacity to directly provide targeted support to children has been strengthened this year by retaining a proportion of the pupil premium which is delegated to schools. There is keen awareness that more needs to be done to close the attainment gap and additional education psychology support, group and individual tuition and activities to raise aspirations are underway. Children benefit from a diverse range of recreational activities and opportunities in and outside of school. The participation project within the virtual school runs popular weekly Fun Clubs and recently enabled a group of young people to make an excellent hard-hitting film about bullying, working alongside professionals in the media industry.
92. Improving the health outcomes for looked after children is appropriately prioritised. Within the last six months, very rapid improvement in the capacity to offer timely appointments for initial health assessments means that 82% of looked after children were seen promptly. General practitioners are now notified when a child becomes looked after, facilitating the prompt sharing of information if a child has an existing medical condition. Improved performance is also demonstrated, with 92% of immunisations completed and clear reasons for those not completed. Partnerships with health professionals work well to provide specific examinations and assessments that contribute to child protection processes.
93. Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) treatment is inconsistent. While many referrals are made to CAMHS very few looked after children and young people meet the threshold for treatment so do not receive the help requested. Managers are placing reliance on the Therapeutic Intervention Support Service due to be operational in September 2014 to fill

the gap in support for the emotional and mental wellbeing of looked after children.

94. The children in care council is underdeveloped, but the recent appointment of a dedicated participation worker as part of the virtual school has brought new direction, commitment and energy to developing the council. Over the last six to nine months a small but enthusiastic group of young people are starting to make a difference in representing looked after children and have engaged in revising the pledge, staff recruitment and the development of a website.
95. The quality of management oversight in the looked after children team is too variable. Case records demonstrate some improvements in recording manager's directions in the last few months. Managers in the fostering and adoption teams demonstrate good oversight, clearly recorded on case files. The placement panel provides an additional and beneficial layer of oversight to managing looked after children's work. The complex needs panel meets routinely and oversees and makes decisions about joint-funded placements for children requiring the highest levels of support and care.
96. Performance management across looked after children services is poor, and is not supported by effective management information. This means that strategic and operational managers do not have an accurate overview or contemporaneous knowledge of what is happening in their services. The adoption and fostering teams have compensated for this through the use of effective manual systems and benefit from an in-depth knowledge of their service.

The graded judgment for adoption performance is good

97. When children cannot live with their parents, or within their extended family, adoption is appropriately considered as a permanence option. Adoption plans were made within six months of the child coming into care for the vast majority of the 15 children who are currently waiting for adoption. For seven of those children a potential match has been identified but has not yet progressed to the adoption panel. Legal planning meetings thoroughly consider the thresholds for legal proceedings. The decision for adoption and seeking a placement order by the agency decision maker (ADM) is made in a timely way, which helps children move into their adoptive placement as quickly as possible.
98. The local authority's improving performance in relation to the Adoption Scorecard is good. Court timescales currently average 30 weeks and make a good contribution to helping children move in with their adoptive family as soon as possible once their placement orders are granted. Good performance is also demonstrated in the time it takes for children to move to their prospective adopter from coming into care. In January 2014 Herefordshire was one of only 36 authorities meeting its target in this area. Since then,

based on the local authority's unvalidated data to March 2014, performance has improved further with the time taken now standing at 15 months. This is significantly better than the current national average of 21 months and, if performance is sustained, is in line to achieve the DfE target for 2016 of 14 months.

99. When there are delays in adoption these are clear and appropriate, for example in some cases the reason for delay relates to legal processes such as an appeal against the placement order. In other cases evidence clearly demonstrates that there is continued and persistent family finding activity. The adoption team do not like to 'give up' and their commitment, combined with their expertise in family finding, means that only three children have had their plans changed away from adoption in the last year. In those cases children have remained with existing carers or moved to extended family.
100. Applicants are routinely informed during their training about the benefits for children of concurrent planning and fostering to adopt. They are encouraged to consider this during their assessment and good evidence was seen of this in Prospective Adopter Reports and panel minutes. However, no concurrent or foster to adopt placements have been made.
101. Co-location and good information sharing between the adoption and fostering teams helps social workers to build a detailed knowledge of the children who may need an adoptive family. Information gathered is used well to develop children's profiles which are circulated within the team, neighbouring authorities, the Adoption Register and more widely as the family finding process progresses.
102. Adoption service managers effectively oversee the progress of family finding for all children who are waiting for an adoptive placement. This is supported by effective (manual) management information systems. Monthly progress reports are made to adoption panel and six monthly reports to senior managers which set out progress and the local authority's performance against the adoption scorecard.
103. Rates of recruiting adopters are satisfactory and numbers have increased year on year. The authority acknowledges that more targeted recruitment is needed to better meet the needs of children who are waiting too long. Some progress has been made but continued negotiations to develop a regional approach, through the West Mercia project, has added delay.
104. Prospective adopters have good, prompt access to preparation and training. Stage 1 of the application process is completed promptly and within required timescales. The content of the training is appropriate and applicants report positively about the learning they have gained, particularly in relation to attachment issues. Stage 2 is also timely and compliant with national guidance. Assessments are thorough; reports are of good quality and increasingly analytical.

105. The adoption panel and the panel chair ensure good standards of practice, robust quality assurance of reports and constructive feedback to applicants. The panel chair provides challenge to improve assessment practice and to ensure appropriate levels of adoption support for children. A strong working relationship between the adoption panel chair and the ADM ensures that the matches between children and prospective adopters are thorough and timely.
106. Adopters spoken to said that adoption social workers are professional, approachable and very skilled in making the assessment process feel thorough, probing but not intrusive and a 'two way process'. Case files are compliant with regulations and case recording is up to date and detailed. Adoption team social workers provide good, highly-valued support to adopters throughout the process and this is evidenced in routine post-adoption order feedback. The part-time child and adolescent therapist attached to the team provides good individual support for children and families from assessment to post-adoption. One adopter said that work done with their child had made the difference between having 'a happy family and one that was just about coping'.
107. Post-adoption order support is good. The service is responsive to all parties in post-adoption arrangements. Adopters appreciate being able to access advice and more extensive support when they need it. 21 children have received adoption support in the past year, not including children who have been in receipt of financial support only. A dedicated Letterbox coordinator provides a good service to support contact with birth relatives post-adoption for 125 children. The adoption team also provides valued counselling for birth parents and, in the last year, for 22 adopted adults. Good use is made of learning from this aspect of their practice by enriching preparation of adopters and undertaking life story work with children.

The graded judgment for the experiences and progress of care leavers is requires improvement

108. The 16+ team, which provides services for older looked after young people and care leavers, is emerging from a long period of instability, management changes and a legacy of under-resourcing, well below the national average. Over the last year, clear direction from a new team manager, development of the No4 centre as a team base and centre for young people, and additional qualified staff, have all had a positive impact on the service. Staff morale is now high and a strong team ethos is developing. However, many policies, procedures and practices are new and their impact on improving outcomes for care leavers has not yet been fully demonstrated.
109. In the last six months, improvements in transition arrangements from looked after children teams to the 16+ service are helping to support young people as they progress through and out of care. All young people, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, have named personal advisors who

provide good continuity at key stages towards independence or transition to adult services. Care leavers with learning disabilities also have a lead worker in the adult learning difficulties service to facilitate joint planning.

110. The majority of young people have a pathway plan based on an assessment of their needs. However, nine of the 12 plans seen required improvement and two were inadequate or were out of date. This was a key area for improvement at the last inspection of looked after children's services and remains so. Different planning and risk assessment tools, for example in relation to drug use or sexual exploitation, are used but do not link together coherently. A much-improved interactive electronic planning tool is being developed to address this. Young people contribute to their plans and reviews, but few plans reflect their aspirations or individual needs sufficiently. Partner agencies, who often provide key services and support to care leavers, are not routinely involved in plans.
111. The quality of plans contrasts sharply with the views that young people expressed to inspectors, which were positive about the care, support and practical help provided by the 16+ team. One young person said 'They go the extra mile for you'. Workers build trusting relationships over time through regular contact and reviews.
112. Young people are encouraged to live healthy life-styles and make informed choices about their health, relationships and behaviour. The looked after children nurse runs a weekly drop-in session at No4, with the option of a full health assessment for all aged under 18. The take-up is currently low but is improving and non-attendance is followed up. Young people have good access to youth counselling, substance misuse and sexual health services. Ten young people make regular use of the free gym membership that is available to all care leavers. Personal advisors ensure that young people have relevant identity documents, national insurance numbers and birth certificates. Only three young people currently have a copy of their full health record and action is being taken to ensure that they all do.
113. A range of suitable accommodation and housing meets the needs of young people and this includes supported housing, foyer provision and tenancies. 91% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation, which is above the national average of 88%. Young people told inspectors that they felt safe where they lived and benefited from practical support and regular contact with personal advisors and housing workers, helping them to develop independent living skills. The Staying Put policy has increased choice for those who want to remain in foster care with a level of support well matched to individual need. Eleven young people have chosen this so far, with carers trained for three more. The 16+ team works well with the youth offending service to meet the needs of young people in custody in preparation for their return to the community.

114. As a result of learning in 2013 from a local serious case review, no young people are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. Improved partnership work and information sharing between children's social care, the housing department and key partners ensures that 16 and 17 year-olds who present as homeless and cannot return home safely are found suitable accommodation which meets their needs. However, a gap remains in specialist provision locally for the small number of highly vulnerable care leavers with complex needs and often chaotic life-styles, who are more likely to be placed out of the area at a greater distance from support networks. The local authority is exploring how to meet this need locally.
115. The virtual school supports all young people well in their initial transition into further education. A post-16 personal education plan is available, but only a few are currently in place and arrangements are informal and ad hoc. Although the majority of care leavers are engaged positively in education, training or work, 14 out of 50 aged 16 to 19 years are not. Care leavers in Herefordshire are four times more likely to be out of work, not in education or training than their peers locally. The local authority recognises that more targeted and independent information, advice and careers guidance is needed. Work experience, mentoring opportunities and two apprenticeships have been identified specifically for care leavers and are being developed as part of the local authority's New Belongings programme.
116. Care leavers attending university are well supported. Seven young people are currently on degree courses and four more have places in September 2014. The virtual school is working with foster carers, linked to a number of other new activities, to raise young people's aspirations in relation to higher education.
117. Care leavers are not always aware of their legal entitlements and this is not a routine part of pathway planning. A small, committed and active group of care leavers are supported well to raise the profile of care leavers and to champion their views within the local authority, partner agencies and with other young people. Care leavers are involved in recruitment and selection processes, support the work of the children in care council, and undertake voluntary work in the community. They are engaged in the development of a new website designed to provide helpful information and advice.

Leadership, management and governance requires improvement

118. Progress has been made in improving the quality of front-line practice since Ofsted judged the local authority as inadequate in an inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children in October 2012. However, until very recently this has been too slow and erratic. Many of the improvements in front line practice are as recent as January 2014.
119. Services for looked after children and care leavers have deteriorated since the child protection and children looked after inspection in 2010 which

judged the services as good. In contrast, adoption services have been maintained at a good level.

120. Following the issue of an improvement notice by the Department for Education (DfE) in February 2013 the local authority engaged in a comprehensive improvement plan which was subsequently refined and more sharply focused as a result of learning from a rigorous peer review undertaken in October 2013.
121. Despite high levels of self-knowledge and activity demonstrated at every level in the local authority, too many areas for improvement identified in the child protection inspection of 2012 have not resulted in positive progress prior to January 2014. Throughout 2013 there were significant concerns in relation to poor standards of practice and management throughout children's services which left children at risk.
122. Ensuring that the senior leadership team within the local authority has sufficient capacity and skill to lead organisational change has been a key challenge that has slowed the pace of improvement. Since the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive in March 2013 and a lead member with specific responsibility for children's services the pace of change has accelerated. Senior management capacity has been increased by separating the previously combined role of Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Services in August 2013. Other key posts in the current children's services senior leadership were filled in October 2013 and the team in its current establishment has been fully operational since January 2014.
123. Senior leaders in the local authority, strategic partners and key elected members now demonstrate a detailed and consistent understanding of the service's strengths and weaknesses based on learning from the inspection of 2012, a rigorous Local Government Association (LGA) peer review conducted in October 2013 and reviewed in February 2014, and on-going monitoring and evaluation of its progress by the independent Improvement Board. However, progress has been hampered by the persistently poor quality of performance management information available within the children's services, from electronic case file and data systems which are still being developed. Also, many of the plans that have been developed to improve services are in draft form or have only recently been implemented, making it too early to evaluate their effectiveness.
124. Protecting children and giving them a great start in life is a key priority for the local authority and across partnerships, who now ensure that the focus on protecting children is not lost in the light of competing priorities in a time of severe financial austerity. Despite challenging reductions required in the council expenditure over the next three years, children's services as a whole has been largely protected in the savings identified for other council services and there are no plans to cut front-line social care services. Efficiency savings in other parts of the organisation, such as in business support, have

had a negative impact, for example resulting in delayed distribution of invitations and minutes of child protection conferences. This was identified in recent multi-agency audits and is being closely monitored by the senior leadership team.

125. Leadership, management and governance arrangements comply with statutory guidance and are well understood by all key stakeholders including elected members, the Chief Executive and other members of the senior management team. They discharge their individual and collective responsibilities diligently and with effect. The Chief Executive meets regularly with the Director of Children's Services (DCS), the chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB) and the lead member for children's services. There is mutual constructive debate and challenge within these meetings that shapes the development of children's services.
126. The local authority makes good use of its links with the LGA and is active in seeking out new opportunities to learn from good practice elsewhere. For example a group of councillors recently visited another local authority to explore how to improve their role as corporate parents.
127. The establishment of a Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) during early 2013 for the contact, referral and assessment service was ineffectively overseen and significant practice, management and resource issues amongst the contributing partner agencies were not recognised or resolved. A Peer review of October 2013 identified that significant urgent changes were required in relation to the consistency, timeliness, and the quality of partnership working within the MASH. This resulted in the local authority and its partners taking prompt, decisive remedial action. As a result, since December 2013, more timely and effective assessment and safeguarding of children has been supported by increasingly effective partnership working at the front door in the MASH. Since January 2014 there is evidence of appropriate management oversight of cases within the MASH in almost all cases. However, the quality and regularity of management oversight in the rest of children's services remains too variable.
128. The local authority invested in supervision training for all frontline managers in April 2014. Staff report that they receive regular formal and informal supervision. However, the use of regular formal written supervision as a tool for reflection, support and management of performance is inconsistent. In 13 of 26 supervision records seen there were gaps in the frequency of supervision and records were brief. Inspectors saw few examples of good supervision records, demonstrating appropriate challenge and support. Prompt recording of supervision is not prioritised in all teams. The Local Authority had already identified this issue prior to this inspection and an audit of supervision is planned for July 2014.
129. Staff report that senior managers are visible and supportive. The Chief Executive and elected members visited social care teams following the last

Ofsted inspection and members of the senior leadership team regularly visit teams. A staff forum has been held to consult with staff formally and to keep them apprised of developments. Another, which was planned for the time of this inspection, was postponed. Staff told inspectors that senior managers, after a period of many changes, are now making an 'emotional investment' in the authority as well as a financial investment in improving and developing their service. As a result staff express confidence and commitment to the service.

130. Almost all the areas for improvement identified in the inspection of child protection services in 2012 have been addressed, albeit at a slow pace, and some, such as the screening and prioritisation of referrals in the MASH, are now working well. However, performance monitoring and quality assurance arrangements continue to pose significant challenges, as does the number of changes of social worker experienced by children and their families. Both were identified as areas for development in that inspection.
131. Performance management is not embedded in management culture. The local authority's ability to evaluate its own performance is compromised at every stage of the child's journey due to inaccuracies and gaps in its data collection. The local authority struggled to provide prompt, accurate data to inspectors during the course of this inspection.
132. Improvements and adjustments to the authority's electronic systems were identified as an area for further improvement by the DfE following the twelve month review meeting on the 12 March 2014. There is a clear work plan to address the issues by July 2014.
133. There has been improvement since January 2014 in the accuracy of data within the MASH team which enables managers to monitor the timeliness of work. However, across the rest of the service accuracy of data remains poor. The most easily accessible and accurate data seen by inspectors were those held in the adoption and fostering teams, which is collected manually.
134. The quality of case file audits undertaken by the local authority for the purpose of this inspection was good, using a comprehensive audit tool. Findings were aspirational, and where deficits in practice had been identified appropriate plans with clear priorities had already been put in place. However, routine case auditing at a team and service level is not sufficiently established and learning from those audits that have taken place has not been used to collate themes.
135. Learning from complaints is anecdotal, and insufficiently robust. The local authority identified in October 2013 that the complaints process in relation to children's services was ineffective and required fundamental changes to ensure it is meeting statutory guidance. There are plans to transfer responsibilities to the quality assurance team in June 2014 in order to streamline the process and improve robustness of investigation and

response. The current arrangements, although improving, remain insufficiently detailed to assist analysis of themes arising from complaints. Similarly, qualitative evaluation of the impact of the advocacy service across looked after children and child protection provision is not undertaken, and there is no collation of themes to inform organisational learning.

136. The local authority acknowledges that until very recently corporate parenting was not given sufficient priority. The creation of a dedicated health and social care overview committee, supported by a permanent operational safeguarding group, has resulted in increased focus on children's services. This group has made a series of key recommendations to strengthen elected members' understanding of the role of corporate parent, including mandatory training as part of the induction process for newly elected members. This has not yet taken place. The number of cross-party councillors in the corporate parent group has been increased. This newly reconstituted group has made some progress. They have refreshed the Pledge which is now written by young people, and held events to raise awareness of children in care, including the planning of a looked after children celebration event. Many recent developments are standard practice in most local authorities and much further work is required for the local authority to achieve its goal of becoming 'good' corporate parents.
137. There has recently been substantially increased investment in the leaving care service, which was significantly under-resourced compared to statistical neighbours and national averages. This was the result of learning from a recent serious case review. Expenditure on care leavers has increased from 2% to 7% of the children's services budget this year, which is now in line with the national average. The leaving care grant has been increased and a contract for commissioned services to improve levels of support to young people with complex needs in supported accommodation is being tendered.
138. The retention and recruitment of a suitable workforce with sufficient capacity to deliver good quality services for children remains a key risk to the sustainability of improvements in practice and management of the local authority children's services. Until as recently as March 2014 caseloads were too high, in part due to increased referral rates. Attempts to address the balance by transfer of cases between teams were ineffective. This, combined with high staff turnover, caused delay and uncertainty for some children. Leaders took decisive and effective action and, in March 2014, engaged a short-term project team provided by an external agency to reduce caseloads and to ensure that children now receive a prompt and effective service. Caseloads in the Children with Disabilities team remain too high and have been compounded by an increase in children subject to child protection processes within that service as a result of improved recognition of risk.
139. A period of destabilisation and high turnover of staff followed the findings of the Ofsted inspection in 2012. The ratio of agency staff to permanent rose sharply due to a variety of factors, including positive moving on of both

permanent and agency staff who were unable to provide the standard or work required. As a result, many children have had too many changes of worker and this has negatively affected the quality and consistency of practice in the past two years. Some workers report that they have had up to three changes of manager in a year. This has begun to stabilise through securing more permanent staff and through securing suitable agency staff on longer-term contracts.

140. The local authority workforce strategy is comprehensive, realistic, and is based on a detailed analysis of local market forces. It incorporates financial and professional development incentives to make working in the authority competitive. It acknowledges the inevitability of use of interims and minimises disruption to children by the use of long-term contracts with skilled agency staff. Finance to support sustainability is agreed. The current ratio of agency to permanent staff is improving, but remains high. The local authority has recently recruited a further eight newly qualified social workers as part of a 'grow our own' initiative.
141. The local authority has developed effective strategic partnerships with the Children and Court Advisory Service (Cafcass) and the judiciary and protocols with health partners which have resulted in a substantial reduction of timescales in court proceedings to avoid delay in securing outcomes for children. Targets set under the Public Law Outline of within 26 weeks are nearly met. A member of the judiciary commented that the local authority has done 'astonishingly well' to reverse the position they were in 2009–10, when Herefordshire had nine out of ten of the longest running cases placed before courts locally to now having the fewest.
142. The Children and Families Joint Commissioning Group, with the local authority and health partners, commissions services based on the priorities of the Children and Young People's Partnership forum. The priorities are consistent across strategic groups and ensure that vulnerable children and those known to children's social care services remain at the forefront of joint commissioning arrangements. Priorities drawn from the Joint Strategic Analysis (JSNA) are recognised by the group to have insufficient detail about children, and this is being addressed through a further analysis of the needs of vulnerable children commissioned to report in June 2014. The local authority and partners are improving the targeting of services through more robust analysis of need. For example, a domestic abuse needs analysis resulted in increased services commissioned from Women's Aid and a review of the effectiveness of the CAHMS service, which has recently been completed.
143. The looked after children commissioning strategy is robust. It is based on trend analysis and an understanding of gaps in provision, and good team level knowledge of the young people known to children's services. It is informed by best practice considerations, statutory requirements and case law.

144. Within local authority commissioned services recent consultation with service users and other interested stakeholders have enabled young people and their carers to be actively involved in the drawing up of service specifications and evaluation panels, ensuring that the tendering process is fully inclusive and relevant to the needs of specific groups. Monitoring of contracts across services that are commissioned is informed by unannounced visits to providers, user feedback and short-term evaluation of impact based on case studies which, whilst appropriate and informative, is insufficiently robust.
145. Current services commissioned are relevant to the local authority's statutory duties. Stakeholder events with third sector providers and private business have been held to promote development of alternative funding to maintain services which, whilst helpful and enriching to children's lives, do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention. Events were well attended but it is too early to measure effectiveness.
146. Commissioning of short breaks for children with disabilities to move from a medical model of respite care has been too slow. The identified service in place since January 2014 has so far recruited only one carer and received two referrals neither of which was suitable. Currently, therefore, there is insufficient choice and flexibility of provision available to support disabled children and their families.
147. The local authority has not effectively addressed the diverse needs of the children and families that its supports at either a strategic level or when assessing or meeting the diverse needs of individual children. Strategic planning is hampered by poor information collection and by the relatively small number, but wide range, of families from cultural and ethnically diverse groups. This also poses a challenge for staff to gain knowledge and experience to understand and engage with children and young people from diverse backgrounds. However, inspectors saw two good examples of careful and sensitive work that took into account children's individual identity needs.

What the inspection judgements mean: the local authority

An **outstanding** local authority leads highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** local authority leads effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and those who are looked after and care leavers have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a local authority that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the authority is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children, young people and families.

A local authority that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after or care leavers not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Section 2: The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

The effectiveness of the LSCB requires improvement

Priority and immediate action

148. There are no areas for priority or immediate action.

Areas for improvement

- 149. Ensure that governance arrangements between the LSCB and the Improvement Board are clarified.
- 150. Ensure that LSCB policies and procedures are up to date and incorporate issues specific to Herefordshire.
- 151. Ensure that the LSCB receives accurate and relevant performance information from its partners to enable it to assure itself on the quality of safeguarding work.
- 152. Ensure that the work of the LSCB operational groups is manageable and prioritised.
- 153. Ensure that learning from multi-agency case audits is actioned and the impact is reviewed through repeat audits.
- 154. Ensure that robust strategies and intelligence in relation to specific vulnerable groups are developed and implemented, in particular missing children and those at risk of child sexual exploitation.
- 155. Ensure that multi-agency safeguarding training is sufficient, taken up by partners and is robustly evaluated.
- 156. Ensure that the LSCB business unit is effectively able to support the work of the LSCB.

Key strengths and weaknesses of the LSCB

- 157. Governance arrangements between the LSCB and the local authority are well established, with the LSCB chair regularly meeting with the Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive Officer, to ensure that the authority is fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities. The LSCB Chair is a member of the Children and Young People's Partnership, which helps to ensure that safeguarding children is appropriately considered in the wider context of services for children and families and is incorporated into the Children and Young People's Plan. Whilst the LSCB Chair has made presentations on safeguarding children to the Health and Wellbeing Board, safeguarding of children is not clearly prioritised by this board.

158. The LSCB complies with its statutory responsibilities. The LSCB minutes and the last published annual report provide sufficient account of the challenges faced by the Board and its partners in developing and promoting safeguarding issues and of the activity of the board. The 2013–14 report has not yet been completed. The board and its sub-groups have developed detailed actions plans which are specific and measurable. However, the extensive range of practice, policy and procedural issues that need to be addressed, revised or updated poses a significant challenge to partners on how well, quickly or systematically actions that have been agreed are progressed.
159. The terms of reference for the LSCB are clear, as are the roles and responsibilities of the Chair and board members. The role of the LSCB Chair is sufficiently independent. However the respective roles of the Improvement Board and the LSCB are not sufficiently clear, with no protocol established between them. The LSCB is described by members as 'reporting to' the Improvement Board and, particularly in the period following the last Ofsted inspection 2012, aspects of the LSCB work programme were established by the Improvement Board plan. Engagement by the LSCB in the Improvement Board has strengthened and enhanced the profile of the LSCB and secured commitment from senior officers from partner agencies. However, as the LSCB increases its effectiveness its lead statutory role in safeguarding children needs to be realigned with that of the Improvement Board.
160. The LSCB has received reports on the range of early help provision in the area, and in April 2014 began to consider proposed changes to early help services and to explore its governance role in relation to these. However, this is very recent and the Board has exerted little influence in the development or targeting of early help services or in the evaluation of the effectiveness of early help services in preventing the need for safeguarding children or children being subject to repeat plans of protection. The LSCB has appropriately maintained an overview of the safeguarding of looked after children, including those placed outside the area, and has challenged children's services to report to the Board on the effectiveness of these services.
161. The LSCB has focused appropriately on performance management, primarily through enhancing the role of its Quality Assurance sub-group, which has undertaken regular multi-agency audits of safeguarding practice. An extensive programme of themed audits has been scheduled, focused on key practice issues. However, repeat audits of the same themes, to ascertain whether actions resulting from the learning have improved practice, have not been achieved due to the extensive and overambitious work programme for this sub-group. One repeat audit on child protection conferences did not demonstrate significant improvements in the areas identified by the previous audit. The sub-committee also considers performance information from partner agencies, and is particularly dependent on data from the local authority children's services. Partners recognise that repeated inaccuracies in

performance data provided by children's services severely undermine their ability to robustly analyse safeguarding practice. The Board and its partners have continually challenged the local authority to provide accurate data. The LSCB and its sub-groups and partners had not identified the issues of concern in relation to practice in the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as it was becoming established in 2013, which were identified by the Peer Review. The LSCB now more rigorously monitors the effectiveness of the MASH through an LSCB governance group.

162. The LSCB has responded to developments in child sexual exploitation through a case discussion group and working group tasked to develop local plans. A new sexual exploitation and trafficking strategic group was established in March 2014 to review local policies and to develop a new action plan, intelligence and information sharing. A new operational group is to be established to consider individual cases and themes arising from these. Similarly, strategic planning for missing children is underdeveloped. Whilst the LSCB uses the West Mercia Police joint protocol, this was last reviewed in 2011, is outdated and does not include local issues. The LSCB developed a missing children action plan in 2013. Whilst work with individual children who are vulnerable, at risk of going missing or of sexual exploitation is appropriate, this is not yet well supported by strategic oversight and intelligence sharing and is not sufficiently joined up.
163. The Child Death Overview Panel and the Joint Case Review Sub-Group are well-established, well-represented by partner agencies and robustly consider detailed information. One Serious Case Review has been recently completed and several single and multi-agency reviews have been appropriately undertaken, with learning shared at the Board and with partner agencies. Due consideration has been given to joining these groups with similar groups in neighbouring authorities, as the work programmes are low, commensurate with the size of the area, but the LSCB has decided to retain locally focused groups.
164. Safeguarding is appropriately prioritised by partner agencies and this is confirmed through the safeguarding audits that agencies completed in 2013, under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Partners from all agencies are well-represented at the right level on the Board and its sub-groups. Strong commitment and enthusiasm to work collaboratively to improve safeguarding services is now evident. The LSCB has implemented a range of safeguarding policies and procedures, many based on regionally agreed policies. However, few have been reviewed and updated to incorporate local and national emerging issues, and an LSCB policies and procedures sub-group has now been tasked to undertake this.
165. Board members recognise the need to engage with children, young people, families and the community to secure their views to influence the development of its work and safeguarding practice. However, little progress has been made in obtaining the views of children and their families who have

contact with safeguarding services. Several lay members have been appointed to the LSCB to represent the views of the community and are actively engaged in the LSCB and its sub-groups. The voluntary sector is extensively and well engaged in the work of the Board, which is currently considering how to ensure that third sector organisations in the area take responsibility for safeguarding children.

166. The LSCB is appropriately funded by contributions from member agencies. A significant proportion of funding is used to maintain the LSCB business unit that facilitates the operation of the Board. However, the business unit has a significant challenge in meeting the widespread demand of the ambitious LSCB work programme and supporting the LSCB and its operational groups. The business unit also supports the Adult Safeguarding Board in the area, whose business has significantly expanded. As a result, the business unit has struggled to effectively support both boards and this has been exacerbated by staff and role changes in the unit. The local authority and both boards are currently considering how to reconfigure and resource the unit.

167. The LSCB has an established multi-agency training programme, which underpins safeguarding training provided within individual partner agencies. This has recently been revised and commissioned from an external provider following the departure of the LSCB training officer. Significant effort has been put into developing e-learning for partners. However, there has been low take-up or completion of e-learning. For example, e-learning on leadership for representatives engaging in the work of the LSCB has had poor take-up, with the exception of voluntary sector representatives, even though there are increasing numbers of new representatives on LSCB groups. Evaluation of the quality and impact of training on improving practice and the experience of children is significantly underdeveloped. This is primarily based on basic feedback from training participants through short questionnaires, which are not effectively used to ensure the quality, content or relevance of training or to enable the strategic development of multi-agency training. A number of awareness raising seminars have been delivered on behalf of the board, for example on learning from case reviews. These have been well received and enhanced awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues across partners.

What the inspection judgements mean: the LSCB

An **outstanding** LSCB is highly influential in improving the care and protection of children. Their evaluation of performance is exceptional and helps the local authority and its partners to understand the difference that services make and where they need to improve. The LSCB creates and fosters an effective learning culture.

An LSCB that is **good** coordinates the activity of statutory partners and monitors the effectiveness of local arrangements. Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is effective and evaluated regularly for impact. The LSCB provides robust and rigorous evaluation and analysis of local performance that identifies areas for improvement and influences the planning and delivery of high-quality services.

An LSCB **requires improvement** if it does not yet demonstrate the characteristics of good.

An LSCB that is **inadequate** does not demonstrate that it has effective arrangements in place and the required skills to discharge its statutory functions. It does not understand the experiences of children and young people locally and fails to identify where improvements can be made.

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MEETING:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
MEETING DATE:	15 JULY 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	CARE ACT 2014
REPORT BY:	Director Of Adults Wellbeing

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on the progress of the Care Act.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: the progress of the Care Act, as outlined in the Briefing Note attached at Appendix A, is noted.

Alternative Options

- 1 The purpose of the briefing is to provide a progress update on the Care Act, which will place new legal requirements on the Council from 1 April 2015.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The Care Act represents the most significant change to adult social care in over 60 years. It is therefore essential that the Health and Wellbeing Board are informed of progress with the Act and its implementation locally.
- 3 The Care Act received Royal Assent on 14 May 2014 and the statutory regulations and guidance which will underpin the Act are currently out to national consultation (until 15 August 2014).

Key Considerations

- 4 As the Care Act has now received Royal Assent and the draft regulations and guidance have been released for consultation, the council is beginning to develop a more detailed understanding of what the requirements of the new legislation will be when they take effect in 1 April 2015 (1 April 2016 for the funding reforms).
- 5 The briefing attached at Appendix A explains the most significant changes the Act introduces and outlines the implications for both residents and the council.

Community Impact

- 6 The Care Act is intended to have a range of positive implications for Herefordshire residents, including service users and their families and carers. These are outlined on page 1 of Appendix A.

Equality and Human Rights

- 7 By simplifying the care and support system, the Care Act intends to ensure that all those in need of care and support are treated equally and with respect.

Financial Implications

- 8 The Care Act will have significant financial implications for Herefordshire Council. High level estimates are included in Appendix 1. A more detailed understanding of the financial implications in Herefordshire is currently being modelled – a further update will be provided when these projections are finalised.

Legal Implications

- 9 When the Care Act comes into effect in April 2015 (April 2016 for certain funding reforms), a number of new statutory duties and requirements will be placed on the local authority, The most significant changes are explained in Appendix A,

Risk Management

- 10 As the Care Act introduces a number of new statutory duties and requirements for local authorities, there will be significant risks for the council in failing to meet these new statutory requirements.

Consultees

- 11 Not Applicable – the briefing attached at Appendix A is intended only as a progress update.

Appendices

Appendix A – Care Act Briefing Note

Background Papers

None identified.

Overview

The Care Act consolidates over a dozen pieces of social care legislation into a single law and represents the most significant change to adult social care in over 60 years. Most of the provisions in the Act will come into effect in April 2015, with some of the funding reform changes taking effect in April 2016.

At its heart, the Act is person-centred; it places the wellbeing of the individual at its core and emphasises the need for greater integration and cooperation between agencies. The Act attempts to rebalance the focus of social care on preventing and delaying needs rather than only intervening at crisis point.

Some of the key duties and changes introduced by the Act

Provision of comprehensive information & advice for all	New duties of market shaping , prevention & wellbeing	Carers treated as equal to the person they care for	Changes to assessments and who we will be assessing	Introduction of the care cap & care accounts (April 2016)
Changes to deferred payment agreements	National minimum eligibility threshold	Safeguarding Adults Board to become statutory	Improved transitions for young adults	Changes to financial means testing (April 2016)

Implications for Herefordshire residents, including service users and their families and carers

- A simpler care and support system which focusses on individual needs and outcomes
- Greater clarity on what people can expect and be entitled to from the care and support system
- Information and advice about care and support will be easily accessible to everyone
- A person-centred care and support system which is built around the needs of individuals
- Eligibility threshold criteria for care and support will be the same nationwide
- Support to help people maintain their independence and take control of their care and support
- A greater choice of quality and sustainable care and support services
- Greater support for carers – including the right to an assessment in their own right
- Co-ordinated whole-family approach, with better links between adults and children’s services

Implications for Herefordshire Council

- Potential additional costs in region of £1.9m in 2016/17 for Herefordshire (top level calculation using national estimates)
- Increased demand for assessments from both self-funders and carers, which will generate significant workforce capacity and financial pressures
- Changes to the ability to secure a debt through the placing of legal charges when debt arises
- Our IT systems, particularly the adult social care case management system, will need investment and development to ensure they meet the requirements of the Care Act
- Considerable learning and development and shaping will be required across the whole social care workforce

What is the Council doing to prepare?

Following an initial analysis of the council’s current position, a Project Group with dedicated Project Manager has been established to ensure the council meets all aspects of the Act. This includes

- Planning and undertaking required workforce shaping and learning and development
- Ensuring all our policies and procedures are up-to-date and reflect the Act appropriately
- Making sure our IT systems are capable of meeting the requirements of the Act
- Ensuring all commissioning activity bears appropriate consideration to the Act
- Developing a communications strategy which keeps everyone informed and involved

Key Care Act terms and concepts explained

Care cap

No adult will have to spend more than £72k on meeting their assessed eligible needs. Once the cap is reached, the council will pay for their care and support. Some important details of the cap are:

- The cost is based on what the local authority would pay to meet assessed eligible needs
- If the care and support needs are funded by a combination of local authority and the person's own contribution, the total cost counts towards the cap
- For most adults in residential care, "hotel costs" are excluded (e.g. food, utility bills etc.). This is so that those receiving care at home are not unfairly treated (as they would still be paying these costs). Adults in residential care will continue to pay their "hotel costs" after the £72k limit is reached; this is likely to be set at £12k per annum.

The most significant implication of the cap is that it incentivises self-funders to approach the council for assessment, thus increasing demand on social care assessment functions. National analysis and modelling of how the cap will operate indicates that many individuals will not reach the £72k in their lifetime.

Care account

For every individual with assessed eligible needs, the council will hold a care account which shows the total accrued costs towards that individual's care cap. The council will need to monitor and review this account as well as provide annual individual account summaries.

Deferred Payment Agreement

People entering residential care will have a new legal right to defer paying for their care costs, meaning they will not have to sell their home during their lifetime. The council will pay the care costs during this time and then reclaim the costs incurred on the sale of the property after the person has died. The council will be able to charge administration and interest payments and secure the debt by placing a legal charge against the asset. Herefordshire already operates a deferred payment scheme but cannot charge interest under current regulations – the Care Act makes it a duty for all councils to provide them and existing schemes will need revising to ensure they meet the requirements of the Act.

Financial means testing

Following assessment, if an adult has eligible care and support needs they are then offered a financial assessment to determine how much financial support from the local authority they are eligible for. For adults receiving care and support at home or in the community, those with assets over £23,250 (excluding the value of their home) are not entitled to any financial support. Through the Care Act it is proposed this limit be raised to £27,000. The Care Act also proposes that those in residential care with assets over £118,000 (including the value of their home) will not be eligible for financial support.

Minimum eligibility threshold

Currently local authorities choose at what level they set their eligibility criteria for social care. Like Herefordshire Council, most authorities set this at "critical and substantial" needs. The Care Act makes provision for this system to be replaced with a standard national eligibility threshold, so as to remove any variation between authorities. Draft guidance indicates this will be set at a level equivalent to the existing "substantial and critical" levels.

Market shaping

The council is expected to play a pivotal role in ensuring there is an efficient and effective market of high quality and sustainable care and support services from which people can choose.

Useful links

- The Care Act - <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/care.html>
- Care Act Draft Regulations and Guidance - <http://careandsupportregs.dh.gov.uk/>
- Care Act (easy read) - www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/317822/Care_Act_easyread.pdf
- DH Factsheets - www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets



MEETING:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
MEETING DATE:	15 JULY 2014

TITLE OF REPORT:	BETTER CARE FUND SUBMISSION
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR FOR ADULTS WELLBEING

1. Classification

Open

2. Key Decision

This is not an executive decision

3. Wards Affected

County-wide

4. Purpose

4.1 To receive an update on the Better Care Fund Submission

5. Recommendation

THAT: The report be noted.

6. Background Papers

6.1 None identified.



MEETING:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
MEETING DATE:	15 July 2014

TITLE OF REPORT:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD WORK PLAN
REPORT BY:	Director of Children's Wellbeing

1. Classification

Open

2. Key Decision

This is not an executive decision

3. Wards Affected

County-wide

4. Purpose

4.1 To seek the views of the Board and finalise the quarterly forward plan

5. Recommendations

THAT: The report be noted

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 - An outline work programme for the Committee.

7. Background Papers

None identified.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
 WORK PLAN July 2014 TO MAY 2015
 TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES AND DECISIONS UPDATED
 July 2014

DATES	BOARD MEETINGS
	NB ALL MEETINGS RUN FROM 3pm – 5pm
PUBLIC 16 Sept 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Needs Assessments: principles, terms of reference and membership of an overarching steering group which will determine which needs assessments are required over a 12 month period and approve publication of final reports. • Early Help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Integrated Needs Assessment • OFSTED Action Plan
PUBLIC 18 Nov 2014	
PUBLIC 13 January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Annual Report
PUBLIC 17 March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Needs Assessment Report
PUBLIC 12 May 2015	

Notes:

1. Workshop denotes meeting where no decisions are formally taken or approved
2. Scheduling is indicative in some cases and will be firmed up as part of the joint agenda planning work
3. Work Plan will be updated each month

<p>Initials:</p> <p>HC - Helen Coombes JD – Jo Davidson CK - Claire Keetch ES – Elizabeth Shassere AW – Andy Watts IP - Ivan Powell DS - Derek Smith</p>
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