

AGENDA

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 20 October 2016**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

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

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Sarah Smith on (01432) 260176 or e-mail sarah.smith1@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet

Membership

Chairman **Councillor AW Johnson**
Vice-Chairman **Councillor PM Morgan**

Councillor H Bramer
Councillor DG Harlow
Councillor JG Lester
Councillor PD Price
Councillor P Rone

AGENDA

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
3. MINUTES (TO FOLLOW) To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2016.	
4. SWTP CPO & SRO To seek authority to acquire by negotiation the land, properties, easements and rights of access over land needed for the construction of the Southern Link Road and for in principle approval for the making of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Side Roads Order (SRO) if required, for the same purpose.	7 - 12
5. EARLY HELP STRATEGY To approve the early help strategy 2016-18.	13 - 40
6. ANNUAL FOSTERING REPORT – APRIL 2015-2016 To review fostering service performance and approve related documents.	41 - 104
7. PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK To approve a framework setting out the council's approach to partnership working, helping to strengthen accountability and ensure working arrangements are as efficient as possible.	105 - 118

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Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	20 October 2016
Title of report:	South wye transport package - southern link road land acquisition of required rights and easements
Report by:	Head of infrastructure delivery

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates and because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Wards affected

Stoney Street and Wormside

Purpose

To seek authority to acquire by negotiation the land, properties, easements and rights of access over land needed for the construction of the southern link road between the A49 Rotherwas access road roundabout and the A465 Abergavenny road and the A465 and B4349 Clehonger road, and for in principle approval for the making of a compulsory purchase order (CPO) and side roads order (SRO) if required, for the same purpose.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the director for economy, communities and corporate, be delegated authority to take all operational steps necessary to acquire all the necessary land interests required for the delivery of the southern link road through negotiation with possible affected landowners, and;
- (b) in principle use of the council's statutory powers of compulsory acquisition in making a compulsory purchase order, and the use of the council's statutory powers to make a side roads order be approved, subject to a further decision to more specifically identify the land interests to be acquired and further explain the necessity for a CPO in a statement of reasons
- (c) a further report be prepared to consider the business case for the purchase of properties outside of any proposed CPO boundary.

Alternative options

- 1 Not to negotiate with landowners and rely on compulsory purchase powers to secure all the necessary land and rights to deliver the road. This would place additional risk on obtaining confirmation of the CPO and SRO as there is a duty on the council to have made reasonable efforts to acquire the land and rights and use CPO powers only if negotiations are unlikely to result in a timely and cost effective outcome.
- 2 To rely solely on acquisition by negotiation could result in considerable delay and possible prevent delivery of the road due to one or more landowner not being prepared to sell or only at a cost significantly in excess of the market value.

Reasons for recommendations

- 3 Planning permission for the Southern Link Road was granted in June 2016 for the entire line of the road, in addition to all necessary junction works, side roads, drainage and environmental mitigation.
- 4 To enable the construction of the road primarily agricultural land needs to be acquired. The agricultural land is in five different ownerships plus land owned by the council and Highways England. Part of the garden from one residential property is also required. There are no residential dwellings that need to be acquired for the road construction.
- 5 Approval is sought to commence negotiations to acquire required land interests and to approve the use of compulsory purchase orders in principle. If the Council agrees the "in principle" use of its powers of compulsory acquisition and powers of access, this will not preclude the Council from endeavouring to acquire the necessary land and rights by agreement. This report therefore asks for approval in principle to make a CPO and SRO, whilst continuing with efforts to acquire, by agreement, the land, business interests and rights needed to carry out the works.

Key considerations

- 6 The aim of the South Wye transport package (SWTP) is to promote economic growth in Hereford while tackling specific problems in the South Wye area.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Maired Lane, head of infrastructure delivery on Tel (01432) 260944

- 7 These problems in the South Wye area have mainly been caused by the level of congestion along the A465 and the A49. This has resulted in poor levels of air quality and noise and has resulted in large numbers of short distance trips being made by car.
- 8 The SWTP will reduce congestion, enable access to the Hereford enterprise zone (HEZ), reduce growth in emissions and traffic noise, reduce accidents and encourage physical activity. The package comprises a new southern link road and a package of complementary active travel measures.
- 9 The southern link road is a priority project for the Marches local enterprise partnership and growth fund funding of £27m has been secured to deliver the entire package. Securing the required land interests will further demonstrate the council's commitment to the project.

Community impact

- 10 There are currently six identified and known property owners affected. One of those affected is a residential property where part of the garden is required the remaining land is agricultural land which forms part of larger farming operations which will continue after the land for the road has been acquired. There is also land currently part of the council's small holdings estate where tenants will be affected.
- 11 It is proposed that terms for the purchase are negotiated in accordance with statutory compensation payable in the event of a compulsory purchase order, which will include the market value of the land plus disturbance and statutory loss payments. Landowners will not be financial disadvantaged by negotiating and agreeing sales early otherwise they will be no incentive to negotiate now.
- 12 There are a number of residential properties that are outside the planning footprint of the Southern Link Road route. Whilst not required for the construction of the road there may be a business case for the purchase of these properties. Any purchase will require a robust business to be developed on an individual basis and if appropriate a further report will be considered alongside any further decision to invoke CPO powers.

Equality duty

- 13 This proposal will support the council in demonstrating its commitments to the Equality duty. Land acquisition will wherever possible be by agreement and if not possible the council will use compulsory powers in accordance with appropriate national guidance and legislation.
- 14 The Council has carefully considered the balance to be struck between individual rights and the wider public interest. For those parties who are prepared to negotiate settlements in advance of a CPO then the terms of that agreement will be as per the relevant statutory powers so as such parties should not be financially penalised in reaching agreement by negotiation

Financial implications

- 15 £27m of growth fund capital money has been secured towards the funding of the South Wye Transport Package of which the southern link road forms part. At this

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stage the land acquisition costs are estimated to be in the region of £1million excluding fees, taxes etc and are contained within the overall scheme budget which will be funded from the growth fund and council funding as allocated and approved in the capital programme.

- 16 At this stage the decision authorises officers to negotiate purchases and ascertain where CPOs may be necessary. The decisions to purchase through CPO, if applicable, will be the subject of a future report.
- 17 All purchases which are negotiated and agreed without the need for CPO will be in accordance with statutory compensation guidelines so landowners will not be financially disadvantaged by selling early in advance of a CPO being confirmed.
- 18 To assist with the valuations of sites and appropriate compensation calculations, independent consultants will be procured. This will be funded from the approved capital budget.
- 19 External consultants will be procured in accordance with council's procurement process to verify land values.

Legal implications

- 20 A further resolution will be required authorising the Council to use its powers of compulsory acquisition in order to make the CPO. An SRO in the context of this scheme would, amongst other things, be used to stop up private means of access to premises, of certain affected landowners, and providing such alternatives means of access as are considered necessary.
- 21 The financial basis of negotiations will be in accordance with the statutory CPO terms so landowners will not be either advantaged or disadvantaged by reaching an early agreement and entering into a contract for sale with the council in advance of a CPO.
- 22 The council's legal department will be responsible for preparing and agreeing contract documents relating to the purchase of any property interests.

Risk management

- 23 Should the recommendations not be approved, the risk to the Council is that the land and rights needed for the scheme will not be securable by negotiation within a suitable time frame and/or cost, leading to a potential adverse effect on the timings and implementation of the wider south wye transport package scheme.
- 24 Asking for "in principle" approval of the use of CPO and SRO powers gives a clear indication of the Council's intention. A report to Cabinet asking for a resolution to actually make a CPO and SRO for this scheme will follow this initial report, and will determine the most appropriate powers for the same.
- 25 It is from the point of the Council's resolution to agree to invoke CPO and SRO powers, that the Council is at risk of eligible property owners submitting Blight Notices and approval of this reports recommendations does not.

Consultees

- 26 There were a number of public consultations prior to the submission of the planning

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application, including a call in by overview and scrutiny committee regarding the southern link road route selection. As part of this consultation process there was refinement of the road design which subsequently got planning permission. All of the landowners were notified of the consultation and some actively engaged in the process.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – planning application route plan

Background papers

- None identified



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	20 October 2016
Title of report:	Early help strategy 2016-2018
Report by:	Cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

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Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To approve the early help strategy 2016-18

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **The early help strategy 2016-18 (appendix 1) be approved**

Alternative options

1. The alternative option to the proposed early help strategy is to continue with the current arrangements. However this is not recommended as it does not maximise or coordinate early help in Herefordshire, and has contributed to a higher than necessary number of referrals through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Many of these are inappropriate to be dealt with at the agreed Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board's level 4, threshold of need. Herefordshire has experienced higher comparative levels of child protection referrals and increased numbers of looked after children. The current system is 'overheated' resulting in extra activity, a greater level of intrusive work with parents and families than is ideally required, and higher costs to partners and the council. There is a need to build on current early help activity and provide a clearer approach across Herefordshire that will improve effectiveness to ensure where appropriate, children and families access support at an earlier stage of need; and contribute to reducing pressure on the statutory child protection system.
2. In considering alternative solutions to this issue, the provision of early help is a nationally recognised, cost effective use of resources and an appropriate way to organise and manage the delivery of services. Whilst there are a number of national models, the proposed strategy aims to develop service and budget arrangements that best suit Herefordshire, to focus the early help service arrangements in communities across the county and maximise the collective approach in all agencies.

Reasons for recommendations

3. The early help strategy will play a key role in securing outcomes set out in Herefordshire's children and young people's plan 2015-2018 and contribute to meeting the expected commitments to the troubled families (families first) programme; and contribute to delivery of Herefordshire's health and wellbeing strategy.
4. The development of the children and young people's partnership's early help strategy is at a time of increased financial pressures on all agencies and organisations, including early year's settings, schools, colleges, NHS, public and mental health services, police as well as the council. At the same time there is an increased pressure on resources, with higher numbers entering health and social care services. Herefordshire has experienced comparatively high numbers of MASH and child protection referrals and the number of looked after children are at comparatively high level against statistical neighbours. Whilst the local authority and partners do not set activity by statistical comparisons they do point to potentially different ways of meeting needs. There are significant cost pressures, with capped budgets, that need to be absorbed. The early help strategy provides a vehicle to maximise the council's and partner's work and resources to meet need in a more preventative way. It also recognises that there are strengths and services within local communities than can play a strong and effective part in supporting families. The council has been clear that it is families and communities who bring up children, and this proposed approach will build on that theme.

Key considerations

5. The early help strategy is priority one of the children and young people's plan 2015-2018 and underpins all other aspects of the plan. It aims to ensure provision of early and effective help and support to children and families when they need it, with the

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Gordon Murray, head of children's commissioning on Tel: (01432) 383873

long term aim of helping families in Herefordshire to be able to help themselves and improve their overall wellbeing and quality of life.

The Early Help provided will be:

Family focused – and designed to address the issues of the whole household in a holistic way;

Community Focussed – drawing on the strengths and services in each locality

Targeted – to ensure the right level of support at the right time;

Multi-agency – to reflect the complex and multi-faceted issues that families can often face;

Aimed at building resilience in families, to provide them with the tools and skills to help and support themselves in the future.

6. In order to be able to help and support children and their families at the earliest stage, the range of core partners who form the health and wellbeing board and the children and young people's partnership have both committed to the early help strategy and are working together to plan and deliver services. Strong partnerships that understand the role each agency plays and the impact each service has on supporting families will be essential.
7. To provide accurate assessments and target resources appropriately for children and their families, the Early Help strategy aligns with the Herefordshire four 'Levels of Need Thresholds':
 - Level 1** – Universal; Children making good overall progress in all areas of their development, receiving appropriate universal services such as health and education.
 - Level 2** – Early Intervention; Children, young people and families are experiencing emerging problems, whose needs require some targeted support. They are likely to require early help for a time limited period, to help them move back to Level 1.
 - Level 3** – Complex/Family Intervention 'Light'; Children, young people and families with identified vulnerabilities who are experiencing significant additional complex needs and are likely to require a more targeted, multi-agency coordinated approach with possible longer term intervention.
 - Level 4** – Acute/Family Intervention 'Plus'; Children, young people and families who are experiencing very serious or complex needs that are having a major impact on their expected outcomes or there is extreme concern for their safety. These acute needs may require statutory intensive support.
8. It will be important that these levels of need are understood and accepted across the authority and partner agencies to ensure their appropriate application and contribution to early help assessments. The work of the early help strategy will mainly identify support for families within the level two early Intervention.
9. The strategy has a community focussed approach that recognises the importance of the families themselves and the communities in which families live and work. Developing and building relationships based on the families' links within their communities, is a key part of the work.

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10. The strategy also acknowledges that a rebalancing of resources across Herefordshire's multi-agency services will need to occur in order to create a sustainable service provision that will benefit families. The approach builds on and coordinates current early help activity to:

- enable families to organise and access help themselves through and with their local communities and services
- enable communities to help themselves
- fundamentally improve the way that services are identified and delivered to the county's most vulnerable children and their families
- build upon existing provision to ensure a more robust and coordinated range of early help services across the county that are easier to navigate for both families and practitioners
- maximise a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to family help

Herefordshire's Early Help Key Messages

- Think Independence
- Think Family
- Think Whole System
- Promotion of Whole Well being
- Flexible Workforce
- Make Every Contact Count

11. The implementation and operation of the early help strategy will be governed through the multi-agency children and young people's partnership executive group. Developments and progress will be reported bi-annually through a scorecard which will track quantitative and qualitative outcomes as outlined in the strategy document. The focus of this work will be towards the outcomes achieved for each family and how those outcomes align with the key indicators of each agency's targets along with the cost-effectiveness of programmes of support. The joint and integrated approach will provide clearer access for families to support and services. Alongside which will be an integration of data to enable the identification of gaps in provision but also identifying where support services are improving the wellbeing of families.

Community impact

12. Evidence that underpins the need for early help for vulnerable children and their families is provided in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) – Understanding Herefordshire (July 2016, version 1.1) and the children and young people's plan 2015-18.

13. The population of children 0-19 years at mid-2015 in the county, is 39,900.

14. The October 2015 census of primary and secondary schools shows that the year groups with the highest number of pupils were in reception (1,976), year 1 (1923) and Year 3 (1900). This reflects the increase in the population of young children seen locally and nationally in recent years. Whilst the numbers of children had been declining in Herefordshire throughout the whole of the last decade, levelling out over the last five years. However, the number of under-fives and births has been rising over the last decade with the next 10 years expecting to yield a gradual increase in the numbers of children.

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15. There are 120 children with child protection plans.
16. There are 278 Looked After children
17. There are 4,300 children under the age of 16 years who live in income deprived households. There are one in four children within ten areas of the county who live in income deprivation. Six of these areas are within the 20% most deprived in England.
18. The performance of children whose parents claim free school meals (FSM) for their children is still performing below their peers nationally. At all key stages the gap in attainment between pupils who have FSM and those who do not, remains wide as it has been for the last three years. Of the 266 young people in 2016 who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), 70 of this cohort were eligible for free school meals during their years of compulsory education.
19. Childhood obesity has a wider social impact with children who are overweight experiencing more emotional and behavioural problems as a result of stigmatisation, bullying and low self-esteem. In 2013/14, 19% of reception children locally were either obese or overweight, while 31% of children in Year 6 were either obese or overweight.
20. Recent Public Health England (PHE) data (mid-2014) on tooth decay among five year olds showed that 41% have tooth decay.
21. As core part and contributor to the early help strategy the troubled families, families first programme in Herefordshire aims to identify and support the work with 1090 vulnerable families in the period 2015-2020. This aims to identify support for vulnerable families across six key outcomes:
 - Parents and children involved in crime and antisocial behaviour
 - Children who have not been attending school regularly
 - Children who need help
 - Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
 - Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
 - Parents and children with a range of health problems
22. The early help strategy will build on and be dependent on the identification and engagement of community resources in each locality. It has a focus on four of the seven key priorities of the health and wellbeing strategy:
 - Giving every child the best start in life
 - Helping vulnerable children and families
 - Empowering communities to take better care of themselves
 - Improving mental wellbeing throughout their lives
23. The early help strategy will be integrated with the council's supporting communities and connecting communities programme and provided through community resources, adapting to each locality's needs.
24. In practice this means that we will enable children and families to access information, advice and guidance and support them through their own network of contacts, through their local community resources, and through contact with public and private

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services; to support children and families to work with services to assess their needs and determine the best way to meet them.

25. This will require engagement with communities and community organisations across the county, which is underway through consultation work with the council's children's wellbeing and adults and wellbeing directorates has been informed by the design council community engagement project. The feedback from this will inform how early help services will be developed and local organisations and inter-agency services might be harnessed to deliver the early help support. It will also identify where there are gaps to inform the partnership commissioning arrangements.

Equality duty

26. The early help strategy will pay due regard to our public sector equality duty and the attached equality impact assessment attached at appendix 2 will ensure that we have considered and paid 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

27. Alongside the commitment to the early help approach, there is an expectation for the commitment of resources across the directorates and partner agencies. This will be through the identifying and bringing together partners current and existing early help work and pathways. This includes the early help and intervention work across Public Health, CCG, criminal justice agencies, schools where there is already money allocated to schools to support early help. There will also be an impact on the workforce development across all the agencies to ensure a common understanding on the approach and assessments.
28. There will be a need and requirement to commit to an inter-agency communication strategy and practical briefings to ensure a combined approach.
29. As part of the early help strategy there will be a re-alignment of service arrangements in the children's wellbeing and adults and wellbeing directorates and with partners to a more community focussed, locality based approach. In time, reductions in the numbers of children and young people subject to child protection plans, or becoming looked after will free up council and partner time and resources.
30. The strategy will also play a key role in meeting the expected commitments to the national troubled families (families first) programme, which will provide funding to the council and the children and young people's partnership over the period 2015-2020. The troubled families programme in Herefordshire, on agreeing to and meeting the troubled families' outcomes, will attract a combination of payments from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This is made up of attachment fees for each identified family, an annual transformation grant and a payment by results, amounting to a potential £2.276m by 2020.
31. Through the use of the DCLG's troubled families cost calculator and as a result of the early intervention work undertaken we will be able to develop an Early Help cost-benefit analysis, identifying the achieved costs avoided across the partnership. This will include improved child health, identifying reducing number of police call outs, improving school attendance and attainment, and increasing employment. The

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DCLG have estimated that the following average annual costs of interventions could be avoided (2012 figures)

Truancy £44,468/lifetime

Mental health services £81/hour

Neighbourhood disputes £778-£9,500

Child being taken into care £36,653/year

Legal implications

32. Local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. They have a number of statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 children acts which make this clear. They have a duty to provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child. Local authorities, under section 10 of the children act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children.

Risk management

33. The risks to consider in implementing the early help strategy include; the length of time it will take to engage partners in this early help model. To align and integrate with each agency's early help provision and achieve the desired positive impact in the communities with an identified improvement in the number of families worked with at the appropriate level of need and their long term outcomes.

34. Over previous years there has been a similar approach within the county which was very dependent on council only funding and services. These have been significantly reduced or cut completely over the period of austerity. There may now be negative perception of the strategy as 'we have been here before' and at the same time a real or perceived reduction in funding for services. To ensure that there is an understanding that a fully integrated early help support and provision will be more cost effective for all partners and agencies than having to commit resources to the higher level and higher cost child protection work. It will therefore be important to consider these views and experiences and develop ways to integrate and engage partners in this new strategy through communication, briefings, workforce development and training.

35. With the implementation of a planned re-alignment of referrals to the early help community model there will need to be careful management of the current workload within MASH and the higher level children's wellbeing services to early help support. The early help strategy will take time to develop and identify work with the community resources, whilst at the same time referrals are still ongoing and requiring appropriate support. This will be managed through close work and liaison between children's wellbeing teams and services to ensure that any referrals are managed appropriately and access early help as this support is identified and developed.

36. There is a risk in the delay of implementation in ensuring that children and their families get the support they need. The impact of delay would have the detrimental

effect of those children being subject to child protection plans for longer periods than may be necessary.

Consultees

37. There has been a programme of work with the design council, where a project team from CWB, AWB and Public Health has engaged and consulted with them over several months to inform the development of the early help approach of involving the community in the decision and design process of early intervention. This work is now integrated into the current prototype project in Leominster to trial and adopt the methodology.
38. Through the work of the community connections prototype in Leominster and building on the design council consultations. The community connectors have been since July, engaging with members of the Leominster community to understand their needs, to find out their views and through this inform and develop early intervention practice across both CWB and AWB. This work is current and on-going and is planned to take the approach to other market towns and areas across the county.
39. The proposed early help strategy has been taken to the health and wellbeing Board. Whilst recognising the developments in the market towns, they wanted to insure that that there is a timetable to roll-out the prototype work from Leominster and to ensure that the communities between the market towns are given consideration and how the development of the approach will meet their needs.
40. The strategy has been taken to the Herefordshire children and young people's partnership board in July and September, to consult and to gain commitment to the strategy on an inter-agency basis. This is on-going partnership work following their commitment to the strategy with the current focus on the commitment of resources and combining early help pathways of support from across the partner agencies.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Early help strategy

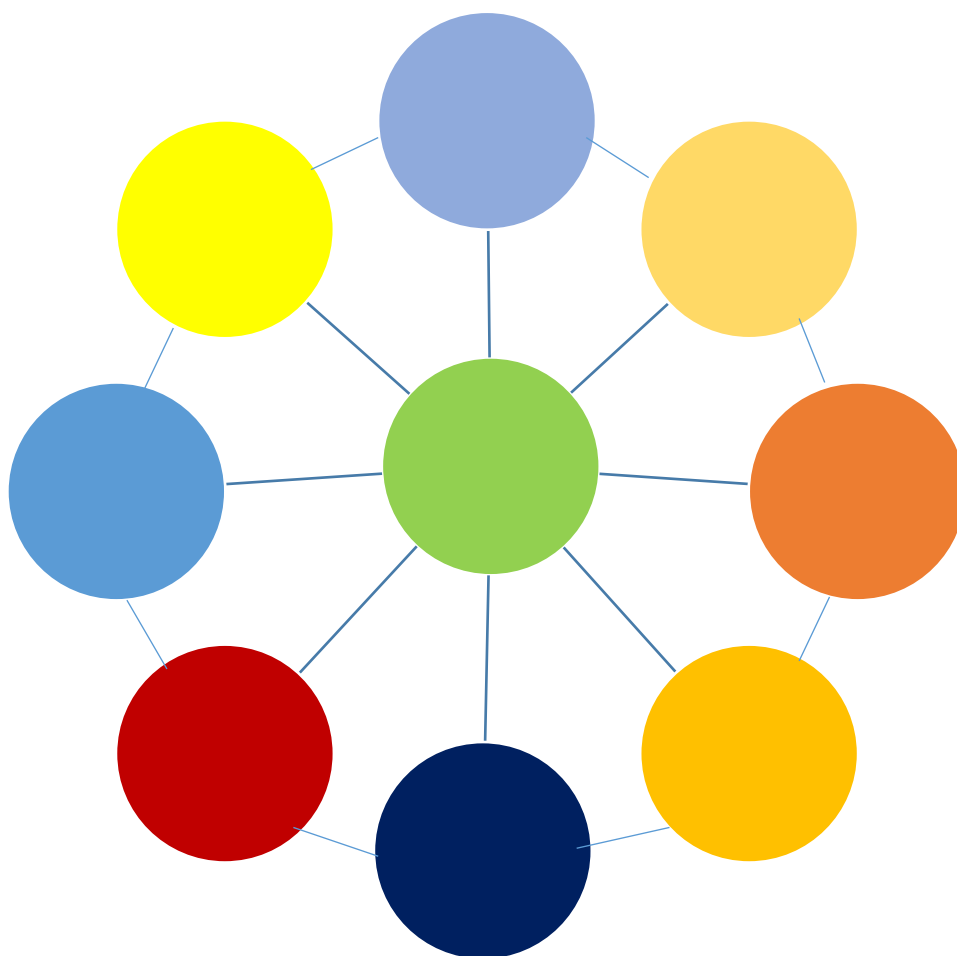
Appendix 2 - Equality impact statement

Background papers

- None identified.

Thriving Communities Think Family and Think Locally

EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2016 – 2018



What is Early Help?

Early Help means providing help for children and families as soon as problems start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future. Herefordshire's Early Help is therefore about providing services at the right time to meet family's needs and to keep them in control of resolving their issues and problems, to reinforce and develop the families' own skills to determine their future, reducing poor outcomes and inequalities. Although research shows that the most impact can be made during a child's early years, Early Help is not just for very young children and we understand that problems may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence.

Why we want Early Help

The Herefordshire approach to Early Help reflects the widespread recognition that it is better to identify and deal with problems early rather than to respond when difficulties have become acute and demand action by statutory or more intensive services. There is now strong evidence of what factors place children at risk of neglect or abuse, of developing mental health problems, of failing in education, or of becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. These negative outcomes damage the children or young people concerned, their families and disrupt communities where they live; and. But also results in significant financial costs.

Our overall aim is therefore to provide early and effective help and support to children and families when they need it, with the long term aim of helping more families in Herefordshire to be able to help themselves' and thus improving their overall well-being and quality of life. To build resilient families who are able to find their own solutions to the challenges that they face. In order for us to be able to help and support children and their families at the earliest stage a range of partners need to work together to plan and deliver services. Strong partnerships that understand the role each agency plays and the impact each service has on supporting families are essential.

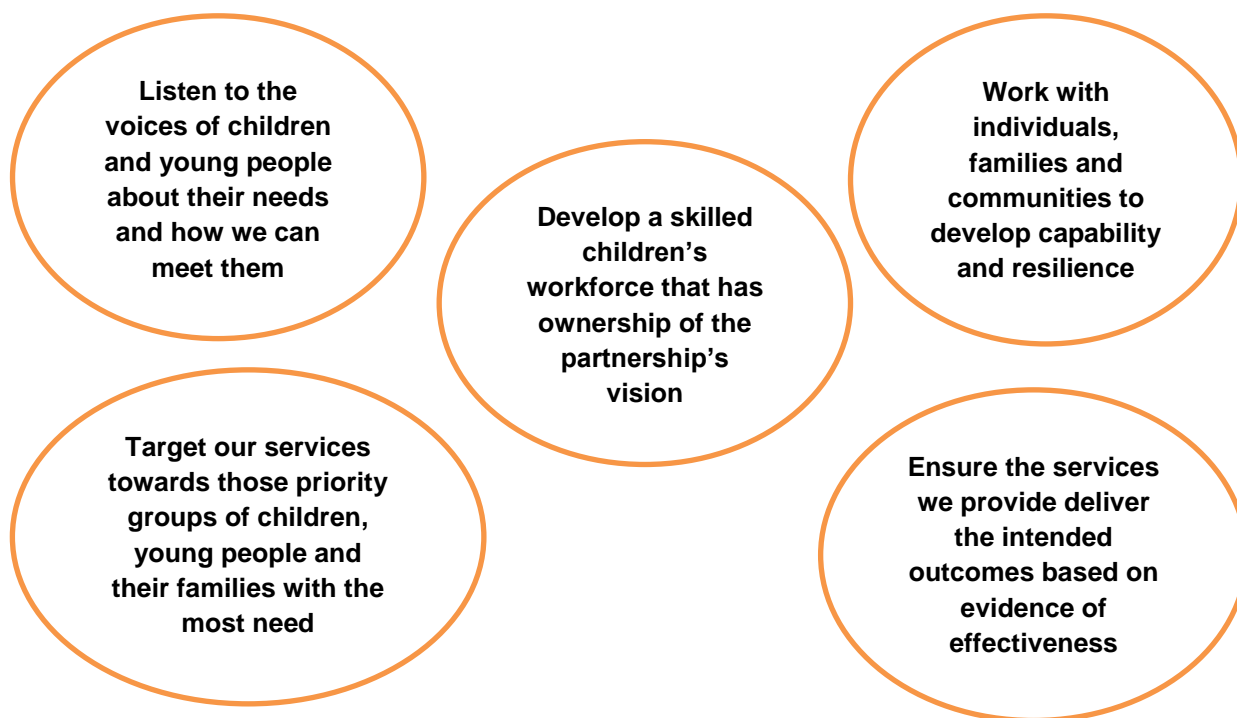
This is what we are going to do

To make the sustainable changes, Herefordshire Council works as part of Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Partnership to facilitate and influence communities and partners to provide effective and coordinated evidenced-based help and support to children and their families at the earliest opportunity. The Herefordshire inter-agency Troubled Families programme, known as Families First, will be central to how we support and deliver early help to families. In practice this means that we will enable children and families to access information, advice and guidance and support them through their own network of contacts, through their local community resources, through multi-media and through contact with public and private services. To support the children and families to work with services to assess their needs and determine the best way to meet them.

The strategy is influenced by a range of national policy and guidance that includes:

- Ofsted – Early Help, whose responsibility? March 2015
- Children’s Acts 1989, 2004, 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 and 2015.
- ‘Think Family’ Evaluation Report
- The Munro Review of Child Protection (May 2011),
- The Graham Allen review on Early Intervention (January 2011)
- The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults (Field, 2010)
- The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning (Tickell, 2011)
- Marmot Review, 'Fair Society Healthy Lives' (2010)
- Early Support programme for children with disabilities
- Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability (DfE 2011)
- The National Health Visitors Plan - Progress to date (DoH 2013)
- Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006
- DCLG Troubled Families Programme 2015
- NSPCC, 'Thriving Communities' report 2015

The Herefordshire Partnership approach recognises that to build and enable resilience in families, to ensure appropriate Safeguarding and to reduce the levels of dependence on statutory services we need to work with whole families, not just individuals within the family. The importance of the communities in which families live and work and developing and building relationships based on the family’s links within their Community is also recognised. In order to create a sustainable early help provision that will benefit families and building on the best of the work that is already happening across the county, that includes family support, early years provision, the Wellbeing and Information Signposting for Herefordshire (WISH) hub, health and education support services, a rebalancing of resources across Herefordshire’s multi-agency services must occur. The Herefordshire Children’s Partnership’s vision for Early Help will:



The development of the Partnership's Early Help strategy is at a time of increased financial pressures on all agencies and organisations, including early year's settings, schools, colleges, NHS, public and mental health services, police as well as the council's children and adult services. At the same time there is an increased pressure on the resources with higher numbers entering health and social care settings. These significant cost pressures with capped budgets that require to be absorbed, means that the current resourcing is not sustainable and there is a need to maximise an early help approach that will achieve 'best value'. The Government's national Troubled Families programme also acknowledges this and encourages each authority area to focus on families with multiple high cost problems to make sustainable changes that will make better use of resources.

The Council and partners provide statutory safeguarding services and these will continue. However, there are different ways to commission and provide services that contribute to early help, as well as providing social care support to children and young people experiencing the highest levels of problems and vulnerabilities. An NSPCC vision statement in their 'Thriving Communities' report (2015) states that, "A concerted shift to prevention where everyone – children, parents, communities, universal services and local government – works together to help children thrive...". This underpins the Herefordshire's partnership approach to support and develop early help provision in our communities - to Think Family and Think Locally.

- | Herefordshire's Early Help Key Messages | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ➤ | Think Independence |
| ➤ | Think Family |
| ➤ | Think Whole System |
| ➤ | Promotion of Whole Well being |
| ➤ | Flexible Workforce |
| ➤ | Make Every Contact Count |

One of the priorities of the children and young people's plan is the development of an Early Help Strategy. Alongside national policies and guidance the strategy also cross-references and contributes to a range of the partnership's policies, guidance and strategies, with each agency having their own referral and service delivery pathways that will be integrated across their Early Help provisions:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy, with its four key priorities:
 - Giving every child the best start in life
 - Helping vulnerable children and families
 - Empowering communities to take better care of themselves
 - Improving mental wellbeing throughout their lives
- Children and Young Peoples Plan, 2015-18
- Herefordshire's LSCB annual report and business plan, 2015
- Public Health Outcomes
- Child Poverty Strategy,
- Strategic Plan for Education for Children and Young People in Herefordshire
- Housing Strategy
- Children with disabilities Transformation programme
- Care Placement Strategy
- Health Strategies

- Criminal Justice and Community Safety strategies
- Information Sharing protocol
- Thresholds of Need guidance

Herefordshire Early Help Approach

Herefordshire’s Early Help approach is an integrated community focussed multi-agency programme which sets out to provide *effective step up and step down systems and processes* using Universal services and building on the community resources and capacity to:

- fundamentally improve the way that services are identified and delivered to the county’s most vulnerable children and their families.
- build upon existing provision to ensure a more robust and coordinated range of Early Help services across the county that are easier to navigate for both families and practitioners.
- maximise a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to family help.

To do this, based on Herefordshire’s Thresholds of Need, we will support the development and co-ordination of the Level 1, Universal and Levels 2 and 3 early intervention activities in communities. Sharing information, best practice and training to enable services to target areas of need. The development of the Wellbeing Information and Signposting for Herefordshire – WISH, will form a core resource of early help to families in their communities.

The Herefordshire Early Help approach will meet the needs of vulnerable families by working with them to tackle underlying problems and build their resilience, through:

- supporting the development of a robust and coherent set of Early Help services, that is targeted at the right level of support;
- offering co-ordinated multi-agency support to respond to Safeguarding concerns and the needs of each family on an individual basis;
- meeting Herefordshire’s commitment to the Families First/Troubled Families programme;
- reducing the workload pressures on social care services by offering alternative ways to support families;

The Early Help provided will be:

Family focused – and designed to address the issues of the whole household in a holistic way;

Community Focussed – drawing on the strengths and services in each locality

Targeted – to ensure the right level of support at the right time;

Multi-agency – to reflect the complex and multi-faceted issues that families can often face;

Aimed at building resilience in families, to provide them with the tools and skills to help and support themselves in the future.

The Herefordshire Early Help approach is available for families with children aged 0-19 years old and up to 25 years old for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and is responsive to family needs. The families who will benefit most from our Early Help offer have needs which fit within Levels 2 and 3 of Herefordshire’s Thresholds of Need with the ethos that the right level of

support is available at the right time. We will have a 'Think Family and Think Locally' approach, to work with families, "doing with" rather than "doing for" or "doing to" and includes the principles that:

- families will be empowered to identify their own problems, needs and solutions wherever possible all the children and their families' needs will be met within (level 1) Universal settings.
- it is a multi-agency and county wide approach
- will take a 'Think Family' approach that will:
 - offer an 'open door' into a system of joined-up support
 - take a whole family approach with a Team Around the Family (TAF)
 - provide support that is tailored to need and will build on family strengths.
- effective interventions are dependent on good assessments, planning, achieving and reviewing.

Herefordshire's Levels of Need Thresholds and Key Principles

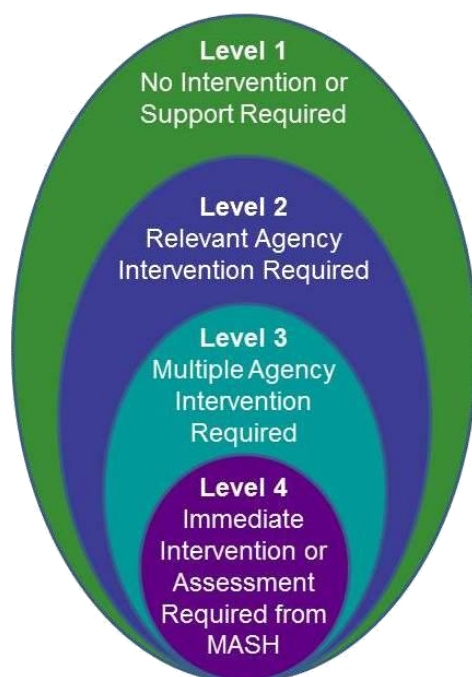
To provide accurate assessments and target resources appropriately for children and their families, the Early Help offer aligns with the Herefordshire four 'Levels of Need Thresholds':

Level 1 – Universal; Children making good overall progress in all areas of their development, receiving appropriate universal services such as health and education.

Level 2 – Early Intervention; Children, young people and families are experiencing emerging problems, whose needs require some targeted support. They are likely to require early help / intervention for a time limited period, to help them move back to Level 1.

Level 3 – Complex/Family Intervention 'Light'; Children, young people and families with identified vulnerabilities who are experiencing significant additional complex needs and are likely to require a more targeted, multi-agency coordinated approach with possible longer term intervention.

Level 4 – Acute/Family Intervention 'Plus'; Children, young people and families who are experiencing very serious or complex needs that are having a major impact on their expected outcomes or there is extreme concern for their safety. These acute needs may require statutory intensive support.



Information Sharing

Effective information sharing through the governance of the Herefordshire Information Sharing protocol will underpin the practice and success of the Early Help strategy. Organisations involved in providing services to the public have a legal responsibility to ensure that their use of personal information is lawful, properly controlled and that an individual's rights are respected. The balance between the need to share information to provide a quality service and protection of confidentiality is often difficult to achieve. This will be achieved by obtaining a balance between the need to share information and to provide a quality service and the protection of confidentiality. This ensures that those accessing early help services and the data collected to identify families and their needs, will have their confidentiality maintained.

This is how we are going to do it

Our Early Help approach will be based on a locality-community focussed approach that will include working with families. Recognising and building on local resources to ensure timely support to families when they need it. This will be centred on a 'Thriving Community', Community Hub model that links directly with the Herefordshire four Levels of Need thresholds. The Community Hubs will be based on a multi-agency approach where there will be an alignment of services and pathways within each locality, co-ordinated through 'Family Network Meetings'. These will review referrals, coordinate and deliver support and services. Partners' cross-cutting strategies will have their own referral and service delivery pathways which will be integrated with the Early Help offer.

The aligned partner agency services include:

- Family Support
- Families First / Troubled Families programme
- Early Years Provision
- Parenting support programmes
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) 0-25 services
- Schools
- Employment & training including those young people defined as NEET
- Health including:
 - Public Health
 - Health Visitors
 - School Nursing
 - GPs
 - Adult Mental Health
 - CAMHS
- Youth strategy as part of the Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Community Safety, addressing issues of Domestic Violence and Anti-social Behaviour
- Adults Wellbeing service arrangements

WISH - Wellbeing Information and Signposting for Herefordshire

WISH is a service provided by Herefordshire Council in partnership with Services for Independent Living (SIL) and is available to everyone. The WISH service will provide universal information online, by phone or face to face for Herefordshire to provide a wide range of information and guidance. It is a comprehensive directory of services and activities that support the wellbeing of adults, children, young people and families as well as a range of activities that are happening in local communities across Herefordshire.

Families First / Troubled Families Programme

Central to and fully integrated with Herefordshire's Early Help is the Families First/Troubled Families programme. This programme will carry out work with a broad range of families usually within the levels 2 and 3 of the Thresholds of Need but also with a number of families considered at the Level 4 who have more complex needs. Families identified for support will meet at least two of the six main headline issues:

1. Parents and children involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly
3. Children who need help
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, and young people at risk of worklessness
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
6. Parents and children with a range of health problems

It will ensure that,

- there will have been an assessment that takes into account the needs of the whole family;
- there will be a Family Action Plan that takes account of all (relevant) family members;
- there will be a lead worker for the family that is recognised by the family and other professionals involved with the family;
- provide an intensive, flexible response that allows for support outside traditional working hours with an 'assertive and persistent' family key worker.
- that 'step-down' arrangements to services and support are accessed.

Achievement of outcomes for families against this framework will ensure that significant and sustained improvement for that family has been achieved. However families will be monitored for a longer period of time after an intervention has ended because sometimes situations arise in families that can cause a re-escalation of issues. Recognising that it is better to catch those issues quickly to resolve them before they reach any crisis point.

This is how we are going to do it

Building on the core ethos of the Families First service and WISH, we will work with families to ensure

- strengths-based family assessments,
- robust family agreements with a focus on improved parenting (outcomes) and
- the use of evidence-based support and interventions.

The Herefordshire Early Help services will be coordinated and commissioned on a multi-agency basis and focused on the needs of communities around the county, with an emphasis on the development and use of the Universal services within each area. These will be coordinated through a number of Community Hubs which uses a multi-agency Team Around the Family (TAF) approach that has a family keyworker model at its heart. The TAF approach will bring together through the community hubs, using family network meetings that will consist of a multi-disciplinary team of practitioners working and volunteering in that locality to support a child, young person or family to ensure:

- that the family is at the core of the family network meetings
- a joined-up assessment and plan using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- a Lead Professional coordinates the work
- the child or young person and their family are at the centre of the process
- that a support plan meets the identified needs of the child or young person.

To enable this we will:

- provide better information, advice and guidance so families can help themselves rather than relying on services,
- be proactive in the use of data and intelligence to target resources
- provide targeted and specialist services for the most vulnerable families whilst ensuring and supporting whilst making sure that universal services to be effective and resilient
- focus on self-reliance, personalisation, choice and control

Commissioning

To support these aims the Partnership will commission services to decide how to use and prioritise the resources available to deliver better outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way. To develop the universal market in Herefordshire for services for children that support early help and intervention so the demand for services at higher levels of need are reduced. The design of the Early Help provision will prevent families escalating to higher levels of safeguarding need, and reduce the demand for public sector services; whilst improving sustainable outcomes. The principles that underpin all our commissioning of services will ensure that:

- the services will make a tangible positive difference to the lives of children and their families
- safeguarding and quality is at the heart of the commissioning process and in commissioned services
- we focus on commissioning for outcomes, rather than commissioning of services
- we improve experiences for children, young people and their families and their involvement in all aspects of the commissioning process and service redesign
- commissioning decisions are based on clear evidence of local need, best practice and innovation in service delivery and effective services that provide value for money.
- we encourage and support individuals, communities and organisations to do more for themselves and their local area

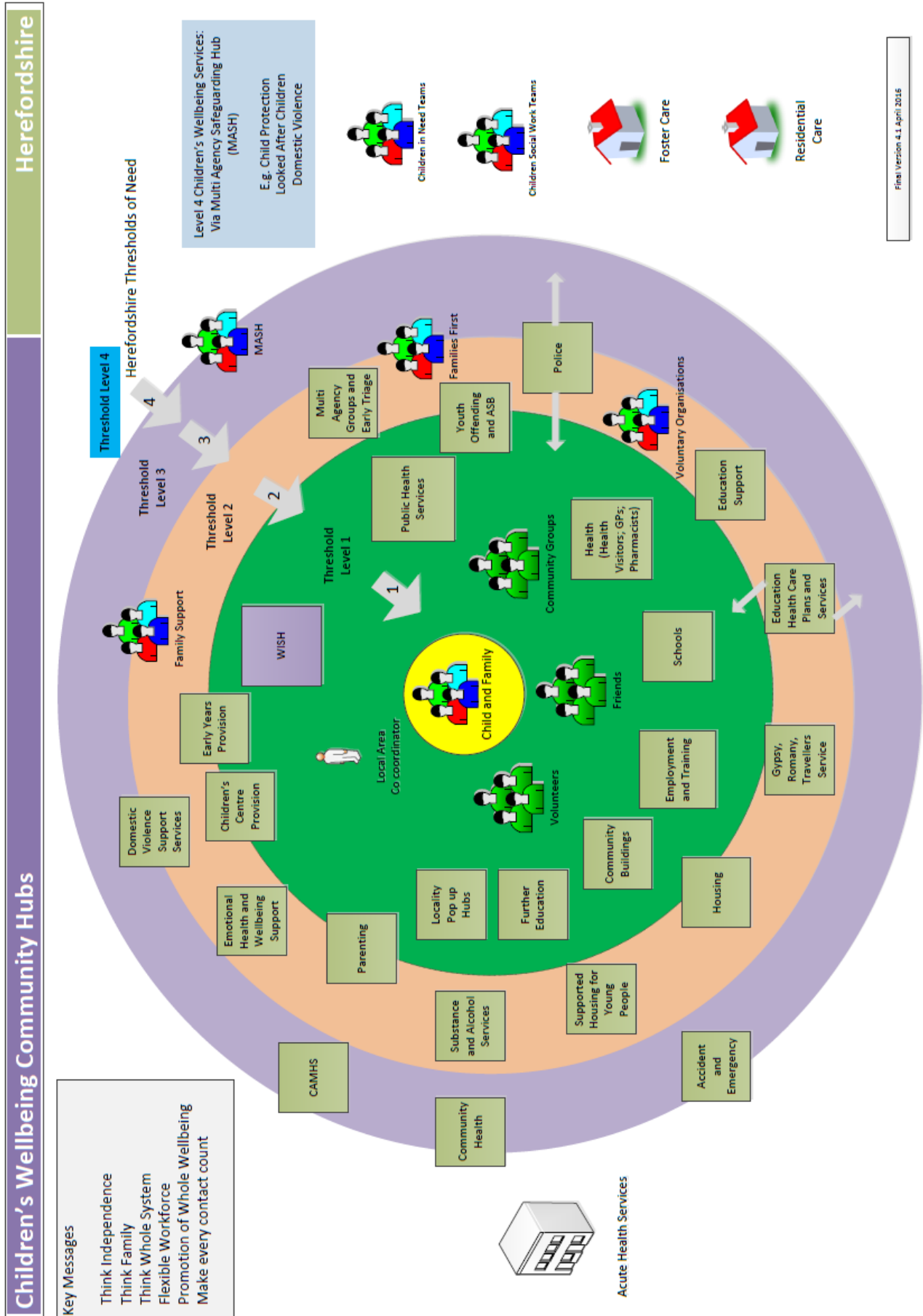
Locality Hubs

The hubs will be a local base for the coordination of work with children, young people and families. Based on the level 2 and 3 of the Thresholds of Need, there will be Community Hubs across the County with the aim of responding to the particular Community needs. The locality family network meetings will coordinate their work from those Hubs. The vision is that staff from the core partner agencies, aligned services along with local community providers will work together to address the needs of (whole) families from community bases. With the aim of delivering contact and services from local venues such as community centres, church halls and children's centres. Whichever is central and accessible to each Community (Fig 1).

Family Network Meetings

The locality based family network meetings will identify and co-ordinate support for children, young people, families and carers who have a completed Common Assessment Framework (CAF). They play a crucial role in the integration of services to provide early intervention and prevent needs escalating. An effective family network meeting will have ownership and commitment from key professionals working in each locality. Representatives from the core agencies, aligned services and organisations whose focus is on the outcomes and achievements of children and young people will attend this meeting on a regular basis. Their role will be two-fold, they will provide an initial local point of contact for Early Help support and provide a triage role to identify what (local) support can be provided to the family. They will identify a lead professional/key worker and agree a family plan. The child and family's inclusion and views are central to any decisions. Additionally the family network meeting will provide a forum for review of the family plan and the support it provides.

Fig 1. Community Hub Model



The Child and Family CAF (Common Assessment Framework)

In order to be in a position to intervene at the earliest point and target help and support in a way that makes a difference to the lives of families, a good quality assessment is required. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is part of the council's strategy to provide help to families at the earliest point of identification and reduce the need for more costly interventions and reliance on more specialist interventions. The CAF provides a common approach, and a holistic assessment of the needs of families which will be meaningful to them as they have been supported to tell their story and agree on an action plan to meet their individual needs.

The child and family CAF is therefore central to the work of the Early Help approach. It focuses on the risks to and needs of all family members and supports families to identify their own solutions. The CAF will be used to assess, plan and review work, together with families enabling clear objectives to be set and worked towards. The CAF can also be used as a referral, when concerns increase about a child and family and support is needed to 'step-up' to the 'higher level' social care services.

The Lead Professional (Key Worker) Role

For those families identified as needing support, Key and Lead Workers will act as the main contact within a given family at any one time. With the aim of ensuring one family, one worker, one plan. Using the Family Action Plan they will provide day to day support and help families to make sense of an often complicated and confusing landscape of service provision. They will do this by co-ordinating a package of support from a range of aligned family support services that exist across the county. The Lead Professional will be required to;

- Build a relationship with the family using a whole family, locality-based approach
- Be persistent and assertive
- Deliver evidence-based solutions and coordinate the support needed from other agencies, providing practical support.
- Put robust agreements in place using CAF or family agreement
- Provide a flexible response that includes support outside traditional hours
- empower families to develop the capacity to resolve their own problems
- Tailor interventions to the specific family needs
- Collect appropriate information and data, record well, evaluate with the family, monitor appropriately.

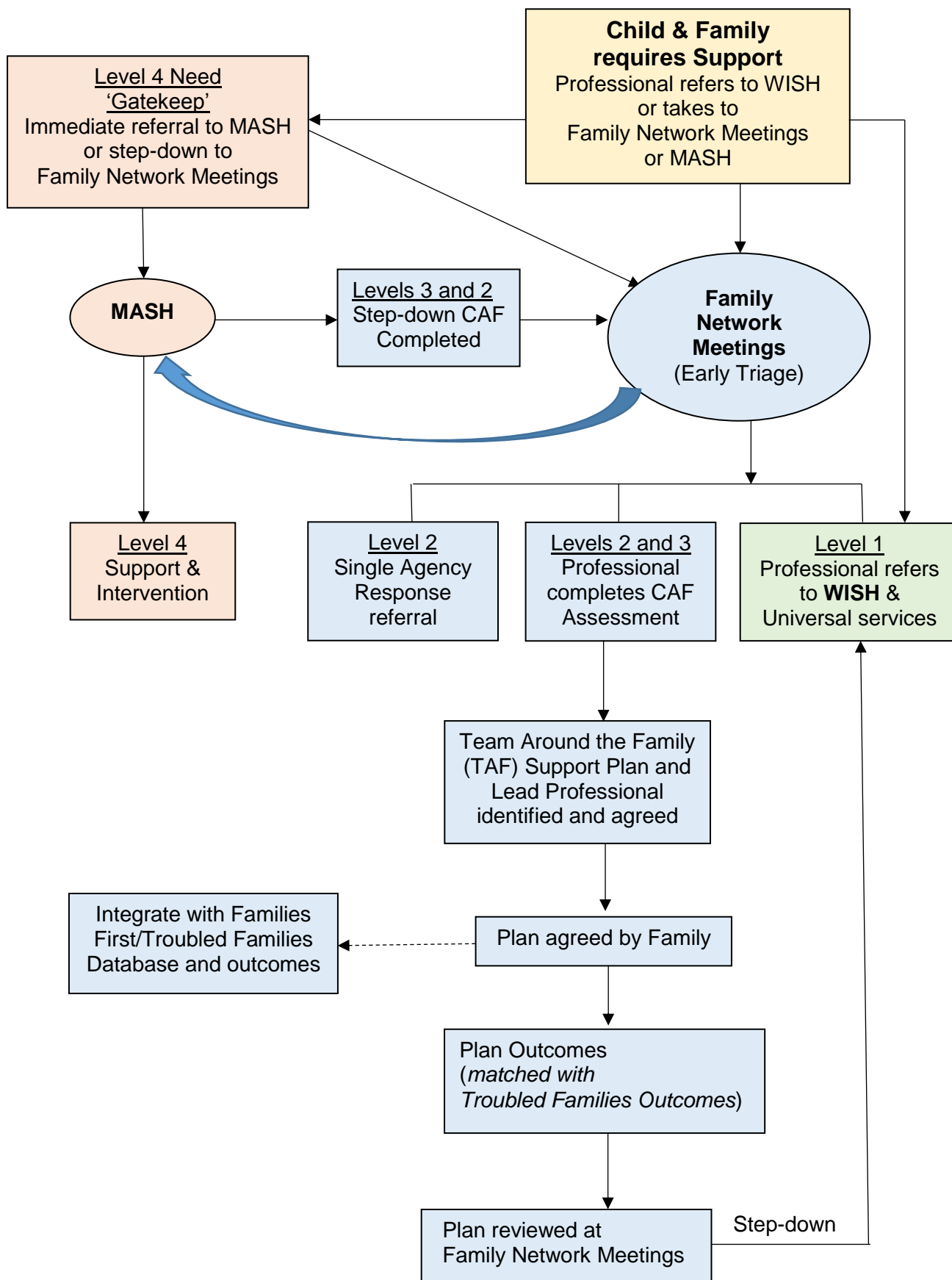
Voice of the child and family

Throughout the process of working with families will be the integration of the voice of the child and that of the family. Central to the Early Help approach will be the engagement with the family to understand their needs and work with them to resolve the issues that affect them. This will mean ensuring their full engagement in identifying the support that they require at every stage of their involvement.

Early Help Community Support Model

Outlined below (Fig 2) is the Community Support Model that illustrates the process of where and how professionals and organisations ensure that families, can identify where they can get the support they need, outlining a typical journey of a child and family accessing the Early Help community support:

Fig 2. Community Support Model



Progress and Outcomes

Through the work of the Early Help strategy we will achieve the outcomes identified within the Children and Young People's Plan will be achieved by 2018 and Troubled Families outcomes by 2020. Therefore we will have improved the early identification and response to critical issues ensuring that we are helping the most vulnerable families as early as possible. Universal services will be in place which work in conjunction with targeted models of effective intervention. Our approach will be to working with whole families to address their issues and concerns.

The focus and emphasis of the Early Help strategy will use the Family Outcomes Framework as the benchmark. The outcomes for Troubled Families programme forms the basis of the Framework, to ensure and achieve against the six expected outcomes:

- Parents and children involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school
- Children who need help
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, and young people at risk of worklessness
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

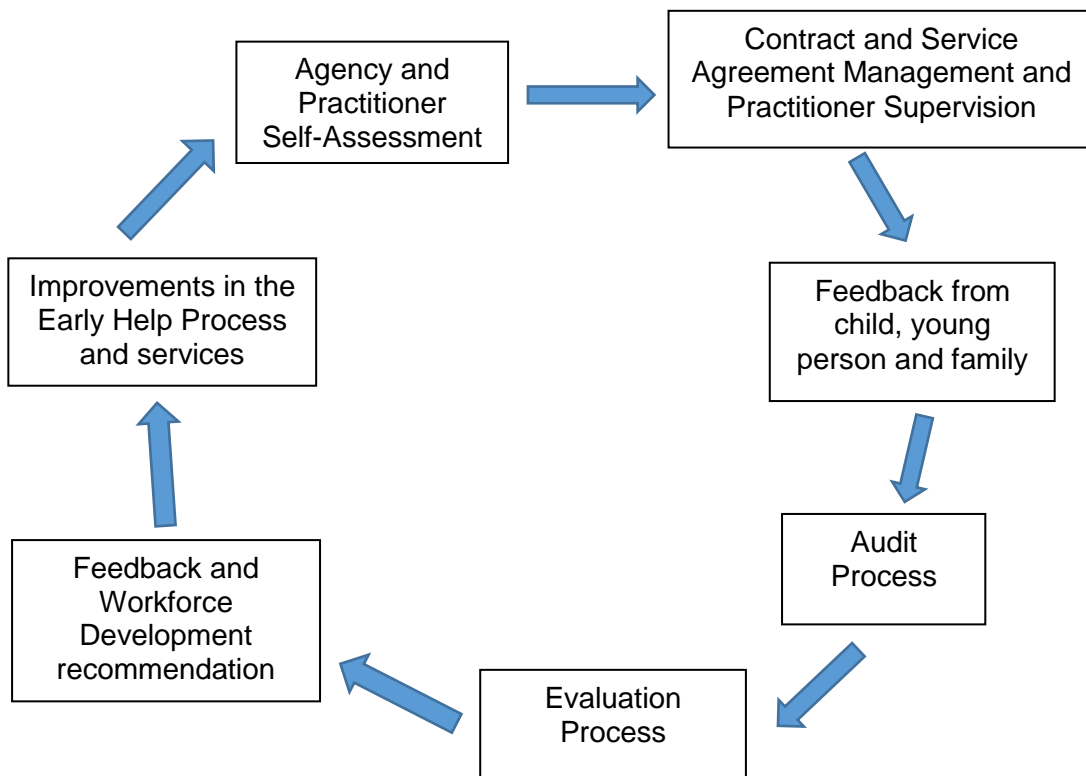
These outcomes are also attached to the DCLG Payment by Results (PbR) providing potential further funding to Herefordshire and contributing to the early help service transformation. Through the use of the DCLG's Troubled Families cost calculator we will be able to calculate and identify savings and cost avoidance across the partnership. It is also recognised that the current levels of Child Protection referrals and plans and the number of Looked After Children are at an 'overheated' level and achieving against the Early Help outcomes, whilst not leading to an immediate reduction in those numbers, it is expected that they will reduce over time and therefore lead to a reduction in the wider costs to the system.

We will develop a range of Early Help and prevention key impact indicators that directly reflect the outcomes measured through the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board, Children's Services and the Early Years and Family Support Services and aligned with partner agency outcomes including Public and Mental Health. An Early Help scorecard has been developed to monitor the effectiveness of Early Help services delivered or commissioned by the Council and Partners. The impact indicators and outcomes will include:

- Numbers families referred and received Early Help
- How are families entering Early Help services
- Number of Families First/Troubled Families that have been worked with
- Number of Families First/Troubled Families where outcomes have been achieved
- Family Network meetings - geographical referral numbers
- Partner agency outcomes including Public Health, Police, Youth Offending Service, Health
- Breakdown of referrals in Community Hubs
- Number of Family Network Meetings Triage (to whom, to where and timescales)
- Identified lead professional by agency
- Progress against Children and Families equality objectives

Quality Assurance

Our Quality Assurance Framework will include quantitative as well as qualitative measures of outcomes and success, identifying standards that will be expected to be met by both Council and aligned agency services. It will enable continuous improvement in the way that services are provided to children and families. As part of this, staff will be well supported, through a thorough induction and regular supervision. A systematic programme of case audit will be an integral part of the framework, with the purpose of not only checking whether essential requirements are being met, but to lift the quality of practice. Ensuring that programme thresholds are working and being met and for example, step up and step-down down arrangements are being used appropriately and efficiently. We will also take the views and opinions of the services from the families we work with to help us improve the way we deliver our Early Help offer and engage with those families.



Equality Analysis (EIA) Form

A) Description

Name of service, function, policy (or other) being assessed

Early Help Strategy 2016-2018

Directorate or organisation responsible (and service, if it is a policy)

Children's Wellbeing

Date of assessment

18th April 2016

Names and job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Gordon Murray, Interim Head of Children's Commissioning

Accountable person

Gordon Murray, Interim Head of Children's Commissioning

What are the aims or main purpose of the service, function or policy? What does it provide and how does it provide it?

The aim of the Early Help strategy to provide early and effective help and support to children and families when they need it, with the long term aim of helping families in Herefordshire to be able to help themselves' and improve their overall well-being and quality of life. Providing help for children and families as soon as problems start to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will emerge in the future. In order for us to be able to help and support children and their families at the earliest stage, a range of partners will work together to plan and deliver services. Strong partnerships that understand the role each agency plays and the impact each service has on supporting families will be essential. The approach and delivery of Herefordshire's Troubled Families programme, Families First, will form a cornerstone to the Early Help strategy. The strategy will have a community focussed approach that recognises the importance of the Communities in which families live and work and developing and building relationships based on the family's links within their Community. Acknowledging also that a rebalancing of resources across Herefordshire's multi-agency services must occur in order to create a sustainable service provision that will benefit families.

Location or any other relevant information

The strategy will have a county-wide, community and multi-agency impact.

List any key policies or procedures to be reviewed as part of this assessment.

- Ofsted – Early Help, whose responsibility? March 2015
- Children's Acts 1989, 2004, 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 and 2015.
- 'Think Family' Evaluation Report
- The Munro Review of Child Protection (May 2011),
- The Graham Allen review on Early Intervention (January 2011)

- The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults (Field, 2010)
- The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning (Tickell, 2011)
- Marmot Review, 'Fair Society Healthy Lives' (2010)
- Early Support programme for children with disabilities
- Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability (DfE 2011)
- The National Health Visitors Plan - Progress to date (DoH 2013)
- Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006
- DCLG Troubled Families Programme 2015
- NSPCC, 'Thriving Communities' report 2015

Who is intended to benefit from the service, function or policy?

Children and their families across the county whose needs fall within the Universal and Levels 2 and 3 of Herefordshire's Children's Wellbeing 'Thresholds of Need' guidance.

Who are the stakeholders? What is their interest?

The children, their families and the communities in which they live, alongside the core (statutory) agencies that includes:

- Children's Wellbeing
- Adults Wellbeing
- Public Health services
- Mental health services
- NHS services
- Police
- Youth Offending Service and Adult Criminal Justice agencies;

will be engaged in the development and planning of the support that they need. This will also involve community, third sector organisations who will be engaged to provide appropriate support for those families in need.

B) Partnerships and Procurement

If you contract out services or work in partnership with other organisations, Herefordshire Council remains responsible for ensuring that the quality of provision/delivery meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, ie.

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity between different groups
- Fosters good relations between different groups

What information do you give to the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act? What information do you monitor from the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act?

To be confirmed.....

Are there any concerns at this stage that indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? For example: complaints, comments, research, and outcomes of a scrutiny review. Please describe:

No.

C) Information

What information (monitoring or consultation data) have you got and what is it telling you?

There is widespread (national) recognition and data informing that it is better to identify and deal with problems early to reduce poor outcomes and inequalities, rather than to respond when difficulties have become acute and demand action by statutory or more intensive services (see national reports and policies listed above). Although research shows that the most impact can be made during a child's early years, Early Help is not just for very young children and we understand that problems may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence.

There is a range of local data that shows that there are a high number of inappropriate referrals to the MASH and the higher Level 4 services, which in part is as a result of the current low levels of early help available for families and agencies to refer. This is informing us that an early help strategy needs to be in place and delivered to ensure that the support and services are provided to families at the right level and at the right time.

D) Assessment/Analysis

Describe your key findings (eg. negative, positive or neutral impacts - actual or potential). Also your assessment of risk.

Strand/community	Impact
Children and young people	There will an expected positive impact through the family's involvement in the development of their support plans and the children and young people's access appropriate levels of support in their community to meet their needs.

E) Consultation

Did you carry out any consultation?

Yes No

Who was consulted?

As part of the development of the strategy and in partnership with Adults Wellbeing and The Design Council project, communities across the county are currently being consulted to inform the development on how early help can be integrated and delivered in partnership with the communities. As the strategy progresses through the formal governance processes the following partners and Partnership boards will also be consulted to ensure that all agencies are engaged and committed to the Early Help strategy implementation.

- West Mercia Police
- NHS
- West Mercia Youth Offending Service
- CCG
- 2gether

- HVOSS
 - Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board

Describe other research, studies or information used to assist with the assessment and your key findings.

Do you use diversity monitoring categories? Yes No
(if No you should use this as an action as we are required by law to monitor diversity categories)

If yes, which categories?

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion & Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

What do you do with the diversity monitoring data you gather? Is this information published? And if so, where?

It is collected and collated within Children's Wellbeing data systems and is used to identify where there is need for support and services and to inform where there may also be a need for contracted services. This is not published. Where families are identified as part of the Troubled Families/Families First service, the information will be collected and collated on the Families First data hub. This information will be shared, anonymously, with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

F) Conclusions

	Action/objective/target OR justification	Resources required	Timescale	I/R/S/J
a)	Draft strategy being submitted through governance arrangements, through the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Young Peoples Partnership and Children's Safeguarding Children's Board.	Draft Early help Strategy	April – June 2016	R
b)				
c)				
d)				

(I) Taking immediate effect.

(R) Recommended to Council/Directors through a Committee or other Report*.

(S) Added to the Service Plan.

(J) *To be brought to the attention of the Equality Manager.*

*Summarise your findings in the report. Make the full assessment available for further information.

NB: Make sure your final document is suitable for publishing in the public domain.



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	20 October 2016
Title of report:	Annual fostering report – April 2015-2016
Report by:	Cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

To review fostering service performance and approve related documents.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the activity, quality and impact of Herefordshire Council's fostering service as detailed in appendix A to this report be reviewed and any additional actions to support improvement identified;**
- (b) the Herefordshire foster carers charter (appendix B) be approved;**
- (c) the guide for young people that are looked after (appendix C) be approved; and**
- (d) the statement of purpose (appendix D) be approved.**

Alternative options

1. As this is a performance report there are no alternative options.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Carol Moreton – fostering team manager on Tel (01432 383240)

Reasons for recommendations

2. It is a statutory responsibility for Cabinet to receive an annual fostering report and approve the related documents. It also provides an oversight of the direction and priorities for Herefordshire's children and ensures they receive good quality care from the county's foster carers, who are supported to keep children safe, enjoy a healthy lifestyle and attain good educational outcomes.

Key considerations

3. The annual report outlines the changes in team structure, recruitment and placement activity between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 and evidences that the management, outcomes and financial state of the fostering service is effective and efficient.
4. As reported last year, there continues to be a national shortage of foster carers, specifically those able to look after children from traumatised backgrounds and with challenging behaviours.
5. In line with the children with disabilities (CWD) transformation programme, it was identified that more family carers for short breaks for disabled children would be needed and these are now being recruited and matched to children.
6. To prevent the use of expensive mother and baby units, we have identified a need to recruit carers able to meet the needs of parent and child placements. In addition, carers for older teens continue to be an area of need.
7. To meet sufficiency needs, we have increased overall foster carer households by 15% from 93 carers on 31 March 2015 to 107 carers on 31 March 2016. Of these, eight carers are Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service foster carers providing specialist therapeutic support to the most challenging young people. To meet the needs of teens, we have maintained supported lodgings provision at 18 households.
8. Over the year, there have been seven foster carers transferring to Herefordshire from independent fostering agencies (IFA) or other local councils, which means they are transferring in with existing skills and expertise for these type of challenging placements. There have been no in-house carers transferring out to agencies; with support and training being identified as positive factors in being a Herefordshire foster carer.
9. Two Herefordshire carers received an MBE this year in recognition of their long standing commitment to looked after children and over 30 years of fostering service.
10. Positive permanence outcomes for children are reflected in the number of approved kinship carers and children moving from fostering into special guardianship order (SGO) arrangements. Herefordshire family and friends foster carers have increased by 6.25% (32 to 34 households) and seven children moved from being looked after (LAC) to SGO. There are a total of 84 children in SGO arrangements. This reduces social work intervention and ensures compliance with legislation. Post order visits will be from one special guardianship social worker three times a year, rather than six weekly statutory visits from children's social workers and additional visits from the fostering service.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Carol Moreton – fostering team manager on Tel (01432 383240)

11. Following implementation of a recruitment strategy and successful open day event in January 2016, four specialist foster carer assessments began and a further four overnight short breaks providers were also identified to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families. Across the service this raised awareness of the needs of disabled children, increasing training and support available resulting in two further in-house carers converting to provide short-breaks for disabled children who are looked after.
12. Mother and baby placements have been made in-house over the year with continued referrals reflecting demand forecast for 2016/17. These avoid high cost IFA or residential unit costs (£585 against £1,200 - £2,500 per week).
13. By the end of March 2017, our aim is to increase the number of overnight short breaks carers from four to eight households, which will provide breaks for potentially 10 to 12 children, depending on the number of nights each child is assessed as needing.
14. With the introduction of the availability of the adoption support fund to special guardians, it is hoped that more children will move into special guardianship arrangements and permanence over the next year.
15. We aim to increase the number of foster carers and supported lodgings providers to meet the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), as part of the national transfer scheme. The target is to have six additional places by December 2016 and a further six by March 2017. This is being supported through the development of training courses and policies and procedures for UASC placements.
16. Training and policies for mother and baby placements is planned to improve provision and skills for an additional two to three mother and baby placements.

Community impact

17. It is a council priority to safeguard children by ensuring they have a safe place to live. The fostering service, carers charter and looked after children's guide support the council achieving its ambitions in key strategies in the corporate plan, health and wellbeing strategy and children and young people's plan to keep children close to their existing networks.
18. Increasing in-house capacity will support children being placed with local carers, enabling them to remain in their current school and facilitate contact with family members. This will also meet objectives set above and within the children and young people's plan.

Equality duty

19. The fostering service welcomes enquiries from all ethnic, religious and cultural groups within Herefordshire. Increased in-house fostering capacity will support sufficiency of choice and ensure appropriate matching of children to the right placements, with consideration to ethnicity, culture, religion and disability.
20. To prepare and support foster carers who are being recruited and caring for unaccompanied asylum seeking children specialist training has been arranged and will be further developed during the next 12 months.
21. Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out:

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Carol Moreton – fostering team manager on Tel (01432 383240)

- a. As a public authority we pay due regard to ensure where possible that we;
- b. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under this Act;
- c. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- d. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it as we carry out our functions.

Financial implications

22. The Fostering Service has a budget of £3,488k for 2016/17. In addition to this a budget of £3,491k is available to fund the HIPSS service, independent fostering agency and residential placements. Due to the high number of looked after children there has not been sufficient in-house capacity despite the growth of the fostering service and there is currently a forecasted overspend of £133k for 2016/17.
23. Fostering allowances may increase in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance to ensure that the council stays in line with national guidelines. This decision is delegated to the director for children's wellbeing. In recognition of the valuable role foster carers play in supporting vulnerable children they are paid a fee relevant to their skill and experience in addition to allowances and this enables the service to be more competitive with the independent fostering sector.

Legal implications

24. Herefordshire Council must comply with Standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards and ensure that every three months a report on the management, outcomes and financial state of the fostering service is received by the executive to allow them to monitor the service for effectiveness and ensure it is achieving good outcomes for children. They must also be satisfied that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

Risk management

25. Other than when it is safer to do so, without an effective fostering service, children who need to be looked after by the council may be placed away from their own community. This can cause disruption to their education and disaffection from their families and friends.
26. If recruitment targets are not met, there is a risk of increased dependence on private agencies and residential units located further away from a child's networks incurring higher costs and budget pressures.
27. Currently we do not have sufficient families able to care for children with complex disabilities, Muslim or eastern European families. This may require specialist placements to be arranged out of county. We aim to mitigate these risks through specific support plans, training, using buddying or learning from those carers with children from other countries and cultures.

Consultees

28. The fostering service works closely with the participation service and corporate parenting panel, which consists of council members and representatives of partner agencies in health, education and representative foster carers and young people leaving care, which is a forum for young people to be consulted on their experience of care. This has resulted in a strengthening of the foster carers association and fundraising arm, which will provide additional funding for activities and trips for birth children and care leavers, for example, which no longer are budgeted for within fostering expenditure.

Appendices

Appendix A - Fostering annual report 2015/16

Appendix B - The foster carer's charter

Appendix C - The young people's guide

Appendix D - Statement of purpose

Background papers

- None identified.

FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Ofsted registration: SCO56304

1st APRIL 2015- 31st MARCH 2016

Report Owner –Carol Moreton (Registered Person) Fostering Team Manager

Alison Forshaw – Kinship and SGO Team manager

Lin Hitchman (Responsible Person) – Head of Looked After Children

Introduction

This report complies with Standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards which sets out the condition that the Fostering Service Manager will monitor and report to board members and management members about the management, outcomes and financial state of the fostering service every three months.

Establishment

1 Team manager

9 full time equivalent social workers – including 1 senior practitioner, 1 HIPSS project coordinator and 1 SLP fostering social worker.

1 family support worker; 1 marketing officer; 1 recruitment officer.

Vacancies: One secondment post is vacant (covering senior practitioner moves) but interview set for permanent post.

1.5 social worker posts have been filled but 1.5 posts are vacant – interviews to be held in May 2016.

One p/t maternity cover will be returning to post in May.

The Kinship and SGO hub has developed its remit to include Overnight Short Breaks for children with disability.

Analysis:

Over the year one member of staff has gone on maternity leave, one moved to the adoption team and 3 staff moved to the 16 + team. It is significant that they have not left out of dissatisfaction with the Council but have sought to progress and specialize in another field.

Caseloads per staff member have increased significantly due to staffing shortages in the quarter: average case load has increased from 16 to 20 which places pressure on the team and duty work. Alongside continued recruitment and increased demand for form F assessments we have together with Commissioning and Hoople implemented a flexible system for the timely completion of assessments through the creation of a framework agreement with independent assessors.

Issues relating to the geographic spread will again be compensated by reallocation of cases over the next year 2016/17 into area groupings to reduce time spent by fostering social workers travelling once fully staffed.

Current Picture:

We support, supervise and provide training for 107 general fostering (including 8 HIPSS) households, 18 Supported lodgings providers and 34 kinship foster carers.

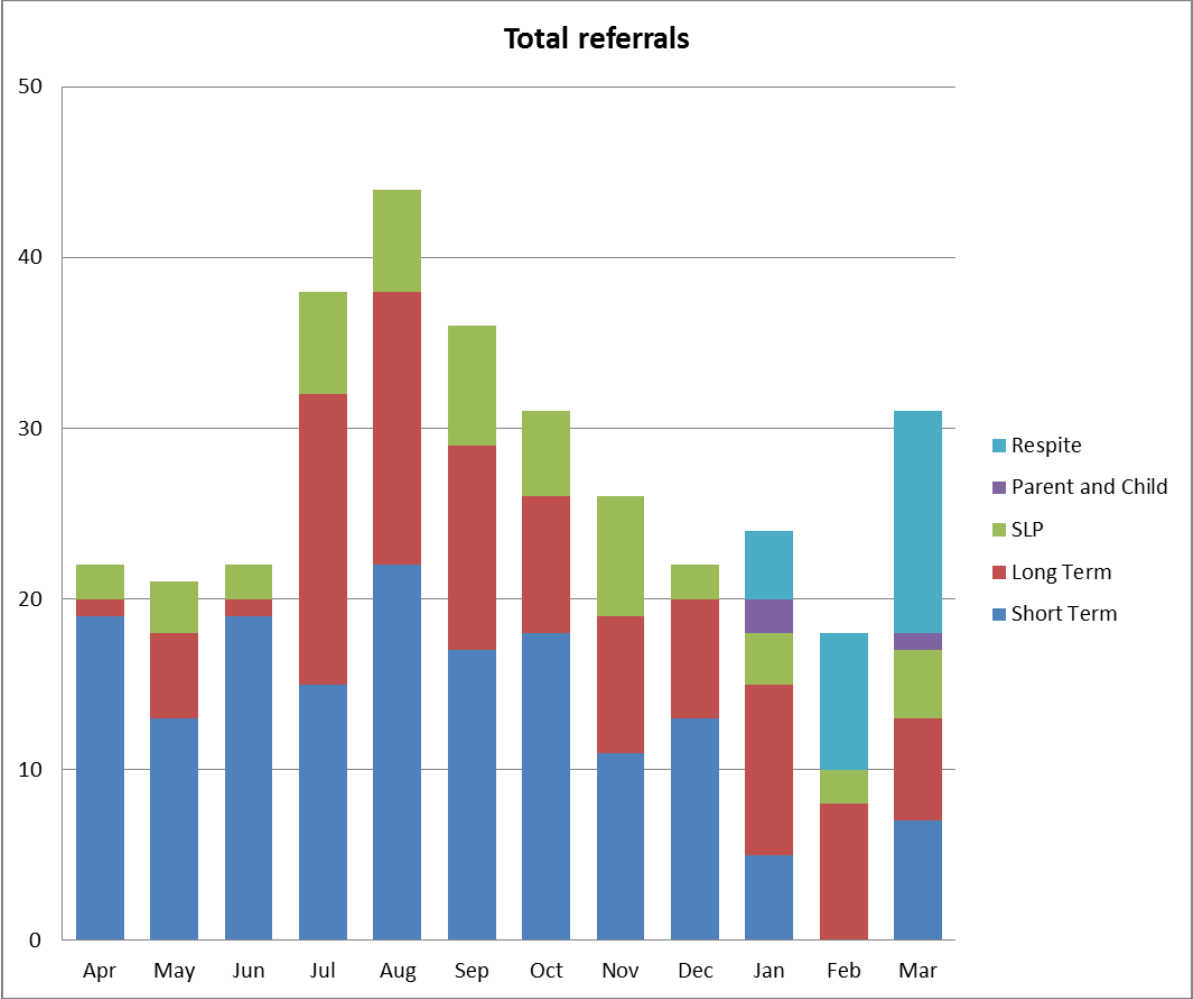
In line with other local authorities there has been an increase in the numbers of children becoming LAC and late summer of 2015 was extremely busy for duty workers and foster carers.

There are currently 119 children in in-house placements, (49 in kinship care/8 in Reg 24, and 97 SGO placements); plus 19 (13 LAC, 6 s17 or post 18) in SLP, a total of 195 placements plus 4 Staying Put arrangements.

PLACEMENT ACTIVITY:

REFERRALS:

There has been a slowdown in the number of placements being requested and therefore made in the quarter. Despite several disruptions of placements requiring crisis responses and support plans the number of IFAs continue to be below previous levels in the quarter:



In line with the Care placement Strategy we have continued to work to prevent the use of IFAs over the last quarter: particularly in preventing IFA or expensive residential mother and baby placements – in January there were 4 such placements. The Ofsted 2014/5 data report has shown a rise of 3% in the use of IFA’s across all other Local authorities.

Placement Searches, especially for respite, take considerable team duty time and placement availability continues to be increasingly limited as many carers have reached full capacity. However, we have recruited 3 respite carers in the quarter to meet this need and comments from carers about the lack of respite impacting on morale.

There is continued slowdown in referrals in the quarter which would indicate placement panel and scrutiny of decisions has been effective.

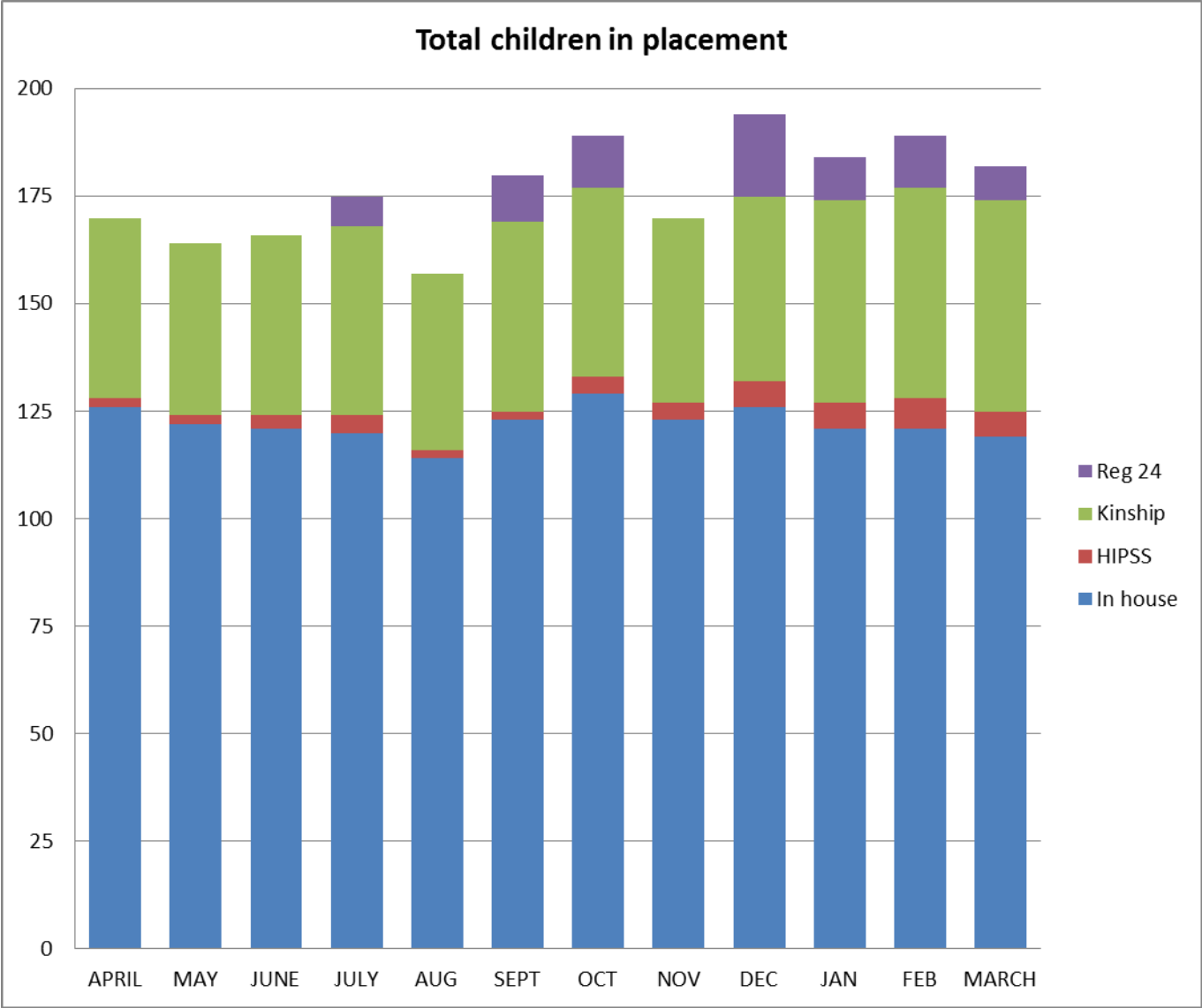
Analysis:

The number of short term or emergency placements peaked in the first quarter and third quarter. We have had a consistently high number of children awaiting ongoing long term placements, some ultimately are not needed as other options are identified i.e. s/t move, reunification or remain in existing placements.

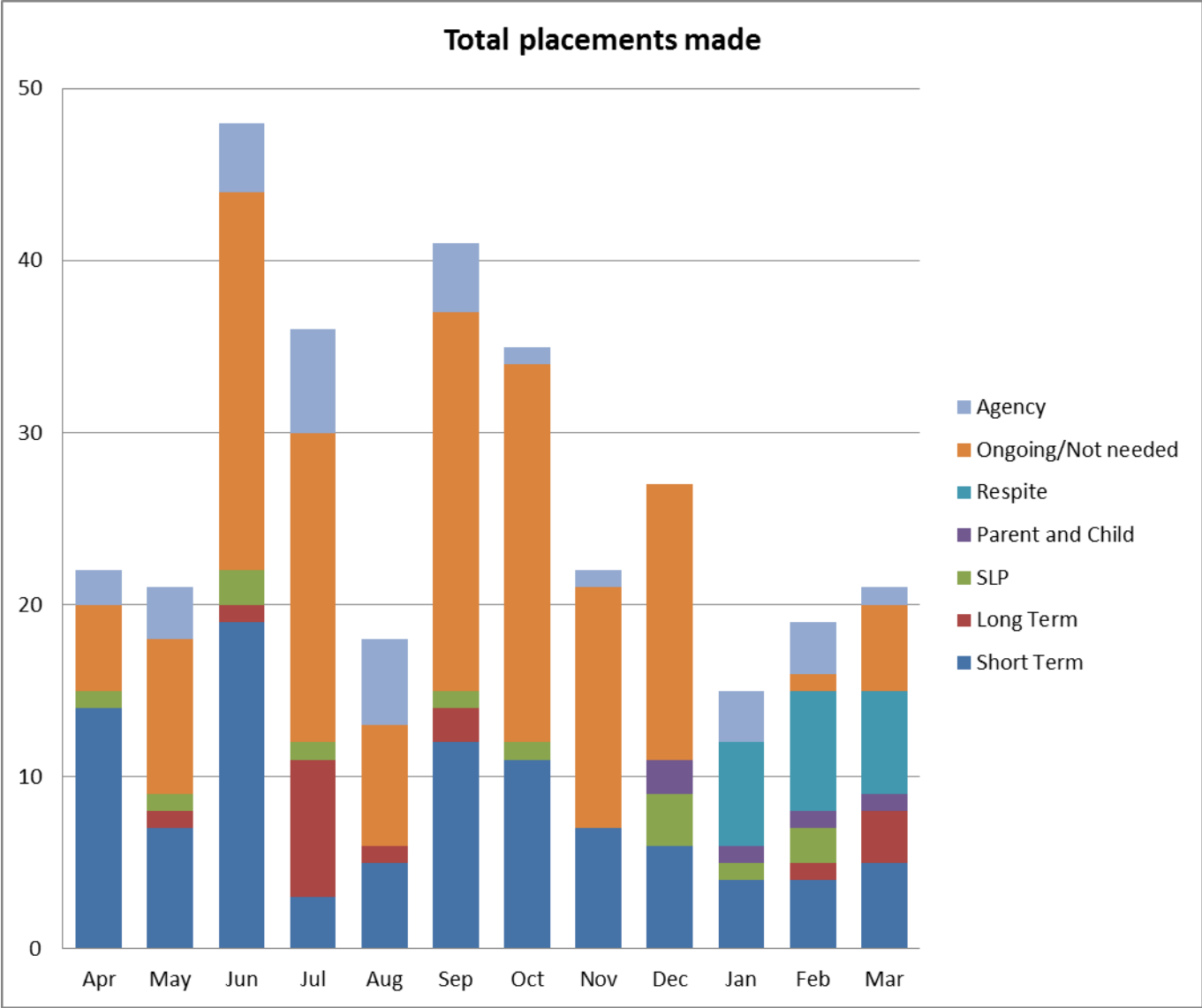
The spread of SLP placements remains fairly consistent but placements are being blocked by lack of moving on to independent housing. This is being addressed at a Strategic level and is being supported through corporate parenting Panel.

Four parent and child placements were made in-house over the year – thus preventing the use of expensive IFA or mother and baby unit expenditure. Meeting this demand has illustrated the need to develop parent and child training, policy and procedures over the next 6 months.

From January 2016 we will collate figures for respite activity as this requires considerable duty time and reflects the level of support needed by some carers to maintain challenging placements. Respite support is part of our strategy to support and retain foster carers. To meet increased need we have recruited an additional 3 respite carers in the last quarter.



In the face of increased LAC numbers the service has worked hard to place children in house without resorting to additional IFA's.



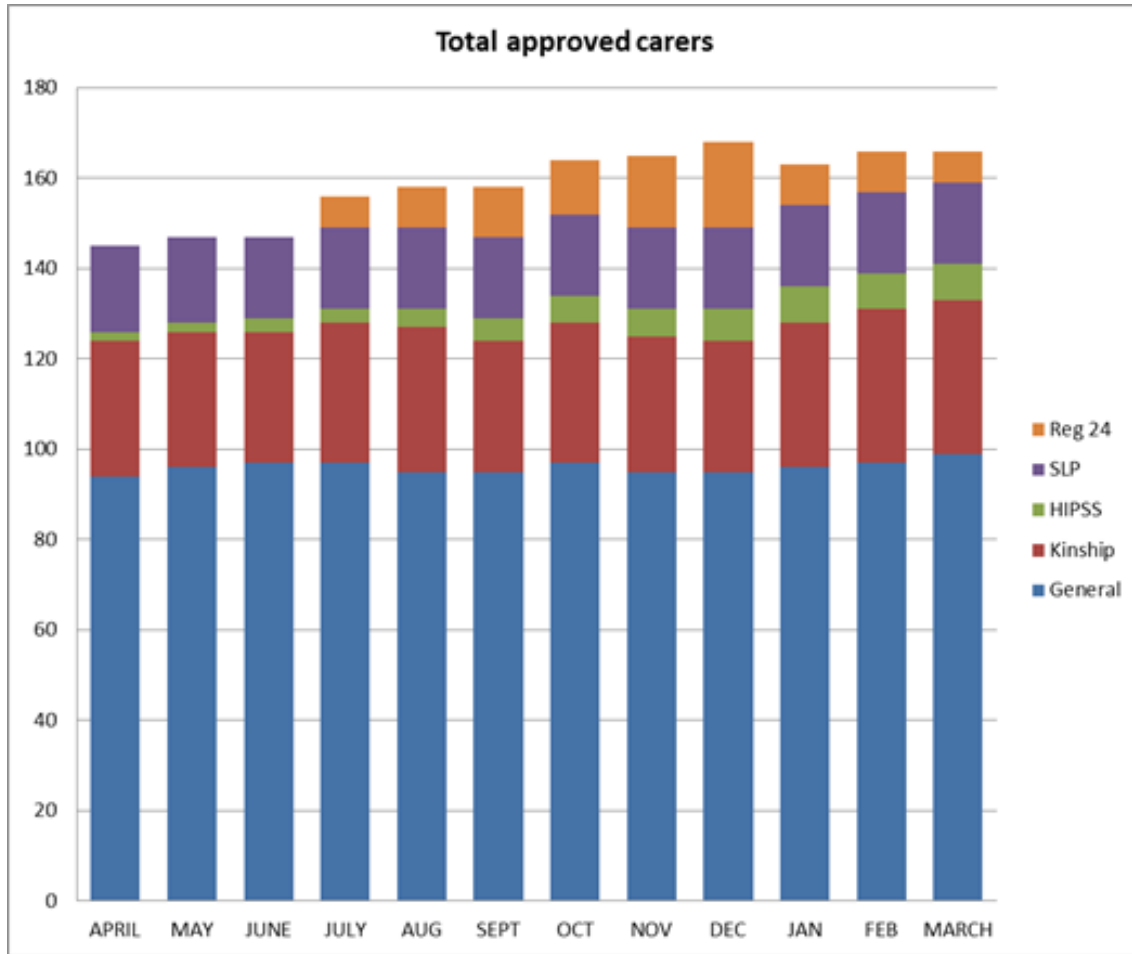
PANEL AND ASSESSMENTS:

There are 2 Panels per month to meet increasing need and an increase in review work. A further two panel members have been added to the Central list from education and Care leaver backgrounds to add to the scrutiny and quality of decision making.

From September 2016 the service moved to completing Stage 1 checks and references to Stage 2 assessments. This allows the fostering social worker to focus on assessment whilst the recruitment officer can focus on checks and references and ‘hold’ potential applicants interest.

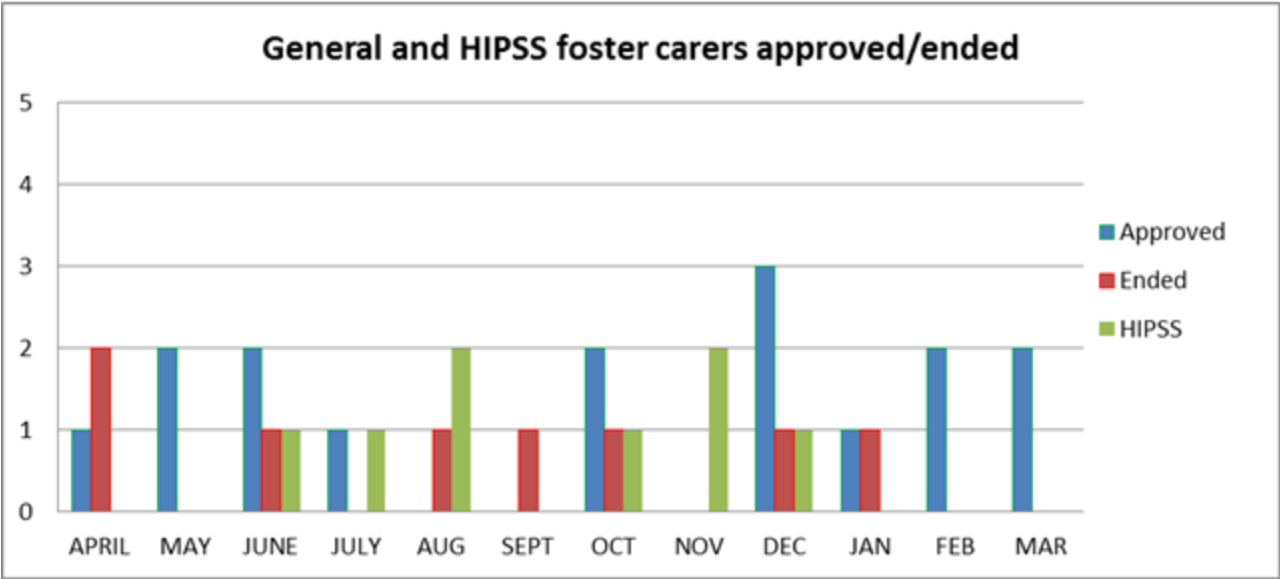
The number of applicants at Stage 1 has increased as Stage 2 becomes a faster process for applicants and increases Panel business. There have been some risks to this – one is staff

vacancies, the other is that three applicants have 'gone on hold' whilst other family or business commitments impinge. One general applicant was withdrawn as unsuitable following a brief report to panel and it was evident that this was an effective way to prevent having to complete the full assessment. Applicants may appeal this decision to IRM if they wish.



Significantly, there have been 7 IFA or experienced Local authority carers that have transferred to work for Herefordshire council. This means they are moving over with pre-existing skills and require less 'induction' to develop skills – a further 3 are currently being assessed and 2 Adult placement providers are converting to Supported lodgings.

No in-house carers have left to move to an Independent agency.



HIPPS:

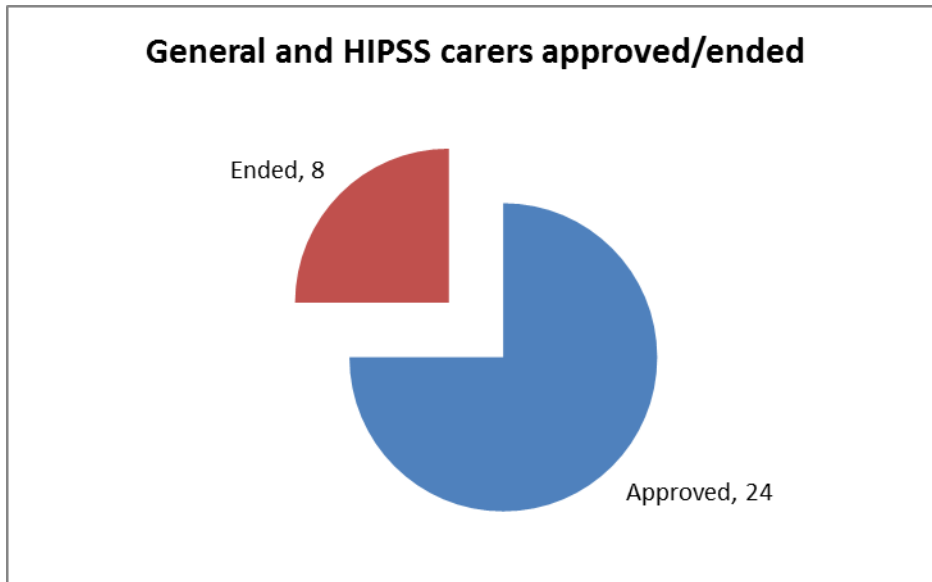
The HIPSS scheme is only slightly below its target of 10 households by April 2016 having recruited 8 HIPSS carers households over the year. These are providing care for 6 placements: one kinship, 3 step downs from Residential and 2 placements have successfully stepped down to in-house placements from IFA; one respite carer has been identified as being needed to consistently support the scheme.

Analysis: whilst an Open Evening held on 8th February failed to generate new interest, a wider marketing plan is in place which targets carers interested in teens and older children with challenging behaviours; specific adverts in Hereford Times jobs pages targets those with pre-existing skills in counselling, therapeutic or Residential work.

Training and ‘upskilling’ of general foster carers to be available for ‘step down ‘ and prevent escalation is in place with the HIPSS and TISS teams.

Carers approved and resignations:

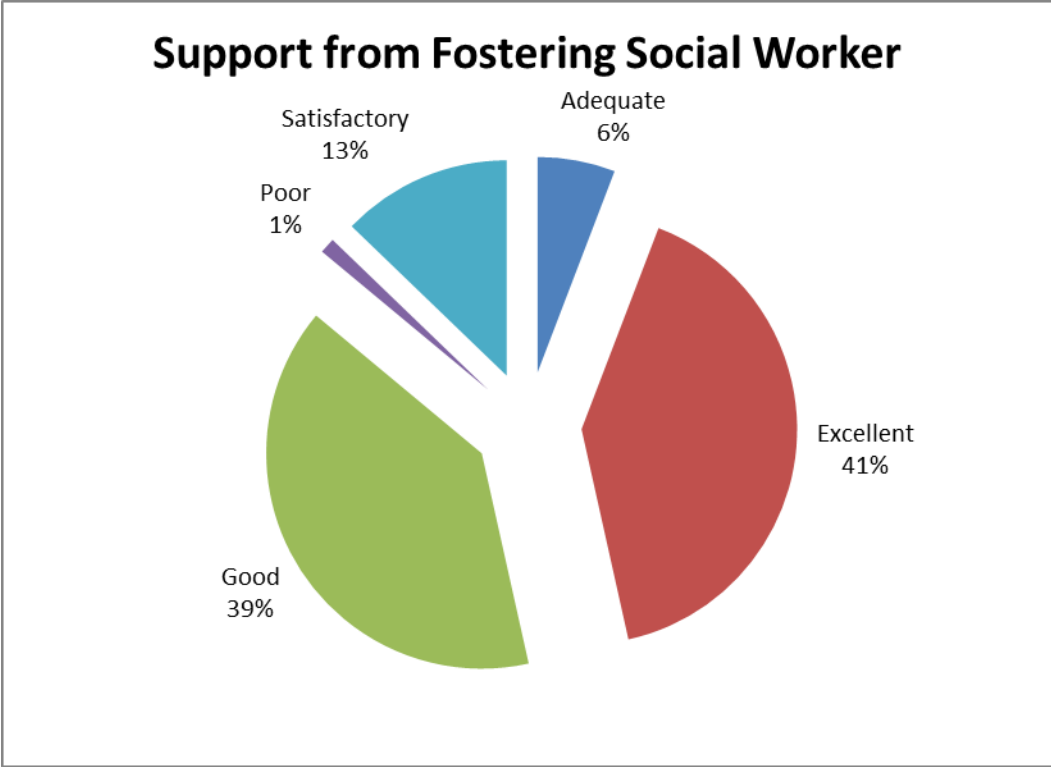
The service has increased the number of general and HIPSS foster carers by 24, retention remains good as the resignation level is low again (8 2013/4, 9 in 2014/5). A further 4 carers came to panel in April 2016 and ADM in May.



Retention and support:

Some (15) carers have opted to go on 'hold ' through the year due to family circumstance, adoptive placement break, health need, post placement recovery or exhaustion, this impacts on placement choice/vacancies available. However, by March 31.3.16 this figure had reduced to 10 - these carers need a break but should be back 'on board' with careful matching and support.

To check whether we are getting support levels right in the midst of increased pressures a survey of the past years annual reviews and feedback was collated to identify gaps and training needs:

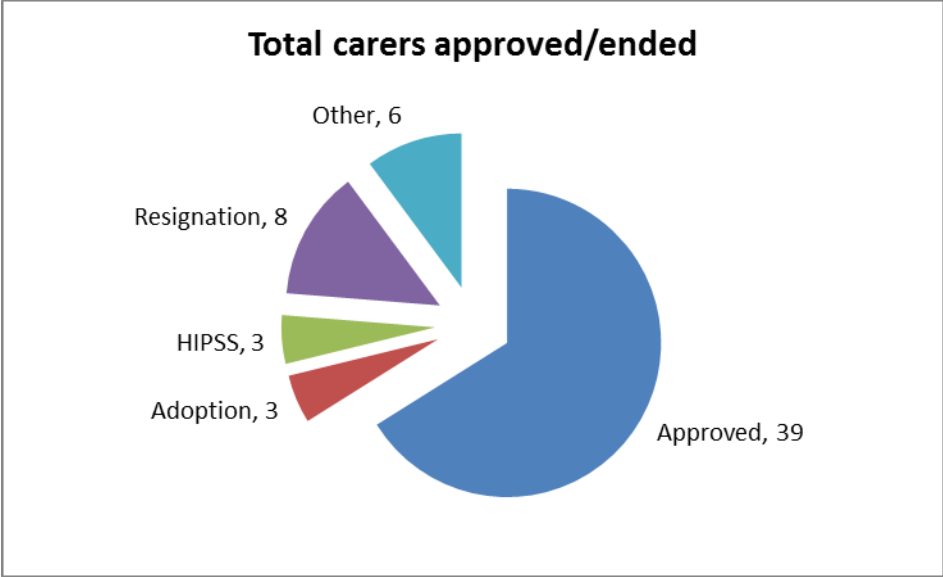


Analysis:

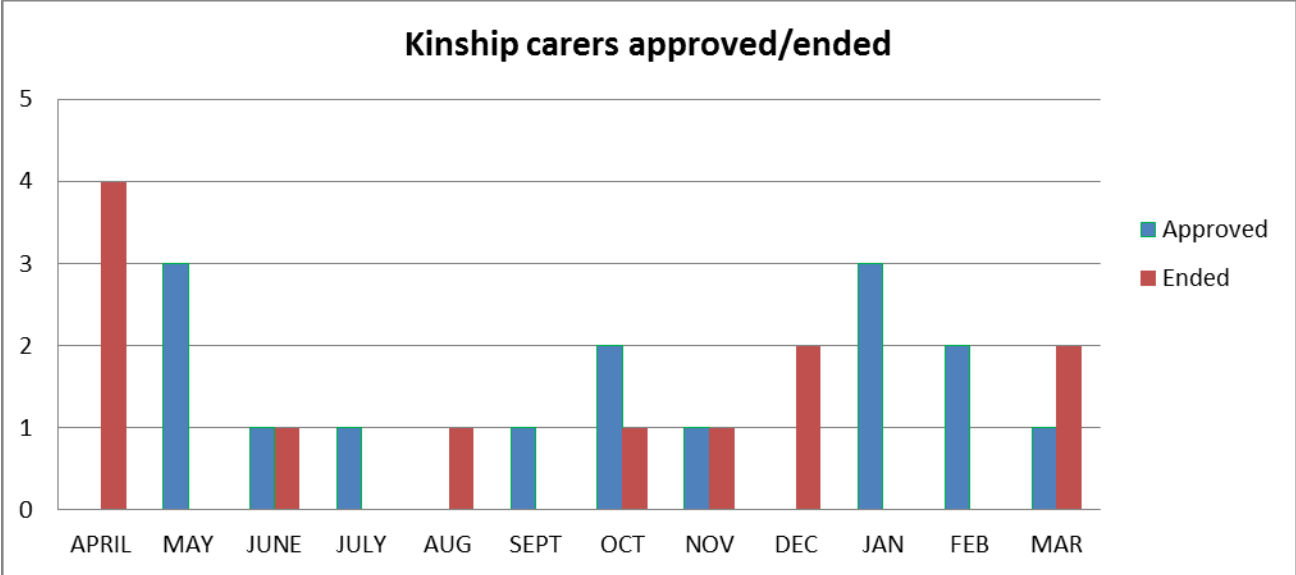
The 2014 – 2015 Ofsted Annual report showed a national decrease in fostering households of one percent (and an increase in family and friends households of 6%). Herefordshire foster carer households have increased by 8.6% (93 carers 31.3.15 to 107 carers 31.3.16). Herefordshire family and friends foster carers have increased by 6.25% (32 to 34 households) which is in line with the national average but does not reflect some of the increased activity around temporary approved carers which peaked at 19 households at one point but is reduced to 7 as at 31.3.16 which reflects a more stable workflow.

Over the year the impact of resignations is mitigated by those carers converting to other permanence or resource options, either adoption or SGO for LAC children needing permanence – this reflects savings to the Department in avoiding expensive out of county adoption or remaining in care. Three in house carers have converted to become HIPSS. None have moved into SLP.

Other represents those whose temporary approval has not continued. Within the 8 resignations 2 households were de-registered following serious concerns relating to practice or care following LADO investigation.



KINSHIP- Team Manager – Alison Forshaw



Over the quarter the kinship team have supported 34 carers; 2 kinship carers were approved in the quarter with a further 12 kinship, reg 24 or SGO assessments ongoing. There are 49 children in kinship care, 8 in Reg 24 placements – temporary approved carers at the end of the quarter.

Kinship foster care

Currently we have a total of 12 assessments underway within the Kinship and SGO Hub. 7 of these are full fostering assessments for temporarily approved kinship foster carers under Regulation 24. We do not have the capacity of our sessional social worker to fully support this level of assessment work but hopefully this will be available to provide adhoc assessment

support post in the next three months. We are not experiencing the same level of joint assessments visits from our CIN/MASH team colleagues at the moment. Compared to 25 joint assessment visits in the previous quarter we have completed 11 in this last quarter. So a significant decrease in Reg 24 joint visit requests. Interestingly there is an increase in viability assessment (pre placement) which is positive in terms of planning for children. This is will be tracked more accurately during the current quarter.

Our number of fully approved households is holding steady during the three months in 2016 this has been at a level of 32, 34, 34. This is a 25% increase compared to 2014 when the Hub first formed.

Kinship and SGO Hub Staffing

A new family support worker (30 hrs) is due to join the Kinship & SGO Hub in May which will provide much needed support to new kinship fostering families.

Special Guardianship Orders

During the quarter 3 children have moved from LAC status to permanency with Special Guardians. During 2015 there were 13 new Special Guardianship arrangements and so the initial quarter would suggest a forecast of a similar number for 2016. However with the introduction of the Adoption Support Fund for four years now available to Special Guardianship Arrangements significant effort is focussed on promoting this change, and hopefully the result will be more families will feel an SGO is an option for them.

The Kinship & SGO Hub meet the Government expectations in relation to the new improved Special Guardianship assessment. There is no doubt there is an increased expectation on SGO services providing more face to face support which will place pressure on the SGO Hub. The Hub has developed training specifically for Special Guardians in collaboration with Adoption Colleagues and this will provide training on The Secure Base Model, drawn from attachment theory, and adapted to include an additional element, that of family membership, for children who are separated from their birth parents.

The consultation in relation to allowances policies is now complete and report prepared for cabinet. The outcome of this will trigger a process of review of all SGOs which will be a

significant amount of work – the Hub has a review process in place and will be able to begin to trigger a process.

OSB – 7 Carers under assessment with our first carers going to fostering panel in May. Matching with children with disability will begin as soon as approval is given. Health training continues to be a focus and the Project Co-ordinator is planning to meet with Health Colleagues. Health Clinical Psychologist is keen to support placements for the children open to her however is unable to provide any specific training. Local OT input is needed.

SUPPORTED LODGINGS AND STAYING PUT:

One vacant social worker post is dedicated to SLP support – activity has been covered on duty until the new post holder is in place early May 2016. Of the 18 SLP providers 6 combine fostering and SLP support. Three carers are still on hold due to illness, moving house and HIPSS approval.

There are 19 young people in SLP placements at the end of the quarter (13 LAC and 6 S17 currently over the age of 18ys). The next annual data needs to be able to consistently differentiate those that are LAC and those s17 placements to refine LAC population data.

The number of SLP placements moving on and sufficiency has stagnated due to lack of housing options. This has been raised at a Strategic level with partner agencies via Corporate Parenting Panel, 16+ Team and the Director of Childrens services.

Analysis: Sufficiency targets for 6 new SLP providers over the year have not been met. We have approved one new SLP carer plus 2 approved to support existing households over the year. However, three further applications are now in process following a specific recruitment campaign:

The 2016 marketing strategy has included redesign of a teen and older young people needing support to move into independent living leaflet and poster. These have been placed around the county. Recruitment stands in Job Centre ‘drop ins’ and the sixth form college and art college have been set up. Twitter and website activity has been amended and the marketing officer has spent time with Children in Care council to focus on their needs and expectations as they move into independence.

This has resulted in interest in 2 adult supported lodgings scheme carers applying to us to convert to SLP and should result in further interest.

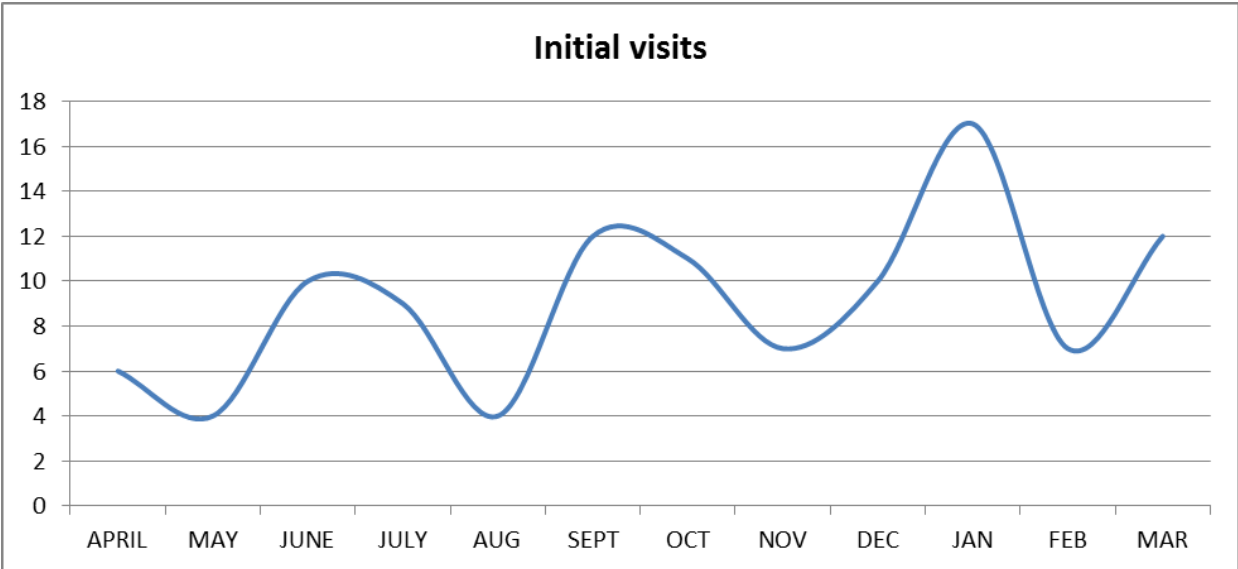
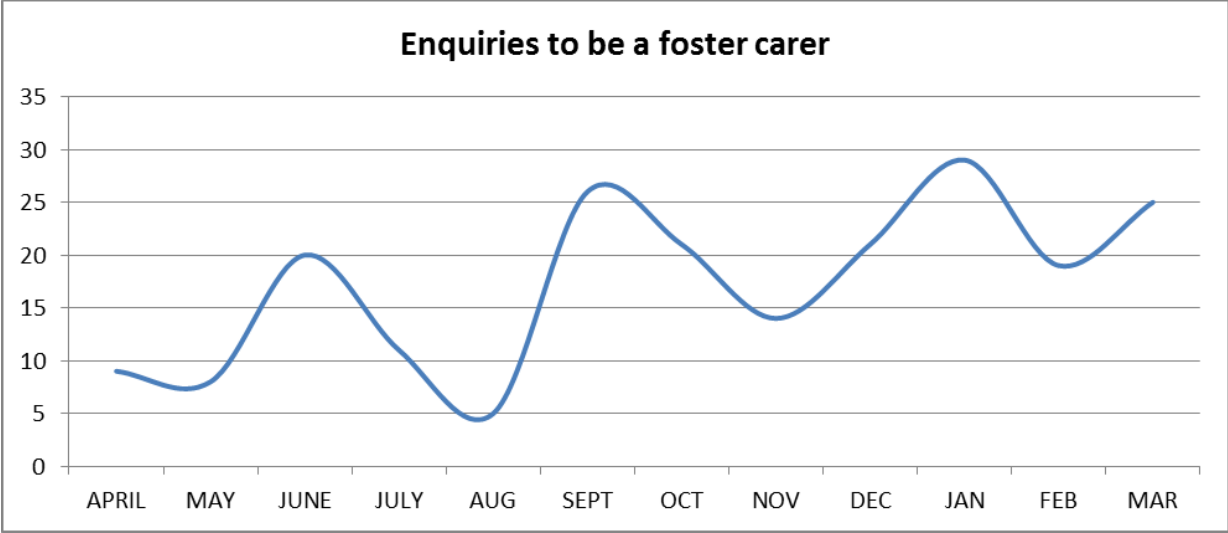
There are currently 4 SLP providers approved at Level 3 who are sufficiently skilled to take the most challenging placements i.e. Remand, risk of CSE and high drug and alcohol or offending issues. As such we have increased capacity for the more demanding placements and 'step downs' from residential where it has been determined that independence was a more appropriate route than HIPPS. These Level 3 Providers are reviewed annually and require a high level of safeguarding input. Enhanced training for this group has been implemented over the last year and this quarter a Restorative Justice course was added to supplement activity - more is planned for the next quarter with specialized training from the HIPSS team.

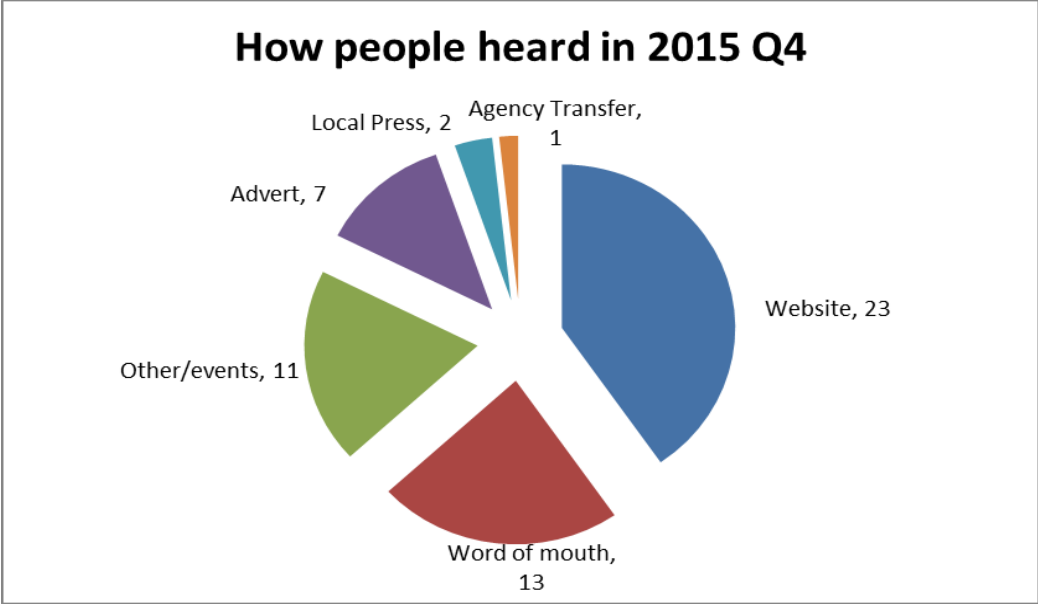
Staying Put:

There are currently 4 Staying Put arrangements: one has been in placement for two years and will be progressing to university. Figures over the year are consistently between 3-5 placements. This is a comparatively low figure compared with other authorities, less than forecast year on year and means the central government funding will cover in-house costs to date. Further work at a strategic level is required to address housing and Benefit issues to help reduce costs and support young people and former carers to have a more streamlined access to benefits and Housing to date and increase local government commitment to Staying put arrangements.

RECRUITMENT

- There is continued increase in Initial enquiries reflecting the roles of the Marketing officer and recruitment officer - refer to graph:





Analysis:

The recruitment strategy to date has shown a significant increase in Initial enquiries and average end of year data shows that 50% of all enquiries result in an initial visit. From this 25% then go on to application and assessment. The target for next year is 33% to reflect the sustained contact and support from the Recruitment officer to ‘hold ‘ on to enquiries and continue progress made to date. The quality of carers being recruited and those transferring in from IFA’s is extremely positive.

OTHER OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

- There has been 8 general fostering LADO’s held in the year, all were returned to Panel to discuss support and training needs. Of these, 2 were of significant concern, requiring carer de-registration and referral to DBS.
- All home reviews were completed within timescale, with one completed as a paper review due to carer ill health. Two unannounced visits have fallen out of timescale due to staff changeover/capacity and geographical distance. The service continues to aspire to complete 2 unannounced visits per annum.

- Challenges around UASCs and refugees have been met through a collation of foster carers experience, formulation of training materials and 'tools' required to support carers likely to offer UASC placements. Consultation with carers planned for 25.4.16 and specific training for carers has been set up with Prevent workshops on 13.6.16 and 11.10.16; and UASC on 6.10.16 and 12.1.17. Recruitment has taken place within existing carers to date and marketing is moving to engage the public through website and social media awareness of need.
- Consultation with foster carers having experience of mother and baby placements and social care managers and social workers requiring placements and assessments has taken place and this will be developed through policy and procedures over the next 6 months. The aim is for specific training for foster carers in October 2016 to prevent dependence on IFA provision.
- The panel central list has been extended by 2 more members and panel processes reviewed to ensure actions are followed up and reported on at the following panel and evaluations shared with Panel members. Panel chair and members have noted that the quality of the Brief Reports coming through and used them as anonymized good practice documents for use in other authorities.
- The Children in Care Council has met with Panel members to find out how foster carers are approved and to share some of the questions they would like to have asked. One new panel member is a previously Looked after child and helps to represent carer leavers perspectives in Panel activity.

Signed:



Carol J. Moreton, Fostering Team Manager.

Dated: 2.5.16



Herefordshire

Herefordshire Foster Carers Charter

What Foster Carers can expect from the Fostering Service:

Working in partnership

We recognise that foster carers have skills and expertise and make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children in care.

We will:

- ▶ Value your skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals.
- ▶ Recognise that you are the people who live with children every day and know them best.
- ▶ Include you in all meetings that affect you and the children you care for.
- ▶ Ensure that our fostering service will meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance.
- ▶ Treat you without discrimination and respect you as a colleague
- ▶ Respect confidentiality.

Information

We know that information is vital in order for foster carers to provide care that meets the child's need.

We will:

- ▶ Give you all the information you need in order to care safely for the child
- ▶ Provide this information in writing prior to placement (except when there are emergency placements and it is not feasible to do so, when we will provide this information as soon as possible)
- ▶ Ensure that there is a placement plan drawn up in discussion with you and agreed with you in advance of placements (except in emergencies where this will be done as soon as possible).

- ▶ Provide you with information on all financial matters including tax, allowances and additional entitlements
- ▶ Provide you with full details of all relevant departmental policies and procedures.

Clarity about decisions

We recognise that in order for children to live a full family life foster carers must be able to make decisions regarding the children they foster.

We will:

Ensure that, wherever possible, you are able to make everyday decisions that mean that your fostered child is not treated differently to their peers and can feel part of your family.

Provide clarity about any decision you cannot take at the outset so that everyone understands who is responsible for what. This will be looked at in detail within the placement plan.

Support

We recognise that fostering is an isolating and challenging task and appropriate and timely support makes all the difference to the fostering family and to the child in your care.

We will:

- ▶ Respond positively to requests for additional Support
- ▶ Provide you with formal supervision 3 times a years and regular phone or email contact.
- ▶ Give you honest and open feedback provide you with access to 24-hour support.
- ▶ Pay you allowances, expenses and fees in a timely manner.
- ▶ Pay fees that reflect your skills.
- ▶ Ensure that there is a local group, recognised by the fostering service, where you and your family can find support and share experiences with other fostering families.

Learning and development

We believe that foster carers must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career.

This will ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need, and allow them to develop their practice in order that they can help transform the lives of the children they foster.

We will:

- ▶ Provide you and your family with appropriate and relevant training by trainers who understand the fostering task. At appropriate times, including weekends and evenings.
- ▶ Provide you with other development opportunities which make the best use of your skills and expertise, such as mentoring or providing training or support.

Fair treatment

We recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances.

We will:

- ▶ Consult with you before changing terms and conditions
- ▶ Ensure openness in all of our discussions and communications with you
- ▶ Ensure that you are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with emotional support should you be subject to an allegation
- ▶ Provide a framework for dealing with allegations and adhere to our agreed timescales
- ▶ Ensure that you know the arrangements for the payment of fees and allowances in the event that you are not able to foster while the subject of an allegation.

Communication and consultation

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- ▶ Facilitate regular communication between you, councillors and the Director of Children's Services.
- ▶ We will listen to foster carers
- ▶ Ensure that we consult with you in a meaningful way on matters that affect you.
- ▶ Give clear expectations around children's care plans and the foster carers role within that.
- ▶ Give you timely feedback from consultations.

What the Fostering Service can expect from Foster Carers:

Working in partnership

We will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

We will:

- ▶ Demonstrate our expertise and make use of our skills to the best of our ability provide children with an experience of family life
- ▶ Attend meetings about the children and young people we care for
- ▶ Work with the agencies involved with the child such as school, health and religious establishments.
- ▶ Show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family and people significant in a child's life
- ▶ Meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance and follow departmental policies and procedures respect confidentiality.

Respect for the child

Every child and young person should be respected as an individual and be supported in meeting their needs and achieving their aspirations and potential.

We will:

- ▶ Respect and promote a child's religious, linguistic and cultural heritage afford the same level of protection and care to a child as we would our own child in accordance with the national minimum standards
- ▶ Ensure the child has the right to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding.

Information

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- ▶ Inform our supervising social worker about changes in our household
- ▶ Inform our supervising social worker about any difficulties that arise for us.

Learning, development and support

We must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout our fostering career. This will ensure we have the skills and knowledge we need, and allow us to develop our practice in order that we can help transform the lives of the children we foster.

We will:

- ▶ Be prepared to develop our skills throughout our fostering career
- ▶ Attend relevant training
- ▶ Take up opportunities offered to us
- ▶ Let you know if we are unable to attend and contribute to support groups.

Communication and consultation

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- ▶ Respond to local consultations and discussion in order to inform the development of the service. The role of the elected Foster Carer Representatives is available to help support this dialogue.
- ▶ Meet with councillors, service managers and others in order to promote dialogue and a good working relationship.










All about being in care.

This guide is all about YOU!



This guide is for YOU!

-  We want you to know that you will be:
-  Given the help you need;
-  Protected from harm;
-  Treated with respect and dignity;
-  Consulted on your views and taken seriously;
-  Supported to participate in making decisions about you;
-  Supported to aspire to be the best you can be!



How will we do this?

We aim to provide you with the best care possible to meet your need.

You may be Looked After for a short time or a long time; but it is our job to work with you and other professionals to create the BEST Plan for your future. We are here to make you happy and have a good life!

Part of your plan will be to decide where you live; it may be that you are the only child in a family or with other foster children in a **foster family**, or that you need other support to get you ready for life after care; but we will work hard to find you a foster family or placement where you are happy and gives you everything that you need.



Pledge to those children and young people looked after by Herefordshire Council

We know that nobody chooses to be in care and that it isn't always easy.

This is our pledge – those things we promise to do our absolute best to do for you.

We will:

- ☀ Listen to you
- ☀ Understand who you are and what you want
- ☀ Offer you support when you need it

Director of Children's Wellbeing


Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive



Details of what this means are in the Pledge leaflet given to all looked after children and the people who work with them.

 Herefordshire Council

Who are foster carers?

Foster carers are single people or couples who are chosen to work with and care for children and young people when they are not able to live with their birth families.

Foster carers want to support children and young people; helping them be the best they can be.

Foster carers can live in the country, in a town or a city. We will do our best to make sure your foster carers are one that meets your needs.

Our foster carers will;

Support you to reach your goals

Listen to you

Teach you new skills

Have fun with you

Cook for you

Be there for you

Make sure you have clothes, toiletries, essentials and the little things that re important to you e.g. hair gel for you to feel comfortable in yourself



Our foster carers will....

"Listen, talk to you, help you through rough patches"

"Look after me and feed me well"

"Let me have fun"



"Befriend you and give you advice"

"Be someone to talk to"

"Help me look to the future"



Will I be safe?

Everyone who supports you has a duty to protect children and young people. Everyone who supports you has special training to help **YOU** make good decisions to keep yourself safe.



This guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.

What about my education?

We will make sure that wherever possible you will stay in the same school. **YOU** will have a plan which will keep track of how well you are doing, what support you need and your goals for the future. This will be your education plan. There are a team of people who know about education who can advise and support you if you need it.



This guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.

What about my health?

We will make sure that you are healthy and that you get all the support you need. Some children and young people need special help because they have a disability. Whatever your needs; we will make sure you have access to a doctor, dentist and optician. And are seen regularly by a Looked After Children Nurse.

(What does the LAC nurse do?)



This guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.

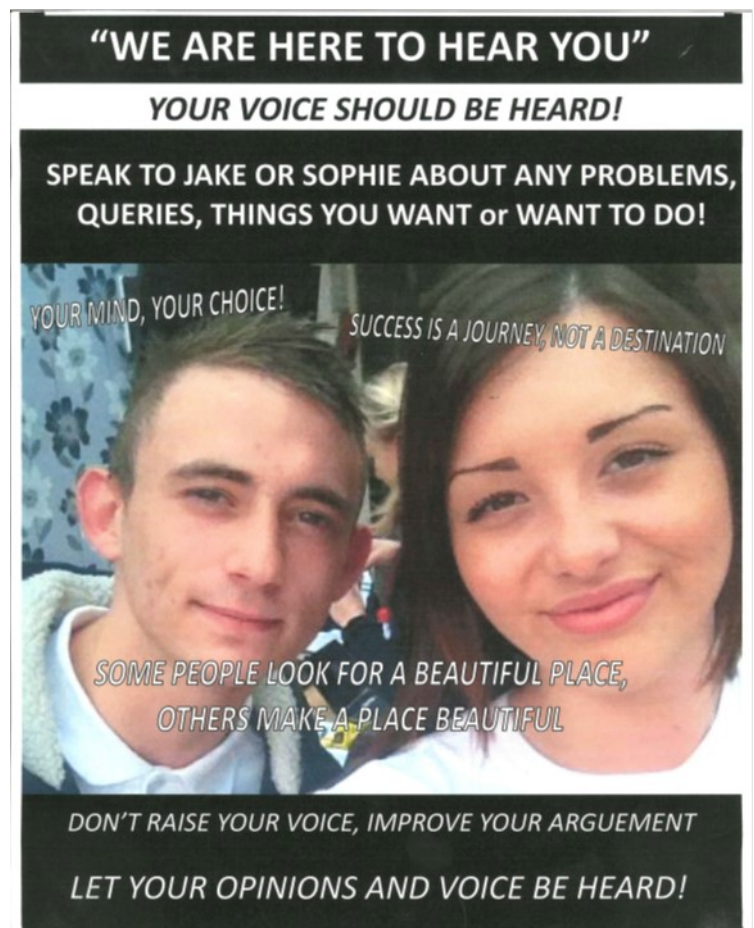
Having a good time?

We think that it is important for you to enjoy yourself. We will try our best to make sure you continue any clubs or activities that you already do; but also help you try new things.

No4!!

•“We really enjoy everything that they put on here...”

LATCCH and Children in Care Council



This guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.



YOU have a right to be protected from being bullied. Bullying is not just someone threatening to hurt you physically, but being made fun of or being made to feel small in any way. If **YOU** feel that **YOU** are being bullied; we will make sure that you feel listened to and we will support you to make it stop.

It's Our Turn



This guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.



YOU have a right to be respected and to be treated respectfully. We support you to express your views and we will listen to you and take you seriously. We will work with you to ensure your views are acted upon.



This guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.

What can I do if I am not happy?

I will
be ur
listening
ear...



If **YOU** are not happy for any reason in your foster home there are always

people you can talk to. You may be worried about; something you don't like in your care plan, about the foster carers, about school or your birth family.

We need to make sure that you have someone to talk to, this might be; your foster carer, school teacher, advocate, social worker, STEPS worker or someone else who works with you. Who ever **YOU** choose to speak to, they want to make sure your voice is heard and your rights respected and you are supported to be the best you can be.



If you want to speak to someone independent you can contact:



Children's Rights Director at www.rights4me.org or on 08005280731,



Ofsted on 030001231231,



NYAS (advocacy) at help@nyas.net or on 0808 808 1001,



The Participation Team on 01432 383 326.



Out of Hours duty team on 01905 768 020



Childline on (Free phone) 0800 11 11 (open 24/7)



If you want to make a complaint you can contact 01432 260 535.



This guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.



 So here is a space for you to write down things to remember....





And some more space.....





This is guide is designed for children and young people who are Looked After by Herefordshire Local Authority.

Herefordshire Council Fostering Service 2016

Statement of Purpose

OFSTED Registration: URN - SCO56304

Contents

1. Introduction
2. What the fostering service aims to do
3. What are the objectives of the fostering service
4. Who makes up the fostering team
5. What types of fostering do we provide
6. Fostering panel and recruitment
7. Principles and standards of care
8. Complaints, Monitoring and Supervision

Introduction

This statement has been produced in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. The statement outlines the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service and the services and facilities provided by the Fostering Service.

It is made available to staff of the organisation, foster carers, children and young people, parents and other professionals. It is reviewed on an annual basis and revised to reflect any changes as necessary.

What the fostering service aims to do (objectives)

Herefordshire council aims to develop and provide a high quality, comprehensive and integrated service that delivers excellent outcomes for children and young people in our care.

- To ensure that children are securely attached to carers capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of their childhood.
- To ensure children are protected from emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect.
- To ensure children receive the education, health and social care they need to maximise their potential.
- To ensure that the services provided are flexible, responsive and supportive of carers.

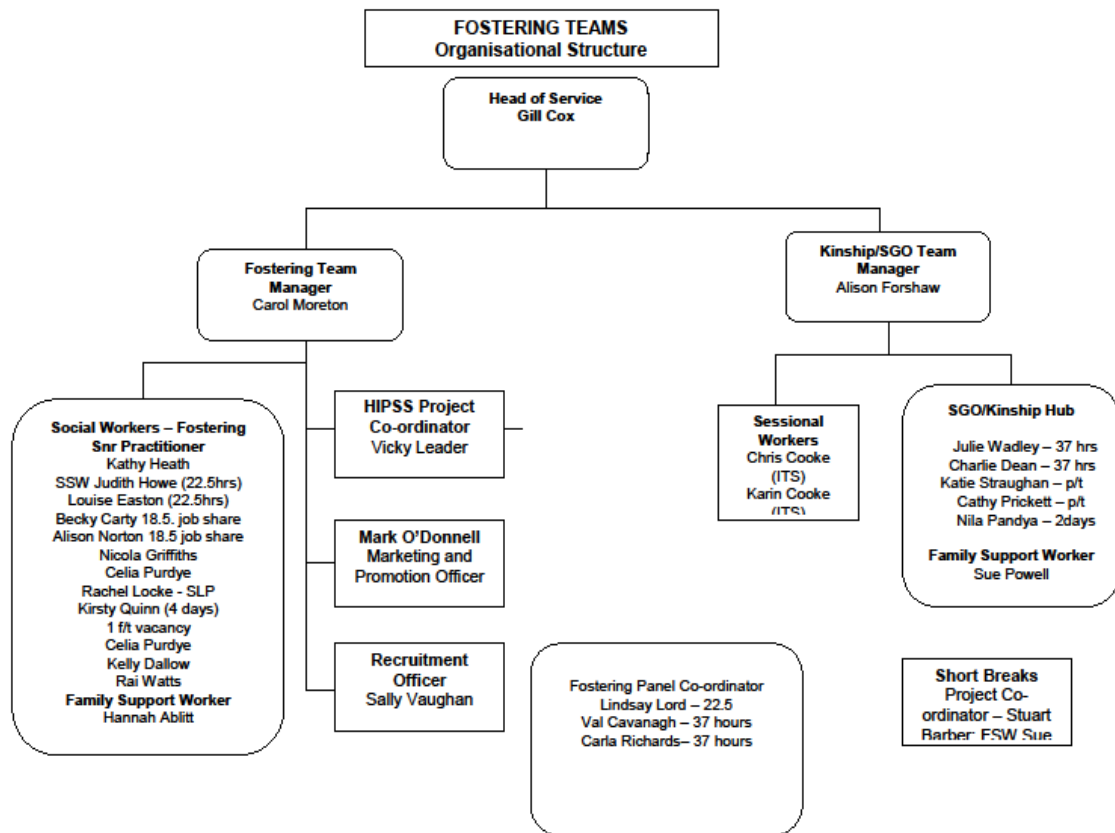
What the fostering service aims to do (objectives)

Our aims are underpinned by the National Minimum Standards for fostering to provide Herefordshire looked after children with appropriate foster placement provision primarily in Herefordshire.

- To ensure the views of children, parents and carers are sought and taken into account, having regard for their age and understanding, in the continuous development and improvement of the service.
- To take the wishes and views of children and young people seriously and to enable them to be part of any decision making process that affects them.
- To recognise the importance of and support appropriate levels of contact with family and community as is consistent with their welfare and care plan.
- To recognise and value the diverse nature of the community it serves and proactively engage with the local community to identify potential carers.
- To ensure there is a sufficient range of safe and appropriate placements available for the Looked After Children in Herefordshire.
- To actively monitor and supervise all placements to ensure children are safe, their needs are met and they are making progress to achieve positive outcomes.
- To contribute to and ensure effective multi-disciplinary and partnership working to meet the health, educational and social needs of children within placements.
- The service operates within the framework of equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Children will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, culture, religion, language, age, gender, sexuality, disability or social class in terms of service provision. Wherever possible children are matched within their own cultural, racial, linguistic and religious communities, and where this is not possible, plans must be put in place to keep the child's culture alive for them.
- Children with disabilities are to be placed in an environment that recognises and caters for their disability, and at the same time promotes their social inclusion.
- To ensure staff and carers are well trained and competent in delivering a quality Fostering Service, including opportunities for continued learning and professional development. To ensure all staff and carers have completed safeguarding checks and have a valid CRB.
- To provide all staff and carers support and supervision with clear lines of accountability and management.
- To provide each Foster Carer a named allocated Supervising Social Worker.
- To operate clear administrative records and financial management systems pertinent to the running of the service, including the maintenance of comprehensive and up-to-date records on all children placed.
- To ensure all complaints and allegations against carers/staff are investigated under departmental procedures in a timely fashion and lessons learned filter to improvements in future practice.

- The Fostering Service operates a Fostering Panel that provides a quality assurance role with regards to the recruitment and review of Foster Carers and Foster placements. The panel will ensure the welfare and safety of children is paramount in all decision making.
- Through the recruitment programme, specific training and supervision, foster carers are expected, with support, to give each child placed the best life chances available to them and an opportunity to be safe and secure, achieve in education, health, relationships and transitions to independence or moves back home to birth families.
- To meet the growing need for the fostering service to provide effective and prompt assessments of 'family and friend' as carers a Kinship and SGO Hub has been created in the last 12 months. This will enable children and young people to remain within their family and reduce pressure on existing in-house placements.
- For those children who require external specialist placements (IFA or Residential placement), a referral is made to the commissioning team who aim to source and identify potential placements, working in collaboration with the child's social worker.
- A HIPSS (Herefordshire Intensive Support Scheme) has been commissioned from Action For Children and in-house fostering HIPSS project Co-ordinator to assess and meet regulatory requirements in relation to HIPSS carers to meet the needs of more challenging placements and reduce spend on IFA and Residential costs.
- We have continued to absorb the provision of supported lodgings (16+ placements) into the fostering service and to recruit accordingly to provide placements for those young people who present to social care with needs that are additional to housing accommodation.

Who makes up the fostering team



What types of fostering do we provide

Short term or long term care

A child might come into care because of an illness or accident or a serious incident at home. Whatever the reasons, social services will be working with the family to resolve the issues so that the child can return home as soon as possible.

Brothers and sisters

Wherever possible siblings should be placed together. For many foster children, the relationship with their brothers and sisters is what they value most when separated from their family and staying together is very important.

Disabled children

We need carers with experience of caring for children with physical or learning difficulties and other additional needs. We provide Overnight Short Breaks to support birth families with a regular break and also need carers able to provide Short Breaks to support foster carers of children with a disability.

Parent and child

We need carers who can help to give extra support in their home to new parents and their babies, particularly teenage mums.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

We need carers able to offer emotional and practical support to children under the age of 18 who are fleeing war zones and have experienced trauma. Most of these young people will have language and health needs; training and services are being developed to support carers to learn to meet these young people's specific cultural needs.

Long term fostering

Some children are unable to return to their families. They will require a stable, long term fostering placement until they reach the age of 18 or beyond.

Family and friends

Family and friends carers play a key role in allowing children to remain living with adults that they know and trust if, for whatever reason, they cannot live with their birth parents. In such cases Herefordshire Council is committed to ensuring that, where possible, a child or young person can remain living within their own family network.

The support that family and friends carers receive is critical to the success of any placement.

Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS)

Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) is a new therapeutic fostering service to children and young people looked after by Herefordshire Council with the most complex needs that would normally need to be cared for in residential care, away from their local communities and networks.

Therapeutic foster care gives children and young people who have experienced significant trauma in their lives an opportunity to overcome adversity and have the chance to form stable and secure relationships with their carers and live appropriately ordinary lives.

HIPSS is a dedicated friendly, creative team of professionals from psychology, education, social care, fostering and youth work. We work with children and young people aged 7-18 years with complex needs.

Supported Lodgings Placements

Young people often need support with becoming independent. Especially those people who have lived in care, are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers or vulnerable and homeless. Supported lodgings provide a safe place for them to become confident and learn about living as an adult: Carers who can inspire and provide them with an environment to help them build independent living skills and help them build a positive future.

Private fostering

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 (or 18 if disabled) goes to live for 28 days or more with someone who is not a:

- Parent (including step parent)
- Legal guardian or person with parental responsibility
- Close relative (like grandparent, brother or sister, aunt or uncle)

Fostering Panel and Recruitment

The Fostering Panel

Hereford operates its own Fostering Panel for the approval, review, registration and deregistration of carers.

The Fostering Duty Service

A Duty Social Worker is available throughout office hours. The purpose of this service is to identify placements for looked after children and support carers in times of crisis when their own supervising social worker is not available.

Fostering Family Support Worker

Herefordshire Fostering service has developed a family support worker role, who is available to provide outcome focused, direct work with children, young people and their carers. Trained in the Solihull Parenting Approach she is able to further equip carers to meet the needs of the children in their care.

The Recruitment Service

The Marketing and recruitment officers are responsible for providing a recruitment strategy to respond to service needs and ensure we have sufficient placements for those children in need of Foster placements. This service involves marketing and advertising for foster carers at events and using websites and social media resources. The recruitment officer undertakes initial assessments, checks and references – known as Stage 1 checks - to determine if an applicant meets the criteria

required. The fostering social workers then complete Form F assessments of those applicants in preparation for presentation to the fostering panel (Stage 2).

16+ placement providers are recruited and are subject to an assessment by the Supported Lodgings social worker that is then verified and approved by the fostering service management team.

The Training Service

The fostering team provides training for foster carers both prior to and post their approval.

Preparation training is carried out over three full days and covers basic underpinning knowledge and experiential learning relevant to the task of fostering. The course is underpinned by the seven Training Standards that carers are expected to meet in the first year of their approval, these standards are:

1. Understand Principles and Values
2. Understand your role as a foster carer
3. Health, Safety and Healthy care
4. Know how to communicate effectively
5. Understand the development of children and young people
6. Safeguard children and young people
7. Develop yourself

Carers are expected to meet with their supervising social worker within 6 weeks of approval and develop their Personal Development Plan in line with the Training, Support and Development Standards. It is at this stage that carers will discuss with their supervising social worker what they need to do to meet the standards within the first year of their approval.

There is a programme of training for carers who are engaged in the fee payment scheme and who wish to progress through from level 1 at approval to level 3.

The training programme currently offers the following workshops

- Diversity
- First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Healthy Matters – (age related)
- Education
- Attachment
- Record Keeping and Reflective practices
- Safe Caring
- Behaviour Management
- Working as part of a team
- Life story work and Memory box
- Contact
- Drug awareness
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome disorder
- ADHD and Autistic Spectrum – when available from partner agencies
- Social Networking
- Parent and Child Placements
- Alcohol Awareness
- Sex Education and relationships (speakeasy)

- Positive Handling
- Impact of Domestic Violence
- Sexual Abuse.
- Pathway planning for older teens
- Attachment in teens
- Appropriate adult training
- Hidden Minorities
- UASC placement support

Carers are expected to undertake Safeguarding, Diversity and First Aid as Mandatory courses and will be expected to attend a refresher course at least once every three years for safeguarding and first aid. Diversity is rotated with specialist workshops and online courses.

The fostering service offers carers the opportunity to further their skills and knowledge by accessing Solihull training within the first three years of approval.

Any individual training identified for carers within their supervision will be considered by the fostering service manager and where appropriate to meet the needs of the placement, carers will be given the opportunity to attend individual training events.

Family and Friends carers equally have access to all training events and are actively encouraged to attend. Specific training for kinship carers is to be offered in recognition of the specific issues affecting them and their family.

Support Groups for Carers and Birth Children

The fostering team provides carers with the opportunity to attend support groups which is facilitated by a fostering social worker and provides a forum for debate, guest speakers and informal support.

A Practice Issues Group offers experienced carers a more intensive bi-monthly discussion group.

A Stay and Play group for carers with under-fives also meets weekly to enable carers and young children have social interaction.

There is also a support group led by fostering social workers for birth children which is known as FISS, providing birth children with the opportunity to meet with other birth children and share their feelings and views about the impact that fostering has on them.

Support to Approved Carers

Approved carers are allocated to a supervising social worker who supports and supervises the carer and their family. This supervision is underpinned by relevant legislation, the standards and the Fostering Regulations.

Carers are supported and assisted by supervising social workers to manage the complexities of caring for a looked after child which includes support to attend any professional meetings, advice and guidance on attachment issues, managing difficult behaviour and placement issues. Supervising social workers will help carers to manage contact issues with birth families and support any contact where appropriate.

Formal supervision will take place with every approved carer at least three times a year and a record will be kept on their file, signed by the carer, social worker and team manager. Regulations require an unannounced visit is undertaken annually and the Fostering service strives to complete 2 per annum to improve Standards.

Throughout the carers' first year reports and progress is recorded: an annual report is prepared by the supervising social worker which is presented to panel for consideration. Subsequent years are undertaken as part of a home review with return to panel every 3-4 years or if areas of concern require Panel scrutiny. In all cases a recommendation is then made by the panel for the carer in relation to their approval status.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

A Clinical Psychologist provides advice to foster carers and social work staff on all aspects of behaviour, attachment and mental well-being through the HIPSS team as part of the TiSS Service. Herefordshire Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service may also be available for children in the care of the Herefordshire Fostering Service.

Education

All children Looked After by Herefordshire Council are encouraged to access educational opportunities and develop to their maximum potential. The Virtual School Education Service provides advice, guidance and additional curriculum support to all foster carers and children. All children in foster care should have access to a home computer and relevant educational software. Foster carers have a special link to reading schemes such as 'Letterbox'.

Health

The physical health needs of children are monitored by the Medical Advisor to the Fostering Service. Each child placed is registered with a General Practitioner. The Wye Valley NHS Trust has employed 2 specialist LAC nurses (1.5 fte) to assist in meeting the health needs of Looked After Children.

Direct works Service

This service manages and supervises contact for many Looked After Children. Intensive support to support re-unification plans and prevent placement breakdown is also being developed.

STEPS

A number of sessional workers are available for specific pieces of work with a Looked After Child and can be accessed to provide support to young people to assist in maintaining placements.

Complaints, Monitoring

Complaints, Compliments and Comments

All Local Authorities are required to have complaint procedures under the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 and also, where children are involved, under the Children Act 1989.

We want everyone to be satisfied with the service they receive from Herefordshire Fostering Service and the complaints procedure in this authority can be instigated by anyone who is dissatisfied with the service they receive. Young people can also enlist the assistance of a Children's Rights and Advocacy Worker. NYAS

Herefordshire Council has a complaints procedure, which is communicated to all service users and to foster carers, Looked After children and their families.

Allegations

All allegations of abuse made by children against foster carers or members of a foster carer family will be thoroughly investigated. Hereford's Safeguarding Board procedures for handling allegations are followed in all cases. The investigation of allegations against foster carers will be evidence-based and the decision of how best to proceed will be made in the best interests of the child. An independent Advice and Conciliation worker from Fostering Network is made available to support foster carers throughout the process. All foster carers receive the ongoing support of a Fostering Social Worker. A clear distinction is made between an allegation of harm and a concern regarding standards of care.

Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest

Foster carers are provided with information about the children placed with them and expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency we maintain records on both foster carers and Looked After Children who are subject to national standards and Data Protection legislation. Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest.

Foster Carers Charter

Herefordshire Fostering Service is committed to providing and promoting safe, stable and nurturing placements where the outcomes and life chances are positive for looked after children. In order to achieve this it is important to have a working relationship which is based on trust and respect among all children services that are involved in the care of the child.

The service has worked in partnership with foster carers to achieve the charter which was launched in 2012. The charter explains what the roles and responsibilities of the service and the carers towards each other and the children we care for.

Foster Carer Representatives.

Over the last 4 years we have developed the election of Foster carer Representatives to meet with the Team Manager on a monthly basis to liaise over key issues and improve communication between the fostering service and all foster carers – general and kinship. A quarterly Newsletter is produced and support group activities planned. This is supplemented through the setting up of a Foster Carers Association in 2016 to represent Herefordshire foster carers and support fundraising activity.

Monitoring

Herefordshire Fostering Service produces annual reports. These are presented to the lead member of the Council along with the Senior Management Team at the Corporate Parenting Panel who act for the executive.

Other monitoring includes staff supervision linked to the appraisal system, 3 formal supervisions a year to foster carers, annual reviews, the fostering panel, feedback from training sessions, case recording and practice audits.

Evaluating the Service

The information gathered through performance data and annual reports, audit, inspections and customer feedback is evaluated by the managers of the fostering service, to judge its ongoing effectiveness and make changes where necessary.

The Fostering Service is also subject to formal inspection by Ofsted and inspections usually take place every three years.

Bullying

Bullying can disrupt an individual's personal, social and educational achievements. It is recognised that Looked After Children, because of their circumstances, are particularly vulnerable and the Fostering Service requires that steps are taken to prevent bullying by ensuring that foster carers and social workers understand what bullying is and the impact it can have on a child / young person's life. It provides advice and guidance on how best to deal with situations where bullying is occurring in order to help everyone involved with the child / young person remain alert to bullying behaviour both inside and outside the foster home.

Behaviour Management

Guidance on managing behaviour is made available to all foster carers through training, ongoing supervision and as part of the 'Discipline Sanctions and Rewards' section. No form of corporal punishment is permitted to be used on any child placed with a foster parent. No child placed with foster parents is subject to any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable. Physical restraint is used on a child only when it is a last resort and is necessary to prevent likely injury to the child or other persons or likely serious damage to property. If such a risk is identified appropriate training in physical restraint is provided to the foster carer. All carers are to be trained in positive handling, care and control with an emphasis on de-escalation

Recruitment, Pre-Approval Training and Support of Prospective Foster Carers

The Fostering Service provides a range of services to local people who enquire about becoming foster carers.

The following is a summary of the recruitment, assessment and approval process:

- Publicity and promotion of foster care to attract new foster carers is continuous throughout the year.
- Prospective carers are provided with information about foster care within 48 hours of making the request.
- Prospective carers who wish to have further information will be visited by a Fostering Recruitment officer within 10 days. Stage 1 checks are completed and if concerns arise the Team manager must respond within 10 days to inform prospective applicants their application will not progress to Stage2 assessment.
- Full statutory checks and references are undertaken on all applicants and CRB checks on any other adult in the household over the age of 16 years.
- All applicants complete a full medical questionnaire (British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form AH), which is made available to the agency Medical Advisor for comment.
- Applicants are enrolled in pre-approval training, which occurs prior to or concurrently with the Form F assessment, whichever provides the timeliest service. This training opportunity is also available to Kinship/family and friends carers. This is now planned for every two months throughout the next 2 years

- Assessments are undertaken by a qualified Social Worker in accordance with fostering service regulations and are completed using BAAF Form F.
- All applicants are invited to attend the Fostering Panel, which makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker on the terms of their approval.

Support and Supervision

All foster carers are supervised by a Fostering/ supervising Social Worker.

All foster carers have access to support groups. There are currently three support groups in operation as described above. A family and friends support group has been offered and will continue to remain an important feature but has not been taken up to date – development of the Kinship Representatives role may help to change this.

A Duty Fostering Social Worker is available throughout office hours. The duty worker will also take all placement referrals made to the service and identify and match placements with the referrer. Outside office hours, foster carers can access the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Emergency Duty Team.

- Foster carers have access to Herefordshire Virtual school Education Service for advice and support to ensure children’s educational opportunities are maximised.
- HALO leisure vouchers can be used for all Looked After Children and a discount service is available for foster carers and their families to use Herefordshire’s leisure facilities.
- Foster carers who require respite on a planned basis can access respite services from other foster carers.
- A ‘buddying’ system is facilitated by Fostering Social Workers between experienced carers and newly approved carers.
- Foster carers are provided with the Foster Carers’ Handbook covering all aspects of fostering, together with a diary and the equipment required to record and store confidential records about individual children.
- Annually, a Foster Carer Forum is convened to celebrate and inform the work of Herefordshire foster carers in partnership with elected members, officers and fellow professionals. The forum also provides a multi-disciplinary training event and a social opportunity for carers.

Ongoing Reviews of Foster Carers

All carers are reviewed annually and their continued registration is considered by the Fostering Panel, which makes recommendation to the agency decision maker as to the terms of their continued registration. Minutes of home reviews are noted at the fostering panel.

Approval and Review of Statement of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose has been formally reviewed and up dated as of July 2016. It has been distributed or is available via our website to the following agencies/departments:

- OFSTED.
- The Herefordshire Council Website.
- Foster Carers.
- A children's version has been produced for dissemination to all children using the service.

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APPENDIX A : Legislative and Regulatory background:

Principles and Standards of care

The Fostering Service seeks to ensure that its policies, procedures and practice comply with the following:

- Children Act 2004.
- Children Act 1989.
- National Minimum Standards 2011 (Care Standards Act 2000).
- Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- U.K. National Standards for Foster Care (Fostering Network 1999).
- Care Planning Regulations 2010.

- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and fostering Services (Misc amendments) Regulations 2013
- Code of Practice on the recruitment, training, management and support of foster carers (Fostering Network 1999).
- Training, Support and Development Standards (CWDC)

- Foster Carers Charter

Appendix B: Aims and Principles of the Fostering service:

The Fostering Service:

- Seeks to provide a sufficient choice of placements for all Looked After children wherever possible.
- Seeks to provide or commission placements with foster carers for all Looked After children who require placements in a family setting.
- Respects the ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language of children and foster carers.
- Seeks to work in partnership with all those involved in the care of Looked After children, including children, their families, foster carers and Social Workers.
- Recognises that children with disabilities may have additional special needs for placement.
- Recognises and seeks resources and specialist provisions for those children who need it.
- The central importance of the child's relationship with their foster carer should be acknowledged and foster carers should be recognised as core members of the team working with the child.
- Children in foster care deserve to be treated as a good parent would treat their own child/ren and to have the opportunity for as a full a experience of family life and childhood as possible without unnecessary restrictions.
- Seeks to ensure that the Fostering Service and the 16 plus Team work in partnership to maximise life chances for young people leaving care.
- Seeks the views and opinions of young people and carers when planning and reviewing services.
- Seeks to provide continuity through a placement service, which works in partnership with Herefordshire's Adoption Service.
- Seeks to recruit, train and assess carers to the highest standard in order to meet the needs of local children for local placements.
- Values the child as an individual and give personalised support in line with individual needs and background, in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	20 October 2016
Title of report:	Partnership governance framework
Report by:	Cabinet member economy and corporate services

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To approve a framework setting out the council's approach to partnership working, helping to strengthen accountability and ensure working arrangements are as efficient as possible.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the draft framework for partnership governance at appendix 1 be approved.

Alternative options

- 1 The council could choose not to adopt a framework for partnership governance. This is not recommended as there is then no consistency of approach, or process for ensuring transparency and accountability of partnership activity.

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 To improve the robustness and transparency of governance arrangements when the council is working in partnership.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Annie Brookes, head of corporate governance on Tel (01432) 260605

Key considerations

- 3 The council is currently involved in a number of partnership working arrangements. These operate to a variety of terms of reference, and vary considerably in form and structure from statutory bodies such as the health and wellbeing board and community safety partnership, to formally constituted company or charitable bodies such as Hoople or the new university partnership, or informal voluntary partnerships such as the Herefordshire nature partnership.
- 4 It is often difficult for members and the public to understand these arrangements, or to see whether they are cost effective and still appropriate for the council to engage in given the ever-changing environment within which we work. This lack of transparency can lead to misunderstanding of the level of involvement by the council, which in turn can impact negatively on the council's reputation. In addition, where partnerships are taking decisions about how resources are directed or about future service delivery, there is not always the expected degree of transparency or the ability for members to hold partnerships to account for the decisions that they make.
- 5 Attached at appendix 1 is a draft of a partnership governance framework that aims to explain why the council may consider entering into a partnership, and what should be in place when it does.
- 6 Comments on the draft would be welcomed in terms of whether it is missing anything, but also whether it is helpful and practical to use – the aim is to have a workable framework rather than simply more 'bureaucratic stuff' to be doing which diverts from the business.
- 7 There is currently no centrally held data about the number/significance of existing partnership arrangements and therefore once adopted, it is proposed that the framework be used both not only when entering into new partnership arrangements but also to review existing partnership arrangements to ensure that there are clear and effective governance arrangements in place and that the benefits of working in such an arrangement justify the council's continued involvement.
- 8 The framework proposes that for partnerships which the council view as significant (as defined in the draft framework) a register is maintained and published and which will provide information, based on an annual assessment, about: the type of partnership, date of establishment, terms of reference, council representative(s) on the partnership, review date, risk assessment, and identified link officer. In future the audit and governance committee will receive reports on medium and high risks identified in assessments and the annual governance statement process will include a review of the effectiveness of the framework.

Community impact

- 9 The council's code of corporate governance includes commitments to:
 - Provide the best possible service to the people of Herefordshire
 - Define the roles of Members and Officers, ensure that they work together constructively, and improve their effectiveness
 - Require high standards of conduct
 - Take sound decisions on the basis of good information
 - Be transparent and open: responsive to Herefordshire's needs and accountable to its people.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Annie Brookes, head of corporate governance on Tel (01432) 260605

- 10 The council's communications strategy provides that when engaging with audiences the council aims to:
- Centre on the citizen and operate as a joined-up organisation
 - Encourage two-way dialogue with residents
 - Celebrate success and innovation of our workforce, residents, businesses and organisations
 - Help people feel informed and proud of living in Herefordshire
 - Support employees, members and partner organisations to act as proud local ambassadors for the council's work
 - Be clear, open and honest without creating a negative impact on other people, services or partners
- 11 The draft framework provides a robust and transparent way of demonstrating how the council upholds these principles when working in partnership.

Equality duty

- 12 The draft framework includes a prompt for partnership governance frameworks to set out how the partnership will operate to ensure the duties under the Equality Act are met.

Financial implications

- 13 Staff time will be required to review and assess existing partnership arrangements; this work will be undertaken using existing staff resources.

Legal implications

- 14 There is no legal requirement to adopt a framework for partnership governance. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 include a requirement for all councils to produce an annual governance statement which assesses governance risks and agrees actions to mitigate those risks. Partnership governance has been identified within that process and the adoption of a framework is included within the 2016/17 annual governance statement action plan approved by audit and governance committee.

Risk management

- 15 The risks and benefits of partnership working are set out within the draft framework. If there is no consistent approach to assuring and reviewing partnership governance arrangements there may be financial and reputational risks to the council which are not visible. Adoption of a framework for partnership governance mitigates that risk by ensuring strategic partnerships have robust and transparent governance arrangements and that the effectiveness of those arrangements are periodically reviewed.

Consultees

- 16 General overview and scrutiny committee members have been provided with a briefing on the proposal, but have not expressed any view on the proposal.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – draft partnership governance framework

Background papers

- None identified.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Annie Brookes, head of corporate governance on Tel (01432) 260605

Partnership governance framework

Purpose

1. Herefordshire Council must conduct its business in accordance with the best interest of residents, within the law, and transparently ensure that public money is spent efficiently and effectively. This requirement also applies to the council's partnerships which have become an increasingly important way locally for planning and delivering services and for delivering strategic objectives. Nationally there is a continuing focus on ensuring that councils and the wider public sector work together to deliver efficiencies and drive both service improvement and economic growth.
2. Working in partnership can bring a wide range of benefits, but also produces particular risks and governance issues. To protect the interests both of the council and the residents of the county it is therefore important that we know what our significant partnerships are, we understand their purpose, we understand the costs and benefits of working in that way, and have assurance that partnerships' governance supports their operation particularly in key areas such as making decisions and accountability.
3. This framework is intended to help council officers and members to evaluate and influence partnership governance by:
 - Defining what a significant partnership is
 - Setting out the principles of partnership governance
 - Providing guidance, model policies and templates.
4. The framework recognises that there is great variety in the scale and nature of the councils' partnerships, but provides a standardise approach by which accountability can be strengthened, risks managed, and working arrangements rationalised.
5. The framework may also be of interest to those who already, or may in the future work with the council, as a way of understanding the way in which the council conducts business.

Benefits and risks of partnership working

6. Partnerships vary in size, service area, membership and function, funding, legal status and structure. They may be affected by the same pressures and challenges as the council. These include external factors such as funding reduction, national changes in policy and legislative changes, or internal factors such as reducing staff resource, service level reviews and organisational restructures. Partnerships can provide an effective way of meeting these challenges but also carry risks because working across organisational boundaries and cultures can add complexity and ambiguity, and reduce accountability.
7. It's important to acknowledge both the benefits and risks when establishing and reviewing partnerships to ensure they remain the most effective way of achieving the desired aim.

Potential benefits

- Better co-ordination and integration in the delivery of services
- Greater understanding of challenges and greater capacity to plan and develop solutions
- Pooling of expertise and resources

Potential risks

- Lacking clarity of purpose, of partner expectations or of partner responsibilities
- Setting unrealistic goals or expectations, or being unaware of the extent of financial or legal implications
- Financial or time commitments outweighing potential benefits or gains

Potential benefits

- Flexibility and innovation; learning from each other to produce better policy and stronger delivery than when working alone
- Effective communication and engagement to achieve outcomes
- More efficient and effective use of resources (money, people, assets, data) to deliver value for money.

Potential risks

- Differing cultures, policies and behaviours leading to conflict, distrust, manipulation of domination
- Inadequate governance and scrutiny over planning, decision-making, management of resources, risk or performance
- Lack of public transparency and/or perceived lack of democratic accountability.
- Mixed or confusing messaging to audiences.

Framework principles and practice

What is a partnership?

8. The term partnership is used when two or more organisations agree to work collectively to achieve an objective or goal. They may create new structures of processes to achieve their goal, may plan and implement a jointly agreed project or service; may jointly provide or share staff or resources and may agree to share risks and rewards.
9. The following relationships or groups are not considered to be partnerships:
 - Employer and staff relationship
 - If the council has direct and sole control over budgets and decision-making
 - Where a subscription or membership payment is made for a service (eg the local government association)
 - Where a grant is being made to another body for a specific purpose
 - A supplier of a contract not meeting the criteria below.
10. A client and contractor relationship is not usually considered to be a partnership but may be if it is:
 - Of strategic importance to the council;
 - Critical to the delivery of the council's key objectives or statutory obligations;
 - Critical to the reputation of the council where failure to deliver could damage the council's reputation; or
 - responsible for spend of significant public funding.

Is a partnership needed?

11. Partnerships will not always be the best way in which to achieve a particular goal or deliver a service. The first consideration must be whether or not the establishment of a partnership is mandatory (statutory) or discretionary. Although mandatory partnerships may be regulated in specific ways and have particular structure or governance requirements it is still important to provide assurance about the management of that partnership.
12. Where the partnership is discretionary (voluntary) it is important to assess whether a partnership is necessary or whether the same objective could be achieved more efficiently and effectively by the council working alone. To help make that assessment the following should be considered:

- Can the objectives, outcomes and benefits of the partnership be clearly expressed and linked to council strategies and priorities?
- Will the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs when compared to other arrangements, including issues such as co-ordination of activity and resources?
- What is the resource impact and who will meet the costs of delivery, and of strategic and operational management?
- Can the partnership provide ongoing and robust compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements?
- Are there alternative delivery arrangements that could be considered?
- Is there a shared vision and purpose across the partners, or is it dominated by one partner?
- Are there a clear set of jointly agreed goals with respective values, capabilities and capacity of partners understood by all?

Principles

13. Having established that a partnership is appropriate the following key principles should be considered – not all will necessarily apply to every partnership, but their relevance should be considered and a proportionate approach applied.
- a) Shared understanding – partners should formally agree and record how the partnership operates. This will include: structure, purpose and aims, activities, roles and responsibilities, membership, regulatory framework, dispute resolution, timeframe for operation and exit strategy. Relevance to the agreed purpose should be maintained during the lifespan of the partnership.
 - b) Accountability – partnerships should account for their actions through reporting, meetings, oversight and scrutiny of performance and regulatory compliance, openness and engagement, and complaints and redress processes.
 - c) Decision-making – there should be clearly allocated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, open and transparent processes such as records of delegated authority and decisions taken, and effective scrutiny.
 - d) Value for money – costs and benefits should be understood and monitored to ensure that the partnership continues to provide value for money over alternative arrangements.
 - e) Corporate governance processes – To ensure high quality cost effective operation to meet agreed priorities, proportionate processes should be in place for managing issues such as risk, performance, finance, and information. These should be periodically reviewed during the lifespan of the partnership.
 - f) Standards – high standards of conduct and leadership of the partnership should be agreed to ensure the needs of all partners are met, conflicts of interest can be identified and managed, differences are respected, disputes may be resolved quickly and effectively and public confidence in the way in which the partnership operates can be maintained.

Strategic partnerships

14. To be considered ‘significant’ partnerships should have either:
- a) Financial responsibility – based on a threshold for the council’s annual contribution, or for directing council funding of £100k (excluding staffing costs); and/or

- b) Strategic importance – the partnership being critical to the delivery of key council objectives or statutory obligations, or is a fundamental component of council priorities and functions and the council’s reputation could be damaged by the partnership’s failure to deliver.

Practice

- 15. The table below shows how these principles can be put into practice either in the formation of a new partnership or when evaluating the effectiveness of an existing partnership.
- 16. Appendix A provides a model structure for a partnership agreement – it is intended for guidance but, in accordance with the need for proportionality, should be customised to suit the characteristics of the partnership.

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Criteria	Good governance	Good practice
Purpose, structure and membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes are agreed and communicated ✓ Membership is aligned to objectives to provide relevant interests experience and expertise ✓ There is an appropriate board and committee structure with clearly defined remits ✓ Personal interests of members do not impact on decisions. 	<p>Establish a partnership agreement which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Key messages and an agreed description of what the partnership is trying to achieve (purpose and deliverables) ✓ Roles and responsibilities ✓ Structure chart ✓ Partnership board and committee criteria ✓ Declaration of personal and pecuniary interest and requirement to withdraw from meetings/decisions ✓ Exit strategy for partners and the partnership
Accountability and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Good leadership promotes supportive culture and behaviour ✓ Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are understood ✓ Decision-making is open and transparent ✓ Reporting to officers and/or members supports scrutiny of decisions and activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Responsibilities for decisions are agreed and recorded ✓ Minutes of meetings record decisions, agreed action and relevant related discussion. ✓ There is regular reporting within existing democratic structures ✓ A communication strategy sets out internal and external communication processes, including how external stakeholders may engage with the partnership, spokesperson designation and process for approval of press statements
Monitoring and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is regular review and evaluation of membership, policies, performance and risk ✓ Awareness is maintained of what is working and what is not, and action is taken to address issues ✓ There are strategies for change and exit. ✓ Disputes between partners are addressed effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The partnership is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose and aligned to council objectives and priorities ✓ There are clearly defined indicators of performance to monitor delivery of the partnership objectives ✓ Performance and risk are actively monitored, managed and reported ✓ Processes are in place to resolve disputes, for partners to exit (or join) the partnership, and for its termination ✓ Consideration is given to internal and external audit requirements ✓ Processes are in place for dealing with external complaints and compliments
Financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The partnership is resourced to deliver its aims and objectives ✓ Responsibility for financial decisions is clear ✓ The partnership can show that it manages funding appropriately to add value efficiently and effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The accountable body for funding is identified ✓ Financial and business plans show clearly how funding and resources will be used to deliver objectives ✓ Financial accounting budgeting and reporting arrangements are in place and subject to appropriate external scrutiny ✓ Processes are in place by which financial, legal and other technical advice

Criteria	Good governance	Good practice
		may be provided to the partnership
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Meetings operate efficiently and are of sufficient frequency to facilitate business ✓ The chair ensures meetings address the agenda, promotes contributions from all and ensures decisions are open and transparent ✓ Attendees bring expertise, knowledge and experience relevant to the objectives of the partnership and have the necessary authority to make decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Partnership terms of reference specify arrangements for meetings to include quorum, voting, representation and deputising, declarations of interest and arrangements for extraordinary meetings or other procedures for decision-making ✓ Agendas and minutes are produced to specified times, and arrangements for wider access (transparency) are clear ✓ Decisions, action points and accountable leads are clearly identified within the minutes ✓ Arrangements for a secretariat and resources to support it are in place if required

Key council roles and responsibilities

Elected members and officers

17. Elected members may be appointed to partnership boards or bodies, may determine the resources to be made available to a partnership, or may scrutinise the effectiveness of partnerships through overview and scrutiny. Officers may be appointed to a partnership board or body, or may provide support to the partnership.
18. When working with partnerships members and officers must be aware of their responsibilities under the council's code of corporate governance and the member and employee codes of conduct. These codes apply whether directly representing the council, acting in an advisory capacity, or as part of an interest group. Members and officers should help to ensure that the principles for good governance set out in this framework are agreed, adopted and adhered to by the partnerships they are involved in.
19. It should be remembered that acceptance of a role as either a charity trustee or company director (even if accepted as part of work for the council) carries a personal responsibility. In these circumstances there will be particular responsibilities to the Charity Commission or under company law that must be fulfilled. The duty to act in the best interests of the charity or company must be balanced with the duty to the council as an elected member or a council officer, and as a representative within its community leadership role. Further advice can be sought from the monitoring officer if required.
20. If an elected member or officer feels the partnership is not acting in a way that is acceptable to the council or in the public interest they should raise the concern at the earliest opportunity initially with the relevant link officer, or with either the director for economy, communities and corporate or the chief executive.

Link officers

21. Link officers provide the key point of contact between the council and a partnership. They are responsible for:
 - ensuring that corporately the council is informed of partnership activity and progress;
 - ensuring that the partnership is appropriately advised regarding its governance arrangements;
 - leading the periodic self-assessment of the effectiveness of those governance arrangements; and
 - ensuring that the partnership that terms of reference have themselves been subject to appropriate governance and the appropriate entry on the register of strategic partnerships is kept up to date.

Assurance and review

22. The director for economy, communities and corporate has overall leadership responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of partnership governance arrangements and will maintain a register of strategic partnerships that includes the category of partnership, date of establishment, terms of reference, council representative(s) on the partnership, review date, risk assessment, and identified link officer.
23. Within the register, the categories of partnership will be:
 - Incorporated partnership (i.e. a separate and distinct legal entity)
 - Statutory partnership

- Non-statutory partnership
 - Contractual
24. Risk assessment, based on the information within the annual self-assessment return, may be:
- **Low risk** – there is a sound system of governance in place and being followed, which is designed to achieve the partnership and council’s objectives
 - **Medium risk** – While there is a basically sound system of governance either there are some weaknesses or it is not consistently followed, resulting in some of the partnership and council objectives being at risk.
 - **High risk** – Controls are generally weak leaving the partnership’s system open to significant error or abuse. It is likely that the partnership and council objectives will not be met.
25. Management board will recommend partnerships for inclusion on the register of strategic partnerships, following consideration of nominations from the relevant director who has corporate responsibility for the partnership. This will ensure that the strategic fit between the partnership and the council’s objectives and priorities is maintained, strengthens lines of accountability and improves collective oversight. Draft terms of reference and governance documents should be reviewed by legal and governance services before submission to management board.
26. Approval for establishing, and resourcing, strategic partnerships will be subject to the appropriate council decision making processes in accordance with the council’s constitution.
27. Partnership annual self-assessments should be considered and signed off by the relevant director, and the outcome of those assessments be included as an element within the normal quarterly performance reporting process, and an annual review of the effectiveness of these arrangements will be undertaken and reported within the annual governance statement considered by audit and governance committee.
28. Directors should ensure that a proportionate approach, based on the principles within this framework, is established for approving and reviewing the value and operation of non-strategic partnerships within their corporate areas of responsibility.

Appendix A – Model partnership agreement

1.	General information
1.1	Name of partnership
1.2	Type of partnership (public/public; public/private; voluntary and community; other specified bodies) and legal status
1.3	Principle reason for establishing (eg statutory requirement; to access government funding; to deliver a service; to consult....)
1.4	Council priority and aim to which the partnership will contribute
1.5	Date partnership commenced
1.6	Expected life span
2.	Partnership objectives
2.1	Partnership vision (clear, long-term, agreed by all partners, achievable and contributes to all partner priorities and defined service outcomes)
2.2	Partner contribution (how and what each partner contributes; business plan define how goals will be achieved by which partner and when)
2.3	Publication (to promote understanding and ownership)
3.	Terms of reference
3.1	Purpose (what the partnership is for including expected benefits and outcomes)
3.2	Scope (what the partnership is and isn't intended to do)
3.3	Agreement (documented agreement to the scope by all partners at an appropriate level)
3.4	Code of conduct (partners may be bound by their own organisation's code and if so this should be stated and a link to those codes provided for clarity)
4.	Partnership principles
4.1	Referring to the principles in the framework, the principles agreed by the partners should be set out
5.	Membership
5.1	Partners (the full list of agreed partners, number of representatives each partner may have and whether they must be member or officer, and names of nominated representatives)
5.2	Non partner participation (explain why they are their eg professional or technical advice, provide view of service users, representational role etc, and how they were selected)
5.3	Voting powers (terms of office and voting rights of partners.
5.4	Time limits (frequency of membership review, limits of time an individual representative can serve on a partnership)
5.5	Representation (if/how the membership is expected to reflect the characteristics of the area/people it serves)
5.6	Roles and responsibilities (for each constituent member; it may be appropriate to list members by sector and areas of activity they are responsible for; list each partner and specify what, where and when they will provide to the partnership activity)
5.7	Secretariat (who will provide it; who pays for it)
5.8	Chair (method and criteria for appointing; term of office; vice chair)
5.9	Accountable body (who will be accountable for the finances; who will pay for that function)
6.	Accountability and communication
6.1	1. Reporting (how will the partnership report, to whom is it accountable to include: reporting lines between various levels within the partnership and to constituent bodies; statement on members accountability to each other including behaviour; communication strategy for reporting externally and internally; boundaries between activity of the partnership and of individual partners)
6.2	Audit (arrangements for internal and external audit and how these will be resourced)
6.3	Value for money (how the partnership adds value, how it measures and monitors that added value)

7.	Governance
7.1	Corporate and individual governance (how governance arrangements link to partner bodies arrangements, how decisions are recorded, who makes sure they are acted on, who scrutinises them, to whom are they reported)
7.2	Statutory powers/obligations (specify and legislative or regulatory requirements the partnership must comply with and say how it will be assured that it does so)
7.3	Transparency (say how the principles of transparency will be complied with including access to meetings and information; register of interests)
7.4	Delegations (who is responsible for what decisions and any limits on that delegation)
7.5	Policies (any policies of the partnership needed to operate, or policies of individual partners which must be adopted by the partnership)
7.6	Meetings arrangements – to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting dates of meetings • Minimum number of meetings in a period • Publicity re meetings (and if open or private) • Process for convening extraordinary meetings • Responsibility for setting agenda, circulating papers, minutes etc • Venues/timing/duration • Representation/deputising and quorum • Expectation of behaviours/attendance • Declarations of interest and withdrawal • Voting • Written procedure • Attendance via video/tele conference facility
7.7	Timescales (review of governance, review of partnership, exit strategy once objectives achieved)
8.	Financial and resource management
8.1	Inputs (sources of funding including partner funds and grant funding; assets, in kind resources, staffing and any limits on the use of these resources by partners)
8.2	Financial regulations (may follow those of the accountable body but must be agreed by the partners)
8.3	Financial decision making (limits both upper and de minimis)
8.4	Financial reporting (what information will be provided, to whom and when)
8.5	Accountability (how staffing and in kind resources will be managed and accounted for)
8.6	Services (what services will the partnership require and how will they be procured)
8.7	Assets (how will the assets of the partnership be recorded, who retains ownership of them, and how they will be distributed when the partnership is dissolved; to include intellectual property rights)
9.	Performance and risk management
9.1	Arrangements (performance management methodology and arrangements, targets and indicators; complaints and compliments processes)
9.2	Data quality (arrangements for assuring quality of data, information storage and management; data sharing)
9.3	Delivery (how the partnership will monitor and report on progress towards objectives)
9.4	Outputs and outcomes (list deliverables linked to objectives, and give timescales)
9.5	Risks (arrangements for recording, reporting and managing risk)
10	Disputes and termination
10.1	Resolution of issues (systems and processes to resolve conflicts within the partnership)
10.2	Termination (how partners may exit and how the partnership may be dissolved)
11.	Equality duty
11.1	How the partnership will operate to ensure the duties under the Equality Act are met?