

Agenda

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 26 July 2022**

Time: **2.30 pm**

Place: **Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford,
HR4 0LE**

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

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Steve Tucker, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260239 or e-mail Steve.Tucker@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairperson Councillor Phillip Howells
Vice-chairperson Councillor Jennie Hewitt

Councillor Graham Andrews
Councillor Toni Fagan
Councillor Helen l'Anson
Councillor Mike Jones
Councillor John Stone

Wiktor Daron

Andy James

Sam Pratley
Fiona Reid

Representative of the Archdiocese of Cardiff

Parent governor representative for the special school sector

Representative of the Diocese of Hereford

Representative of Families

Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
3.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive declarations of interests in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2022 and review the action log and recommendation tracker.</p>	9 - 32
<p>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</p> <p>The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 9.30am on Thursday 21 July 2022.</p> <p>Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</p> <p>Accepted questions and the responses will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</p>		
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the public.</p>	
6.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the council.</p>	
7.	<p>ROLE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</p> <p>To consider and note the role of the Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the key strategic objectives for the Committee and the overall strategic objectives for scrutiny agreed by the Scrutiny Management Board on 16 June 2022.</p>	33 - 38
8.	<p>SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES - AUTISM PROVISION AND NURTURE HUBS</p>	To Follow
9.	<p>CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-2024 [VERBAL UPDATE & PRESENTATION]</p> <p>To consider the Herefordshire Council Children's Social Care and Early Help Improvement Plan 2022-2024 and the strategic framework for review of key improvement measures.</p>	39 - 80

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| 10. ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK AND FINISH GROUP | To Follow |
| To consider the establishment of a Social Care Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group, including the agreement of Terms of Reference and Membership. | |
| 11. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2022-23 | 81 - 96 |
| To review and agree the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2022-23, drawn up in consultation with members of the Committee. | |
| 12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS | |
| Scheduled meetings for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year: | |
| Tuesday 6 September 2022 2.30pm
Tuesday 22 November 2022 2.30pm
Tuesday 10 January 2023 2.30pm
Tuesday 21 March 2023 2.30pm | |

The public's rights to information and attendance at meetings

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We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions.

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- Attend all council, cabinet, committee and sub-committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. Agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) are available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings
- Inspect minutes of the council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the cabinet or individual cabinet members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting (a list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. The council's constitution is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution
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The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:
www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-

The seven principles of public life

(Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Minutes of the meeting of Children and young people scrutiny committee held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Tuesday 26 April 2022 at 2.30 pm

Present: Councillor Phillip Howells (chairperson)
Councillors: Helen l'Anson, Mike Jones, and David Summers
Councillor Jim Kenyon (non-voting member)

Co-optee: Wiktor Daron – Archdiocese of Cardiff Representative
Fiona Reid – Observing nominate Co-optee for Families

Officers: Darry Freeman Corporate Director - Children & Young People, Project Lead, Head of Law and Legal Business Partner, Children and Families, Democratic Services Officer and Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

Remote committee attendees (non-voting): Councillors Toni Fagan, Graham Andrews (joined approx. 3.00pm)

Other remote attendees: Councillor Diana Toynbee (Lead Member), Interim Assistant Service Director Safeguarding, QA & Improvement, Head of Law and Legal Business Partner, Children and Families; Technical Support Officer

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

- ~ Councillor Jennie Hewitt
- ~ Mr Sam Pratley - Diocese of Hereford, Church Representative – Co-optee
- ~ Mr Andy James - SEND Sector Parent Governor Representative - Education Co-optee
- ~ Jane Ellis - Healthwatch

83. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

85. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

It was requested that the attendance record was reviewed so that virtual attendees were marked as in attendance.

Resolved: It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairperson.

When reviewing the Action Log, it was noted that:

- The committee was making great steps forward to accurately track and review their agreed actions.
- Some enhancements are needed and the committee is looking to schedule regular meetings to refine actions to adhere to a SMART format.
- Over time the actions will be refined to be more specific with action-by-dates.
- It was noted that the recommendation tracker was absent, and would be included in future agenda packs for the committee to review.

86. CO-OPTEE CONFIRMATION

Mr Wiktor Daron was welcomed as the Archdiocese of Cardiff representative co-optee.

It was put that Fiona Reid is nominated as a non-voting co-optee in relation to concerns around families and the committee to confirm her appointment.

Concerns were raised by two committee members about not having any background information on the position or candidate.

It was noted that information about the nomination was circulated a few months previously. This communication led to two queries being raised. These queries were answered and satisfied prior to this meeting.

The committee were given ample opportunity to comment on the nomination as stated by the Chair. Therefore there was no further need to delay the approval of the co-optee nomination.

Resolved – Fiona Reid was confirmed as the non-voting Co-optee for Families.

87. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Before the committee could hear subsequent questions from members of the public, a question was put by a councillor on a concern they have currently that they wished to have resolved.

Year 7 special students are unaware of secondary school places, why is this and when will they be informed?

A response was to be given in a written form by the Corporate Director – Children and Young People.

There were three questions submitted prior to the committee meeting. Answers to these questions were published as a supplement to the agenda.

Following this, each person who submitted a question also requested to ask a supplementary question. The first of these was submitted as a written follow up question which the Chair read aloud:

The Department for Education reviewed the A Fertile Heart programme after the Ofsted Inspection and found serious non-compliance issues. Consequently, in June 2021 the (former) Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb MP wrote to local MPs that “A Fertile Heart contained content that would be hard for a school to present in a way that was consistent with the statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)”. He undertook to write to the Archdiocese and the Publishers. According to the Council's response, it appears no significant changes to the programme have been made. Given this, how does the legal advice square with the Council's duty to protect children and ensure primary equality and

human rights are not breached, and how can the Council legally challenge the continuation of such a programme in one of our schools?

Mr Darryl Freeman picked up this question and offered to provide a written response to the individual within 2 weeks, following consultation with the Legal Team.

The chair then invited the first member of the public in the room to present their supplementary question.

They stated:

Thank you for the written response. It refers to a lot of documents but fails to answer my question and it does not explain how the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act apply to cases of peer-on-peer sexual assault.

The Council's guidance for schools has only one reference to the Human Rights Act and one reference to the Equality Act – these are cursory references in the Appendix which merely urges schools to ensure they adhere to those Acts.

There is NO explanation for schools as to how those Acts apply to cases of peer-on-peer sexual assault. No wonder that schools are still getting it wrong and that victims – mainly girls – are still at risk of harm.

I am more than ever concerned that no officer in this Council has got to grips with how the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act apply and I hope I am wrong on that. Can someone – any officer or any member – put my mind at rest, and please explain to us how the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act should operate in a specific circumstance of protecting a rape victim who has reported the crime to the police but does not wish to go through the criminal justice system.

Mr Darryl Freeman was asked to provide a response to the question from the member of the public. He stated that he disagreed that the council did not have appropriate guidance and policies, as suggested.

The response to the question was deferred to a written response following consultation with Legal colleagues. The deadline for this would be within 2 weeks.

The chair then invited the second member of the public in the room to present their supplement question. They stated:

In the written response to my question, Q3 again relevant to Peer on Peer abuse. Case by case basis with the voice of the child in use. My trouble with this is that the child in many cases will not be familiar with their rights under the equality act or human rights act. May feel that there is pressure to be kept in the same space as the perpetrator of their abuse. More often than not it is girls that are victims sadly. My concern is that there being asked to be in the same space and continue their education in the same space as the same situation. What guidance will be given by officers of the council to the schools specifically where there aren't going to be pursuing a criminal case, as this doesn't always happen in a timely manner. What guidance will be given to schools?

The Chair asked Mr Darryl Freeman to provide a response to the question from the member of the public.

The response to the question was deferred to a written response following consultation with Legal colleagues. The deadline for this would be within 2 weeks.

88. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were no questions from members of the Council

89. INCREASED BUDGET FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES: INVESTING IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSFORMATION

The Corporate Director for Children and Young People introduced the report, the purpose of which was for the Committee to review the increased budget for children's services for investing in children's services transformation.

During the following discussion/debate the following principal points were noted:

- The pension scheme that care givers can receive as part of their contract is/will be the Local Government pension scheme which can be opted in and out. This is regulated and generous and should attract people.
- The terms and conditions of the employment contract are being reviewed to ensure it attracts people to the positions and made more attractive.
- Herefordshire needs to attract people inwards and this could be improved by a good pension scheme.
- A copy of the employment contract was requested to be provided to committee members.
- Although working to an exemption at the moment given the urgent need to recruit, we will be returning to a regional memorandum of understanding between all the regional authorities and will not be aiming to poach the expertise or staff/LOCUMs of other local councils.
- The council needs to ensure that the £11m, is spent correctly and in the best way the council can. When looking at the figures Legal receive a lot of the funding. Queried whether legal secretaries would be better hires than solicitors as it would be more cost effective.
- Human Resources were commented to be an expensive outsourcing resource that could be brought internal.
- Suggestions were raised about including a 'refer a friend bonus' to try and encourage people into the council to fill positions. We could be using similar incentives to come and work in Herefordshire.
- The committee wants to see commitment from experienced social workers to help in training other social workers especially the level 1(new starters) and 2. It was raised that this does happen already and a number of social workers take on an education role.
- Interim workers are aware of the deadline of their contracts. Some are approached to stay on and these conversations start early on in the process before the end of the contract. There are a number of ongoing initiatives in place to try and retain some of the interim workers.
- There needs to be a look at how to better utilise support workers to try and reduce the workload of social workers where possible. This could also lead to further training opportunities to train support workers into becoming social workers.
- Sexual abuse in children is not touched upon in the plan, nor how these children are identified and supported. Some of the money should/could have been inputted to informing children on the importance of coming forward when they have been abused and in understanding the need for the protection of their personal space.
- Pastoral support and more proactive support is needed for children who are at risk or are experiencing abuse.
- Children services come into their own when abuse is known and they are able to support and help. Potential usage of collaboration with charity services.

- Important to note that recruitment is underway, but noted it is a difficult problem faced by all authorities. Idea of supporting career progression with salary increases which could aid the problem of recruitment was muted.
- Social workers have a protected status and must undertake a degree course to qualify. A number of social workers undertake additional courses that are linked to universities to develop and train further. The council needs a workforce that is diverse and has a range of skills.
- There appears to be a significant drop in the budget figures for HR and Legal support, but this is due to the fact this resource was reported in their individual budgets and not in the budgets of the Children's Services.
- There is no budget in this transformation money that would be available to develop and recruit youth workers locally. There is nevertheless a very important need to think more about adequate service provisions for the youth in the county, since this is certainly not currently in place.
- Improvement progress metrics are reported to the improvement board and the corporate cabinet board quarterly. The committee should include reviews of these quarterly reports in its future work programme.
- There currently isn't a contingency plan for not recruiting sufficient staff, but this is not seen as vital as the council has not had issue with recruitment at the moment. Most of the staff recruited for the transformation plan are already in post. There is a risk and challenge to other recruitment, but not so much on newly qualified staff.
- The committee should be reviewing aspects of children's service delivery that actually impact on the lives of young people as much as simply looking at the KPI's

On being asked to sum up their thoughts on the discussion, the cabinet member noted that they were pleased that over the past few weeks the committee had had opportunities to see this plan and understand the investment being made, which should be seen as a very significant investment in people and admin support.

Conclusions:

Resolved: that the committee requested the following information:

- A written response to a question posed by the committee be provided by the Corporate Director for Children's Services - What is the timescale for effectively providing SENCO support when identified?
- A copy of the employment contract of social workers be circulated to members of the committee for review.
- Further detail should be provided to explain the figures set out in Appendix A. Table 1 in relation to the increased budget figure of £11.4m (relative to the table in the original budget)

Resolved: that the committee asked for the following actions and recommendations to take place:

- To bring a draft proposal, based on the advice of officers, back to the next committee meeting, with regards to reviewing retention and recruitment in the form of a Task and Finish Group. This should include opportunities to meet frontline staff.
- Key weakness areas in the service delivery should be particularly identified for subsequent committee review, with the view of moving beyond just the recruitment and key performance indicators. The Director of Children's Service was asked to look at additional metrics that could be used by the committee to effectively evaluate service delivery improvement, which it was agreed would be reported to and scrutinised by the committee quarterly.

The meeting adjourned for a short break at 16:06.

The meeting recommenced at 16:16

90. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE' IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People, introduced the report with the help of the Project Lead, the purpose of which was for the Committee to review the Children and Families Strategic Improvement Plan

During discussion the following principal points were noted:

- Officers will be finalising the contents of the enhanced improvement plan in the next week. This will then be circulated to the committee for comment. A plan that frequently changes is not what is wanted and are looking to have a final draft ready to send that can be signed off.
- Expecting to have quarterly data in July, which will be reported back to cabinet. This will provide feedback on how the plan is progressing in the improvement of the service.
- Good to see that partnerships are being highlighted in the plan.
- There are outside forums which engage with the service users and gain passive feedback on the services performance. What is key, is to capture the lived experience of the service users.
- Expecting to see less complaints from users on the service provided as a result of this plan.
- Expecting to see good performance improvements over the next few months, and not receive any surprises in July meeting.
- Concerns raised over the term 'critical friend', and its usage in terms of the scrutiny function. Agreed that although scrutiny committees have the key scrutiny role, but the Corporate Leadership Team has a right to scrutinise its own work as well. The main difference in emphasis is that the committee scrutinises and the CLT monitors.
- The service is already heavily monitored and the reality is that there is not currently sufficient time to satisfy all interested parties on performance whilst also completing their work on the improvement plan.
- There are some measures that matter more than others, but there is no current feedback baseline by which to compare; this be improved in the final version of the new plan.
- The committee wants to see realistic, but challenging targets to attain and against which to scrutinise.
- The Improvement Plan is sent over to OFSTED and the Department of Education for review to show how the work that is underway is progressing. Feedback illustrates there is a high degree of confidence in the direction in which the service is going.
- There needs to be a sensible balance on the frequency of when these reports come to the committee. It is of course in the services interest for effective scrutiny, but there is a risk of duplication and excessive work that is unnecessary.
- The directorate is happy to provide separate briefing notes as opposed to being committee meeting agenda items, providing stage reports on the improvement plan if necessary.

The cabinet member commented on the report and debate, saying they were pleased with the identification of the measures that matter most in the plan, and that being worded in plain English it is easier to understand and scrutinise.

Conclusions

Resolved - that the committee would like to review the following information:

- Regular updates to be circulated to members on the progress on Corporate Parenting.
- Monthly updates starting the end of May to be provided on the progress of the improvement plan to all members via a briefing note
- A new format for looked after children to be updated and provided to the committee in the form of a briefing note within two weeks of the committee meeting.
- Version 2 of the improvement plan to be updated and circulated to the committee by the 6th May

Resolved – that the committee would like the following action to take place:

- When the updates are provided they should include feedback on how the voice of the child is reflected and this should be included within the first quarterly report in July.

91. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Chair opened the item with the purpose of reviewing the current work programme plans for 2022/23.

During the discussion the following points were raised/agreed:

- 21 June committee meeting be converted into a work plan meeting, so that people have it pencilled in and can attend to contribute to alterations to the work plan for 22/23
- Workshops will be held circa one week prior to the main meeting in future
- Some members felt that the workshops were too much and should not be necessary. They could be meetings for meeting sake. However other members found them useful and informative to help form more informed lines of scrutiny query. The workshops help members obtain a better overall picture of the topics and the key issues in advance of the committee meeting.
- In agreeing to revert back to bi-monthly meetings for the coming year, some concern was raised over a reduction possibly resulting in lengthier meetings. However it was agreed that this format allowed officers a fairer time to produce the reports needed and that the committee needed to review other ways in which work could be done, such as agreeing reports that could be circulated for feedback without necessarily coming to scrutiny meetings, in order to be more effective.
- There needs to be set times and dates for meetings upcoming and it was agreed that now the improvement plan was in place and a formal review structure established, it was now possible to set a meetings schedule for the whole municipal year.

Resolved:

That the committee will return to bi-monthly meetings following the May committee meeting, thus allowing better time for preparation of officers and members. This will be reviewed over time if more items become needed.

92. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as Tuesday 17 May at 2.30pm.

The meeting ended at 5.21 pm

Chairperson

COMPLETED ACTIONS WILL BE MOVED TO THE 'REPORTED COMPLETE' TAB ONCE THEY

BLUE TEXT INDICATES NEW ACTIONS ADDED

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action and Information Requests	Owner	Directorate	Progress Update	Due date	Reported complete
1	07/09/21	check and confirm if the Human Rights Act is highlighted as a workshop requirement for social workers	Claire Ward	Corporate Centre	Legal services checking	02/11/21	OVERDUE
2	07/09/21	provide an example of an induction pack for new starters	Claire Ward	Corporate Centre	Legal services checking	02/11/21	OVERDUE
5	12/10/21	Circulate to the Committee the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the Children's Centre Service contracts, with comparisons of the different providers used within the County.	Richard Watson		To be completed	07/12/21	OVERDUE
6	12/10/21	The Deputy Monitoring Officer to provide the Committee with the current procurement rules, including the guidance on current exemptions to these rules.	Kate Charlton	Corporate Centre	Legal services checking	07/12/21	OVERDUE
7	12/10/21	Information on the Friends of Ledbury to be forwarded to the Committee.	Richard Watson		To be completed	07/12/21	OVERDUE
10	23/11/21	That the Committee receive an update on the next IRO report			Target of getting the IRO report 2021-22 to Scrutiny much earlier, hopefully June /July - SCHEDULED FOR JULY	30/07/22	IN PROGRESS
13	12/02/22	That quantitative data for the report presented be sent to Committee Members	Matthew Sampson	Children's Services	To be completed		
14	12/02/22	The Director for Children's Services would provide the Committee with the data on how long it took to get a statement of education need.	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed		
15	22/03/22	Send out a report and update of the work programme and statement of next meetings.	Clerk to the committee	Corporate Centre	Noted	28/04/22	OVERDUE
16	28/04/22	Send out a written response to the supplementary questions provided by members of the public and members of the committee.	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed with Legal services to review	10/05/22	COMPLETE
17	28/04/22	A copy of the employment contracts for Social Workers are circulated to the committee	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed (HR request)	17/05/22	
18	28/04/22	Further detail provided to explain the figures set out in Appendix A. Table 1 in relation to the increased budget figures, £11.4m	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed.	17/05/22	
19	28/04/22	Regular updates be circulated to members on the progress on Corporate Parenting.	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed.	01/07/22	ONGOING
20	28/04/22	Monthly updates starting the end of May on the progress of the improvement plan, to all members via briefing note	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed.	31/05/22	ONGOING
21	28/04/22	New format for looked after children to be updated and provided to the committee in the form of a briefing note within two weeks of the committee meeting.	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed.	10/05/22	
22	28/04/22	Version 2 of the improvement plan be updated and circulated to the committee	Darryl Freeman	Children's Services	To be completed.	06/05/22	OVERDUE

5 August 2021

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
<p>Youth Justice Plan 2021-2022</p> <p>19</p>	<p>The committee endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2021-2022 for presentation to Council.</p> <p>A written briefing be provided on diversionary schemes and activities.</p> <p>A copy of the national standards and improvement plan be shared with the committee.</p> <p>For the 2022/23 iteration of the plan the committee recommends the inclusion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased evidence of consultation with young people and the wider public; • evidence on staff consultation; and • more information on progress on county lines, exploitation and peer on peer abuse. 	<p>Noted. Presentation of the plan to Cabinet for recommendation to Council has been delayed.</p> <p>Briefing received and circulated to members of the committee.</p>
<p>Co-optee membership of scrutiny committees</p>	<p>The process for the appointment of co-optees set out in appendix one is adopted.</p> <p>The process is used to appoint one representative from the teaching sector.</p> <p>The term of service of co-optees be reviewed with a view to making appointments for more than one year and up to four years, linking to the election cycle.</p> <p>The process is used to recruit an adult representative of families who are or have been supported by social workers and Council be asked to appoint an additional co-optee at its next suitable meeting.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Advertisement is 'live'. Final date for expressions of interest is 14 Jan 2022.</p> <p>14.2.22 Unfortunately those who expressed an interest were ineligible due to the criteria laid out in 3.2 of the Co-optee protocol</p> <p>To be reported to the next Annual Council meeting in May 2022.</p> <p>Advertisement is 'live'. Final date for expressions of interest is 14 Jan 2022</p> <p>14.2.22 Recruitment process underway</p>

	<p>The induction of co-optees be more structured and include safeguarding training.</p> <p>Consider how the participatory officer could bring the voice of the child to the committee as and when needed.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>A meeting is to be set up between the Committee and the Participation Officer</p>
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7 September 2021

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
<p>Children's services improvement journey</p> <p>21</p>	<p>That progress on development with heat maps be shared with the committee by 23 November 2021</p> <p>That development sessions include members of children’s services legal team as well as social workers</p> <p>That the committee review all the challenges identified in the report with a view to identifying areas where scrutiny can contribute</p> <p>That examples of audit documentation be shared with the committee by 23 November 2021</p> <p>That a link to relevant information on the council website be provided to the committee</p> <p>That the voice of the staff be captured in an appropriate form as evidence for external review and the scrutiny committee</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Update report to reflect on progress was presented to the Committee at their meeting on 23 Nov 2021</p> <p>Outstanding</p> <p>Outstanding</p> <p>Outstanding</p>
<p>Update on children’s legal team improvement plan</p>	<p>The committee notes the progress made to date and the plan to continue with improvements in the Children’s Legal Team</p> <p>Further updates on the legal team improvement plan be presented to the committee bi-monthly, with evidence in the next meeting (23 November 2021) on the service level agreement, knowledge and understanding of when to access legal services by middle managers</p> <p>Add more clarity on the status of HRA cases and include evidence of training / workshops of areas of concern</p> <p>Post court proceedings meetings be required rather than optional (Q7 in Children’s Legal Team Improvement Plan relates);</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>A further update was circulated to the Committee on 17 Nov 2021</p>

	<p>A review of the escalation process be undertaken in relation to decision making by senior officers within the escalation process and support for them, including the criteria under which a second opinion is sought</p> <p>Training be provided to councillors to help them be confident in instigating the call in procedure</p>	
Work Programme Review	<p>Agrees the work programme at appendix 2 with the following amendments:</p> <p>A report on health and wellbeing be scheduled for the December meeting, to include mental health in schools</p> <p>A report on holiday activities provided by schools during covid be scheduled for the December meeting, with a focus on contextual safeguarding</p>	<p>Added to work programme for December 2021.</p> <p>This has been added to the meeting agenda for March</p>

<p>Work Programme Review</p>	<p>Agrees the work programme at appendix 2 with the following amendments:</p> <p>23 November agenda to include items on IRO, carers portal and exit interviews in children's service</p> <p>A workshop be arranged ahead of the 23 November meeting on the IRO service and carers portal</p> <p>Consider use of performance challenge sessions to cover information items</p>	<p>IRO report scheduled. Briefing note to be provided on Carer's Portal</p> <p>Scheduled</p> <p>Noted</p>
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23 November 2021

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Annual Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Report	<p>Having reviewed the Independent Reviewing Officer's Report for 2020/21 the Committee recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The Committee receive the IRO Report as an annual agenda item.b) The next iteration of the report should include comparator data with statistical neighbours where this was available.c) A workshop be arranged with the participatory officer on how to include the voice of the child in future meetings.d) Health partners be asked to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss barriers for children and young people accessing CAMHS or other therapeutic support and counselling.	<p>Noted and included in the work plan</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>In Progress</p> <p>Invited to the meeting on 22 March 2022 which has a mental health focus</p>
Children Improvement Plans – Progress Update	<p>That the Committee noted the progress update and made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Feedback from the third sector (for example community groups and charities) be recognised as an additional source of information informing the whole system approach to quality assurance and performance managementb) Work on mental health in schools be highlighted in the Committee work programme	<p>Noted</p> <p>A mental health agenda is scheduled for the March meeting of the Committee</p>

<p>Work Programme Review</p> <p>26</p>	<p>The Committee recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reports on dental health and obesity which were provisionally scheduled as agenda items for the December meeting be instead presented to the Committee as a briefing note, and circulated to the Committee outside of the meeting schedule. b. The scheduled meeting on 7 December 2021 be cancelled. c. A workshop to go through the following items be organised for 7 December 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the headline budget proposals ahead of public scrutiny of the budget in January 2. the LGA scrutiny self-assessment exercise d. A themed mental health agenda be scheduled for the March meeting and that a range of different bodies be asked to submit reports. e. A monthly programme of scrutiny meetings be continued until the end of this municipal year at which point the practice would then be reviewed. There was a caveat placed on this that a meeting should not be held for the sake of it and that if the meeting was not needed it would be cancelled. f. When appropriate to do so, workshop training sessions on upcoming agenda items be organised before the meeting and that they be held online and preferably from 5pm onwards to enable greater participation. Members also requested that the sessions be recorded so those unable to attend could catch up. g. The Chair and Vice-Chair meet with lead officers to further discuss and populate the work programme. Outstanding items to be included were the Director of Public Health’s Annual Report and an Improvement Plan focussed paper on workforce and resourcing issues. 	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>Done</p> <p>Done</p> <p>Scheduled</p> <p>Scheduled</p> <p>Scheduled and noted.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Scheduled</p>
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11 January 2022

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
2022/23 Budget Setting	<p>Having discussed the budget proposals for 2022/23 as they related to the remit of the Committee, the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="349 395 1205 454">1. Noted and accepted the children and young people services budget for 2022/23;<li data-bbox="349 478 1205 566">2. Requested that they be provided with a more detailed breakdown of where money was being spent in the budget on specific service areas; and<li data-bbox="349 574 1205 638">3. Recommended that in future budgeting there be an increase in the allocation for early help/early years funding.	<p>Completed</p> <p>Noted</p>

22 February 2022

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
<p>Workforce Report</p> <p>28</p>	<p>Having reviewed the information provided, the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Noted and welcomed this first workforce report to the Committee as an interim report, being part of the improvement plan process, and also welcomed the progress being made, including feedback and data from Council care workers and families, as part of the Committee’s aim to help improve openness and transparency in line with a “bottom up” scrutiny approach. b) Asked that the detail and information contained in the pdf documents on the Herefordshire Social Work Academy website be reviewed and brought up to date and that the Academy be promoted more widely so that it was more visible. c) Asked that in future the report provides more detail on the issues emerging from the exit interviews and includes a greater level of quantitative data. d) Suggested that to encourage a greater uptake of the offer of an exit interview that there is also an option that they be conducted by an independent interviewer. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>Children’s Services Improvement Plan – Progress Update</p>	<p>The Committee recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) An overview of the amended improvement plan be presented at a forthcoming workshop, focussing on the framework activities for performance and management; b) A report on the outcomes of the external peer review of SEND provision be allocated to a forthcoming meeting, as soon as available; c) A report giving detail of the access of social workers to legal advice and support when undertaking casework be provided to the Committee at a future meeting and d) In future the report reflects how relationships are positively managed with staff in line with management philosophies and that these are more widely advertised as a unique selling point in recruitment strategies. 	

<p>Fostering Service Update</p>	<p>The Committee reviewed and accepted the Fostering Service Annual Report April 2020-March 2021 and recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) The Committee promotes the opportunity for elected members of the Council to sit on the Fostering Panel and encourages nominations from current councillors; d) Officers from the Fostering Service provide their assessment of the challenges and opportunities for improvement that exist in the Service. 	<p>To be discussed on how Cllrs wish to promote this opportunity</p>
<p>Children's Performance Report</p>	<p>The Committee received and approved the Children's performance report and recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A workshop development session on understanding and analysing the Safeguarding and Family Support Scorecard be scheduled; to include an overview and examination of other data sets used by the Committee and with a narrative to support the presentation of data. b) The current report be used as a bench mark against which the performance of the service will be judged during the course of the year. 	
<p>Work Programme Review</p>	<p>The Committee reviewed the draft work programme for 2021/22 and agreed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That that the next meeting on 22 March would have a mental health focus. b) That the Chair and Vice-Chair, along with any other members of the Committee that wished to attend, hold a business planning session with officers to look at agenda items for the meetings of the next municipal year. The session would also include a review of outstanding actions from this year. 	<p>Meeting went ahead on 09/03/2022 with the vision of planning in more of these meetings ahead of mainstream meetings.</p>

22 March 2022

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
<p>Impact Of The Pandemic On The Mental Health And Wellbeing Of Pupils In Schools</p> <p style="text-align: center;">30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) If/when a child is excluded from a school, the money follows the child within a month so that their special /mental health needs are addressed quickly. To include lobbying the CCG for funding b) A report and methodological approach is prepared to review the progress at the CYPSC meeting, including national comparator data to report to the committee about what action planning Herefordshire is considering to address the problems within our county. c) A review be undertaken and a report be prepared on the impact of COVID ‘enrichment’ initiatives, including the WEST programme, is reviewed and the analysis provided as to which schools have been involved in this initiative, how many schools knew about it. d) Consideration be given to a T+F group or spotlight review with schools to encourage and support parents to ask for and take up the various mental health initiatives in their school setting. To be added to the work programme. e) More resource to be allocated for Brookfield’s and the other special schools – with particular emphasis on investment in early years, and Yr 1 and 2 to prevent problems being exacerbated in relation to the impact COVID f) CYPSC to lobby local MPs to lobby DfE to prioritise funding, supported by a funding bid and business case, to fund two attendance officers... Ceri Morgan/Hilary Jones/Matthew Sampson to send text. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>To go to the Business Working Group</p> <p>To go to the Business Working Group for further consideration</p> <p>“““</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>Children And Young People’s Mental Health And Wellbeing: Data And Prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The children’s commissioners’ newsletter be circulated across all councillors. b) Local government level social media platforms are explored in their relation to their impact on the wellbeing of young people and the risks presented to young people into being drawn into sexual exploitation and bullying using these platforms be investigated 	

22 March 2022

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
<p>Impact Of The Pandemic On The Mental Health And Wellbeing Of Pupils In Schools</p> <p style="text-align: right;">31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) If/when a child is excluded from a school, the money follows the child within a month so that their special /mental health needs are addressed quickly. To include lobbying the CCG for funding b) A report and methodological approach is prepared to review the progress at the CYPSC meeting, including national comparator data to report to the committee about what action planning Herefordshire is considering to address the problems within our county. c) A review be undertaken and a report be prepared on the impact of COVID ‘enrichment’ initiatives, including the WEST programme, is reviewed and the analysis provided as to which schools have been involved in this initiative, how many schools knew about it. d) Consideration be given to a T+F group or spotlight review with schools to encourage and support parents to ask for and take up the various mental health initiatives in their school setting. To be added to the work programme. e) More resource to be allocated for Brookfield’s and the other special schools – with particular emphasis on investment in early years, and Yr 1 and 2 to prevent problems being exacerbated in relation to the impact COVID f) CYPSC to lobby local MPs to lobby DfE to prioritise funding, supported by a funding bid and business case, to fund two attendance officers... Ceri Morgan/Hilary Jones/Matthew Sampson to send text. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>To go to the Business Working Group</p> <p>To go to the Business Working Group for further consideration</p> <p>“““</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>Children And Young People’s Mental Health And Wellbeing: Data And Prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The children’s commissioners’ newsletter be circulated across all councillors. b) Local government level social media platforms are explored in their relation to their impact on the wellbeing of young people and the risks presented to young people into being drawn into sexual exploitation and bullying using these platforms be investigated 	

28 April 2022

Item	Recommendations	Executive responses / update
Increased Budget For Children's Services: Investing In Children's Services Transformation	<p>A. To bring a draft proposal with the advice of officers back to a future committee group in regards to reviewing retention and recruitment in the form of a Task and Finish Group. With opportunities to meet frontline staff.</p> <p>B. Key weakness areas in the service be reviewed, with view of moving beyond recruitment and key performance indicators. Looking at additional metrics to evaluate the service and be reported quarterly.</p>	
Children And Young People' Improvement Plan - Progress Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular updates be circulated to members on the progress on Corporate Parenting.• Monthly updates starting the end of May on the progress of the improvement plan, to all members via briefing note• New format for looked after children to be updated and provided to the committee in the form of a briefing note within two weeks of the committee meeting.• Version 2 of the improvement plan be updated and circulated to the committee by the 6th May• Understand what reflection there is in the feedback we get in regards to the voice of the child and will be within the first quarterly report in July	



Title of report: Role and Objectives of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 22 July 2022

Report by: The Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose:

This report provides a summary of the role of scrutiny committee, in accordance with the council's Constitution and the key strategic objectives for the committee, in accordance with the overall strategic objectives for scrutiny agreed by the Scrutiny Management Board on 16 June 2022.

Recommendation(s)

That the general role and remit of the scrutiny committee be noted, and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Objectives for 2022-2023 be agreed.

Alternative options

1. There are no alternatives to the recommendations; the Scrutiny Management Board is to provide strategic management, direction and coordination of the council's five scrutiny committees. In developing this remit, it will require scrutiny committees to help implement its priorities and work programming activities.

Key considerations

2. On 11 October 2019, full Council resolved to review its governance arrangements to investigate and explore options for the future. The underpinning principles were set by the council:
 - i). To maximise member engagement and participation in decision-making.
 - ii). To ensure decision-making is informed, transparent and efficient.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
 Michael Carr, Tel: 01432260659, email: michael.carr@herefordshire.gov.uk

- iii). To welcome public engagement.
 - iv). To enable members and officers to perform effectively in clearly defined functions and roles.
3. The review was undertaken by the member led 'Re-thinking Governance' working group whereby a number of operational changes were proposed and agreed by full Council in March 2022. Those changes came into force on 20 May 2022. One of the principal changes brought in was a restructure to its scrutiny committees, moving from three scrutiny committees to five.
 4. Scrutiny is a statutory role fulfilled by councillors who are not members of the cabinet. The role of the scrutiny committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account for their actions and decisions.
 5. The new scrutiny structure has been designed to drive improvements in the process of scrutiny at the council. Including, development of responsive and evidence led work programmes, strengthen mechanisms for cabinet to provide an Executive Response to scrutiny recommendations and to create a more robust system for being able to track and monitor their implementation.

The Role of Scrutiny Management Board

6. As part of the package of changes a new Scrutiny Management Board has been created. The remit of that board includes:
 - i). Undertaking scrutiny in relation to areas which are cross cutting nature e.g. corporate strategy and finance (budget), people and performance and corporate support.
 - ii). Matters falling within the remit of one or more scrutiny committees,
 - iii). Deciding which of the committees will consider whether a spotlight, task and finish or standing panel review is appropriate
 - iv). The Budget and Treasury management
 - v). Approving an annual work programme for itself and the other scrutiny committees
 - vi). Oversee communications to members and public in relation to scrutiny matters
 - vii). The co-ordination of an annual effectiveness review and oversight of performance of council's companies, e.g. Hoople
7. To assist in the development of the Scrutiny Management Board, its Scrutiny Objectives were agreed by the Scrutiny Management Board on 16 June 2022.

The General Role of Scrutiny Committees

8. The general statutory role of local authority scrutiny committees is provided for by the Local Government Act 2000¹ and set out in the council's Constitution (Herefordshire Council Constitution, Part 2, Article 6²). In summary the general role of scrutiny committees in Herefordshire may be described as to:
 - i). drive improvement in public services,
 - ii). provide constructive "critical friend" challenge;- hold the Executive to account,
 - iii). c. be an effective vehicle for non-executive members to contribute to policy development.

¹ The Local Government Act 2000 F19f, Overview and scrutiny committees: functions.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/section/9F

² Part 2, Article 6, Herefordshire Council Constitution, July 2022.

<https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50101327/Part%202%20Article%206%20Scrutiny.pdf>

The *Scrutiny Objectives*, is a working document, and as such, may be subject to change as the scrutiny committees develop their working practices. Scrutiny members are encouraged and invited to consider their working practices accordingly, working with the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, the scrutiny chairpersons and vice-chairpersons.

General Powers of Scrutiny Committees

9. Scrutiny committees also have the power to request information from council departments and certain other external organisations, where they should expect a response. Scrutiny committees should be clear why they are requesting information and when they need the response by.
10. Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the Executive, as appropriate, and the Executive has a statutory duty to respond to scrutiny recommendations. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.
11. In tracking scrutiny recommendations, it is important that it is clear that the recommendations are addressed to the Cabinet, as the Executive decision making body of the council (or, where appropriate, external agency), and to track the decision of the Executive and thereafter the implementation status of the Executive Response and Executive decisions.

Scrutiny at Herefordshire Council

12. The council has five scrutiny committees, established by full Council on 20 May 2022;
 - i). Scrutiny Management Board
 - ii). Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
 - iii). Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee
 - iv). Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
 - v). Health, Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
13. The general role of the scrutiny committees is set out in Article 6 – Scrutiny of the Herefordshire Council Constitution, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. Part 3, Section 4 of the Constitution sets out the specific remits for each of the scrutiny committees. This includes the strategic management and coordination functions of the Scrutiny Management Board, as well as the thematic remits of the four other scrutiny committees. The Scrutiny Management Board is also responsible for the scrutiny of corporate cross cutting functions of the council.
14. Although scrutiny committees do not have any executive decision making powers, they do have statutory powers to make recommendations to the Executive, as appropriate, and the Executive has a statutory duty to respond to scrutiny recommendations. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Committee

15. The remit of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council Constitution Part 3, Section 4, (Scrutiny Functions). The remit of the committee is:
 - i). Children's social care including safeguarding
 - ii). Online teaching & home learning
 - iii). Signs of Safety
 - iv). Children and families policy framework items
 - v). Statutory education scrutiny powers

- vi). Childrens mental and physical health & wellbeing
 - vii). Schools investment programme
 - viii). Childrens Improvement Board and the oversight of the required improvement journey.
16. The draft key objectives for 2022-2023 for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are set out at Appendix 1 for agreement by the committee.
 17. This document sets out the role and approach of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee which are contained within Part 3, Section 4 of the constitution. This is a working document and may require changes throughout the year.
 18. The overall stated aim of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is to provide effective constructive critical friend challenge to drive improvement in public services and be an effective vehicle for non-executive members to contribute to policy development.
 19. The draft key objectives for 2022-2023 set out at Appendix 1 provides some specific objectives and measures for the committee to consider.

Community Impact

20. The council is committed to delivering continued improvement, positive change and outcomes in delivering key priorities.
21. In accordance with the principles of the code of corporate governance, the council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review.

Environmental Impact

22. The council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
23. Whilst the scrutiny committees will not deal with specific environmental impacts, consideration should always be given to minimising waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy. Service areas within the council, where required to do so will be required to undertake specific environmental impact assessment for the service specific proposals being considered. The scrutiny committees, where they deem appropriate to do so, will be able to scrutinise those proposals to ensure that they minimise any adverse environmental impact and actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.

Equality Duty

24. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

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

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

25. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Whilst this is an update on the work of the scrutiny committees and will in itself have minimal equalities impacts, consideration has been made in the consideration of Executive decisions and the Executive Responses provided by the Cabinet.

Resource Implications

26. There are none.

Legal Implications

27. Sections 9F – 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 requires council’s that have Executive arrangements (Cabinet and Leader) must have in place a committee that provides an overview and scrutiny function for the council.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively.	The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk.

Consultees

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices

Appendix 1: draft key objectives for 2022-2023 for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – *to be tabled*.

Background papers

None identified.

Children and Young People Directorate

Children's Social Care and Early Help Improvement Plan 2022-2024

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Introduction

Most important to us is the effectiveness of the work that we do and the difference we make to the lives of our children and young people in Herefordshire. This is why it is vital that we put children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do.

We want our county to be a place where children are supported to remain with their families wherever possible, through to stability and success in adulthood and in the future to be considered a *Child-Friendly county*.

More than this, we are determined to improve our services for our most vulnerable children, young people and families and are committed to ensuring that all children have the best start in life. We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families when it is safe for them to do so and are committed to working with other agencies to make sure that our children and young people are safe and able to reach their full potential.

The High Court Judgement in 2021 and the finding of the Ofsted Inspection (2018) and subsequent Focused Visits do not demonstrate the quality of services we strive to deliver or that our children and families expect and deserve. Ensuring our children's services are the best they can be has been the council's number one priority since 2021.

This revised Improvement Plan goes into more detail than the previous version, published in November 2021, and is informed by a clear set of outcomes to be achieved. It sets out our priorities to improve, how we will do this, and what can be expected from improved activity.

This plan has been developed with collaborative ownership from across our leadership team, partners, and elected Members to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable children, young people and families are everyone's responsibility.

We have already taken immediate steps since the High Court Judgement in 2021 of increasing capacity across the service and to start to build a new permanent senior leadership team. Additional funding from the Council has been received to resource our improvement activity and we have received support from the Department for Education (DfE) by way of a grant to support increased improvement activity during 2021-22. Delivery against the ambitions in the Plan are continuously reviewed by the Children's Improvement Board and reported regularly to the Corporate Leadership Team, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet, and full Council.

This Improvement Plan is led by the Corporate Director for Children and Young People and is supported by key staff across the Council and other agencies.

Transformation of services

This is a three-year programme to 2024 aimed at:

- Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- Making working in Herefordshire an attractive and rewarding career choice.
- Embedding systemic partnership approaches and exploring alternative models of delivery.
- Making the service financially viable for the future across a range of services the Council delivers.
- All underpinned and driven by improvement across the system of practice, management and leadership.



Approach to delivery

This Improvement Plan aims to bring together the various strands of project work and service improvement into a single change programme to deliver the required improvements and outcomes set out within the County Plan (2020-24) and the commitments contained within this plan.

There is a strong corporate commitment and ownership by the council for improvement and this plan has been developed through a collaborative approach with elected members, staff, partners, and children and families. The Chief Executive will personally sponsor the programme and have a clear line of sight on progress of the plan alongside regular oversight and reports on progress to the Improvement Board and the council's public facing committees.

The programme will need to respond to changes if things are not working or circumstances change so this plan should be seen as a proposed outline of the planned high level activity which will be underpinned by detailed action plans and project plans set out as part of each phase. The Improvement Plan will be refreshed at least annually to reflect any amendments and provide a report on how the transformation is progressing against the outcomes and commitments set out in this plan.

Our improvement programme will follow a structured programme and project management approach under the guidance of a dedicated Improvement Lead working alongside the services responsible for supporting children and families.

Our Values Statements for how we will work with children, young people, and families

1. We will try our very best to make sure that children and young people get the right help at the right time, spending time getting to know the children and young people we support, and doing activities with them that help us understand more about their lives and how we can best support them. Being honest about what we can and can't do, and working to earn their trust by doing what we say we will do.
2. We will keep our working relationships with children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do. Having clear and simple conversations, being honest about what we are worried about and listening to families' strengths, best hopes and worries in order to help create a better and safer home environment. When we make decisions we will be sure that children, young people and their parents will understand why we did so, even if they don't always agree with us.
3. We will work together with families' wider network of support and our partner agencies to create the best possible support that builds upon the family's own ability to help themselves. Using clear language and making sure families know what information we will share with others, whenever possible seeking their consent or telling them when there are times we cannot.
4. We will support parents and carers to make sure children and young people are safe at home if at all possible, and nurtured by others if not. Taking the time to listen to families' views, and trusting their ability to find their own solutions and make positive changes. We will work hard to provide children and young people who cannot live with their families with a stable home with people who understand the effect that difficulties experienced in childhood can have on children and young people later on.
5. We will make sure we take into account the diverse backgrounds and needs of children, young people and families, recognising that not everyone's journey is the same as we all have different roots. Supporting children and young people to understand and own their individual journeys and listening when they tell us about them in their own words. Listening to their choices and supporting them to own their plans for making positive change.

6. We will keep written information about children and young people in a way that recognises that the information belongs to them and will best enable them to fully understand their journey if they ask to see their records. Listening carefully to what children, young people and parents tell us and writing it down so they know that what they say matters, and writing in a way that would help a young person understand what we have done and why.
7. We will work hard to have positive endings when we move on, when children and young people journey through the care and support we offer, or when children and families no longer need our help. Doing our best to make sure that workers are involved with children and young people for long enough to build up trust, and managing any changes of worker by introducing their new workers.
8. We will create a supportive working culture that recognises the importance of critical reflection and shared learning of our good practice in order to help each other provide the best outcomes for children and families. Working in a supportive way with colleagues, sharing our learning, and working together to offer good quality services. Although we won't always get it right, we will always strive to improve, acknowledge our mistakes, take responsibility for our own actions, and learn from our mistakes to help get it right next time.
9. We will keep a focus on making a difference to improving outcomes for children and young people. Valuing children, young people, and young adults and encouraging them to tell us about their own life goals so we can advise and help them to achieve them where possible, and gathering and learning from feedback from children, young people and families in order to improve our practice - we will know when we have done well when our children, young people, young adults, families, carers and other partners tell us!

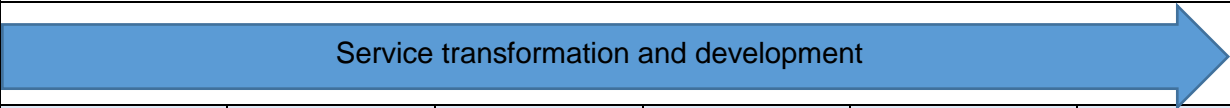


Our vision; our ambition; and our practice priorities

Our vision: **All children and young people in Herefordshire feel safe, loved, and valued, and grow up with the confidence and skills to be the best they can be.**

Our ambition: **Creating a child-centred county where children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.**

Our practice priorities:

	Practice priorities	Partnership priorities		Enablers		
Priorities and enablers	Good quality child-focused assessment and planning	Embedding learning from reviews and multi-agency audits		Developing a skilled and stable workforce		
	Effective interventions and direct work with children, young people and families	Proactive effective interventions with a practice focus		Systems and support services:		
	Supervision and management oversight	Effective, responsive, and reflective partnership arrangements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning • Business Support • Finance • Case management system • Digital 		
	Cultural change					
Cross cutting activity						
Measures of success	What children and their families tell us	What our staff tell us	What our partners tell us	Quantity measures	Quality measures	Outcomes

Measures that Matter (performance and management information – what difference have we made?)

We know that our progress to being a children’s services regarded as at least good will require significant investment and cultural change to ensure we can achieve and embed system-wide change.

We are further developing a suite of management information and performance reports that will be used by the service to drive improvement and service delivery. These are built around the considerable number of key performance indicators that the service is required to report against as well as a number of Measures that Matter developed to indicate the progress and impact of this plan. See [Appendix B](#) for a summary of the Measures that Matter.

Evidencing Impact.

In order to evaluate the quality of practice and the impact of improvement activity the Board will apply 4 levels of assurance.

Level 1:	The first level will be to quality assure practice and to track progress against the actions identified within the Improvement Plan, which will provide a level of assurance that activity is happening, and progress is being made. This will be through a Highlight Report to the Board.
Level 2	The second test of assurance will be the monitoring of a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be reviewed at the Children Improvement Board and provide a level of assurance in terms of progress. This will be through the Performance Dashboard .
Level 3:	The third level test will be the monitoring of risks and issues that have the potential to derail delivery of activity and performance. This will be reviewed by the Children’s Improvement Board via the Risk Register and a high level heat map (to be developed).
Level 4:	The final test of assurance is impact. Children and families tell us that what we have done has made a difference. Where a task has been completed the related areas of work will be evaluated; the type of evaluation will depend on the related area. This final level of assurance will be governed and monitored by the board and linked to future Ofsted activity.

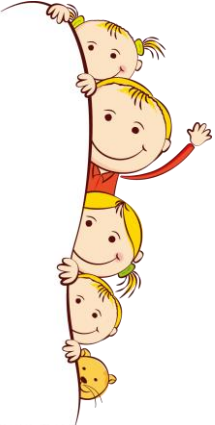
The RAG ratings will be updated on a monthly basis in preparation for the board.

Key: RAG ratings	Blue - Complete	Red - Off track	Amber - Behind	Green – On track	Grey – Not started


Appendix A: Improvement Plan

Our workforce

Accountable Lead: Service Director (Improvement)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
W1	<p>The stability, capacity and skill mix of our workforce.</p> 	<p>1.1 Managers and practitioners are experienced, effectively trained and supervised and the quality of practice improves the lives of vulnerable children, young people, and families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence recruitment campaign with a focus on recruiting experienced workers. Ensure that managers promote Continuing Professional Development opportunities and know their staff (PDR and Supervisions). Practitioners to identify gaps in their knowledge and experience Manager Development Programme to be introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of our workforce have completed their PDR (July 22) 100% of our workforce will have a completed PDR (July 2023) Quality Assurance activity demonstrates that supervision is improving in quality (July 22 and ongoing). Manager Development Programme in place (September 2022) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		<p>1.2 All case holding practitioners have a manageable workload, dependent upon their skills, experience, and job role and this supports effective relationships with children and young people, and good practice. (Ofsted Priority Action 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure robust monitoring of caseloads by Service and Directorate leaders. Take necessary action to identify and address shortfalls in case-holding capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management information provides evidence of manageable caseloads. (July 22 onwards) Our workforce tell us that they have a manageable workload (Sept 22 and March 23 - survey) Average caseload in social work assessment teams is reducing (each quarter) until agreed levels are reached and then maintained. 	Service Director (S & FS)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
W1	The stability, capacity and skill mix of our workforce.	1.3 Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) have a well-supported Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) with manageable caseloads throughout. (Ofsted Priority Action 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and introduce proposal to bring NQSWs who are undertaking their ASYE out of the establishment. Develop the Academy offer of support for NQSWs and students Introduce initiatives to increase the number of Practice Educators in the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQSWs are outside the core establishment (May 2022) Management information provides ongoing evidence of manageable caseloads. (May 2022) Refreshed Academy offer is published (May 2022) NQSWs report that they are well supported (Survey Sept 2022 and March 2023). 	Principal Social Worker
		1.4 The service has a clear workforce strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement Workforce Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Strategy in place (May 2022) 	Service Director (Improvement)
		1.5 The service uses workforce data to inform the learning and development programmes, and service development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and introduce workforce data reporting framework. Ensure that information from PDR cycle informs the learning and development programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers have access to accurate and frequently updated workforce profile information (July 2022) 	Principal Social Worker
		1.6 Children have positive and stable relationships with professionals and carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and introduce a new performance management report. Monitor frequency and impact of changes in allocated worker. Further develop existing good practice re short-term and long term placement stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer than 10% of children in our care have experienced a change in their social worker in the past 12 months. Short and long-term placement stability is consistently above the England and statistical neighbour average rates. 	Service Director (S & FS)
W2	Opportunities for career progression	2.1 A career progression scheme is in place for social workers and effectively supports personal and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Career Development Scheme Implement Career Development Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Development Scheme for social workers is in place (May 2022) Social workers report that they have personal and 	Principal Social Worker

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
W2	Opportunities for career progression			professional development opportunities. (Sept 2022 Survey)	
		2.2 A career progression scheme is in place for staff with alternative qualifications, skills and experience, and effectively supports personal and professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Career Development Scheme Implement career development scheme (s) for various job role types Explore opportunities for career development and progression in partnership with other organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career development scheme(s) for non-social worker roles are in place (September 2022) Relevant staff report that they have personal and professional development opportunities (Jan 23 Survey) 	Principal Social Worker
		2.3 All interim and permanent management and leadership roles are open to internal candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all advertised roles are open to suitably experienced and qualified internal candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff report that they feel supported to apply for management and leadership roles (Survey) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		2.4 The service makes the best use of available resources to maximise the uptake of Social Work Apprenticeships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a 5-year approach to increased availability of apprenticeships. Survey current cohort of apprentices and incorporate the learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five-year strategy in place (September 2022) 	Service Director (S, QA, & I)
W3	Access to high-quality learning and development opportunities	3.1 Our workforce has access to a comprehensive learning and development programme that is informed by performance and management information; feedback from staff; feedback from service users; quality assurance; and personal development plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable training courses to be developed or commissioned Produce and publish a Learning and Development Programme / Training Calendar for the year 2022-23, linked to feedback from PDR process. 		Principal Social Worker
		3.2 Management information evidences appropriate uptake of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory training to be promoted and attendance /completion to be monitored 		Principal Social Worker

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
W3	Access to high-quality learning and development opportunities	learning and development opportunities			
		3.3 Our workforce has access to a multi-agency training and development framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable training courses to be developed or commissioned that support career development and progression and take into account learning from PDR process, local and national reviews, and resource evidence. • Publish and monitor the update of a multi-agency training offer. 		Business Manager (HSCP)
		3.4 Practice should be informed by feedback, research and intelligence about the quality of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that learning from research, legislation and practice issues are shared. • Support our staff to participate in forum where they can share their experiences and ensure that there is a mechanism for feedback from these forum to DLT. • Ensure that all staff have access to <i>CareKnowledge</i> and know how to use the resource. • Develop ways of routinely obtaining feedback from children, young people and their families as part of the Quality Assurance Framework. • Regular reports in respect of complaints and compliments to be presented to DLT / QAPIB 		Principal Social Worker
W4 W4	The morale and wellbeing of our workforce	4.1 A range of wellbeing support initiatives are in place that support our workforce, recognising that the work that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support colleagues to participate in drop-in and communication sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sickness rates are reduced • Staff survey shows that staff are informed and engaged 	Service Director (Improvement)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
	The morale and wellbeing of our workforce	they do may have an emotional and physical impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote range of support and counselling services available through the Employee Assistance Scheme. Conduct a staff survey (baseline and ongoing) Maintain the 'open door' options for access to the Corporate Director, Service Directors, and the Chief Executive. Develop and support the new Staff Reference Group so that it is representative of the whole service Undertake Annual SW Health Check 	<p>and there is improved staff wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an increase in the Social Workers completing the annual health check in 2022/3 (need baseline for 2021/2) 	
		4.2 The morale and motivation of our staff is high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support regular forums for staff to share their experiences and there is a mechanism for feedback from such forums to DLT Undertake survey to measure staff engagement, morale and wellbeing (baseline and ongoing) Undertake Annual SW Health Check 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff survey shows that staff are informed and engaged and there is improved morale. There is an increase in the Social Workers completing the annual health check in 2022/3 (need baseline for 2021/2) 	Corporate Director (C & YP)

Evidence of Impact (Workforce) *(Where we want to be)*

- Children and young people will not experience frequent changes of allocated worker.
- We have clear career progression routes for all staff in Children's Services.
- Case holding workers report that they have manageable caseloads that enable them to build relationships with families and support improved practice.
- Newly Qualified Social Workers have caseloads commensurate with the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme
- The morale and motivation of our staff is demonstrably improved.

Measures that Matter	Baseline	Target end of Q1	Target end of Q2	Target end of Q3	Target end of Q4
Target average caseload for social workers across the service is reducing (target is an average of 18 children or fewer)					
The number of social workers with a caseload more than 24 children. (low numbers is good)					
The number of children in our care for 12 months or more who have experienced a change in social worker in the past 12 (reducing and low numbers are good)					
% of permanent Social Workers who have been in post for more than 12 months (stability of workforce)					
The proportion of the established social care workforce that is permanent (increasing or high proportion is good)					



Service and Practice Development

Accountable Lead: Service Director (Safeguarding and Family Support)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
S1	The effectiveness and frequency of supervision (<i>Ofsted Priority Action 2021</i>)	1.1 We have sufficient management and supervisory capacity across the Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant Management positions are filled and when necessary, temporary arrangements are in place to ensure all staff have access to managers and receive regular supervision. Ensure that case supervision is held on a regular basis and that this is recorded appropriately on the child's file. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate at which monthly case supervisions are completed is 75% by June 2022 and 95% by September 2022 	Service Director (S & FS)
		1.2 Children and young people's plans are driven by effective and regular case supervision and management oversight.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all open cases are supervised in line with the supervision policy. Introduce and effectively use performance and management information reports to monitor supervision. Ensure clear escalation mechanisms are in place where drift or delay are identified that incorporate performance and management information, quality assurance activity, supervision, and management oversight. Managers to take necessary and immediate action where drift or delay is identified Ensure that the rationale for case decisions are promptly and clearly recorded by managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly case supervisions across the Directorate are 75% by June 2022 and 95% by September 2022 Quality assurance activity indicates that increasingly plans are being driven by effective and regular supervision and management oversight (Oct 22) 	Service Director (S & FS)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
S1	The effectiveness and frequency of supervision (Ofsted Priority Action 2021)	1.3 All staff receive high-quality supervision at a frequency appropriate to their job role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce revised supervision policy. Revise and simplify supervision recording. Monitor frequency and quality of supervision. Introduce regular practice observation of supervision activity. Explore opportunities for multi-agency supervision linked to appreciative enquiry, learning reviews, and case escalations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance activity indicates improving quality of supervision (from July 22) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		1.4 Training is available to support the effective use of high-quality supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervising managers to attend supervision training. Supervision training is available to all supervisees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Managers in the service have completed supervision training (Oct 22) 	Principal Social Worker
S2	The multi-agency Early Help (EH) offer needs to be further developed so that families do get the right help at the right time	2.1 Children and families have access to the right help at the right time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take necessary action to reduce the time on waiting lists before accessing services. Prepare, publish, and implement an Early Help Strategy. Increase collaborative working with the community sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no longer a waiting list to receive Early Help support. 	HoS (EH)
		2.2 Families and communities are involved in the development of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Needs Analysis and Review (including feedback from families) of existing provision to fully understand the community prevention offer and early help support Co-design with families a Universal and Community Offer for children and families, building on existing assets and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings of “Let’s Talk Children and Families” to be published by June 22 Publication of Universal Youth and Community Offer (Dec 22) 	HoS (EH)


Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
S2	Our Early Help (EH) offer needs to be further developed so that families do get the right help at the right time	2.3 A broad range of community based prevention and early intervention services are available to children and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a multi-agency Early Help Offer in which where ever possible, families as much are supported at the appropriate level, local to where they live and by a lead professional they already have a relationship with Develop and utilise Talk Community Hubs to coordinate early intervention activity closer to home – to support self-help and maximise use of community sector. Engage with community groups to develop specific work with children and young people in their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families report that they have access to a broad range of community based services 	Service Director (S & FS)
		2.4 The interface between EH and statutory work is clearly and effectively differentiated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake review of a sample of cases which have stepped up or down, and repeat each quarter during 2022-23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance activity indicates that the interface between EH and statutory service is understood and clear. 	Service Director (S & FS)
		2.5 The interface between prevention and EH services and <i>Talk Community</i> is well developed and is accessible to families and communities across Herefordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration to be given for the implementation of Family Hubs across Herefordshire Engage with youth and community groups to seek young people's input in the development of services. 		HoS (EH)
		2.6 The approach to Early Help assessment of need is proportionate and assessments are of good quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular audit activity of Early Help Assessments Develop a quality assurance and feedback mechanism for 		HoS (EH)



Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
			assessments completed by partner agencies		
S3	We need to be more consistent in identifying and responding to children's needs in a timely manner whilst applying appropriate thresholds	3.1 Referrers know and understand levels of need and thresholds for referral, and the quality and timeliness of referrals is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right Help Right Time to be reviewed annually Feedback to referrers to be provided by relevant partners within MASH (i.e. education MASH representative will feedback to schools about the quality of their referral etc.) 		Service Director (S & FS)
		3.2 The quality of referrals is good, and consent is routinely sought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least quarterly multi-agency audit activity in respect of partner referrals and the effective use of the MARF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audits show that consent is consistently sought by partner agencies (unless threshold to override consent has been met) 	HoS (MASH, Assessment, CiN, CP & Court)
		3.3 Assessments identify needs and risk and are clear in what needs to happen. Assessments are child focussed and the voice of the child, including direct work, is evident within the assessment. Information from multi-agency partners is routinely sought, and included. (Ofsted Priority Action 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that a child is seen within 5 working days from the start of a Social Care Assessment and within 10 working days from the start of an Early Help Assessment. Ensure that direct work (age appropriately) is completed as a standard in assessments. Authorising managers will not sign off an assessment where the voice of the child is not evident or where the child is not at the centre of the assessment. 		HoS (MASH, Assessment, CiN, CP & Court)
		3.4 The timeliness and quality of response from the MASH is consistently high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MASH to be relocated and co-located to ensure there is more efficient communication, screening and timeliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MASH is co-located 	HoS (MASH, Assessment, CiN, CP & Court)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
S3	We need to be more consistent in identifying and responding to children's needs in a timely manner whilst applying appropriate thresholds		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service leaders to routinely monitor timeliness and quality of activities within the MASH / Early Help Hub and take any necessary action to address any identified concerns. 		
		3.5 The service is working effectively with other agencies to identify, assess, and support Private Fostering arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and re-launch Private Fostering guidance and procedures. Raise awareness with partner agencies and with communities in Herefordshire Undertake an audit of Private Fostering activity. 		HoS for Care Experienced C & YP
		3.6 There is a multi-agency Neglect Strategy in place that includes a focus on prevention and Early Help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) to update and publish a Neglect Strategy Produced a dedicated Neglect Action Plan to address key areas of development including mandatory tools for Neglect. Publish practice guidance and protocols to be followed, linked to the partnership strategy. Undertake a multi-agency audit of neglect cases to result in an agreed range of actions across the partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-agency Neglect Strategy is published. Multi-agency audit activity evidences increased effectiveness in identifying and working with neglect and the use of the Graded Care Profile and other tools identified in the strategy. 	Service Director (S, QA, & I)
		3.7 Child in Need Plans are outcomes-focussed, regularly reviewed and progressed. Children are regularly visited and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Workers will always visit children at least as frequently as stated in our practice standards. Managers will routinely monitor the frequency and quality of 		HoS (MASH, Assessment, CiN, CP & Court)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
		are placed at the centre of interventions.	visits, plans, and duration of CIN episodes.		
S4	Our support for children subject of a child protection plan	4.1 Strategy meetings and s47 enquiries always maintain a focus on the child and are conducted in line with current best practice and statutory guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that children are routinely seen alone and spoken to in the course of s47 enquiries. Ensure that S47 enquiries are completed in a timely manner and that information from other agencies inform the assessment. 		Service Director (S & FS)
		4.2 Families and professionals have timely and appropriate access to good quality reports ahead of conferences. This supports active engagement and participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Workers will ensure that reports for Child Protection Conferences are completed in a timely manner and are shared with families at least 48 hours before CP Conferences Referrals to advocacy services are routinely devised (and evidenced in case recording) where appropriate 		Service Director (S & FS)
		4.3 Plans are outcomes-focused and address identified risks, keeping the child at the centre of the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the Core Group meet on a regular basis and ensure the CP Plan is SMART and tracks progress Child Protection Conference Chairs to provide effective and timely scrutiny and challenge where CP Plans are not SMART or do not progress sufficiently. 		Service Director (S & FS)
		4.4 Children are not left at risk following the convening of a strategy meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) take place within 15 working days of strategy meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of ICPCs that are held within 15 working days is consistently not less than 85% 	Service Director (S & FS)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
S4	Our support for children subject of a child protection plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim safety plans are to be routinely considered as part of strategy meetings. 		
		4.5 A multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding Strategy has been developed and interventions are effective at managing and reducing risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will with partner agencies develop and implement a contextual safeguarding model (as an alternative to child protection) for adolescents facing risks outside the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextual Safeguarding Model is launched 	Service Director (S & FS)
S5	<p>The quality and timeliness of our court work.</p> 	5.1 The Public Law Outline (PLO) pre-proceedings process is used appropriately and effectively, and is robustly monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review pre-proceedings process and documentation (including letters) Implement identified improvements to achieve consistency Ensure PLO tracker is in place and updated 		Service Director (S & FS)
		5.2 Alternative family arrangements are always considered, and are considered early where we have concerns that may go to court.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Family Group Conferences are routinely considered in all cases before the case enters proceedings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Family Group Conferences increases (need benchmark) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		5.3 Social workers who undertake court work are confident and have access to court skills training. They are well supported by their manager and by the legal team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that social workers attending court are trained in court skills and writing effective statements and plans. Ensure regular and effective liaison between social care and legal services teams that contributes to improved practice. 		Service Director (S & FS)
S6	Our support for, and the creation of	6.1 There is sufficiency and choice of placements for children in our care and care leavers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Sufficiency Strategy and commissioning arrangements to ensure options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A net increase of at least 30 foster carers (by end of March 23). 	Service Director (S & FS)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
	opportunities for children in our care and our care experienced young people.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and availability for care placements. Each year, increase the number of foster carers and other types of carers, including those who have the skills to care for children with complex needs Recruit a Clinical Psychologist to support foster carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-age commissioning strategy developed and introduced (July 22) 	
		6.2 Children in our care will have fewer placement disruptions and increased placement stability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that placement moves for Children Looked after are kept to a minimum and routinely monitored. The reasons for placement breakdowns should be understood and inform future planning. 		Service Director (S & FS)
		6.3 Permanency will be achieved more effectively through timely planning and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all children in our care have a Permanency Plan by the time of their second Looked After Children's Review Meeting. Ensure that permanency plans are tracked and that delay is minimised. 		Service Director (S & FS)
		6.4 Learning and employment opportunities are maximised for all Children in our care and care experienced children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of strategy to reduced numbers of children and young people Not in Education, Employment, or training (NEET). Ensure that all children in care have regular and high quality PEP meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in numbers of NEET (benchmark needed) Narrowing of the attainment gap between children in care and their peers 	Service Director (E, S & L)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
S6	Our support for, and the creation of opportunities for children in our care and our care experienced young people.	6.5 All care experienced young people are supported and prepared for adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All care experienced young people have a good quality pathway plan in place Review, revise, and re-publish the Leaving Care offer. All care experienced young people are aware of our Leaving Care Offer and know what they are entitled to 		Service Director (S & FS)
		6.6 For children on the edge of care, we will maximise opportunities to enable them to remain within their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that referrals to EChO are made as early as possible where it is identified that without intensive support a child may come into our care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the strengths of families, the number of children coming into our care is reducing (rate per 10,000) 	Service Director (S & FS)
S7	Our services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND)	7.1 All children whose SEN meet threshold for EHCP are assessed in a timely manner and have a SMART plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EHCP assessment are completed and updated to meet need in statutory timescales Ensure that Social Workers contribute to EHCP plans 		Service Director (E, S & L)
		7.2 There is sufficient local provision to meet the assessed needs of all children who require a short break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Sufficiency Strategy and commissioning arrangements to ensure options and availability for short breaks placements. Commission a Peer Review of the SEND service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review completed and findings inform action plan. 	Service Director (E, S & L)
		7.3 Young people experience a smooth transition into adulthood and do not experience a “cliff edge”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that young people have a good quality and timely transition plan in place Ensure that adult services teams are fully sighted on young people moving into the adults system at the earliest possibility. 		Service Director (E, S & L)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
S7	Our services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routinely monitor the timeliness and quality of transition plans. 		
		7.4 There are sufficient specialist educational places within Herefordshire settings that offer high quality provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Sufficiency Strategy and commissioning arrangements. 		Service Director (E, S & L)
		7.5 Improve the Inclusion and wellbeing of SEND pupils' in schools and settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement SEND Review EHCP assessments are completed and updated to meet need in statutory timescales 		Service Director (E, S & L)
S8	The voice of children is listened to and contributes effectively to practice and service planning and delivery	8.1 Effective participation and engagement activity is evident across the service with children and young people are able to contribute to their plans. It informs service and practice development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop a participation delivery model that ensures children's engagement and participation Ensure all children and young people actively participate in their assessments and plans, through purposeful and creative direct work, including life story work (where age appropriate). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audits show children and young people are routinely involved in the creation assessments and plans. Increase of the number of young people who attend or participate in their Child Looked After Review (benchmark needed) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		8.2 Plans are SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and capture the voice of the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Workers and their managers will ensure plans are SMART and capture the voice of the child Team Managers, Child Protection Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers will provide constructive challenge when plans are not SMART and/or do not capture the voice of the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance activity indicates that an increasing proportion of plans are SMART and capture the voice of the child (from July 22 onwards) 	Service Director (S & FS)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
		8.3 There is Independent Advocacy provision for all Children and Young People who require it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business case to be developed for increased provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No waiting lists for Advocacy Services 	Service Director (S, QA, & I)

Evidence of Impact (Service and Practice Development) (Where we want to be)

- Managers evidence clear oversight and grip, with practitioners well supported and benefiting from frequent, effective case supervision.
- We will have an increased range of Early Help services, provided by a broad range of partnership agencies and communities.
- Thresholds are clearly defined, understood and applied consistently and appropriately.
- Assessment of children, young people and their families are consistently of good quality, are well analysed, and show an understanding of the lived experiences of the child, their needs and any risks.
- Children, young people and their families have SMART plans which are informed by the needs and risks identified through assessments and which are progressed without undue drift or delay.
- Children and young people are routinely listened to and their voice and experience contributes to service and practice development, across the whole service.

Measures that Matter	Baseline	Target end of Q1	Target end of Q2	Target end of Q3	Target end of Q4
Number of unallocated cases (Nil or very low is good)					
Proportion of case holding workforce receiving monthly supervision (high is good)					
Proportion of children's cases having case supervision recorded as per our supervision policy (high is good)					
Proportion of assessments by children's social care resulting in No Further Action (Proportionate response for families – reducing and low is good)					




Performance and Quality Assurance

Accountable Lead: Service Director (Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Improvement)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
P1	We have a Quality Assurance Framework and the learning is used to inform our practice development.	1.1 There is an established cycle of quality assurance activity in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish a revised QA framework Schedule of audit activity to be developed and published QA activity to be monitored through the Directorate Leadership Team 		Service Director (S, QA, & I)
		1.2 Learning from audits is routinely used to improve practice and service development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overarching/thematic audit reports are produced and shared There is a process in place which effectively tracks recommended actions from individual audits. Audit findings inform the development or commissioning of training 		Service Director (S, QA, & I)
P2	The footprint and scrutiny of CP Chairs and IROs	2.1 IRO's and CP chairs have a clear and well-understood role in overall quality assurance and their footprint is evident on children's files.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and re-publish the Dispute Resolution Protocol (DRP) and add data to management information dashboards. 		Service Director (S, QA, & I)
		2.2 IROs have a good understanding of the needs of the children and young people for whom they are the reviewing officer and ensure that plans meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that IRO visits are completed on a regular basis and that these are recorded on Mosaic in a timely manner. Ensure that Midpoint Reviews are evidence and these assist in driving the plan and preventing drift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance reporting consistently indicates that at least 85% of children and young people have been visited by their IRO in the last 6 Months. 	Service Director (S, QA, & I)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
P3	We need an agreed multi-agency dataset that is used to drive performance and improve outcomes.	3.1 Agencies effectively use the data to drive improvement and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to ensure a multi-agency dataset is developed, and implemented. Include the dataset in future PowerBI dashboard reporting (internally) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-agency dataset is agreed and reports are available. 	Service Director (S, QA, & I)
P4	Use of accurate data to understand effectiveness and to drive improvement.	4.1 A comprehensive framework for monitoring performance and progress is in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop an accessible online performance management framework. 	Dashboards reflect the full range of activity across the whole Directorate. (end Dec 22)	Improvement Lead
		4.2 Quality Assurance activity is a part of everybody's daily business and informs service and practice development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and publish a QA framework Ensure that regular audit activity informs practice development, training and service development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance Framework is signed off and launched 	Service Director (S,QA & I)
		4.3 Our case management system supports effective and efficient case recording and data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review (with Adults' Services) the current system to ensure fit-for-purpose going forward. 	Review completed and decision about future procurement options made. (October 2022)	Improvement Lead
		4.4 Children's intranet solution is modernised and fit-for-purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and develop current intranet presence. Work within corporate transformation programme to develop a modern, accessible solution. 		Improvement Lead

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
P4	 <p>Use of accurate data to understand effectiveness and to drive improvement.</p>	4.5 Arrangements for resolving, reporting and follow-up on complaints are effective and learning from complaints informs practice development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish refreshed practice guidance – responding to complaints. Ensure feedback from complaints is routinely considered by leaders and managers. Ensure learning from complaints is embedded in wider QA feedback and practice development. 	The proportion of complaints that are resolved at stage 1 increases.	Service Director (S,QA & I)
		4.6 We have an accurate self-evaluation of social work practice, refreshed every six months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish self-evaluation Develop mechanism to test accuracy and ensure 6-monthly refresh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-evaluation produced and shared with Children's Scrutiny Committee (May 2022) 	Improvement Lead
		4.7 The service knows its local communities, and uses this knowledge effectively to meet their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of data to provide an overview of the strengths, needs and risks of our local communities Consideration to be given for local commissioning where appropriate 		Corporate Director (C & YP)
		4.8 Leaders know their strengths and weaknesses well and both respond to and are resilient to new challenges.			Corporate Director (C & YP)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
P5	Performance and management information needs to be embedded within day-to-day practice and management.	5.1 Managers and practitioners have easy access to a range of data relevant to their job roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop use of PowerBI as an active tool for Managers and Leaders to review past performance and to pro-actively manage information Managers will receive training in the use of PowerBI 		Service Director (S, QA, & I)
		5.2 We understand our data and we can use this to improve our practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers attend regular Performance Clinics 		Service Director (S, QA, & I)
		5.3 Improved performance is measured in impact and in outcomes for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular performance clinics take place to scrutinise performance Performance forms part of supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Workers and Managers are aware and can articulate the impact of poor performance on outcomes for children. 	Service Director (S, QA, & I)

Evidence of Impact (Performance and Quality Assurance) *(Where we want to be)*

- Our Managers will have a manageable span of control and know what is expected of them
- There is a clear footprint by Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs and their involvement actively contributes to the timely progression of plans
- Together with our partners, we will have a multi-agency data-set which allows the partnership to drive improvement and practice.
- Performance data is used to pro-actively manage and prevent drift and delay and drive improvement using systems such as PowerBI
- There is a clear mechanism in place to ensure learning from quality assurance improves practice and outcomes for children, young people and their families
- Independence Advocacy is available to all children and young people who request this
- Our recording is timely, concise and accurate

Measures that Matter	Baseline	Target end of Q1	Target end of Q2	Target end of Q3	Target end of Q4
Proportion of Plans considered to be Good or Outstanding (increasing and high is good)					
An increase of audit activity across the service in order to inform service delivery by all managers (number of audits completed)					

Families are not waiting longer than is necessary and appropriate for the outcome of an assessment - Proportion of assessments completed within timescales (increasing and high are good)					
Number of midpoint reviews by Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Conference Chairs increases (Increasing and high numbers are good)					

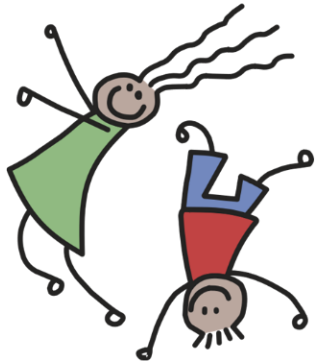


The impact of leaders on practice with children and families

Lead: Corporate Director for Children and Young People

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
L1	The stability of leadership and management	1.1 Service Director posts are permanent appointments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise job descriptions Complete recruitment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Directors recruited and in post (Aug 2022) 	Corporate Director (C&YP)
		1.2 The majority of Heads of Service and Service Manager posts are permanent appointments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise job descriptions Complete recruitment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 50% of Head of Service and Service Manager appointments are permanent (September 2022) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		1.3 The majority of Team Manager posts are permanent appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise job descriptions Complete recruitment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 75% of Team Manager appointments are permanent. (Sept 2022) 	Service Director (S & FS)
L2	We will build a culture that enables good practice to flourish	2.1 Our vision, values and principles for children and young people are clearly communicated within the local authority and across the Partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce consistent branding for the service Refresh the external website Further develop the Directorate Communications Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service has a brand and identity that is recognised. (July 2022) The external website has been refreshed and users report positively about its accessibility and value. (Sept 2022) 	Corporate Director (C & YP)
		2.2 Leaders will be strong, visible and demonstrably engaged with practice and practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations of managers returning to the offices will be made clear. A framework of practice observations by managers and senior leaders and activities such as team visits and practice weeks will be introduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 70% of the workforce report that leaders are visible and engaged by Sept 2022. Framework for practice observation, floor walking and QA assurance activity in place by end of May 2022. 	Service Director (S, QA & I)

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Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
L2	We will build a culture that enables good practice to flourish	2.3 We will be clear about our practice standards and the principles that underpin them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice standards to be revised and published. Prepare and publish a range of relevant practice guidance notes and management action notes to make clear the responsibilities and accountabilities for better practice. Re-launch the Signs of Safety Values Statement and Leadership Pledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice standards formally launched (May 2022) Signs of Safety Values Statement and Leadership Pledge formally launched (May 2022) 	Service Director (S,QA & I)
		2.4 Leaders promote distributed leadership, building a culture of appreciative enquiry and fostering a safe environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and promote the concept of distributed leadership and appreciative enquiry with managers across the service. Promote the use of appreciative enquiry across the service and safeguarding partnership. Introduce framework for encouraging 'Safe to Fail' experiments. Lead by example in terms of supporting colleagues to speak up and engage, sharing a wide range of views and opinion. 		Corporate Director (C&YP)
		2.5 Staff and partners recognise us as a learning organisation with a strong capacity to absorb, assimilate and disseminate information to support cultural and practice change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure open and honest participation in partnership QA activity. Ensure that learning from local and national reviews, research, and partnership QA activity is routinely shared and the learning embedded in practice development activity. 		Service Director (S,QA & I)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
L2	We will build a culture that enables good practice to flourish	2.6 We celebrate our successes and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase activity across the Directorate to recognise and share good practice. Organise a workforce celebration event later in the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration event held (Autumn 22) 	Principal Social Worker
L3	The effectiveness and impact of relationships with key partners	3.1 Children's services are appropriately represented at relevant partnership boards and their sub groups and are actively participate and contribute.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review membership and attendance. Report to DLT with proposals for representation. 		Service Director (S,QA & I)
		3.2 The Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) is active and contributing to more effective partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review/revise Terms of reference and CYPP Plan. Organise workshop for CYPP members to refresh its purpose and forward plan (May 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CYPP meets and agrees refreshed purpose and forward plan (May 2022) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		3.3 We engage with partners to improve our practice and performance within care proceedings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is effective liaison with CAFCASS and the Local Family Justice Board on matters related to court proceedings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are regular meetings with CAFCASS and the Local Family Justice Board that demonstrably contribute to improved practice and performance (Sept 2022) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		3.4 We engage with partners to improve our practice and performance in respect of adoption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is effective liaison with Adoption Central England (ACE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are regular meetings with Adoption Central England Improvement in data regarding adoption 	Head of Service (Corporate Parenting)
		3.5 We actively engage with partners in our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is effective liaison with our communities' i.e. voluntary sector, faith groups, military bases. 		Service Director (S,QA & I)

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
L3	The effectiveness and impact of relationships with key partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide twice-yearly community partner briefings 		
		3.6 The effectiveness and impact of safeguarding partnership arrangements is improved.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Service Director (S, QA, & I)
L4	Our Corporate Parenting responsibilities are effectively discharged	4.1 The Corporate Parenting Board has an agreed core membership, meets regularly, and has clarity of purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a new Corporate Parenting Strategy Revise and refresh the Terms of Reference for CPB Ensure that there is a work programme in place for the year ahead. Develop through the work of the board, stronger links to voice of children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Parenting Strategy in place (May 2022) Revised and refreshed Terms of Reference in place (May 2022) Work programme in place (May 2022) 	Service Director (S & FS)
		4.2 Members and officers across the council are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising to take place across the council workforce. Create dedicated resource on Council intranet. Training programme for all Members and staff in respect of corporate parenting is developed and delivered, including for new starters as a part of their induction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training programme designed by April 2022 Intranet site/page in place Training programme incorporated into mandatory training programme by June 2022 Messages regarding Corporate Parenting from CEO 	Corporate Director (C & YP)
		4.3 There is a corporate sense of responsibility for children in our care and care leavers and Herefordshire Council recognises and prioritises the needs of children in all aspects, such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that consideration of how best to support children and young people in our care is evidenced across the council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Council renews it's Corporate Parenting commitment annually 	Chief Executive

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
		housing, career opportunities, education and learning.			
L5	Members are able to effectively discharge their scrutiny function.	5.1 A Member engagement schedule is in place and Members are supported to actively participate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and introduce a Member engagement schedule (e.g. opportunities to shadow a social worker, observe a meeting etc.) Ensure that the programme of Member induction and development activity includes safeguarding, corporate parenting, and opportunities for Member engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members have had the opportunity to visit all parts of the service, meet with staff, and observe practice. (Sept 2022) Staff report that they have access to Members (Sept 2022) Members report that they feel supported and informed and are better able to scrutinise the service. (Sept 2022) 	Service Director (S,QA & I)
		5.2 Members are supported to work in a pro-active manner across the broad spectrum of education, early help, and social care activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is a Scrutiny forward plan for the municipal year that focuses on relevant topics across education, early help, and social care and is flexible enough to respond to change and emerging concerns. 		Service Director (S,QA & I)
		5.3 Members provide effective challenge and support to the improvement of practice in children's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the workshop model for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee members to enable a better understanding of the work of children's services so that effective scrutiny can happen. 		Service Director (S,QA & I)
L6	Clear lines of communication with staff, children, young people, families	6.1 We communicate effectively with our workforce, our service users, with external agencies, and with Herefordshire citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Communications Strategy that is focused both on internal and external stakeholders. 		Improvement Lead

Ref	What needs to improve?	Outcomes	Actions	Milestones to be achieved	Lead
	and partner agencies to ensure that we remain transparent and collaborative in everything that we do.	6.2 Senior leaders are visible and engaged with the wider partnership and service users.	Develop a schedule of visits by senior leaders to community settings (e.g. Children's Centres, schools, voluntary organisations etc.)		Service Director (S,QA & I)
		6.3 There are a range of different ways for the workforce to communicate with service leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish details for staff forum, briefings, and drop-ins six-months in advance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff confirm they received clear communications from senior leaders and can feedback (survey) 	Improvement Lead
		6.4 Service leaders routinely engage with service users and use their experience of services to inform service development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is clear engagement by senior leaders with children, young people and their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service users' report that that have access to senior leaders and are listened to. 	Improvement Lead

Evidence of Impact *(Where we want to be)*

We will have a permanent Middle and Senior Leadership Team in place who are visible, and engaged with practice.
 We will have created an environment where good and outstanding practice can thrive
 Our relationships with partner agencies will be open, honest, and strong and there will be evidence of constructive challenge and feedback.
 The corporate parenting principle and role is embedded across the Council and its partners, and clearly understood and applied in decision making for children in care and care leavers.
 There is evidence of effective challenge and scrutiny by Members, Officers, DfE and the Improvement Board
 We will use data to enable us to make informed decisions which will drive improvement
 We communicate effectively with children, young people and their families, our workforce and partner agencies

Measures that Matter	Baseline	Target end of Q1	Target end of Q2	Target end of Q3	Target end of Q4
Proportion of senior leader and managers (Service Directors, Heads of Service and Service Managers) who are permanent (stability of workforce, increasing and high is good)					
We respond appropriately to complaints and service feedback from children (measure number of complaints that are responded to within timescales)					
The number of complaints we receive is reducing (decreasing and low is good)					

Appendix B: Measures that Matter (compiled)

	Measures that Matter	Baseline	Target end of Q1	Target end of Q2	Target end of Q3	Target end of Q4
1	Target average caseload for social workers across the service is reducing (target is an average of 18 children or fewer)					
2	The number of social workers with a caseload more than 24 children. (low numbers is good)					
3	The number of children in our care for 12 months or more who have experienced a change in social worker in the past 12 (reducing and low numbers are good)					
4	% of permanent Social Workers who have been in post for more than 12 months (stability of workforce)					
5	The proportion of the established social care workforce that is permanent (increasing or high proportion is good)					
6	Number of unallocated cases (Nil or very low is good)					
7	Proportion of case holding workforce receiving monthly supervision (high is good)					
8	Proportion of children's cases having case supervision recorded as per our supervision policy (high is good)					
9	Proportion of assessments by children's social care resulting in No Further Action (Proportionate response for families – reducing and low is good)					
10	Proportion of Plans considered to be Good or Outstanding (increasing and high is good)					
11	An increase of audit activity across the service in order to inform service delivery by all managers (number of audits completed)					
12	Families are not waiting longer than is necessary and appropriate for the outcome of an assessment - Proportion of assessments completed within timescales (increasing and high are good)					
13	Number of midpoint reviews by Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Conference Chairs increases (Increasing and high numbers are good)					
14	Proportion of senior leader and managers (Service Directors, Heads of Service and Service Managers) who are permanent (stability of workforce, increasing and high is good)					
15	We respond appropriately to complaints and service feedback from children (measure number of complaints that are responded to within timescales)					
16	The number of complaints we receive is reducing (decreasing and low is good)					

Appendix C: Glossary

Abbreviation	Term
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
Corporate Director (C & YP)	Corporate Director for Children and Young People
DLT	Directorate Leadership Team
EH	Early Help
EHCP	Education, Health, and Care Plan
HSCP	Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
MARF	Multi-Agency Referral Form
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PSW	Principal Social Worker
Service Director (E, S & L)	Service Director (Education, Skills and Learning)
Service Director (S & FS)	Service Director (Safeguarding and Family Support)
Service Director (S, QA & I)	Service Director (Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Improvement)
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
QA	Quality Assurance



Appendix D: Key sources of information to secure a whole system approach

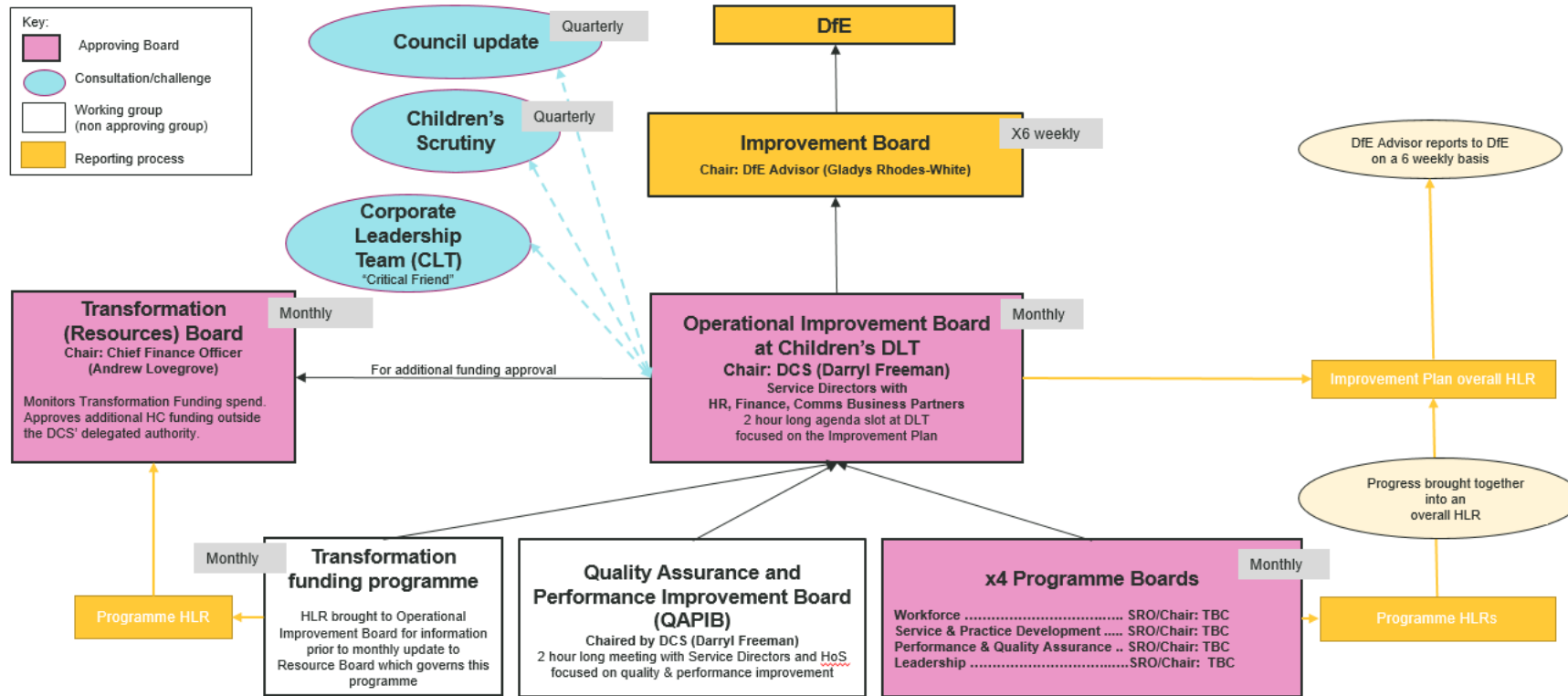
Key sources of information to secure a whole system approach to quality assurance and performance management to be presented and scrutinised will include:

Case audits	Practice Observations
Learning from complaints and compliments	Feedback from partner agencies
Voice of the children, young people and their families	Feedback from frontline practitioners
Self-evaluation and peer challenge	Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents
Performance and data reports	Appreciative inquiry

Appendix E: Revised Governance arrangements.

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Children's Improvement Plan V2 Governance







Title of report: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Annual Work Plan 2022-2023

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 26 July 2022

Report by: The Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose:

This report presents the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Annual Work Plan 2022-2023, drawn up in consultation with members of the Committee, now for review and agreement by the Committee.

Recommendation(s)

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Annual Work Plan 2022-2023 be agreed.

Alternative options

1. The alternative is for the Committee not to agree an Annual Work Programme. This is not recommended as it would undermine the ability of the Committees to plan its work effectively, delay Committee business and provide less transparency and notice to council departments, elected members, the general public and other stakeholders.

Key considerations

2. Each Scrutiny Committee is agreeing their respective work plans for 2022-2023, which now need to be brought together into the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2023. The Work Programme will enable better planning ahead by the Committees in receiving requested reports, arranging attendance and inviting any external witnesses identified.
3. It has been agreed with members of the Scrutiny Management Board that Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees will produce an Annual Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2023, made up of the work plans of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees. The Work Programme sets out the issues that the Scrutiny Committees will consider during the year, including any in-depth scrutiny inquiries (or scrutiny task groups). The Work Programme should thereafter direct the work of the Committees.
4. The council has five Scrutiny Committees:
 - i). Scrutiny Management Board
 - ii). Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
 - iii). Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee
 - iv). Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
 - v). Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
5. The remit of the Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Council's Constitution under Part 3, Section 4 - Scrutiny Functions.¹ The remit of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is:
 - i). Children's social care (including safeguarding)
 - ii). Online teaching & home learning
 - iii). Signs of Safety
 - iv). Children and families policy framework items
 - v). Statutory education scrutiny powers
 - vi). Children's mental and physical health & wellbeing
 - vii). Schools investment programme
 - viii). Children's Improvement Board and the oversight of the required improvement journey.
6. The Scrutiny Committees will each ordinarily meet formally four to five times a year and the topics identified are timetabled across the year.
7. The work plan for each Committee is considered and agreed by the respective Committees, and the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2022, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The Annual Scrutiny Work Programme

8. Each year, the Scrutiny Committees should consider and agree a programme of work for the municipal year ahead, after considering the key issues facing the Council and the local community where consideration by a Scrutiny Committee might add most value in accordance with its statutory functions. Usually, the work programme is for the municipal year period following the Council Annual Meeting, for June to May the following year.

¹ Herefordshire Council Constitution, Part 3, Section 4 - Scrutiny Functions.

9. In drawing up their work plans, the committees should consult the relevant Council directorates on the key issues for the Council that may usefully be considered by the Scrutiny Committees.
10. The identified topics can then be combined into an annual work programme for the Scrutiny Committees which can be agreed by the next formal meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board, reported to Full Council and used to plan the meetings of the Committees throughout the year ahead.

The Role of Scrutiny Committees

11. The role of Scrutiny Committees is set out in the Local Government Act 2000², but broadly speaking, topics for scrutiny should either be to:
 - i). Hold the Executive (Cabinet) to account
 - ii). Contribute to the strategic policy development and review.
12. Generally speaking, topics where a Scrutiny Committee is making recommendations for policy development may lend themselves to questions to seek evidence, which usually require more complex consideration and development of the proposals before they are agreed by the Committee.
13. Topics identified for policy development should be timed to be considered before the matter needs to be agreed by the Cabinet or full Council (or external decision maker). These topics may also be programmed across more than one meeting, to allow time for key findings and scrutiny recommendations to be drawn up in a considered way and for proper consideration of legal, equalities and financial implications, before being agreed by the committee, or may be considered by a Scrutiny Task Group, which reports back to the main Committee with a report and recommendations to the Executive.
14. In addition, consideration may also be given to other ways in which consideration by the Committee may add value through the scrutiny process, such as stakeholder engagement and consultation, pre-decision consultation with councillors, performance review and improvement, efficiency and best value review.

The Powers of Scrutiny Committees

15. Scrutiny Committees may call Cabinet Members and senior officers to answer questions in Committee and may request reports to Committee on the issues under review. They may also invite external witnesses, for example from partner organisations, community stakeholders or expert witnesses.
16. Scrutiny Committees may make requests for information from Council departments, and from external organisations, with specific statutory powers to request information from certain partner organisations, e.g. NHS bodies and the Community Safety Partnership.
17. Scrutiny Committees may make recommendations to Cabinet or external organisation's decision makers on matters they consider in Committee. The Cabinet has a duty to respond to Scrutiny recommendations, setting out what, if any, actions it will take in response.

² The Local Government Act 2000 F19f, Overview and scrutiny committees: functions.

Outcomes from Scrutiny Work

18. At the end of the municipal year, the Scrutiny Committees should aim to demonstrate that they have added value to the decision making process for the organisation and community, in terms of their statutory functions and wider implicit opportunities, such as to improve transparency, partnership working and more inclusive decision making.
19. Specifically, the Scrutiny Committees should help the Council and Executive to demonstrate accountability through the scrutiny process, as well as to provide opportunities for non-executive members to participate in policy development, including through their power to make reports and recommendations to the Executive, external agencies (and full Council where appropriate).

Community Impact

20. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, the Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Environmental Impact

21. Whilst this is an update on the work programme and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

22. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
23. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
24. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this report concerns the administrative function of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, it is unlikely that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource Implications

25. The costs of the work of the Committee will have to be met from within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny can be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.

26. The councillors' allowance scheme contains provision for co-opted and other non-elected members to claim travel, subsistence and dependant carer's allowances on the same basis as members of the Council. If the Committee agrees that co-optees should be included in an inquiry they will be entitled to claim allowances.
27. It is suggested that a Scrutiny Committee should only have one in-depth scrutiny task group inquiry running at a time.

Legal Implications

28. Sections 9F – 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 requires council's that have Executive arrangements (Cabinet and Leader) must have in place a Committee that provides an overview and scrutiny function for the Council. The development of a work programme which is focused and reflects those priorities facing Herefordshire will assist the Committee and the Council to deliver a scrutiny function.
29. The Scrutiny Rules in Part 4 Section 5 of the Council's constitution provide for the setting of a work programme, the reporting of recommendations to the executive and the establishment of task and finish groups within the Committee's agreed work programme.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively.	The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk.

Consultees

The Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Annual Work Plan 2022-2023.

Background papers

None identified.

DRAFT Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2022-2023

Agreed by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 26th July 2022.

Tuesday 26th July 2022

Agenda item	Cabinet Member/s	Officers	External Witnesses
<p>Children’s Social Care and Early Help Improvement Plan 2022-2024 To consider the Herefordshire Council Children’s Social Care and Early Help Improvement Plan 2022-2024 and the strategic framework for review of key improvement measures.</p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	
<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - Autism provision and nurture hubs To consider the provision offered for children with autism, within the context of the wider services for SEND in Herefordshire, service developments and any new Government directives, any new Government Guidance, key challenges facing SEND services more broadly and the preparedness of this service for a potential external inspection or review.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 14th July 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 18th July 2022</i></p>	<p>Councillor Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	

<p>Social Care Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group The establishment of a Social Care Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group, inducing the agreement of Terms of Reference and Membership.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 14th July 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 18th July 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	
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Tuesday 6th September 2022

Agenda item	Cabinet Member/s	Officers	External Witnesses
<p>Corporate Parenting To consider the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy, the plans for the review of the Strategy in 2023 and opportunities for policy review and development of the strategy with any recommendations to the Cabinet.</p> <p>www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/21412/achieving-the-best-for-our-children-herefordshire-s-corporate-parenting-strategy-2020-23</p> <p><i>Deadline for draft reports: 24th August 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 26th August 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	<p>Liz Murphy - Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership</p>
<p>Placement Sufficiency To consider the Council's strategies for ensuring sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after.</p> <p><i>Deadline for draft reports: 25th August 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 26th August 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	<p>Liz Murphy - Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership</p>

<p>Herefordshire Council Strategy to Safely Reduce Numbers of Children in Care To consider the Council's strategy to safely reduce the number of children in care.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 25th August 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 26th August 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p> <p>{Name} - Corporate Head of {Department}</p>	<p>Liz Murphy - Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership</p> <p>The Centre for Social Justice www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk (CFSJ Report - https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CSJJ8864-Children-In-Care-INTS-WEB-210422v.pdf).</p>
<p>Children's Improvement Plan Transformation Funding To consider Children's Improvement Plan Transformation Funding.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 25th August 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 26th August 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	

Tuesday 22nd November 2022

Agenda item	Cabinet Member/s	Officers	External Witnesses
<p>Herefordshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership To consider the Annual Report of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (MASA).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 9th November 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 11th November 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p> <p>Head of Service Safeguarding and Review, Children and Young People</p>	<p>Liz Murphy - Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership</p>
<p>Herefordshire Council - Children’s Wellbeing Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report 2021/2022 To consider the Herefordshire Council - Children’s Wellbeing Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report 2021/2022.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 9th November 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 11th November 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p> <p>Head of Service Safeguarding and Review, Children and Young People</p>	<p>Liz Murphy - Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership</p>
<p>Proposed Education Legislation (the Education White Paper) To consider the planned legislative proposals for Education and its impact on local authorities roles in supporting education, multi-academy trusts, school placements planning and schools improvement.</p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	

SEND – Results of LGA Peer Review & preparedness for a SEND inspection	Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People	
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Tuesday 21st March 2023.

Agenda item	Cabinet Member/s	Officers	External Witnesses
<p>Child Exploitation To consider Herefordshire Child Exploitation and prevention strategies.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 22nd December 2022</i> <i>Reports deadline: 28th December 2022</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	<p>Liz Murphy - Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership</p>
<p>Children’s Services Improvement Plan – Implementation Review Update (Key Measures)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 8th March 2023</i> <i>Reports deadline: 10th March 2023</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	
<p>Social Care Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group Report</p> <p>To receive and agree the report of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deadline for draft reports: 8th March 2023</i> <i>Reports deadline: 10th March 2023</i></p>	<p>Diana Toynbee – Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Freeman, Darryl - Corporate Director, Children and Young People</p>	<p>{name} – {role, job title or designation}, {organisation or area of interest}</p>

Reserve Items:

1. Fostering (and Adoption?) Services
2. Family Group Conferences/Family Advocacy Services
3. Signs of Safety
4. Adoption Central England (ACE) report
5. Pastoral Care in Schools.
6. All Ages Commissioning - To consider Herefordshire Council all ages social care commissioning strategy.

