



# West Midlands Children’s Improvement Board – Peer Challenge 2015-2016

## Part A: Summary of Self-Assessment

### 1. Contact information

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Date of Self-Assessment:	

### 2. Service Information

*This can be summarised from information given in the self-assessment about the local area, demographic information, deprivation, key local issues and may include an outline of the service structure for children’s services and early help offer, the LCSB arrangements and links to other partnerships boards and headline data on number of LAC and care leavers, children on the CPR, CIN and children and young people with a disability in the area. This is about telling your local story.*

#### **HEREFORDSHIRE’S CHILDREN IN NUMBERS**

Herefordshire has the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest total population density of all “top tier” local authorities in England and Wales, but the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest in England only. 95 per cent of Herefordshire’s land area is classified as “rural” and 53% of the population live in these rural areas

In 2011 there were 31,400 children aged 16 years and younger. Numbers of children had been declining in Herefordshire throughout the whole of the last decade despite rising numbers of births and migrants. However, the number of children rose by 200 (0.5%) in each of the last two years (2011-12 and 2012-13) and this gradual rise is predicted to continue until 2023

At the end of April 2015, Herefordshire has approximately 1,000 children experiencing some form of disability. 230 of all children are in need as a result of their disability.

#### Looked after children

At the end of April 2015, there were 273 looked after children and young people in Herefordshire. The number of children and young people looked after by the local authority has continued to rise throughout 2014 (12.45%) across the 12 month period. The rate per 10,000 as at 31 January 2015 was 75.07 significantly worse than the all England rate of 60% per 10,000. The impact on the Southwark judge on local LAC numbers and trend is unknown (*Understanding Herefordshire, July 2015*).

#### Child Protection Plans

At the end of April 2015, Herefordshire supported 156 children who are subject to a child protection plan. Of these 121 (78% have been on a plan for less than 12 months. The rate per 10,000 children subject to a child protection plan in Herefordshire as at 31 January 2015 is 43.21%. This is within range of the all England rate of 42.1% for 2013/14 and is lower than the West Midlands rate of 44.7%. This means that the number of children subject to a child protection plan has dropped.



### Domestic Violence

In the year to September 2014 West Mercia Police recorded 1,893 children exposed to incidents and offences. In the last quarter, 122 had been exposed three or more times, representing a 110 per cent increase from the same quarter of the year before. A proportion of the increase in numbers is attributed to improved recording by the police and an identification of repeat victimisation rather than an actual increase. Between August and November 2014, 355 children were involved in MARAC cases in the previous three months; a 67 per cent increase from the year before. However, in the year to September 2014, there was an eight per cent decline in the maximum number of children involved in West Mercia Women's Aid, averaging at 126 per quarter. The reason for this is under investigation. Domestic abuse is cited by the council as a primary reason for the application for protection plans and for why children and young people are taken into state care.

### Youth Offending

The first time entrant (FTE) indicator which is expressed as the number of first time entrants to the youth justice per 100,000 youth population was 525 for Herefordshire in the year ending September 2014, representing a reduction of 11% from the year ending September 2013 where the FTE rate was 589. At 525 Herefordshire has the highest rate of FTEs across West Mercia and some analysis into the reasons for the higher rate was undertaken in 13/14, and found that in part it is due to a higher detection rate and lower proportional use of informal disposals. Further work commenced at the end of 14/15 and is continuing in 15/16 (Herefordshire council cabinet report, September 2015)

## **EDUCATION, ATTAINMENT AND ASPIRATION**

Whilst there has been some outstanding performance at an individual school and child level, overall we aspire for improved education attainment for Herefordshire's children by 2016/17. As with health outcomes there are persistent education inequalities that need to be addressed. There are a number of complex social issues that are exasperated by the wider determinants of health such as poverty and rurality and are influenced by the action of many individuals, groups and organisations. These issues are beyond the ability of any one agency or individual to 'fix'. There is need for linkages between health, education and social care, paying attention to how they interact forming a wider complex system that can and does create difficulties for individuals (children and families), the community and agencies.

### **Key Stages**

Attainment at key stage levels shows a mixed picture again compared to 2014, but the overall trend is in the right direction. The results of the last academic year (2013-14) were as follows:

**At Key Stage 1** - (2nd and 3rd years of primary school) in reading, writing and mathematics, Herefordshire is showing steady improvement for the period 2012 to 2014, with the local rates close to or the same as England.

**At Key Stage 2** - (end of primary school) steady improvement has been made in the county, at a slightly faster rate but from a lower base (71 per cent to 76 per cent) achieving the combined standard of level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics compared to England's rate from 75 per cent to 79 per cent for the same period.

**At Key Stage 4 level** - where pupils are working toward GCSE or other equivalent qualifications, excellent progress made by Herefordshire's pupils. The percentage of students achieving 5\* A to C grades has risen, 58.7 per cent, compared to a national decline in performance to 56.8 per cent.



### Special Education Needs (SEN)

The total number of pupils with SEN has decreased over the period 2012 to 2014 from 5,067 to 4,382, partly possibly, due the transition of the new SEN Code of Practice, effective from September 2014 which may have affected recording of provision.

### Inequalities

- Significantly fewer children who had Free School Meals (FSM) achieved a GLD (34 per cent) compared to nationally (45 per cent). In contrast, 63 per cent of non-FSM pupils achieved a GLD similar to the national figure of 64 per cent.
- At all key stages, 1 and 2 and 4, the gap in attainment between pupils who have FSM and those who do not persists to be wide for the past two years. Those who have FSM are still performing below non-FSM pupils compared to nationally.
- The gap between pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and non EAL pupils achieving a good level of development in the early years foundation stage profile in the county remains over twice that of the national gap, for the period 2012-2014. Whilst the gap in Herefordshire narrowed in 2014, a smaller percentage of pupils who had EAL met the screening check threshold (66 per cent) compared to similar pupils nationally (74 per cent).
- The gap for pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) at KS2 is even greater over the period. In 2014, 59 per cent achieved locally compared to 77 per cent nationally. The gap in Herefordshire between EAL and non EAL pupils at KS4 has fallen in consecutive years but it still greatly exceeds the national gap.

Source: Understanding Herefordshire, July 2015  
July performance report

### 3. Improvement areas identified last year

*In the summary of self-assessment last year areas for improvement were identified. What evidence do you have of your progress on these areas and the difference (impact) made.*

	Areas for Improvement 2014	Evidence of Progress/impact
1.	Systematic gathering of unmet need	Commissioning team now utilising needs assessment methodology and template to consider this but is dependent on how data is recorded by direct delivery teams, which often doesn't give sufficient detail to assess unmet need. The above methodology was used in completing the first Children's Integrated Needs Assessment which has now been published, which highlights areas of unmet need and where data capture within service teams needs to improve to inform better commissioning.
2.	Improving the attainment gap for	Focused work has been carried out



	<p>vulnerable groups in particular FSM, EAL, GRT and LAC</p>	<p>between groups of schools, LA Officers and HMI in relation to exploring best practice for FSM (primary and secondary) and EAL. This work has continued with a wider group of schools following positive reviews from the initial cohort. Outcomes for GRT are better than nationally but still well below those for all children. A consultant was commissioned to provide a detailed analysis of the attainment gaps (attached) with a view to refining Herefordshire's approach to closing the gap based on the findings. Work will commence in Autumn 2015 to develop detailed plans.</p> <p>Progress has been made in developing the virtual school, tracking and challenge mechanisms. Unvalidated data suggests 88% of the cohort have made expected or better progress than predicted, and 16.6% of LAC have achieved 5 A* - C grades at GCSE in August 2015, significantly improving on last year.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Operating at average or just below for variety of achievement measures. Some Outstanding schools and results but wide variation between schools</p>	<p>Herefordshire continues to achieve success with 87.6% of pupils in Good or Outstanding primary schools (previous year (87.5%) and 83% for secondary schools (previous year 87.6%). We are just above the national average for KS2, and are now showing continuous improvement at GCSE for the third consecutive year.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Reduced capacity, but refocused and targeted service towards tier 3 and 4 children and families</p>	<p>Early help services within Family Support Service are focused only on level 4 and step downs to level 3. Key priority within the new CYP Plan is for a revised early help approach across partners which will support workforce development across all Levels of Need with the primary aim to skill up universal and community services to help families become more resilient and reduce the need for more targeted or specialist services at levels 3 and 4. However, given the escalation in CP</p>



		and LAC population our current Early Help approach is not sufficiently preventing need escalation.
5.	NEET performance is disguised by high unknowns.	The NEET performance was shown not to have a significant impact on the NEET cohort . To focus the change a target of reducing the number of young people who were NEET by 100 was adopted. Between March 2014 and March 2015 there were 83 less young people considered NEET. Further examination of the ICT system suggests there may be errors in the overall cohort size in relation to the NEET calculation. This is being addressed.
6.	Reversing trend of high % of unknowns	Having reversed the trend the situation is stable and remains around the 2% which is significantly better than similar local authorities.
7.	Take of Apprenticeships is good but need to increase take up of level 3 and 4 qualifications	Apprenticeships have remained static.
8.	Implementation of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, at very early stage of implementation, and as yet not sufficient performance data to draw any conclusions as to its effectiveness. Concerns as to Management arrangements which are being addressed through HSCB, and in stability of SW staff (see above). Although it is early days there are already indicators about better targeted service to children and families and more appropriate thresholding of cases to children's social care.	Please refer to the attached self-evaluation document.
9.	A better stream lined approach has been taken to the service arrangement for CIN, the creation of MASH has enabled a re-focus on CIN and targeted CP planning.  From the 17 <sup>th</sup> October the previous FAST service will move under the management responsibility of the CIN service managers, creating two duty pods, one in North and one in	This has been superceded by the work in MASH (see number <b>XXXXXX</b> )



	<p>South CIN teams. These pods will feed into the wider CIN /CP teams but under one management stream ensuring that the gateway for children to receive a timely service if more efficient and effective.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Assessment quality and timeliness remain stubborn performance areas.</p> <p>Quality of plans needs to improve</p> <p>Voice of the child and family needs to strengthen</p> <p>Timeliness of visiting children subject to a child protection plan needs to improve, as does the reporting of this</p> <p>Improvements to assure that supervision needs to take place 4 weekly for safeguarding SW staff</p>	<p>Performance has dropped with respect to assessment timeliness, largely as a result of workforce instability. This has been a significant focus of internal performance management scrutiny across child care managers meetings and the HSCB QA sub group and improvement board, prior to its dissolution when intervention was lifted in March 2015.</p> <p>The quality assurance framework is now identifying thematic issues including the audit of supervision concluded in Sept 2014.</p> <p>Focus on ensuring CP Plans are appropriately in place has led to a reduction of 20% of CP plans since June 2014, albeit there has been a significant increase again in June and July 2015, which in part mirrors past years, although the raise this year is sharper than usual and is currently being analysed.</p> <p>Ofsted inspection May 2014 found good evidence, and subsequent audit activity suggests that this has been sustained. Participation People project is helping to embed cultural change.</p> <p>Specific P.I.'s and reporting arrangements now closely monitoring this. Significant improvements in practice, with CP visits at 76% (June 2015), a 19% reduction from the previous year, linked to workforce issues above, but higher than the West Midlands and England averages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff survey outcomes suggest that supervision is prioritised and received, but audit activity</li> </ul>



	<p>needs to improve</p> <p>Numbers of children subject to CP plans very high.</p>	<p>continues to reveal inconsistency in recording and quality of supervision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further training is being developed, linked to the recruitment of a new tier of Senior Practitioner and the recruitment of new Team Managers.</li> <li>• The Senior Practitioner tier was created to increase management capacity, but recruitment difficulties described above have meant that the benefits of these post have not yet been realised.</li> </ul> <p>CP Plans down from 218 at June 2014 to 194 at May / June 2015, although we have seen a sharp increase in CP activity in July 2015. The delay in concluding s47 investigations where the decision was to go to CP conference from earlier months is likely to be the reason for the sudden increase in the number of conferences being held in July, ie the creation of a bottleneck, as a consequence of staffing problems in the MASH.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>The adoption of a more robust and evidence based assessment model, has started to demonstrate a more focused approach to assessment. Therefore equipping the service to meet the requirements of PLO from Oct.</p>	<p>Through the monitoring of assessment standards by service managers with their team managers and a more robust approach to signing of assessments has been implemented. The performance of MASH has been consistently strong in ensuring that all contacts and referrals are screened by a qualified Social Worker within 24 hours, with timely decision making as to subsequent action.</p> <p>Step down processes are now well embedded in the MASH, and children who do not meet the threshold for statutory assessment or intervention</p>



		<p>are, where appropriate, referred through CAF coordinators for a Family Support service or a CAF.</p> <p>Birmingham University completed an evaluation of the effectiveness of the risk and resilience assessment tool, and work is underway in simplifying it as a model and targeting its application. (See SEF).</p> <p>There continues to be inconsistent performance with respect to the completion of initial assessments, and more so with respect to core assessments, which is significantly related to the continuing workforce stability issues referred to above. Work undertaken in the FWi transformation programme has helped to improve performance with respect to CP processes, and both initial CP and Review CP conferences are consistently held within timescale.</p> <p>Legal Gateway meetings are held on a weekly basis to scrutinise plans for children where care proceedings are being considered for children at risk of becoming Looked After through the Public Law Outline / Care Proceedings route. However, the majority of children becoming looked after continue to be presented as ‘emergencies’, bypassing such processes. A review is commencing of these cases to establish the reasons for this, and help shape the development of appropriate management / gatekeeping and direct work service options to respond.</p>
12.	Greater integration of and involvement of families in the assessment processes as we move	The EHC process has been implemented and early indications to April 2015 are that Herefordshire is





	<p>towards EHC Plan (including transition to adulthood)</p>	<p>amongst the most successful at meeting the new timescales to time as reported by the Herefordshire DfE professional advisor.</p> <p>Herefordshire's initial local offer also received a positive view from the professional advisor. The council has recently audited the school offers for SEND and fed the findings back to each school. Work continues to develop the local offer and to address a small number of areas in order to make it fully compliant. General Overview and Scrutiny Committee are paying particular regard to this, in particular monitoring improvements in outcomes for CwD.</p> <p>Progress has been made with the assessment of children with complex disabilities. The council has committed more resource to the children with disability team. A full core assessment has been completed for each child, though this is not yet translating into integrated EHC plans.</p> <p>Family dissatisfaction with some elements of the provision and processes for Children with Disabilities remain (short break offer, lack of key workers at transition and direct payments) as recorded by carer organisations and special schools. Significant consultation with parent / carer groups has taken place and has led to an ongoing dialogue with the aim of service improvement. However we continue to be inconsistent in this area, although where education are leading the approach on a case basis, satisfaction and engagement are reportedly higher.</p>
<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p>Child and family (Single) assessment project only just underway, with planned implementation date of 01.04.13. Major resource implication to redesign business processes and</p>	<p>Decision taken in Oct 2013 to defer implementation of single assessment linked to identified MASH issues and the need to ensure IA/CA performance in advance. Work is commencing in September 2015 to begin preparation</p>



	supporting software to ensure a practice led system	to implement a single assessment linked to the upgrade of Frameworki to MOSAIC in April 2016.
14.	Intensive Family Support Service provides dedicated support to children on the edge of care, Troubled Families and children on the brink of child protection.	HIPSS and TISS services have become operational in spring 2015, Commissioned by the LA and provided by Action for Children, to focus on supporting the most vulnerable and challenging LAC children to remain in local, family based placements where possible, and to provide consultancy and support in reducing the risk of children and young people on the edge of care becoming LAC. Work is currently underway to further develop a suite of direct work services ring fenced to address the broader operational challenges of responding positively to escalating needs at tier 3 / 4. It is expected that these services will be operational by April 2016.
15.	High numbers of front line agency managers and front line social workers, particularly in Fieldwork service	The balance of Agency SW's to permanent SW's remains too high in key front line teams. Over the course of the year, the Social Work Academy has successfully integrated 2 cohorts of 8 AYSE year SW's into the service, and have taken on a further 2 cohorts, which will total 26 NQSW posts over the last 2.5 years. The first 8 are now in their second year post qualification, and the second 8 are due to take up QSW posts in September 2015, releasing 8 agency SW's from the payroll.  In February 2015 we launched a 'Fruitful Careers' recruitment campaign, which attracted 3 experienced SW's to join Herefordshire.  The Academy has also successfully recruited 5 Overseas SW's who have commenced work in August 2015, and work is underway to recruit a further



		<p>cohort to commence in January 2016.</p> <p>6 Social Work Assistants have been recruited to undertake tasks in support of QSW colleagues in front line teams, who have also commenced in August 2015.</p> <p>We have continued to be as creative as possible in seeking to attract agency SW's to join the organisation, by offering flexible payment and benefits via Hoople, our partner organisation.</p> <p>There continues however to be an over dependency on agency staff in our MASH and CiN service areas, and a bespoke recruitment campaign, supported by a dedicated microsite is currently underway.</p>
<p><b>16.</b></p>	<p>Development of Social Work Academy, to recruit and retain NQSW staff and better support experienced practitioners to improve practice, in early stage.</p>	<p>Following an analysis of the needs of the service, develop and implement an overall workforce strategy. The strategy should provide clear evidence of impact in creating a capable, stable and sustainable workforce which requires fewer agency staff and which includes clear recruitment and retention plans. The aim should be to improve the quality and continuity of social care staff experienced by children and families.</p> <p>Work has been completed to improve induction processes to ensure a better 'joining' experience, and monthly staff briefings have been established to give all staff the opportunity to learn about practice developments and initiatives. Herefordshire invests in 'Research in Practice', which is actively used by NQSW's, and specifically at present with respect to best practice in supervised contact. The next staff briefing will focus on making best use of RIP.</p> <p>To date the Social Work Academy is</p>



		<p>proving to be our most successful and sustained approach, with 26 SW's recruited through this route, and to date only 2 having left (for personal/family reasons). The quality of experience received by those SW's who have come through the SWA is borne out by the hugely positive feedback received from Birmingham University as to the quality of their work in the subsequent PQ module they are supported to undertake during their first years as QSW's.</p> <p>Senior SW progression process agreed and in place, and work is underway in establishing a development programme for Senior Practitioners and Team Managers.</p>
17.	Recruitment campaign to secure stable and quality managers and experienced social workers, currently under way	Development of recruitment campaign using bespoke microsite within the context of the wider workforce strategy to increase number of permanent workers, to attract agency staff to come onto 'the books' contracts and an incentive scheme options have been developed.
18.	<p>Voice of the child needs to be stronger</p> <p>Numbers of looked after children high and growing and needs to be better understood</p>	<p>Significant investment in advocacy services has taken place and performance monitoring of statutory visiting of looked after children has been established.</p> <p>Ofsted found good practice examples of the voice of the child reflected in their care plans in May 2014 inspection, borne out in subsequent audit activity, and enhanced by the focus given through the 'Participation People' project..</p> <p>Our LAC population has continued to rise. Existing challenge processes have not been sufficiently robust – the majority of children becoming LAC have been in 'emergency' situations,</p>



	<p>Many looked after children's core assessments are out of date and currently being updated.</p>	<p>rather than through planned approaches, and our LAC profile shows a growing number of teenagers entering care in this way. Remedial action is currently being taken, with approval to accommodate now resting with the AD, and an overhaul of the functions of Legal Gateway and Resources Panel arrangements. Further analysis has suggested that reunification has not been actively pursued in a number of cases where it may now be appropriate to return a child / young person back to their birth families. There cases are now being identified with a plan to fast track assessment of this potential.</p> <p>LAC core assessments have been targeted with additional resources to ensure that they are up to date, albeit quality has yet to be audited.</p>
<p><b>19.</b></p>	<p>Care planning regulations and doing basics better and simple things well. Need to get all cases in LAC service with up to date chronology / care plan and care assessment with child and carers having copies of plans. Statutory visits recorded and in time with child seen alone.</p>	<p>Performance framework now in place to monitor statutory visiting which has seen significant improvement, with visits within timescale recorded between 96 – 100% between March – May 2015. A significant drop to 58% in June is related to a technical change in reporting from Frameworki and does not reflect any change in practice. However, the new recording template prompts SW's to ensure children are seen alone and receive a copy of their plans.</p> <p>There continues to be inconsistency in the completion of chronologies, which in part relates to higher than desirable caseloads linked to workforce issues.</p> <p>Additional service management capacity was invested in to undertake a self assessment against care planning regulations in Autumn 2014, which has enabled the team to prioritise and focus its activity on key improvement areas, ensuring timeliness and quality of reviews, care plans and increasing levels of challenge to prevent drift.</p>



<p><b>20.</b></p>	<p>IRO caseloads still too high @ 100 each. Structure of conference minutes requires improvement</p>	<p>We are ensuring that there is effective leadership, practice, quality assurance and capacity within the Independent Reviewing Officer service. IRO caseloads reduced through recruitment and secondment of additional management capacity, and the recruitment to permanent IRO posts, caseloads now down to an average of 70, albeit this figure is creeping up again following significant increase in CP activity in July 2015.</p> <p>There is also strong evidence of increased challenge from IRO's / Conference Chairs where concern exist as to the quality of plans for children, or there is evidence of drift. Very few children remain subject to a CP plan beyond 18 months.</p> <p>New CP business processes have assisted to streamline the system and link to improved structure of conference minutes.</p>
<p><b>21.</b></p>	<p>16+ Team and Aftercare Service – issues re capacity and ability to meet statutory targets (statutory visits). Only 1 social worker, high caseload, 30+. To review structure and recruit. Potential to improve: New Belongings Bid – working with young people and project Board of Care leaves to develop mentoring, improve services</p>	<p><b>A new team manager was brought into the team, initially as an assistant team manager in March 2014. This transferred to team leader and is now a full time, permanent, team manager post. The staffing has increased from 1 social work post to 3 social workers and 2 senior social workers.</b></p> <p>Beyond this, the work of the service has been particularly enhanced by the deployment of an apprentice (ex care leaver) and 2 care ambassadors, both care leavers, who have been heavily involved in voice and experience of the child training, including of elected members, HSCB membership and the wider workforce.</p> <p>The 'New Belongings' project has also been successful in improving and increasing placement options for care</p>



		leavers.
22.	Corporate Parenting: Basics in place, pledge needs reviewing, Councillors key to improve corporate parenting (review panel / pledge and develop monitoring). Good potential, got numbers 4 (multi-agency hub) and good Children in Care Council. To make it more representative.	<p>Herefordshire council approved the looked after children pledge in September 2014 when it was presented to full council. However, the system to monitor progress against the pledge is not robust and requires priority at children in care council.</p> <p>Since September 2014 a member of the children in care council regularly attends the corporate parenting panel</p> <p>As part of the Members mandatory training, they are required to attend a seminar on corporate parenting. If Members fail to attend, part of their members allowance is withheld until it is completed.</p> <p>A programme of members' seminars has been developed up until May 2016.</p>
23.	Effective contract monitoring	<p>Contract Management training provided by the Commercial Team to staff involved in external contract management.</p> <p>Ongoing work with Commercial Team utilising various tools to improve contract management processes,. A is underway during 15/16 to review the commissioning and contracting team re roles and capacity to drive out more efficiencies in contracting and placement activity which to date has saved approx. £237k. (see supporting evidence, Agency Placements Report).</p>
24.	Lack of experienced/trained social care expertise within the commissioning team	All contracts have an assigned technical specialist from within family support and safeguarding service areas and a commissioning lead who together monitor contracts for performance, best practice and resolving operational issues. This has



		<p>been effectively applied, for example, through the involvement of the Safeguarding and Review service Manager in the recommissioning of advocacy services.</p>
<p><b>25.</b></p>	<p>Develop the culture of constructive challenge within the Board.</p>	<p>A new independent chair of the HSCB has been appointed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, and an experienced interim Business Unit Manager has also been appointed, to lead the work of integrating the business unit to cover the work of the Children’s and Adult’s Safeguarding Boards along with the Community Safety Partnership, to achieve synergy of objectives and effort where appropriate. We have developed a multi-agency child’s journey scorecard. This will clearly define what data will be received, the format and the frequency. The Board has agreed a new structure, with an Executive created to drive the business plan, receiving formal reports from the sub groups on progress against their objectives. Whilst the new governance arrangements are embryonic, there has already been greater challenge, for example with respect to the pace of delivery against improvement plan objectives, and a greater focus on the child’s voice at the board itself.</p>
<p><b>26.</b></p>	<p>Embed the Board’s new process for communicating qualitative and quantitative safeguarding performance information and analysis from the sub groups to the Strategic Board so that it can effectively monitor and challenge the effectiveness of child protection practice</p>	<p>Terms of reference for the steering group and sub groups have been reviewed to ensure appropriate governance, compliance and prioritisation.</p> <p>We are establishing a quarterly chairs meeting across the three partnerships to ensure a culture of challenge and shared priorities is engendered, so that activity across them are in line with business plan priorities and support the CYPP priorities.</p> <p>Each of the sub groups is supported by a Learning and Development Officer to set agendas, to ensure compliance with terms of reference and Business Plan / Ofsted</p>





		<p>improvement priorities and assist in driving the progress of their work. The Quality Assurance (QA) Sub Group has reviewed its work programme and the HSCB quality assurance framework, including a revised data set and scorecard, with particular emphasis on increasing and improving multi agency performance information analysis, to ensure focussed audit and review audits to assess progress..</p> <p>Learning generated through QA sub group will be shared through the Executive to the Board and identify the relevant vehicle for sharing the learning and action improvement activities to the appropriate sub group.</p>
27.	<p>All member agencies to ensure the voice of children, young people and their families is captured and used to improve services and reports this to the Board for strategic analysis.</p>	<p>All members report to HSCB learning from their analysis of the views of children, young people and their families and the impact of the implementation of this learning into practice, to the QA sub group within all their quarterly reports.</p> <p>HSCB analyses and reports on common themes arising from agencies' collection of the views of children, young people and their families, proposing development actions.</p> <p>HSCB Business Unit is working with the 'Participation People' project to develop and implement its own regular mechanisms for capturing the voice of the child, with findings presented on a quarterly basis to the QA sub group. Board members have attended young people led awareness training on the child's perspective on receiving services. There have been two case studies discussed at the board with CSE and youth offending the focus to date, and this thematic 'child's perspective' approach is now a standing item at the board.</p>

**4. Details of reviews, inspections and assessments in the LA within the last 12 months.**

	Date	Judgement	Is a copy of the report attached?
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LGA Peer Review:			
Ofsted SLAC inspection:			
Ofsted LA Fostering:			
Ofsted LA Adoption:			
Single Inspection Framework:			
LA Support of School Improvement:			
Focused School Inspection:			
Inspections of youth Offending work:			
Ofsted thematic inspections:			
Other (please state): LSCB Peer Diagnostic DfE 18 Month Review	November 2014 December 2014		Yes Yes

	2014 /15		2013/14		2012	
	Outstanding /Good	Inadequate	Outstanding /Good	Inadequate	Outstanding /Good	Inadequate
No (%) Early Years Settings	78.9%	0%	79%	19%	85.7%	0.0%
No (%) Nursery & Primary Schools	86.8% (includes primary schools with a nursery class)	0.0% (includes primary schools with a nursery class)	84% (excludes Nursery)	16% (excludes Nursery)	69.1%	1.2%
No (%) Secondary Schools	81.3%	12.5%	80%	20%	86.7%	0.0%
No (%) Post 16 Provision	83.3%	5.6%	100%	0.00%	62.5% <sup>§</sup>	0.00%
No (%) Special schools & PRUs	100%	0%	83.5%	16.5%	71.4%	0.0%
No (%) residential/children's homes	-	-	Not reported	Not reported	55.6%*	0.0%
No (%) of Children's Centres	37.5%	12.5%	43%	57%		

## 5. Summary of key strengths and areas for improvement



*Include your key strengths and priority areas for improvement which your self-assessment, inspections or other reviews have identified as your priorities across children's services.*

	Area	Key Strengths	Where is the evidence? Please cross reference to other documents
1.	Additional Needs	Success of students in BESD System	Ofsted judgements, improved GCSE points score, attendance, school satisfaction survey regarding Behaviour Support Team work, Low number of permanent exclusions
2.	Additional Needs	Independent travel training service	YP/family satisfaction returns, greater independence and life chances for YP who can travel and overall cost saving to the system
3.	Additional Needs	High numbers of EHC plans delivered to time	NI 172 Continued high performance in this area compared to national statistics despite the reduced timescale.
4.	Additional Needs	Development of Post 19 provision for learners with complex LD.	Increased number of students taking up local packages of provision through the New Horizons offer rather than seeking out of county provision. Innovative use of adult social care and education funding to commission a national provider to manage the provision.
5.		Greater engagement of Traveller families in adult education	Over 100 adults have accessed adult learning opportunities in the past 18 months from virtually no take up previously.
		Children's participation	
	Commissioning	Regional and sub-regional approach to commissioning where advantageous	New frameworks for fostering, residential and supported accommodation in place



			with savings secured.
	Placements	Negotiation with providers	Securing substantial savings for the authority of £240k in 15/16
	Families First	Completed Phase 1 of national troubled families programme	Target of 310 families met with £1.2m funding secured for the county. Asked to join phase 2 of the new programme early in January 2015
	Fostering	Sound fostering service: Good range of placements, with investment to increase 110 foster carers including kinship care. Stability good.	PI's re placement moves and length in placement show good progress.
	Fostering	Successful bid for Intensive Placement Support Service, following analysis of children in care cohort and looking to develop service for those with complex and challenging needs. (This as a developing strength)	HIPSS Service operational from early 2015. Cohort of HIPSS foster carers recruited and being trained
	Adoption	<p>Good adoption Service: Good sub judgement in 2014 Ofsted Inspection</p> <p>Good timeliness on approvals.</p> <p>Taking initiative regionally to explore a shared approach to adoption services across West Mercia</p> <p>Potential for regional collaboration</p> <p>Developing strength in looking forward and taking regional approaches to key areas.</p>	<p>Adoption scorecard, numbers of children adopted and plans for permanency. Very timely once decision made.</p> <p>Good feedback from adopters.</p>
	Early Help and intensive family support services	High quality interventions, good quality CAF assessments, good multi	<p>CAF examples</p> <p>Ofsted inspection and</p>



		<p>agency arrangements in place in localities.</p> <p>These services are currently under review as part of a restructure of direct work services to ensure they are targeted towards the most vulnerable.</p>	<p>performance reports</p> <p>Feedback from service users</p>
	<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>A robust improvement plan is in place with good multi agency contributions and commitment.</p> <p>Progress seen in key areas but many developing areas.</p> <p>Audit activity is seeing improvements in decision making, and better communication between agencies.</p> <p>Clear guidance in earlier areas of weakness issued and practice issues being addressed eg, Section 47 process, strategy meetings</p> <p>The Social Work Academy is dedicated to driving improvement</p> <p>Narrow focus of Advanced Practitioners to improving practice in with key staff groups, with significant focus on AYSE Social workers</p> <p>Principal social worker in place to lead practice improvements</p> <p>Good opportunities for training and development with SWA leading a range of training</p>	<p>Improvement plan/Revised improvement plan and exception reports have now been merged into the Ofsted Action plan post May 2014 inspection, with governance through HSCB, Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet</p> <p>Audit reports produced quarterly</p> <p>New guidance in policy and procedures</p> <p>SWA service plans developed in line with Ofsted Action plan and collocated with QA service to embed a 'closing the loop' culture</p> <p>Social Work Academy continues to be most successful route to recruitment and retention</p>



		<p>sessions on areas including critical thinking and analysis, supervision and recording.</p> <p>Throughput of children on CP plans is good.</p>	
	Safeguarding and review	<p>Stable and experienced IRO service currently</p> <p>New QA alert system for LAC and CPC reviews</p> <p>New 'SILP' way of undertaking Case Reviews with high staff input</p>	<p>Additional temporary management capacity assisted in development of QA systems and SEF against Care Planning Regs compliance</p> <p>2 final SILP overview reports have been completed and action plans tracked though HSCB JCR Sub Group</p>

	Areas for improvement	Where is the evidence?
1.	The attached improvement plan sets out the continuing areas for improvement in safeguarding.	See attached
2.	Performance of children's centres and impact on the EYFS good level of development measure for vulnerable group particularly those on FSM	Ofsted inspection reports in the last year with an RI and an Inadequate. The gap between those without FSM and those with against the measure of good level of development in both 2014 and 2015 this in excess of 25%
3	Early help	As set out in CYP Plan
4	0-5 early years	Key theme in CYPP plan
5	Mental health and emotional wellbeing	New CAMHS strategy / focused theme of CYPP plan.
6	Children and young people in need of safeguarding	Significant challenges remain in particular linked to workforce stability.
7	Addressing challenges for adolescents	HIPSS / TISS services at the early stage of development
8	Closing the Loop	Several initiatives above highlight an emphasis on process as opposed to



		<p>impact. The directorate and its partners clearly knows itself better in terms of strengths and weaknesses but is still underdeveloped with its response to the implementation of change and evaluation of the difference being made to outcomes for children and families</p>
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**6. Direction of travel / capacity to improve**

*Brief summary of your overall **direction and rate of improvement**, your **capacity to improve** and looking forward **your priorities and plans for the future**.*

Following the Ofsted carried out their inspection of children’s safeguarding in May 2014, an LGA Safeguarding Board Peer Diagnostic in November 2014 and a DfE review carried out on 15 and 16 December 2014, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families wrote to the Leader of the Council confirming that the intervention notice issued in February 2012 had been lifted. The DfE acknowledged the hard work of staff, leadership and partner organisations in the work involved in lifting the intervention. In particular the DfE noted;

- The political interest and commitment to continue to prioritise children’s safeguarding and the protect spending on children’s services, alongside supporting members to fulfil their corporate parenting role.
- That Ofsted had identified areas for improvement but that these had been captured within the Improvement Plan.
- That the workforce position remains fragile and will be a major challenge in maintaining improvement but that there was a continued commitment to invest in this area.

Work on the actions within the improvement plan is a key priority and the plan is updated on a quarterly basis in the context of the Children’s Wellbeing Directorate’s Continuous Improvement Framework. The delivery of the plan, where there is synergy between the two, is driven within the children’s wellbeing transformation programme, Children of Herefordshire’s Improvement and Partnership Programme (CHIPP).

Within the Ofsted improvement plan it is worth noting particular priority areas:

- A recruitment campaign has been undertaken in order to reduce the reliance on agency staff, to compliment the work done by the Social Work Academy in bringing NQSW’s and Overseas SW’s into the organisation.
- The corporate parenting strategy is being refreshed and will provide a robust approach to ensuring the voices of our most vulnerable children are heard and responded to.
- The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board have appointed both a highly



experienced independent chair and interim business unit manager, and work in synergising the priorities of HSCB, HSAB and Community Safety Partnership well underway.

- Following the local elections there has been mandatory training for all members in connection with corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities.

Local authority strategic education functions and spend on services to young people and community learners is at the lowest quartile amongst statistical neighbours and within in that at the lowest spend of comparator local authorities. The Ofsted inspection of local authority arrangements for school improvement would challenge Herefordshire particularly regarding the impact across all schools and governors of our strategic approach and on the narrowing of the gap for vulnerable groups compared to their peers.

## 7. Area identified for peer challenge at the Peer Challenge Summit

*From your self- assessment please identify the area that you would like to receive a peer challenge on and reasons/evidence for identifying this area for challenge. Think about what*

*Information/evidence/data would be useful to someone external who is trying to understand and challenging your self-assessment and feel free to attach as an appendix if that is more helpful. Also think about how you might like to present this to your challenge group at the summit.*

**To be completed following discussion at monthly performance challenge meeting**

## 8. Assurance process for signing off the self-assessment

*How well the Council as a whole understands its performance is crucial to continuous development and improvement. Briefly describe the process for completion of the self-assessment, and how the Chief Executive, the lead member, scrutiny, partnerships have been involved in the signing off process.*

This self-assessment has been completed through consultation across the Heads of Service of the Children's Wellbeing Directorate and Cabinet Member. It has also been considered at a meeting of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on **XXXXXXXXXX**.

CYPP Steering Group: 23 September 2015

Children's monthly performance challenge: 2 September 2015

Sign off:





*Please identify who has had sight of the self-assessment and been involved in its sign off.*

Authorised by:

Name	Jo Davidson
Job Title	Director for children's wellbeing
Date	XXXX September 2015