

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

This document is to be read in connection with the Herefordshire journey to date document.

Ofsted Key Judgement: The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
Children and young people who are, or who are likely to be, at risk of harm or who are the subject of concern are identified and protected.	<p>Work has continued in developing the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, with additional staffing to respond to the growth in demand and to retain manageable caseloads. In October 2014, a dedicated resource was established specifically to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation and screen and assess CSE referrals, alongside an increase in dedicated police resources. This service remains over dependent on agency staff to ensure its successful operation. Three permanent social workers are due to start in MASH at the end of September 2015 and one at the end of November. This should reduce the reliance on agency social workers in MASH. A workforce strategy is in operation which will hopefully increase the number of permanent workers in MASH.</p> <p>Work has commenced with the police in order to triage all domestic abuse referrals to ensure that appropriate timely action is taken. The MASH has expanded to include Women's Aid. A duty worker from the 16+ team will be joining MASH as from 17 August 2015. The police will also</p>	Head of Fieldwork	<p>Staffing Levels / Caseload Data</p> <p>Data which supports the hypothesis that contacts / referrals are appropriate (i.e. more contacts convert to referrals / fewer contacts)</p> <p>Audit outcomes</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>have a bigger presence in the MASH to cover CSE.</p> <p>A project is about to commence on work to have a joint MASH to adults social services. The aim of this project is to establish one front door into social care and aid better information sharing across all agencies.</p> <p>The HSCB Levels of need framework was implemented in September 2014, with multi agency training to support its awareness and widest availability, accessibility and operation in practice. Early performance data indicates that, as there has been an increase in the number of contacts being converted into referrals, that its application to date has been successful in helping professionals to identify children requiring a social care assessment via the MASH. This has now stabilised, as shown by performance data. The thresholds are being consistently applied by partners and staff with a corresponding increase in quality and appropriateness of contacts, and an increased conversion rate to referral.</p> <p>The escalation policy is currently being refreshed in response to inconsistent and inappropriate routes of escalation being taken, and once approved will be rolled out to staff and</p>		<p>QA Framework document / Quarterly Reports</p> <p>WS3P20WP1</p> <p>Performance Report</p>




HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>partner agencies.</p> <p>Enhanced performance framework reporting has enabled managers to identify children who may be 'drifting' in the system and where processes and action has not been progressed within timescales.</p> <p>The Quality Assurance framework is now operational, although more robust work is required to ensure that we are 'closing the loop' with respect to thematic issues identified where there may be deficits in practice emerging. A specific piece of work is being undertaken to respond to this deficit. Recent changes in first line management has led to a reduction in quantity of audit activity outside that undertaken by QA Managers themselves.</p>		<p>'Closing the Loop' Project Brief</p> <p>QA Quarterly Reports</p>
<p>Help is provided early in the emergence of a problem and is well coordinated and recorded through multi-agency arrangements.</p>	<p>As referenced above the 'Level of need' threshold guidance was revised, refreshed and re-implemented during 2014. Incorporated within the website hosting this guidance is integrated access to supporting documentation, hyperlinks to procedures and practice guidance, Multi Agency Referral Forms (MARF's) CAF checklist and a directory of early help services, creating an electronic one stop shop for professionals</p>	<p>Service Manager, Family Support</p>	<p>Levels of Need documentation / website & performance data. Child & Family feedback</p>




HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>seeking to identify the appropriate level of support for any given child for whom they may have concerns.</p> <p>Supporting documentation includes the Early Help protocol, and the 'step up / step down' protocol, to support professionals in ensuring that there is a consistent approach to planning and coordination of support for children and families and levels 2 and 3 of the threshold criteria, and clarity as to what to do if you feel that a child needs to be escalated through referral into MASH.</p> <p>Troubled families (Families First) arrangements in Herefordshire are effectively integrated through the support of existing statutory and voluntary services, and outcomes against the national TF criteria have been strong, in that the 'turn around' target of 310 families was achieved well in advance of the end date of phase one of the TF programme, and Herefordshire has been accepted as an early adopter of the extended phase two.</p>	Head of Commissioning	<p>EH & Step Down Protocols / User feedback</p> <p>Performance information re: CAF trends – outcomes / step up & down numbers and outcomes</p> <p>TF outcome data / user feedback</p>
Thresholds between early help and statutory child protection work are appropriate, understood and	<p>Please see above with respect to 'Level of Need' threshold guidance.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria for children with a disability are being refreshed, and a direct payment policy is</p>	Head of Fieldwork	Performance / Outcome data / Audit findings

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
operate effectively.	now in place for children with a disability and their families.		
Records of action and decision are clear and up to date.	The Frameworki transformation programme has improved the arrangements for case records, decision making and management oversight / supervision, to ensure they are both clear and auditable. However, continued turnover in first line managers at the front end of the service has led to continued inconsistency in quality and application. More robust induction arrangements are being coordinated through the Workforce Support Officer in the Social Work Academy to seek to overcome this.	Children's performance lead and framework transformation manager	
Children and young people are listened to and heard.	<p>Significant progress has been made in the last 12 months to embed within our operational and strategic culture the need to actively listen to and respond to the voice of children and young people. This is in part reflected in the priority given to SW visits to LAC, and priority given to review processes</p> <p>The Looked After Children's Pledge was agreed and signed off at Council in September 2014 following work commissioned by the Corporate Parenting Panel, making firm commitments as to expectations for children and young people's active communication, both with respect to plans for their own lives, but strategically too. The</p>	Head of LAC	 <p>Young People's guide_ammend.pub</p>  <p>PLEDGE A5 LEAFLET Job No 1239.pdf</p>  <p>PLEDGE A3 Low res Job No 1239.pdf</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>development of Care Champion posts and the recruitment of two of our young people to these roles has been a very visible commitment to implementing these principles. The further development of No. 4 Blackfriars St as the base for our 16+ service and the very active Children in Care Council, with strong representation on the Corporate Parenting Panel, has further embedded this cultural change. The commissioning of 'Participation People' with a specific remit to actively engage and consult with children and young people across the county to inform and support the development of the children and young people's plan and broader strategic initiatives, ensuring g that young people's voices are at the heart of policy. For all senior manager posts, a young person's interview panel is arranged so that their views on new appointments can be taken into account.</p> <p>There has also been a strengthening of our NYAS contract to ensure advocacy services are available to all children who may be looked after or subject to child protection plans as appropriate, and the strengthening of the IRO arrangements to comply with Care Planning Regulations has also ensured that children are seen and spoken to be the Independent Reviewing Officer as part of the LAC Review</p>		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Herefordshire Council YP Panel Polic </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  2014_Peer Support Plan.doc </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  CYPVoiceActionPlanu pdate Nov2014.docx </div> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">Copies of NYAS and Onside contracts to be inserted</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

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	process.		
<p>Social workers build effective relationships with them and their families in order to assess the likelihood of, and capacity for, change. Risk is well understood, managed and regularly reviewed.</p>	<p>Whilst work has been completed to enable managers to have easy oversight of SW caseloads, and reporting continues to evidence that caseloads are being maintained at an unacceptable level, due to continued instability in the workforce, particularly in the CWD, MASH and CiN service areas, negatively impacting on effective relationship building between workers and their families. Whilst there is evidence of the success of the 'Grow your Own' element of the Workforce Strategy, with in excess of 25 NQSW's having been recruited in the last 2 years, attempts to reduce the through put of agency workers has yet to impact, including the West Midlands approach to developing an agency worker 'pay cap' and learning and development passport. 5 Overseas workers have been recruited and have taken up post during August 2015, and a further recruitment campaign is commencing to bring in a further cohort to commence in January 2016.</p> <p>The management of risk on individual cases has been supported by the implementation of the risk and resilience tool. The impact of this has recently been externally evaluated by</p>	<p>Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Caseload data / trends</p> <p>Workforce data – permanent / agency staff by team</p> <p>Birmingham Univ evaluation</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>Birmingham University, who established that it was not being used consistently, and made recommendations as to its revision which is currently being undertaken. There is a project being undertaken to develop a quality standard for assessments supported by a consistent set of tools to be used and rolled out with the adoption of the single assessment by the financial year end.</p> <p>Management oversight, including supervision, has been strengthened through the implementation of Senior Practitioner posts to ensure that line managers have a smaller number of staff to line manage, and training to new managers is being offered by the Service Manager of the SWA. Improved recording and reporting systems in Fwi, including templates to assist, have been implemented. However, audit findings continue to show inconsistency in supervision recording, quality and frequency, despite positive recognition by staff as to their experience of supervision in the annual staff survey.</p>		Quarterly Audit reports
Children and young people experience timely and effective multi-agency help and protection through risk-	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	Head of fieldwork	MASH performance data re: timeliness

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

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<p>based assessment, authoritative practice, planning and review that secures change.</p>	<p>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 are, where appropriate, referred through INA coordinators for a Family Support service or a CAF.</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. The revised CP documentation has supported the development of better quality, SMARTer CP plans, however, plans are still not sufficiently outcome focussed and don't support the SW to objectively think about SMART objectives and outcomes in advance of the conference.</p> <p>Performance has also continued to be strong with respect to ensuring that children do not 'drift' on CP plans' with extremely few children</p>		<p>Step Down data + outcomes</p> <p>IA / CA data</p> <p>CP data re: ICPC / RCPC timeliness</p> <p>Audit outcomes re: quality of CP plans</p> <p>Performance data re: length of time on a plan / children who are subject to a plan for a second or subsequent time</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	remaining subject to a plan for more than 18 months		



Ofsted Key judgement: The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence

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Decisions about children and young people becoming looked after are made using high-quality assessments about the risk of harm or actual harm to them and the likelihood of change in their family.	<p>The revised permanence policy is currently in draft, within the context of the broader care placement strategy, but has to be agreed by a multi-agency group before being signed off.</p> <p>Legal Gateway meetings are held on a weekly basis to scrutinise plans for children where care proceedings are being considered. A Resource Panel meets weekly to discuss children and young people who may be at risk of becoming Looked After through the Public Law Outline / Care Proceedings route, and Resources Panel fulfils the same function for children and young people on the edge of care / at risk of placement breakdown. 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</p>	Head of Fieldwork	<p>Review and Development of Permanence Process Project Brief</p> <p>LGM procedures / minutes</p> <p>Timeliness of children moving through LAC system (performance data)</p> <p>Resources Panel procedures / minutes</p>







HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>the reasons for this, and help shape the development of appropriate management / gatekeeping and direct work service options to respond. Difficulty sourcing placements for children with a disability continues to be a challenge. The short break provision for this group is underdeveloped but significant activity is under way in reviewing the appropriateness of existing provision, developing the market, including recruitment of respite foster carers to provide greater choice to families. This process has been continuing over the past year but speed of progress is being accelerated.</p>		<p>Short breaks commissioning LAC / CNS sufficiency strategy.</p>
<p>Thresholds are clear and applied appropriately. Children and young people are listened to by social workers who know them well.</p>	<p>Legal planning processes and panel, as described above, ensure that there is consistency to decision making with respect to the use of legal interventions, albeit changes in the chairing arrangements threaten this. There are robust arrangements in place with respect to decision making as to children becoming looked after, which sits at AD level. As above however, more work needs to be undertaken to better identify and respond to cases which appear to escalate rapidly.</p> <p>As described above however, the workforce strategy has not yet fully impacted on reducing the turnover of SW staff, meaning that children</p>	<p>Head of Fieldwork</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy / Data</p> <p>NYAS annual report</p>


HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>are still experiencing too many changes of SW. However, there are 17 permanent SW joining the organisation by end of October 2015 which should improve this.</p> <p>The advocacy service, commissioned from NYAS, does ensure that children and young people have access to such support and ensure that they have a voice in planning and decision making, and our recently appointed Care champions are playing a significant role in both ensuring that looked after children understand their rights, but also that professionals understand clearly what children and young people want and need from them, through the training they are providing.</p>		<p>Care Champions Brief / Training materials (Deb Barnett)</p>
<p>Adults working with children and young people help them to understand and manage their early childhood experiences, to progress well and achieve educationally, and to influence decisions about their future. They return home with the support they need and when it is safe for them. If this is not</p>	<p>Quality of core assessments and care plans remains variable, and there have been significant delays in completing life story work / books for children moving into permanence, although dedicated resources have now been deployed to address this. The project to ensure children with a plan for adoption have a life story book before the celebration hearing concluded at the end of June 2015.</p> <p>Significant progress has been made in ensuring</p>	<p>Head of LAC</p>	<p>Data with respect to numbers / increased timeliness of securing permanence through SGO / Kinship route – we do not hold this data and have no means of measuring this.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">   </div> <p>Life Story Book end FOSTERING ANNUAL of project overview 3REPORT - amended A</p>





HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
<p>possible, they live in stable placements where they are helped to build positive relationships and maintain contact with their family and friends where this remains in their best interests.</p>	<p>that every avenue is thoroughly explored with respect to young people being enabled to remain securely and safely within their extended family network, and a dedicated SGO / kinship hub has been established as an adjunct to the fostering service</p> <p>For those young people unable for whom adoption is the only solution, performance remains very high in securing such placements.</p> <p>Within CHIPP the Review and Development of permanence process will look to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement a clear permanence process - Agree a clear permanency policy - Implement practice standards for permanence - Clarify roles and responsibilities <p>TISS (Therapeutic intensive support services) is supporting children to return home and reduce placement disruption. Key performance indicators will be measured within contract monitoring.</p> <p>The corporate parenting panel oversea progress of LAC and look to ensure that they have the same access to service as a parent would want</p>		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Copy of Adoption_Scorecards </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Copy of Adoption_Scorecards </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  Activity Report 1st October 2014 to 31st </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  TISS Overview.pdf </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  LAC Analysis 1.4.14-31.5.15.doc </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  WS3P18WP5-WPS v1.3.doc </div> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">Quarterly contract monitoring reviews</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy</p>



HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

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	for their own children. The strategy is currently being updated.		
Care plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that the child or young person's current and developing needs continue to be met.	There is consistently high performance in ensuring the regular review of care plans through the LAC review process. No such review can be held out of timescale without the explicit agreement of the Head of Service	Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	Performance data re: LAC review timeliness
Permanent homes and families are found for children and young people without unnecessary delay. Their needs are met and they live with their brothers and sisters if that is assessed as being in their best interests.	<p>Sibling assessments are being completed by Social Workers with the support of advanced practitioners. A clear matching document is already being used to match children to appropriate.</p> <p>The CHIPP project focussing on the review and development of permanence process will look to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement a clear permanence process - Agree a clear permanency policy - Implement practice standards for permanence - Clarify roles and responsibilities at all levels <p>However, we currently have no means of measuring the time it takes for permanence to be achieved other than in adoption, where</p>	Head of LAC	 WS3P18WP5-WPS v1.3.doc




HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	performance remains very strong.		
They do not experience placement moves unless they are part of a planned return home or in accordance with plans for their future.	<p>HIPPS / TISS services developed in response to the challenges faced in keeping our children in local foster placements.</p> <p>Arrangements to strengthen legal gateway and resources panels, including a review of children placed in IFA settings, are currently being implemented.</p>	Head of LAC	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  LAC Analysis 1.4.14-31.5.15.doc </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  HIPSS Overview.pdf </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;">  TISS Overview.pdf </div>
Their education is not disrupted unless it is their best interests and plans for their schooling provide any extra help they need to make up time and learning that has been missed.	A dedicated LAC education team advocates strongly for children's education to be a permanent focus and priority in care planning arrangements. All Looked After Children of school age have a Personal Education Plan.	Virtual Head Teacher	<div style="text-align: center;">  CPP Briefing - May 2015.ppt </div>
They develop safe and secure relationships with adults that persist over time. When support is needed, children, young people and families are able to access it	Our Care placement strategy and Permanence policy highlighted above seek to ensure that children have timely, secure and settled placements, whether within their extended families or beyond. The major challenges in	Head of LAC	

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
for as long as it is needed, throughout their childhood and beyond.	<p>delivering against this has been the instability in the workforce, the remedial actions with respect to this having been described above.</p> <p>Both the HIPPS / TISS Services, the current Edge of Care and future direct work services in development, and the restructured 16+ service will ensure the availability of targeted support.</p>		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  HIPSS Overview.pdf </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  TISS Overview.pdf </div> </div>

Adoption performance

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
Suitable adoptive families are identified without delay for all children for whom adoption is in their best interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two sibling pairs have been referred to After Adoption's 'Families that Last' project commissioned via West Mercia Adoption project. • Only 8 children with a plan for adoption do not yet have a placement identified. • 9 children have been matched since April 1st 2015 	Service Manager Adoption	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Copy of Adoption_Scorecards </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Copy of Adoption_Scorecards </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  Activity Report 1st October 2014 to 31st </div>
The recruitment and assessment arrangements are aligned with national systems and enable potential adopters to consider and to be considered for a wide range of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory guidance is followed. • Prospective and approved adopters are encouraged to be proactive in seeking placements. • Children and prospective adopters have been 	Service Manager Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective adopters are referred to the Adoption Register within 3 months of approval if a match has not been identified. • Matching agreements are completed on approval outlining measure that will be taken to

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

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children for whom they may provide a home.	supported to attend Adoption Activity days.		<p>facilitate matches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals are also made to AdoptWestMids and within the West Mercia area. • Matches for Herefordshire children and adopters have resulted from attendance at Adoption Activity days.
Children are able to develop safe and secure relationships with their adoptive family that persist over time. When support is needed, children, young people, families and carers are able to access it for as long as it is needed, throughout their childhood and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for foster carers 'Moving children on to adoption', delivered on a rolling program and informed by feedback from research and service users. • Increased capacity for play therapist to prepare children to move on has been funded via the Adoption Reform Grant. • Key Link Advisor from the Adoption Support Fund Liaised with the adoption service and attended a meeting including Health and commissioning colleagues to look at ways to maximise the market for adoption support. 	Service Manager Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback questionnaires are given to all those adopting Herefordshire children and report positively on the readiness of children to move on and the support offered post placement. • Successful applications have been made to the Adoption Support Fund for therapeutic interventions for families within Herefordshire and for Herefordshire children placed elsewhere.

The experiences and progress of care leavers

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
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HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

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<p>Young people leaving care and preparing to leave care receive support and help to assist them in making a successful transition to adulthood.</p>	<p>Some cases are still being closed and/or not handed over at the appropriate stage from the LAC team. Therefore these YP's miss out on a service they are entitled to. The YP's are eligible for a P.A from the age of 15 ³/₄ and then a pathway plan being formulated by 16 and 3 months. The case should be handed over fully at this juncture to a social worker in the 16+ team.</p> <p>Pathway plans are reviewed on a more regular basis. Addressed in supervision on a regular basis.</p> <p>Dedicated 16+ service is currently being watered down due to the influx of CIN and CP cases along with YP's being identified as homeless when not. This will have an impact on the service provided to care leavers.</p> <p>The 16+ TM will dip sample the 16+ cohort to ascertain whether they are Mumby complainant and if they exist.</p> <p>There needs to be a clear case transfer protocol</p>	<p>Service Manager 16+</p>	<p>Evidenced by 16+ relevant and former relevant report runs. A number of the cases were open to other teams but closed.</p> <p>(Add data of relevant YP's closed on FWi & date of handover of LAC cases into 16+)</p> <p>Evidenced by supervision notes and report runs on FWi</p> <p>The Chipp project should ensure that the 'care leavers' are not lost in the new service. A permanent team manager and permanent service manager with experience in leaving care should assist with ensuring care leavers remain prioritised within the 16+ service. (Evidenced on sharepoint)</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>between CiN and 16+ which sets out that when a young person turns 15, the case is transferred to the 16+ so that a pathway plan can be created by the team when the young person is 15 ¾.</p>		<p>Part of Chipp project to ensure pushed through into the structure and every day working practice. (Evidenced on sharepoint)</p>
<p>Plans for them to leave care are effective and address their individual needs.</p>	<p>The pathway plans will multi-agency and include the views of the young person to ensure that the plans are effective and take into account the young person's individual needs. To ensure this happens, and that the plans are meeting the needs of the individual needs of the young person, a first meeting will be chaired by social worker and at the meeting a decision made as to the most appropriate chair in future. Further meetings reviewing the pathway plans will take place if there are any significant events or at least once a year. Each young person has an allocated 16+ personal advisor and SW to ensure that the plan is being implemented and progress monitored.</p> <p>Pathway plans are being completed more regularly by social workers. Some social workers in the LAC and 16+ teams are not completing the plans in a timely fashion. This is to be highlighted when all</p>	<p>Service Manager 16+</p>	<p>Pathway plans will be routinely discussed in supervision.</p> <p>Add data old and new figures</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

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	<p>base line data has been gathered for the Chipp project, this will be disseminated to the relevant managers.</p>		
<p>They are safe and feel safe, particularly where they live.</p>	<p>Service user feedback is being utilised via complaints and participation. (approach QA for this data)</p> <p>A variety of accommodation options (e.g. supported lodgings, etc.) are available within Herefordshire and 16+ are prioritised. There must be a clear policy written to ensure that the housing provision provided to the 16+ team is not utilised by the CIN & CP cases. The housing stock provided is for care leavers and those deemed homeless.</p> <p>Young people's transition to independent living is 'tightened up' to prevent drift.</p>	<p>Service Manager 16+</p>	<p>This is currently not measured by 16+ but again part of the Chipp project how to measure 'soft' data. (Evidenced on sharepoint)</p> <p>Team manager is collecting data with regard to housing issues and lack of stock. Negotiating with Shypp. A new house by Shac has been sourced to support young people in their transition to adulthood. (Ian Wakefield).</p> <p>Evidenced by handovers of cases from S.W to 16+ P.A in a planned manner. Pathway plans evidencing work undertaken by SLP's etc. Pathway plans on FWi.</p> <p>Some s.w cases are still in drift however need tighter oversight by IRO and T.M.</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
			In last year, there have only been two occasions when a yp has been accommodated in a B&B for one night only whilst suitable accommodation is being sourced.
Young people acquire the necessary level of skill and emotional resilience to successfully move towards independence.	<p>Pathway Plans assess the young person emotionally and plan the transition into adulthood.</p> <p>Role of 16+ workers / PA's</p> <p>Life story training has just been undertaken with a number of workers. This will assist with supporting young people access their files.</p>	Service Manager 16+	See pathway plans. Regular visits are undertaken by social worker and P.A's. P.A's are requested by legislation to visit 8 weekly however following SILP and OFSTED agreed six weekly visits by P.A's.
They are able to successfully access education, employment, training and safe housing.	<p>To support our young people to fulfil their potential through FE and HE and celebrate their achievements, the Virtual head teacher and the LAC Education Team work closely with the relevant institutions, along with the personal advisor to secure appropriate options. Again, with enhanced emphasis on Pathway Plans being given, more robust data should be available in future.</p> <p>PA is allocated at 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ years of age (when notified by LAC S.W) or by trawling reports or by a notification by the IRO.</p>	Service Manager 16+	<p>This area requires improvement in terms of handovers of cases in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Care planning and transition is part of the chipp project for 16+ in order to ensure development of the plans improving YP's outcomes. (Evidenced on sharepoint)</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

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	<p>Ideally the case is to be handed over at the LAC review just prior to 16 years and three months (landmark review) to the 16+ team.</p> <p>The previous instability of 16+ team had an effect on cases being managed.</p>		Supervision records.
They enjoy stable and enduring relationships with staff and carers who meet their needs.	<p>PA is allocated during 16th year with transition arrangement across to 16+ team. LAC social worker allocated at an agreed suitable transition point.</p> <p>Stability of Leaving Care 16+ team is about to enter a new transition with the change to a 16+ service and with a temporary HoS. The team manager and senior social worker are both agency. No service manager to oversee strategic planning and monitoring of PI's.</p>	Service Manager 16+	<p>This area requires improvement in terms of case handover form other teams and being notified in advance of the pending case.</p> <p>The team has recently recruited some full time staff however there are several agency staff covering P.A roles that are on maternity leave and one on a sabbatical</p>

Key judgement: Leadership, management and governance

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
Leadership, management and governance	One of Council's three priority areas is "Keeping children safe and giving them a great start in	Director for Children's	

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
<p>arrangements comply with statutory guidance and together establish an effective strategy and good-quality services for children, young people and their families.</p>	<p>life.”</p> <p>With respect to educational achievement, the Lead Member receives regular updates on schools causing concern. Scrutiny receives an annual report on education achievement.</p> <p>With respect to its Safeguarding arrangements, a continuous improvement framework has been adopted which ensures good governance mechanisms are clearly defined.</p> <p>Monthly performance challenge meetings take place with the Chief Executive, Leader, Cabinet Member for Children’s Scrutiny Chairs and Group Leaders.</p> <p>Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive quarterly reports on progress against the improvement plan.</p> <p>Robust partnership working arrangements and governance are supported through the Lead Member being the chair of both the children and young people’s partnership and the Strategic Education Board, and the DCS and Lead Member are members of LSCB.</p>	<p>Wellbeing</p>	<p>Notes of relevant Cabinet Member Briefings</p> <p>General Overview and Scrutiny Committee report (January).</p> <p>Continuous Improvement Framework</p> <p>Notes of the monthly performance challenge meetings.</p> <p>Notes of Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<p>There is a clear and up-to-</p>	<p>A Joint commissioning strategy being developed</p>	<p>Head of</p>	<p>Joint commissioning strategy due to be</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
<p>date strategy for commissioning and developing services delivered by a suitably qualified and experienced workforce that meets the needs of local children and young people and families.</p>	<p>in conjunction with the children and young people's partnership. The strategy will be informed by the Children's Integrated Needs Assessment and the Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18</p> <p>Monitoring of the effectiveness of the strategy will sit with the children and young people's partnership.</p> <p>A workforce strategy has been developed for safeguarding and family support which includes an extensive recruitment strategy which covers a financial year. The strategy includes 'growing our own' (NQSWs); national and international recruitment campaigns and creative options to secure quality long term interim workers and attract them into permanent posts.</p> <p>There have continued to be however difficulties in implementing strategic workforce restructuring in a systematic way, in response to budget pressures. For example, a decision was made to reduce the number of Team Managers in the CiN service from 6 to 4, and create a new tier of senior practitioners. However, the Team manager posts were removed in advance of the senior practitioners being recruited (and several posts remained unfilled, or covered by agency staff). There had been insufficient planning as to</p>	<p>Children's Commissioning</p>	<p>presented to Cabinet in September / October 2015.</p> <p>Children's Integrated Needs Assessment</p> <p>CYP Plan – due to be presented to Cabinet and Council in July / September 2015.</p> <p>Workforce strategy - impact should be reduction in reliance of agency staff and stable workforce which in turn improves the outcomes for children by SWs have lower caseloads and fewer changes in SWs.</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>changes in roles and responsibilities for these new posts, as well as induction, training and development. For these reasons these posts have been difficult to fill, and are now carrying caseloads higher than envisaged. A much greater focus on thorough management of change processes will be adopted in future when such changes are desired or required, and a rolling training and development programme for new posts created will be implemented.</p>		
<p>The Director of Children's Services (DCS), the lead elected member and the senior management team have a comprehensive knowledge about what is happening at the 'front line' to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively. They know and understand the difference that help, care and protection are making. They oversee systematic performance management and monitoring that demonstrate rigorous and timely action in response</p>	<p>Monthly performance challenge meetings take place to scrutinise key performance indicators and monitor progress against the Improvement Plan. The DCS also regularly attends key management meetings (SMT / CMM) and undertakes audit activity alongside Social Workers with respect to specific cases. The quality assurance framework delivers quarterly reports with respect to compliance with standards, thematic issues identified as part of the improvement plan and complaints and representations issues and themes. Learning from these processes informs the improvement plan and wider workforce development.</p> <p>Regular reports are presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet, and a series of mandatory elected</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Safeguarding & Family Support</p>	<p>Members briefings and seminars were organised for the period 2014/15 and included:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education Strategy 2. Ofsted /Childrens Safeguarding 3. Childrens and Families Bill / Education & SEN 4. Corporate Parenting 5. Closing the Gap / Families First 6. Improvement Plan / HSCB Annual Report 7. Education Attainment <p>Further members briefings and seminars have been arranged for the forthcoming year 2015/16 and will be starting with Corporate Parenting and the Capital Investment</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
to service deficiencies or new demands.	<p>members' seminars are provided to ensure all are fulfilling their duties as corporate parents.</p> <p>With respect to Education and Commissioning arrangements, regular reporting is provided on achievement results, early years data, the progress of NEETS, and the progress against the 'closing the gap' and 'Troubled Families' initiatives.</p>	Assistant Director, Education & Commissioning	Strategy for Education.
The local authority works with partners to deliver early help, protect children and young people, improve educational attainment and narrow the gap for the children looked after and care leavers. It acts as a strong and effective corporate parent for children looked after and those leaving or who have left care.	<p>Partnership working has been refreshed this year through a formal review and revision of the Children and Young People's plan, with external consultancy brought in to support its progression. The CYPP has overseen this activity and has revised its operational arrangement to reflect its 5 identified priority areas, with SMART objectives and outcome measures to assist in the monitoring of the implementation and success of the CYP Plan. This is further enhanced by the development of integrated strategies with respect to early help and mental health.</p> <p>The Corporate parenting panel has been revitalised through the greater involvement of children and young people, supported by the development of the 'care champions' roles, who</p>	AD, F&S / E&C	

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>are similarly taking a lead in the development of the children in care council.</p> <p>The existing Virtual head teacher is leaving the authority in August 2015, and recruitment is underway to identify a successor.</p>		
<p>Leaders, both professional and political, drive continuous improvement so that the local authority is consistently effective as the lead agency for the protection and care of children and young people and as a corporate parent.</p>	<p>A Continuous improvement framework was adopted in January 2015 as a governance model to oversee service improvement and development. As part of this the revised Children and Young People's Plan contains a specific safeguarding section which links to the HSCB business plan priorities.</p> <p>We have a strong and well supported politically Corporate parenting panel and a Children in care council recently enhanced further through the development of the Care Champions role.</p>	<p>Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>CIF</p> <p>CPP minutes</p>
<p>Partnerships are supported by transparent and rigorous governance between the local authority and key statutory, private and voluntary organisations.</p>	<p>The HSCB, Health and Wellbeing board and CYPP have agreed and 'joined up' terms of reference, and a working protocol exists between the HSCB and CYPP to ensure clarity of roles and governance arrangements.</p> <p>At the start of the 15/16 financial year, the HSCB / HSAB / CSP integrated business unit was established to ensure thematic priorities</p>	<p>Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>ToR's / Protocol</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Area for Improvement	Progress	Lead	Evidence / impact
	<p>across the partnership and economies of scale.</p> <p>The strategic education board has clear terms of reference, and it's business links closely to the Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership Framework.</p>		
<p>Shared priorities are clear and resourced. There is effective engagement with the relevant local partnerships including the Health and Well-being Board.</p>	<p>As above, the Integrated HSCB / HSAB / CSP integrated business unit ensuring thematic priorities across the partnership</p> <p>The CYPP is a sub group of the HWBB, and appropriately membership across the two bodies.</p>	<p>Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</p>	
<p>The DCS works closely with the LSCB chair and the chief executive holds the LSCB chair to account for the effectiveness of the LSCB.</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings held between DCS, Chief Executive and Independent Chair of the LSCB. The chair has objectives set, receives an annual appraisal and is required to ensure the production of an annual report as to the Boards delivery of its business plan.</p>	<p>Director for children's wellbeing</p>	<p>Minutes</p>

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

Getting to Good – Overview of progress Dec 14 – August 15

Progress with the improvement plan over the past eight months has been variable. Of particular note:

1. Senior leadership has remained stable in terms of CEX, Leader of Council, Director of Children's Wellbeing, Assistant Directors. Following Council elections a new Lead Member has been appointed, the Council have reaffirmed Children and Young People as the top priority. Members are on track for 100% of them to have completed mandatory safeguarding and corporate parenting training by the end of September.
2. The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board has a new chair from March 2015
3. The Health and Wellbeing Board has produced a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and is overseeing a significant transformation programme of health and social care. The three priorities are children and young people, older people and mental health
4. The Children's Partnership has produced a new Children's Plan which is being approved through the governance processes of the relevant organisations over the autumn. The six priorities are Early Years, Children with Disabilities, Adolescents, Early Help, Safeguarding and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing.
5. The recruitment and retention strategy for social workers has continued and particular successes include:
 - the recruitment of 5 experienced social workers from Romania with a potential further campaign to follow in the autumn subject to the successful induction of the first cohort of staff;
 - 3 experienced social workers from the national Fruitful Careers campaign who are commencing between September and November;
 - 16 Newly Qualified Social workers graduating from the Social Work Academy and being placed in teams between x and y. There has been a particularly
 - marked improvement in the number and profile of the Independent Reviewing Officer/Child Protection Chair service
 - the Children with Disabilities Service is on track to have a fully permanent staff group by the end of September.

This is good progress to achieving the permanent/agency staffing profile change. Permanent staff retention remains strong.

- 3 The Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service was mobilised in February 2015, to support children with complex and significant needs returning from residential placements to be supported within family and community placements. The service is operating ahead of schedule and has already recruited 5 therapeutic fostering families; it is working with yy children, has enabled the Council to reduce spend on residential placements by £200k and has only had one placement breakdown since starting operation. developed??
- 4 A new experienced Chair of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board has been appointed and started in March 2015, along with an experienced interim Board manager, who is leading the development of a new integrated business unit supporting both safeguarding boards and the community safety partnership. The Board has seen a significant tightening and prioritisation of business, a stronger focus on practice and a sharper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and rates of improvement. As a result, the Board has identified weaknesses in training and development, the pace of

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

ongoing development in child sexual exploitation and in the progress of addressing the inconsistencies in social work practice.

- 5 Educational attainment of Children in Care has improved in a number of areas, with 100% reaching a good level of development, increasing numbers achieving year 1 phonics, and 17% achieving 5 A*-C including English and Maths at GCSE level. It should be noted that the numbers of children are relatively small, often 5-10 children in each cohort.

Alongside these successes however, some significant challenges remain:

9. Practice improvement particularly in relation to consistently adequate or good practice, remains stubbornly difficult to move forward. Reasons for this include:

10. High caseloads caused by a shortage of suitable quality agency staff and a significant turnover of the agency staff within MASH and the Children in Need teams. This has meant that in some teams, some social workers have been carrying caseloads in the high 20s, which is far higher than the figure of 16-18 which is the Council's aim. The council has taken alternative steps to tackle this, through the employment of additional business support staff and social work assistants. There has been a specific impact on the previously positive morale in these teams, however.

11. The implementation of a new career structure, introducing senior practitioners. In introducing these new roles, a shortage of agency staff and lag in securing permanent staff mean that all posts were filled by agency staff, 8 out of 9 of whom have now left the organisation. This means this role is not yet fulfilling expectations

12. Changes within front line management – following a period where all but one front line manager post was permanent, currently xx posts are permanent and yy agency. This has caused particular issues within the MASH and Child in Need teams. As a result of this, the MASH and Child in Need teams have a bespoke development plan.

13. The impact of re-auditing c600 decisions in MASH – following concerns regarding front line management decision making, c600 decisions were reviewed. This led to an increase in workload in the MASH and CIN teams, on top of the day to day work. On reflection, the Council should have implemented a special project approach, which may well have reduced the stress within the front line child protection teams.

14. Whole service audit activity has been affected by high caseloads, as has the speed of implementing some changes in practice as a result of audit activity. The audit programme is being reassessed to ensure it is both manageable and continues to have positive impact. The Social Work Academy is specifically focussing on developments to 'close the loop' to ensure learning is monitored and evaluated over time.

15. The management of some change in the Children with Disabilities service has been slow; some families have continued to face numerous changes in social workers and this has had a direct impact

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

on the ability of the service to establish effective relationships with some families and children, and confidence with this service is not yet at the level it needs to be.

16. The number of children on child protection plans has increased again from 159 in April 2015 to 230 in September 2015. Although this mirrors the trend of growth at this point in the year, it is of concern.

17. Although the number of children in care has remained stable at c275 for six months, there are a concerning number of adolescents coming into the care system. This, combined with a steady increase in placements within independent fostering agencies, of 26, has caused a £1.1m overspend. The Council is implementing a detailed plan to address the growth in IFA placements and is focussing with partners on taking a fresh approach to supporting troubled adolescents.

Priorities for the next six months:

The focus of staff, managers and partners over the next six months will be on:

- Stabilisation of the teams, the induction of the new permanent staff and the management of the workloads
- Focus on improving social work practice
- Focus on improving performance
- Establishment and commencement of the detailed action plans for the Children's Plan
- Implementation of the budget recovery plans and the further development of the five year financial strategy
- Consultation and implementation of a revised approach to the direct work services in early help
- Development of the next phase of the MASH into an all-age MASH
- Preparation for the upgrade from Frameworki to Mosaic
- Preparation for a move into improved office accommodation.
- Recruitment of a new Assistant Director

School Improvement Self- Evaluation

The council's approach to supporting improvement in schools is subject to Ofsted inspection. To provide the council with an overview of the current strengths and weaknesses a self-evaluation has been carried out, led by the Head of Learning and Achievement. This is a live document and the latest version is attached. The self-evaluation is being reviewed this term with head teachers. Officers would welcome any comments that Scrutiny may have.

Children Centre's

Following inspections of two children's centres the directorate took immediate action to review the operational issues and arrangements across all children's centres. Line management and advisory boards have been strengthened, immediate health and safety issues have been addressed and data and performance management arrangements are an area of focus. The arrangements are being

HEREFORDSHIRE SELF EVALUATION

reviewed as part of the Children and Young People's Plan Early Years programme of work, taking into account the resources available and the current Ofsted inspection framework which poses challenges to the current service offer.