

Children's Wellbeing Directorate

Background on Herefordshire's intensive therapeutic support service

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Introduction

1. There are 3 elements to Herefordshire's intensive therapeutic support service which are:

- i) Herefordshire's in-house fostering service, who have responsibility for recruiting, assessing and supervising carers for the HIPSS service;
- ii) Delivery of the Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS);
- iii) Therapeutic Intervention Support Service (TISS).

Contractual arrangements

2. In 2014 Action for Children was awarded the contract to work with the council to develop and deliver an intensive therapeutic placement support service and therapeutic intervention support service for some of the most challenging children and young people in care or at risk of coming into care, in Herefordshire.
3. The contract was awarded on 1st September 2014 for 3 years with an option to renew for a further year. Approval was given in May 2017 to renew the contract for 7 months, from 1st September 2017 to 31st March 2018. The contract value since the start date 1 September 2014 to March 2018, will be at a maximum of £1,956,183.
4. The initial 4 months of the contract were allocated for mobilisation which was essential to enable Action for Children to:
 - Establish relationships with key partners in Herefordshire
 - Establish property and infrastructure to ensure commencement of the service in September
 - Assign timescales, tasks and responsible persons
 - Agree reporting mechanisms with commissioners
 - Recruitment campaign to commence
 - Final delivery plan agreed with commissioners
 - Agree contract performance and outcomes with commissioner.
5. During this period Herefordshire's in-house fostering team started to recruit and assess HIPSS carers. However there is no service level agreement or agreed targets to recruiting carers. The service is monitored through internal systems.
6. HIPSS and TISS is subject to performance monitoring. This is based on target outputs, outcomes and evidence of parental/child/young person satisfaction.

Quarterly monitoring meetings are held, which are chaired by the contract manager from Herefordshire's contracts and commissioning team, to discuss progress being made against the outcomes and any issues that may have arisen. Action for Children also submit annual reports for both services.

What is Herefordshire's intensive placement support service (HIPSS) and therapeutic intervention support service (TISS)?

7. HIPSS is an intensive therapeutic support service for some of the most challenging children and young people in care or at risk of care within the county. Through working with the Safeguarding and Family Support Division, this service aims to reduce the numbers of children who step up from family based care into residential care and aid the transition of children stepping down to local family based care.
8. HIPSS and TISS is based upon a pre-developed model with excellent outcomes (MIST) which has provided a firm foundation. This experience has been critical in underpinning the ethos and shape of the service.
9. The objectives for HIPSS is that they will:-
 - work only with children and young people aged between 7 and 18 years whose needs lie within Level 4 of the Herefordshire Levels of Need Pathway and
 - are at the threshold of being placed in institutional Care, or
 - are already within some form of institutional care or
 - have recently left such care.
10. Through working closely with social care whilst remaining independent Action for Children are aware of the challenges experienced by social care teams and allows them (Action for Children) to assess, formulate and intervene, so influencing the system without being part of it.
11. The flexibility within the service regarding 'what' is delivered is necessarily grounded in clinical models (behavioural, systemic, attachment focussed etc.) informing the 'how'. The clinical skills within the team, from a variety of backgrounds, for example teaching, social work, youth work and school nursing experience, offers differing experiences and ethos and is crucial in informing the way they apply clinical skills to meet common goals.
12. HIPSS is an intensive service necessary for only a small number of young people, aged 7-18 at time of referral who have the most complex emotional behavioural needs. It is important to recognise the service is not able to support those with complex health, education and/or care needs, this has resulted in some children not meeting the referral criteria.

13. Action for Children are commissioned to provide individually tailored intensive wrap-around, (multi-systemic), therapeutic intervention packages as an alternative to institutional care. They are outcome focussed and built on a robust evidence-based approach. They will support children and their carers in foster placements, kinship care, special guardianship arrangements or those stepping-down from residential care.
14. HIPSS is available to children, carers, and professional social work teams on a 24hour, 7 Days a week, 52 weeks of the year basis. They achieve this by providing an “On Call” service outside normal office hours.
15. Through working closely with Herefordshire looked after and fostering teams, the latter having responsibility for providing and supervising the carers, it was envisaged the service would support 10 to 15 children annually, with 8-10 children being supported at any one time.
16. Complementary to HIPSS, TISS is a linked service targeted at other children and families being supported by the Safeguarding and Family Support Division of the Directorate. By adopting a similar operational ethos and models of intervention as HIPSS, its aim is to promote the use of similar approaches to divert families from the need for statutory interventions and to achieve better overall outcomes for children and young people. This will reduce the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan or entering the looked after system.
17. The objectives for TISS is that it will support and promote the use of a range of evidence based therapeutic models that will make a significant difference to the outcomes of children and young people in need as defined within Level 3 and 4 of the Herefordshire Levels of Need Pathway.

Such therapeutic models will:

 - enhance the professional capability in both in fieldwork and family support services through good practise models of intervention
 - ensure consistency of approach if children move across teams or between services,
 - reduce the need for LAC and CP statutory interventions. - will contribute to a reduction in the number of cases subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) process and equip social workers to provide best evidence in court processes should this be required.
18. The service’s Lead Practitioner will undertake some direct work with families but will primarily be required to guide and support the department’s own staff to provide individually–tailored intensive wrap-around (multi-systemic) therapeutic intervention packages aimed at meeting the requirements of Children in Need, LAC and Child Protection Plans.

19. Whilst the Lead Practitioner undertakes some direct work with families their primary role is to guide and support Herefordshire’s social care staff to provide individually tailored intensive wrap-around, (multi-systemic), therapeutic intervention packages aimed at meeting the requirements of Children in Need, LAC and Child Protection Plans.
20. TISS is available on a flexible 37 hours working week basis.
21. As Action for Children state, HIPSS and TISS complement each other and TISS is not an ‘advice service’ or a ‘therapy’ service. It is a consultative emotional wellbeing service which seeks to inform practice using psychological ideas at every level. Through supporting the professionals to expand their knowledge and understanding, the aim is to support the development of care plans and interventions not only for families receiving support but for all families they have contact with now and in the future
22. CAMHS state, “HIPSS and TISS provide focussed and specialised resources for children and young people in care or on the edge of care. It provides support to the caring network around each child and young person producing much needed attention to building the capacity for good relationships and positive attachments. It provides a creative flexible approach so that the use of resources is maximised to meet need”.
23. There is a clear understanding of differences in roles and responsibilities between the two services, with opportunities for a shared approach, case discussion, joint working, consultation and collaboration in the context of meeting highly complex and challenging needs.

Referral process.

24. Referrals, and priorities for HIPSS and TISS are discussed and agreed at the bi-monthly HIPSS and TISS steering group.

Action for Children (Chair)	Head of service for Looked After Children
Childrens social work manager for fostering services	HIPSS senior practitioner,
LAC team manager,	16+ team manager,
Virtual school head,	CAMHS
Team manager from fieldwork	Representatives from HIPSS & TISS

25. There is a clear understanding of differences in roles and responsibilities within the steering group. This provides opportunities for a shared approach, case discussion,

joint working, consultation and collaboration in the context of meeting highly complex and challenging needs.

26. The agreed criteria for HIPSS referrals, requires the child/young person to meet some or all of the following:
 - At Tier 4 of the Herefordshire Level of Need Pathway
 - LAC or at risk of LAC
 - Aged 7-18 at referral
 - Has had multiple placement disruptions
 - Excluded from education or at risk of becoming so
 - Presenting with challenging and risk taking behaviours such as absconding, sexual exploitation, offending, self-harm, aggression.
 - Willing to at least discuss becoming involved

27. The referral process starts with the children's social worker making a telephone referral to request a formal consultation with HIPSS, so they can discuss the young person's history and needs.

28. The case is then referred to the HIPSS and TISS steering group, who will look at matching and priority needs.

29. If a suitable match is identified meetings are arranged which include education, potential carers and key staff within the team around the child, (network meeting), to ensure accurate information is shared and the needs of the young person are clear.

30. The young person's social worker is integral to the process working and agreeing the plan and timescales proposed as being in the best interests of the young person.