

**Herefordshire Children's Safeguarding Social Work Self-Assessment to end of June 2020/2021****Overview: - (Chris Baird Director for Children and Families)**

Herefordshire children's safeguarding self-assessment has been produced to broadly reflect the child's journey across service areas. It also incorporates reflections on quality assurance, performance management, systems and development and workforce including recruitment and retention.

The self-assessment is updated on a quarterly basis with each head of service/service manager taking an active role in producing the assessment for their area. This continues our approach of developing our performance management culture. This self-assessment is up to the end of the fourth quarter for the 2019/20 financial year.

Herefordshire has been rated as requiring improvement for overall effectiveness by Ofsted in the 2018 inspection of local authority children's services. Within this the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection and the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection were judged as requiring improvement. The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families was judged inadequate, overall in not securing an environment within which good quality social work can flourish, whilst recognising that some areas had improved since the last inspection insufficient progress had been made in a number of key areas.

The Ofsted focused visit of January 2019 looked at the local authority's arrangements for receiving referrals about children who may be in need or at risk of significant harm, children transferring to and from Early Help services, the effectiveness of child protection enquiries and the quality of assessments and interventions for children in need of help and protection. From a very low base action taken by senior leaders had improved the overall stability of the social care workforce and that this had been achieved over a relatively short period of time. Plans for improvement were appropriately focused, with a realistic view of quality of practice which was too variable and not yet good. Revised performance management and quality assurance approaches were starting to show some early impact. The pace of progress was hampered by staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting to key management posts including the lead officer for quality assurance. There continued to be strong political and corporate support for children's services.

These themes were echoed in the Ofsted focused visit of December 2019 which looked at our arrangements for children in need and children subject to a child protection plan. This included elements of contextual safeguarding, particularly peer on peer abuse. Little progress had been made in improving the quality of practice, including the quality of management supervision and guidance and timely recording and response to audits. Work was affected by recruitment. There was recognition that we know ourselves well, that the quality assurance framework provides appropriate and in depth knowledge, that there is senior leadership commitment to the service including resourcing and further plans for development. There was recognition of the work in the children with disabilities team which was noted as being demonstrably different. There was also strong recognition of the extensive strategic and operational work regarding peer on peer abuse, including the work with education settings.

Herefordshire has continued to implement the recommendations from external high-performing Partners in Practice (PIP), from both Doncaster and Essex Councils in 2019. Using PiP support was planned to continue to in 2020 to support our improvement and has the commitment from the DfE. We have been in discussions with the DfE and Essex and will be taking this improvement work forward in quarter 2 and quarter3; meeting with colleagues from Essex virtually.

**Summary: Early Help (Nicky Turvey – Early Help Manager)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The Early Help approach in Herefordshire is 'Working towards Stronger Families and Connected Communities'.

Early Help has developed considerably over the past two years since the introduction of Herefordshire's Early Help Assessment (EHA) which replaced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). There are 1324 EHAs (June 2020) compared with 500 CAFs in January 2018.

Families with emerging or more complex needs below the threshold of requiring statutory intervention are identified and assessed using the EHA. The assessment is of the whole family and identifies their unmet needs then an outcome focused support plan is drawn up with the family to bring about sustainable change and leave the family stronger for the future. Each family has a 'Key Worker' who is the main link for the family and coordinates the agencies required to bring about the sustainable change.

Partnership working is strong within Early Help in Herefordshire. Data for the year 2019/20: The Key Worker for EHAs - Primary Schools 22.6%, Health Visitors 17.2%, Other Health professionals 10.9%, Secondary Schools 10.2% and Local Authority early help staff 28.3%.

Early Help is fully integrated with the Troubled Families programme, the EHA is linked to the troubled families criteria and outcomes for families to the Herefordshire Family Outcomes Framework, recently updated in line with the new Troubled Families Financial Framework 2020/21.

Early Help Assessments are managed by the Early Help Coordinator team who administer the assessments, support key workers and organise and facilitate Family Network Meetings (FNMs). FNMs are multi-agency meetings where partner agencies meet to discuss cases which are sticking (with the consent of the family), share good practice and discuss any community concerns. These are usually held twice termly in eight locations throughout the county and are well attended by representatives from schools, health professionals, mental health workers, housing associations, Police and voluntary agencies. Due to Covid-19 they are now taking place virtually. This has had positive consequences with the meetings having improved attendance. The FNM's are usually chaired by an experienced Early Help Manager and social care provide a senior social worker at every other meeting to give advice and guidance on cases. The presence of a social care representative since November 2018 has been appreciated by partner agencies.

Early Help internal support services are trained in Make Every Contact Count (MECC) so are equipped to talk to, signpost and support families about healthy eating, oral health (childhood obesity and dental health are both issues in Herefordshire), physical activity, smoking cessation, alcohol consumption, sexual health and mental wellbeing. Early Help delivers Solihull and Triple P parenting programmes to mixed groups of parents from those accessing just universal services to those with children on Child Protection Plans. The programmes are Solihull for parents of children 0-5 years, Triple P standard for parents of children 2-10, Triple P Teen for parents with teenagers, and Stepping Stones Triple P for parents of children with additional needs. The delivery of parenting programmes to groups of parents in a building have been suspended due to Covid-19 but 'bite sized' parenting workshops are being held virtually.

There are three specialist family support services working with the whole family with EHAs. They go into the family home and work with individual family members and families as a whole. The three services are: an internal, experienced Early Help Family Support team which works with families with the most complex needs and those families stepping down from statutory intervention; Vennture4families, a commissioned service using a professional link worker and volunteer model; and Homestart, also commissioned and which uses a volunteer model. Vennture work with families who are lower level three on the Herefordshire level of needs and Homestart with families with less complex needs. The specialist services seek to address the core issues affecting families systemically such as parenting issues, mental health issues, domestic abuse, problem debts, parental conflict, drugs and alcohol abuse, with a strong focus on worklessness using the Troubled Families Employment Advisor.

Implication to the services of Covid-19 and the work around:

The three specialist services have continued to support families and work with them to bring about sustainable change. Each service followed their own organisations guidelines as to what they could do. The internal Early Help family Support team suspended home visits at the start of Covid-19 except for a very few cases where work was required to stop the family escalating into statutory services but these visits followed Public Health/Council guidelines and PPE was used if required. Work continued with all families by phone or using 'WhatsApp' video facility. As lockdown has been eased visits have increased, support workers are again working with families in their home or outdoor space following Public Heath/Council guidelines.

These specialist services continue to close cases with a 'Family Wellbeing Plan' which leaves the family with information on the success they've achieved and where to go within their family, friends and community if they have a 'wobble' rather than perhaps letting things slide and requiring specialist services intervention again. The plan can have a photo of the family on it and be laminated so it can be put on the fridge for easy access.

The link between Early Help and the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) continues to develop and the plan to have an Early Help Hub (EHH) linked to MASH is moving forward. The EHH will be located beside MASH and take all level 1, 2 & 3 contacts and level 3 MARF's thereby ensuring families are offered the 'Right Support at the Right Time' and releasing MASH to spend more time on investigating level 4 cases. Any cases deemed to be level 4 by the EHH will go directly into MASH and vice versa those cases on further investigation by MASH which don't meet threshold will go to the EHH for signposting, advice and guidance or support through an EHA being offered as appropriate.

Children Centre services was restructured in June 2019 in order to target resources to support the most vulnerable families with children 0-5 years and use some resource to engage and map community assets for families with children 0-18. The service now has a team of early years support workers who deliver one to one support in families' homes using evidence based intervention such as Let's Talk with your Baby, Communication Steps, Bookstart Corner, Solihull Parenting, and they can give guidance and support on, for example, healthy eating, dental health and immunisations. During Covid-19 this service continued to work remotely with families by phone and Whatsapp video conferencing and only visiting in exceptional circumstances and then following Public Health/Council guidelines. The service has now produced videos of some of their programmes so they can work through these remotely with families. As with the internal early help family support team this team is now visiting some families and working with them in their home or outside space as appropriate.

Throughout lockdown all the internal early help services were involved in delivering food parcels dropping off activities to vulnerable families.

The Solid Roots programme is an investment to improve outcomes for foundation (0-5) children and families. This includes training for early years professionals to ensure children have adequate speech, language and communication skills so that they are ready to engage in school. Training early year's professionals in the Solihull Approach and purchasing Solihull licenses so all parents in Herefordshire can access Solihull parenting courses on line and training the early year's workforce in a range of areas to ensure all children reach a good level of development. During Covid-19 the training for early year's professionals has been suspended but the Solihull on line parenting courses continue to be promoted.

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Early Help Assessment data is collated and analysed on a monthly basis. The data has shown the increase in the number of families being identified, assessed and supported to achieve sustainable change. In 2018 there were 500 Early Help cases with evidence of approximately 30% making sustainable change, in July 2020 there were 1324 early help cases. The conversion rate at the end of the Troubled Families Programme phase 2 was 71.0% of families who met at least two Troubled Families criteria and made sustainable change for at least 6 months (Troubled Families data).

Early Help assessments are quality assured when received by the Early Help Coordinator (EHC) team. Key workers from partner agencies are supported by the EHC team to improve their assessment skills if required.

The support work of the Early Help family support team is audited on a monthly basis, any actions are addressed within a month through individual supervision sessions or any trends at team meetings. Feedback from families about the service is collated and analysed quarterly in order to develop the service and address any issues. The feedback is almost always positive and compliments about the work of the team is regularly received from families and partner agencies. The two Early Help commissioned services are regularly reviewed at quarterly monitoring meetings.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Identifying and assessing families in need of Early Help by partner agencies is well established. 500 cases in January 2018 and 1324 in June 2020.
2. Children Centre Services became integrated into Early Help and the EHA is used to access the service in 2019. They now supporting the most vulnerable families with children 0-5 years. The measure will be through Troubled Families payment by results.
3. Two primary schools are paying for the 'added value' of having an EH FSW linked to their school as they see the benefit of the work they do.
4. All three specialist family support services are using the closure of cases with a 'Family Wellbeing Plan' This leaves the family with a plan of who to go to within their own network of family, friends and the community before requiring any specialist services, leaving them stronger.

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. To further develop the Early Help work in MASH through a single front door. The development of the Early Help Hub is well underway and will go live on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020.
2. To develop a strength based approach within Early Help – Signs of Safety to be rolled out over the next three years. Training to early help staff and partner agencies to commence in September 2020.
3. To develop the use of Mosaic as a database for all early help partners. It is used as a caseload management system by internal council teams which allows information to be shared easily when cases are stepped up or down. The development will be through a portal - Finestre with controlled access for partners but allowing information to flow both ways. March 2021. Work on the portal is going well and will be ready to test in September 2020. Partners agreeing to test the system are CAMHs and 2 schools.

	<p>4. To improve the knowledge of Herefordshire’s community assets available to families and share this knowledge on WISH (Wellbeing, Information &amp; Signposting for Herefordshire) and with partner agencies. Phase 1 completed. Regular checking of information and sharing at Family Network Meetings. Development work going on with Adults &amp; Communities Directorate to incorporate this area of work into the Talk Community and Community Hub service.</p>
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Thinking about practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that the early help practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being early help practice has just lost its and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



#### **Summary: MASH and Assessment Service (Sue Rogers – Head of MASH and Assessment)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The June 2018 OFSTED inspection identified that the “Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is responsive and ensures that good-quality information sharing results in strong decision-making”. The January 2019 OFSTED focused visit commented “effectiveness of responses in the MASH has been maintained and improved since the last inspection”.

OFSTED noted that a significant number of contacts are signposted away from children’s social care, which would indicate that too many children were being referred that did not reach threshold for intervention. 1938 contacts were received in Q1, 366, 18.89% contacts progressed to referral. This is below the target of 20%. Contact completed with 24 hours is 68.1%, this is an increase in contacts being completed within timescales but not at the target of 95%. Q1 has seen consistency in contacts converting to referrals. The Head of Service for MASH and Assessment and Early Help visited Redbridge Local Authority in December 2019. Redbridge Local Authority are Ofsted rated “outstanding” and are achieving their target of 95% of contacts being completed within 24 hours. Work has been completed to strengthen our approach, learning from Redbridge to develop the front door. Currently we have a system that all Multi agency referral forms come through the MASH which could be diverted to Early Help. As from 21st September 2020 an Early Help Hub will be established working alongside MASH. The Early Help Hub will receive all contact at level 1, 2 and 3 of the Herefordshire level of need response and guidance document, so targeted support can be offered to children and families.

All contacts have a chronology of past risk, concern and involvement with Children's Services. Every attempt is made to contact the parents/ carers for consent for multi-agency checks which are routinely requested. It is an expectation that the threshold document will be used by partners to inform making referrals to MASH, and by MASH social workers to determine the best course of action required for that child/family. There is also an expectation consent will be sought by the referring agency prior to a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) being submitted.

There continues to be a strong multi-agency commitment and engagement with the MASH. Police, Health, Early Help and Education are the main agencies based within the MASH and Probation, Youth Offending Service (YOS) and West Mercia Women's Aid are our virtual partners.

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) service is commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Worcestershire Children First provide the out of hours services for Herefordshire. There is a senior manager from Herefordshire available to make decisions when required.

OFSTED noted that Domestic Abuse notifications are not triaged prior to them arriving into MASH and that the process potentially could have left children at risk or not responded to in a timely manner. Work has been undertaken with partner agencies to develop a process that effectively manages the Domestic Abuse notifications. This was enhanced during COVID-19 to respond to a possible increase in Domestic Abuse incidents. This has now been reviews and a proposal has been put forward to partner agencies to implement on 1st September 2020. Domestic Abuse meetings take place on a daily basis with partner agencies on Domestic Abuse incidents that have been assessed at level 2 and 3 according to the Level of Need Response and Guidance Document. This is to ensure appropriate information sharing and support is provided. Level 4 domestic abuse incidents are investigated by MASH. Safe lives have been consulted and further discussions are planned to consider their models and utilizing their training opportunities.

The OFSTED report of July 2018 outlined an inconsistency in the quality of assessments. During the summer of 2018, much work was undertaken, led by the then Quality Assurance manager to develop skills in completing assessments within the service. It was noted that this was not consistent and the historical concerns were not routinely considered. The focused visit in January 2019 evidenced some improvement in the quality of assessments, but identified some children were not being seen in a timely manner. To address this, there is now an expectation children will be seen within 3 days of a case being allocated for the purposes of an assessment being completed, and this is reported on. Data evidences that 72.52% of children are seen within 3 days of the assessment being initiated. This is an improvement but below the target of 95%. Smaller caseloads and weekly reporting will drive this forward.

Time frames for Children and Family Assessments being completed are set at 95%. The Assessment Service are standing at an average of 92.66% completed within timescales.

Child in Need cases remain in the Assessment Teams. There are 7.5 full time equivalent Family Support Worker posts within the Assessment Teams who provide support and direct work with the children and families who are subject to a Child in Need plan. Team Managers are chairing the first Child in Need meeting and devising the Child in Need plan. Case supervision is provided by the Team Manager and the Family Support Worker to ensure consistency and that the plan is progressing appropriately. Senior Practitioners chair the Review Child in need meetings. The Child in Need guidance has been up dated.

To address the timeliness of 3 day visits, Children and Family Assessments and caseloads, the Head of Service and Managers have weekly performance

meetings to ensure targets are met. Team Managers have a monthly meeting with other Team Managers, HOS and AD's to present their teams data, what is working well and what are the challenges

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

A weekly performance report measures the overall rate of contacts that the service receives and the outcome of all contacts following the initial screening process. This is measured in terms of the percentage of referrals passed to children's social care, advice and information provided or cases diverted to early intervention. Multi agency audits are completed to review cases that have not progressed from contact to referral to scrutinize decision making. The outcome of these audits is fed into the MASH Partnership Forum.

The weekly performance report provides details of all strategy meetings, s47s, and Child and Family Assessments. The reports provide information on timeliness and outcomes. Staff performance is recorded and challenged if required. The Monthly Information Booklet provides information regarding trends, challenges and volume within the service and what is working well.

Social work practice in the MASH and Assessment Service is monitored through management oversight. Every MASH record, Children and Family Assessment, and s47 is signed off by a manager. Challenge of threshold is used as a learning mechanism both in supervision, team discussions, group supervision and multi-agency performance meetings. The data evidences that personal supervision within MASH and the Assessment Teams is at 100% and case supervision is 91.66%.

EDT have operational processes and procedures in place which ensures a high level of performance out of hours. Quarterly monitoring meetings take place to provide scrutiny of the service provided.

In April 2020 A Child Exploitation audit was completed. 50% were seen as good and 50% required improvement. Some areas of strength were, clear management oversight on all cases, relevant consideration of historical information was given. Areas for development were, The CE tool was not used by the referrer and some of the case had not been signed off within 24 hours.

In April 2020 a deep dive neglect audit was completed. The findings were that no plans were seen as inadequate. 44% Good. No assessments were inadequate.

92% visits good or RI (44% good). Management oversight (19% good, 63% RI, 19% inadequate). The Graded Care Profile 2 has not been routinely used. Actions from this audit was for a bi monthly learning event regarding neglect took place on 1st and 3rd June 20. There is a clear request from the Safeguarding Partnership of when the GCP2 is initiated.



In April 2020, a pre-birth assessment audit was completed. 1 was good, 2 were requires improvement and 5 were inadequate. An area of strength was Assessment plans identified by Team Managers at the beginning of the assessment are clear and of good quality. To address this the actions were that an immediate review was undertaken of all inadequate rated cases to identify if immediate safeguarding action was necessary. All pre-birth cases that were closed with no further action from January 2020 until May 2020 were reviewed. Senior Practitioners to deliver guidance and training around use of the pre-birth handbook. A re-audit of pre-birth assessments will take place in October 2020.

In June 2020 a thematic audit was completed looking at re referrals into MASH. 1 was good, 5 required improvement and 1 was inadequate. Areas of strength were, Early Help support was offered to families in 6 of 8 cases, indicating that this support is being routinely offered. In cases where further assessment had been declined by parents, there is evidence of staff within the assessment teams adapting their approach in an attempt to engage parents while at the same time respecting their decision to decline assessment. In 5 case examples, re-referrals were for concerns of the same nature as the previous referral. This may indicate that concerns had not been sufficiently explored within the preceding child and family assessment, or alternatively that referrers are reluctant to hold their concerns below level 4 despite previous assessment.

<b>Areas of strength, evidence</b>	<b>Areas for development, intended impact, timescales</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The MASH works to a well-established multi-agency model.</li> <li>2. There are experienced social workers collating information from partner agencies to provide clear recommendations and defensible decisions.</li> <li>3. Good responses to immediate harm to children between Police, social services and our multi-agency partners.</li> <li>4. Strong threshold decision-making with good impact of social work and early intervention services.</li> <li>5. Monthly case audits are undertaken across the management structure and recommendations put in place</li> <li>6. The Domestic Abuse Hub is embedded and plans put in place to enhance.</li> <li>7. Regular supervision is taking place and recorded. HoS has observed supervisions to ensure quality of supervision provided.</li> <li>8. Audit activity is evidencing that improvements have been made.</li> <li>9. Caseloads are low and consistent</li> <li>10. Development of Child in Need work with the support from Family Support Workers within the Assessment Teams to ensure all children and families will receive the right services at the right time dependent upon the level of need. Family Support Workers will provide direct work with Children and families. Children's views</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We will explore options for best retaining social workers within the MASH and Assessment teams. This is ongoing. Workers, children and their families will benefit from the consistency of experienced and permanent Social Workers.</li> <li>2. Contacts to be completed within 24 hours. Additional Social Work capacity has been put in place with immediate effect.</li> <li>3. Development of the Early Help Hub will improve the timeliness of contacts being completed which will provide children and their families with the most appropriate support and safeguards. The target was 1st June 20 but this will not be implemented until September 2020.</li> <li>4. Work with partners to reduce the level of inappropriate Multi Agency Referral Forms. Monthly performance meetings with partner agencies will continue. This scrutinizes the quality of Multi Agency Referral Forms, the quality of work within the MASH, decision making and timeliness of contacts. Findings are presented to the MASH Partnership Forum.</li> <li>5. 100% case supervisions recorded within 3 months by end of Q2. HoS will observe 2 supervisions by 30th September 20.</li> <li>6. Senior Practitioners will provide reflective supervision individually and within a group. This will improve practice to be completed by end of Q2.</li> </ol>



<p>wishes and feelings will be heard and support provided to reduce the need for children to move to alternate accommodation-Family Support Workers have been recruited and trained.</p> <p>11. Child in Need guidance has been reviewed and updated with clear expectations</p>	<p>7. Thematic audits will be completed. Child Exploitation May 20, Pre-birth Assessments April 20.</p> <p>8. Completion of strategy meetings, s47's, Child and Family Assessments to meet targets of 95% within timescales. – HoS and Team Managers will drive forward the consistency of the work being completed. This will ensure the safety of children and that the appropriate support is provided-It was hoped that consistency would be seen by the end of Q1 however this still needs to be completed and consistency will be seen by the end of Q2.</p> <p>9. The Child in Need Guidance needs to be embedded within the teams. We will evidence that it is being evidenced and that it is producing positive impact for the children and families.</p> <p>10. Signs of Safety implementation-a multi-agency approach to working with children, young people and their families to identify and manage needs, risks and family strengths where children are in need of help and protection. Some training has taken place but further training has been delayed due to COVID-19.</p> <p>11. Embed the learning culture. Thematic audits will continue for MASH and the Assessment Teams. The learning from the audits will be shared by way of reflective workshops, supervision with the Social Worker and Managers and support from the Academy. Social Workers will have support from Senior Practitioners within the teams. Evidence of improved practice will be seen through further audit activity through Q2</p>
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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being that MASH and Assessment practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



**Summary: Safeguarding and Review (Barb Langstaffe – Head of Safeguarding and Review)****What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The restrictions arising from Covid-19 meant that since the end of March, in line with many other local authorities, all Looked After Children Reviews and Child Protection Conferences have been conducted via video conferencing. Every effort has been made to ensure children and parents can be fully involved within Webex video based Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Children Reviews, with invitations sent via email and phone to participants who can access meetings by laptop, tablet and smart phones. Where parents / carers do not have access to these they are supported by the child's social worker / fostering social worker in person to access the meeting with the social worker via the webex link. Although there have been some technical issues due to broadband capacity, getting used to the new technology has been relatively straightforward for many parents, children and partner agencies. Where there are difficulties, IROs/Conference Chairs ensure there are preparatory and follow up telephone calls to support child and parent contribution.

Due to the same restrictions, IRO Consultations with children prior to Looked After Children Reviews are also conducted via video calls or telephone calls. It is of concern that the most vulnerable of parents and children are impacted by the challenges of participating through technology and supporting arrangements to have limited participants in face to face socially distanced meetings with video conference input from other agencies / individuals will be progressed in quarter 2. While there is no current travelling time, IROs are reporting that Looked After Children Reviews and Child Protection Conferences are taking significantly longer in preparation conversations and in the meetings themselves, so there is no significant time saving from the new arrangements.

A significant area of improvement in quarter one which has had a direct impact on children and young people is securing long term matches with foster carers, with a significant amount of work being undertaken by IROs escalating informally and formally and Social Workers from the Looked After Children and Fostering Teams subsequently addressing previous drift. There has been a shift in culture from the perception that a matching assessment is for the foster carer and only when the match is all but agreed, to being an assessment for the child to evaluate if matching between this child and this carer is right, what support would need to be in Looked After Children to make it right, and if not right recommendations for future planning to progress the care plan of a long term foster placement or if a change of plan is required

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Performance indicators for the first quarter show a significant drop in CP plans being completed and distributed within timescales. Interrogation of CP cases has identified that apart from two cases where plans were delayed due to the chair having special leave due to bereavement, the CP plan arising from the conference was completed within 3 days (and therefore within the 5 day timescale). However, this was not copied over to the siblings' files in some cases and the request to business support to distribute the plans was not sent. This is a process issue and all Conference Chairs have been reminded to complete these actions. Some of this is down to a new starter getting to grips with the process and therefore an area where being in physical proximity with

colleagues would have enabled reminders about process knowledge and practice to be shared by colleagues; part of picking up the daily practice of a team. In response to this the Principal IRO has been requested to set aside time in each virtual team meeting to go over the basics of process and provide opportunity for any questions to be explored and schedule in a face to face team meeting in late August / early September (restrictions permitting).

A second area identified in the Monthly Information Booklet for the 1st Quarter as a reduction in performance is that of IRO oversights between Looked After Children Reviews down to 75%. However, the data sent on a weekly basis, which identifies each case and date of IRO oversight, showed at 30.06.20 that 96% of cases had two or more IRO oversights in the last twelve months, a very positive figure and improvement on good performance last year. Only one child who had been Looked After for more than four months had less than two oversights.

This direct data has been checked as accurate and is therefore the one reported within the PI section and the discrepancy is being raised with Mosaic reporting. All other areas are either maintaining good performance or making significant improvements in poorer performing areas from 2019/20.

#### **Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Informal and formal Dispute Resolutions (6 formal DRs relating to this area in quarter one) addressed long term matching drift: Of the 70 children identified with a plan of long term fostering but not yet matched who were under 17 and a half years of age, 24 have now been matched with their carers. The remainder have either not been in a placement for 12 months and have dates set for the completion of the matching assessment or have had their plan changed to SGO applications or a return to parental care and two are to be submitted to fostering panel with IRO review of progress on 01.08.20 for formal dispute resolution if required.
2. Timeliness of Looked After Children review minutes and recommendations is improving, with Year to date at end of June increasing from 68% (end of 19/20) to 82% and from 77% (end of 19/20) to 82% respectively.
3. IRO oversights between Looked After Children Reviews (minimum of 2 within a 12 month period) have increased from 88% to 96%, with only one child Looked After for more than 4 months having only one oversight and no children Looked After for more than 4 months having none - this from a total of 349 children. This evidences IROs recording their continuous monitoring of progression of care plans and actions to promote the welfare of all Looked After Children.

#### **Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Ensuring outcomes for children are linked to agreed work with families. Performance in completing and distributing CP plans dropped, the reasons for which are covered above. This is largely a process issue in copying to sibling files and sending 'request to distribute' and is being addressed as above, by mid-September 2020.
2. Improving the quality of Looked After Children review minutes written in the form of letters to the child. These need to incorporate recording parental views appropriately and focus on how the style has relevance to the child as well as covering statutorily required areas. There is potential to use the letter to the child at the 1st Looked After Children Review as the beginning of life story work - equally there needs to be a formal account appropriate for consideration in court proceedings. The Principal IRO will address this within individual supervisions with the IROs and undertake quality auditing in September 2020.
3. Parental participation in CP and Care Planning needs to be further promoted to support parents who have difficulties in contributing through virtual meetings and those parents who have previously found engagement difficult. Use of hybrid meetings - physical meetings for the Chair / IRO, Social Worker, parents and parental support / advocate, with input through video conference from agencies and carers, is being progressed with the aim these can begin by September 2020 (depending on local and national Covid-19 guidance).

<p>4. Implementation of Signs of Safety continues to progress with a programme of weekly group supervision for Conference Chairs / IROs scheduled to cover 9 topics from 08.08.20 to 14.10.20.</p> <p>5. Increased use of formal dispute resolutions: Qtr 1 = 29, compared with 17 dispute resolutions for the year 2019/20. These covered Delegated Authority, completion of Care Plans and Pathway Plans for Looked After Children Reviews and the completion of Matching assessments.</p>	<p>4. SMART Child Protection Plans require further development, with this being progressed through the 9 sessions of group supervision on Signs of Safety in August and September.</p> <p>5. Distribution of Looked After Review minutes is improving but remains too slow. Minutes are not distributed until the hand written attendance sheet is attached, a measure previously introduced three years ago to ensure no minutes were sent to the wrong address but this delays distribution significantly. Proposal that the invite list, amended with a tick box to confirm the address is current by the social worker, to be used for distribution of minutes by business support - these will mainly be email addresses for the webex meetings. Parents / carers without email to be asked to confirm postal address when telephoning into meeting or consulted by IRO. Postal invites to CP Conferences / Looked After Children Reviews for parents who do not have an email address and who have not been in recent contact to include information that if their postal address is not confirmed as up to date they will not automatically be sent minutes due to data protection and will need to contact the child's social worker to request a copy of the minutes by confirming a current address. This to be operational by 01.09.20.</p>
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Thinking about social work practice across your service and your reflection above – where are you on a scale of 0 – 10? With 10 being that social work practice within Children and Families is exactly where you want to be at the moment, in fact you could not be happier about the way everyone is working; to 0 being that MASH and Assessment practice has just lost its way and the way everyone is working makes you so unhappy.



**Summary: Child Protection & Court Service (Cath Thomas – Head of CP and Court)****What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

Compliance with statutory timescales and tasks has significantly improved in the past 6 months and this has been not only maintained but has continued to improve in Q1. With a more stable workforce and lower caseloads we are now starting to see improvements in the quality of practice. Practitioners and their managers have more time to pause and plan, reflect and to undertake quality direct work with children and families.

Case recording is becoming increasingly more reliable, from social workers and managers. In Q1 we are starting to see a positive cultural shift as the staff group learns and reflects together and supports and challenges each other. Individual and group learning and reflection is becoming part of everyday practice.

The improvements in performance data have improved morale, and coupled with a genuine enthusiasm and energy around Signs of Safety and a positive learning environment, staff appear more confident to share their best practice, try out new things, and learn together and we now have a good proportion of our fortnightly service meeting dedicated to this. We have adopted an Appreciative Inquiry approach to service development during Q4 19/20 and Q1 20/21 and this has enabled staff at all levels to contribute to driving forward improvements in the service and to feel part of something they can really be proud of.

Audits are increasingly evidencing good practice and the learning from all audit activity is effectively shared. Evidence of this being quickly acted upon and applied to all cases however is more limited and there are some core aspects where progress is being made but the pace of change is too slow.

Staff morale is significantly impacted on currently as a result of remote working arrangements and we quickly need a resolution for teams to have regular time to come together, particularly given the inexperience within the staff group, including 9 ASYEs and 3 students.

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Performance indicators contained within this service plan evidence many areas of good performance which has improved significantly during Q4 19/20 and has continued to improve and maintain during Q1 20/21. Key highlights are: 100% posts filled; 100% personal supervision; 97% case supervision; CIN, CP and Looked after Children visits 90%, 92% and 96% respectively; no audits rated 'inadequate' (April 20 thematic audit). There were no outstanding audit actions in the service at the end of Q1.

A small number of SWs had more than 20 cases and more than 16 cases at the end of Q1. Case summaries and delegated authority are longstanding issues that are now being progressed but too slowly - at the end of Q1 77% of cases had an up to date case summary and 88% of children in care had a delegated authority recorded. Performance in the timeliness of strategy meetings has recently improved but now needs to be maintained - 100% at the end of Q1. the service have very few s47 investigations and C&F assessments which leads the performance data to be 'spiky', however in Q2 we will be working to ensure that timescales for these pieces of work are being met consistently.

All teams are now holding regular group supervisions and the team managers have all received training in Signs of Safety group supervision. Staff are now more consistently accessing formal learning opportunities provided by the Academy and others such as ACE. We have 2 senior practitioners enrolling on the PSDP supervision course for September and 3 SWs seeking to start their Practice Educator Level 1 course.

#### **Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Positive learning culture and collaborative service development, evidenced by regular learning and sharing best practice focus at service meetings; same approach in team meetings; whole service engagement in Appreciative Inquiry approach.
2. Performance in case supervision and personal supervision means staff are well supported and have regular opportunities to discuss cases.
3. Culture of compliance with statutory timescales and tasks has improved and is embedding with less direct intervention from HoS.
4. Workforce stability is improving including recruitment of permanent staff and 3 permanent senior practitioners are in post and have lower caseloads.
5. Improved quality of practice and timeliness in PLO and a clear focus on planning for permanence for children outside of care.
6. Family support workers now sit within social work teams and managers report that their work is more responsive and targeted as a result.
7. Positive response and commitment to embedding approach to permanence planning for children outside of care, foundations in place and will continue to strengthen with additional FSW resource currently being recruited.

#### **Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Embedding use of Genopro and the Family Network Assessment Record to ensure timely and appropriate decision making for children in PLO and care proceedings Q2
2. Further training to be delivered by ACE in relation to completion of CPRs and FTA to ensure SWs are skilled and knowledgeable in adoption planning - Q2/Q3
3. All cases to have an up to date case summary aligned with the case supervision cycle and develop practice standards - by 30th Sept.
4. Develop and refine performance data for CIN reviews and core groups - Q2/Q3 dependent upon performance team capacity.
5. Further develop shared reporting via Mosaic and / or trackers for cases in PLO and care proceedings - Q2.

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### **Summary: Looked After Children Service (Gill Cox – Head of Looked After Children)**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The local authority continues to have a very high number of looked after children. At the end of quarter 1 there were 345 children in care which equates to 96 per 10,000, which is significantly higher than the national average (64 per 10,000) and that of statistical neighbours (53 per 10,000). The number of looked after children has been fairly stable over recent months but has reduced slightly during the quarter.

Care orders have been discharged for 7 children in the looked after children teams in this quarter - 2 children were reunified and 5 children became subject to SGO's. At the end of the quarter a further 31 applications are filed either with court or with legal services to achieve children's exit from the looked after children system.

There are 18 SGO applications and 7 care order discharge applications filed with court. There are 3 SGO and 3 care order discharge applications with legal services to be prepared for issue. 19 children have been formally long-term matched with more assessments completed ready for formal decisions in July.

Life story books and later life letters have been completed for 35 children who have been adopted. At the end of June there were 12 adopted children waiting for these pieces of work and all will be completed by the end of August.

Arrangements for family time for children and young people was completed virtually during the Covid "lockdown". During July and August it is a priority to review all family time arrangements that were being supervised within our contact centre so that we ensure that all children and young people who could have unsupervised family time or be supervised by a family member or foster carer have the benefit of this.

The Virtual School in the Education and Commissioning Directorate is a strong and stable team that supports the education of looked after children and previously looked after children. The team feels that social workers and schools value the work they do; feedback from both is positive. One social worker



has recently stated “in my time in Hereford I have never met more dedicated, passionate or hard working professionals for looked after children! they do their absolute best with every case I have come across and they know each case inside out”.

There are close links between the Virtual School team and the CWD, looked after children team and 16+ teams. The links with the CP Court teams and Assessment teams is improving. Because the Virtual School team have taken the responsibility of organizing and chairing the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings for the last 9 years there can be occasions when social workers and their managers do not prioritise attendance at PEP meetings, knowing that a member of staff from the Virtual School will attend.

The Virtual School team feels strongly that social workers (especially in the CWD and Looked after Children teams) know their children well and are passionate about getting good outcomes for them.

The Virtual School piloted a project (SEEdS) to support school stability since January 2019. This has mainly been through Multi-Element Planning Meetings (PEP+) and Video Interaction Guidance (VIG). The input from social workers at the PEP+ meetings has been very good. The first year evaluation demonstrated that 41 children were supported directly, 17% in out of authority placements. 100% of the participants felt the experience was positive. 50 foster carers were also provided with training through the project. The project has now moved into a second year.

#### Corporate Parenting

The Corporate Parenting strategy has driven improvement with much achieved since it was agreed. All elected members attended Corporate Parenting training as a mandatory part of their induction training and during this made a personal offer of support to Looked After Children and care leavers which now provides a directory of interests and skills that the Service can call on. The training was developed jointly with Your Voice Matters (YVM), our children in care council, and was co-delivered with them.

Corporate Parenting panel meets bi-monthly and has a work plan for the year based on the priorities within the strategy.

Work is underway to refresh the Corporate Parenting strategy which will be presented to Cabinet in September 2020.

YVM meet monthly and are active members of the Corporate Parenting panel. They meet monthly themselves and are involved in recruitment for all Social Worker and Personal Advisor posts within the service. It is acknowledged that further work is required to ensure that children in care and care leavers are able to contribute and affect change at a service level.

#### **How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Audit completed on the theme of child exploitation in May. Of the 7 cases audited 3 were assessed as "good" and 4 as "requires improvement".

Compliments for LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN teams - "J was very anxious for some time before this FaceTime, but you read her so beautifully when you spoke with her on the phone and before the contact. She felt very safe and you were spot on with how to deal with her" and the foster carers “have shared that E

would not open up to her previous social workers. E was very closed down in relation to speaking about her wishes and feelings, however Nita has been amazing at forming a positive relationship with E; she has got alongside E, (played on the trampoline for example). M and D have shared that Nita's work has been very effective, E is now much more willing and able to talk about her wishes and feelings, the whole family will miss Nita very much."

Feedback from the parent of a child in care "Thank you for being the type of social worker you are, you have helped so much and I know at times we have both been difficult. I really am looking forward to the next chapter and moving forward."

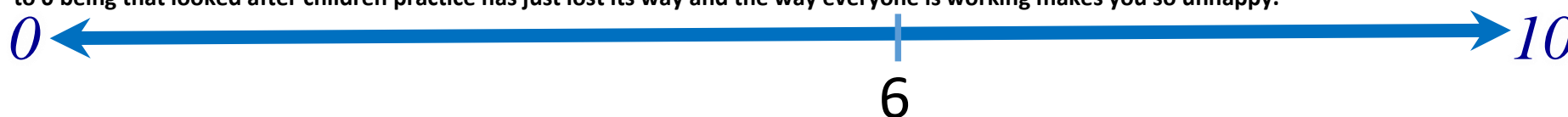
#### **Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Audit found evidence in most cases that in case supervision progression of planning is discussed, with actions reviewed and new actions set
2. audit found in all cases, the young person is being visited as regularly as is needed, and case files evidence a clear sense of their lived experience;
3. Good progress in reducing looked after numbers with 7 children who had their care orders discharged during Q1 and a further 31 applications prepared
4. Good progress with increasing number of children who are long-term matched with 19 long term matches approved during Q1
5. Good progress in reducing backlog of lifestory work and later life letters with 35 completed during Q1
6. Case supervision target was met
7. Visit targets were met

#### **Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Continue work to reduce numbers of children in care with expectation that a further 12 applications will be completed during Quarter 2 - 9 for SGO and 5 discharge following successful reunification;
2. complete at least 12 long-term matches by end of August
3. review arrangements for family time and establish safe plan for all children and young people outside of the contact centre wherever possible
4. Ensure that the elimination of the backlog of life story books and later life letters for children who have been adopted is maintained
5. Ensure all children in care have an up to date delegated authority form
6. Ensure all children in care have an up to date case summary

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### **Summary: Care Leavers Service (Gill Cox – Head of Looked After Children)**

#### **What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The 16+ team has had a significant change in Social Workers and has 2 full-time vacancies that are filled by agency workers at the end of the quarter but have been vacant for periods during the quarter. In addition to long-term absence of another Social Worker and the remaining Social Workers both being ASYE's this has impacted upon performance and service delivery during quarter 1.

Visits are not yet consistently completed within timescales and not all cases have been supervised during this 3 month period. The team worked hard to update Pathway plans for all looked after children and the focus now is on ensuring they are all reviewed within timescale improving from the current low base to achieve a target of 95% by December 2020.

Performance of the team has improved during 2019/20 with those in touch and in suitable accommodation being as good or better than statistical neighbours. The number of young people engaged with education, training or employment has improved significantly and focus now needs to be on sustaining this as the impact of Covid is felt.

Audit programme has shown improvement in quality of practice although further improvement is required. The team are more knowledgeable in working with liberty safeguards enabling them to take a more proactive approach in safeguarding young people; are more experienced in working with young people at risk of exploitation and in challenging risk averse cultures within the service and across multi-agency partners which has successfully enabled some young people to be reunified within their families

#### **How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

In April an audit of 16+ cases was completed on the theme of exploitation. 7 cases were audited with 1 assessed as "good" and 6 assessed as "requires improvement".

Compliments from young people "Hey I don't really now how to tell you but I would like to say a massive thank you to all your team for supporting me and never giving up. I know that I have been a pain with all my running episodes I have done. I am very grateful for all you help and support. I would like to give a first shout out to Fran for never giving up on me and getting here to this point because if I didn't have here I wouldn't of made it without her. Then you got Steph, Andrea and Stacie for just giving me so much advice even though sometimes I didn't take it but you have all been amazing..."

"Whilst in care I got taught a lot of life skills, got involved in participation with a lovely lady and we do all sorts of activities! We go and speak in big groups of people, give our voice etc. When we are ready to move out they help us with how to sort bills out, and help us buy things. They help us whilst learning to drive by paying some of those lessons for us. They're always at the end of the phone, I'd be dead without the help of my PA, and my former social worker.

They do an amazing job, people just don't see that side of it. To all social workers/PA's etc out there as someone who's been in care I'm proud to say you've been the ones to make me who I am today! 😊"

#### Areas of strength, evidence

1. Team are in touch with more care leavers than statistical neighbours;
2. More care leavers are in suitable accommodation than statistical neighbours;
3. Number of care leavers in education, training and employment is higher than statistical neighbours;
4. audits show that the quality of practice is improving; S47's are being completed to timescale;
5. new accommodation for care leavers with complex needs is due to open week commencing 13th July 2020;
6. more young people are "staying put" providing stability for young people;
7. two Social Work apprentices appointed from existing personal advisors who are keen to work in the 16+ team when they qualify.

#### Areas for development, intended impact, timescales

1. Statutory visits and visits to care leavers need to be completed in timescale consistently;
2. case supervision needs to be completed on all cases at least every 3 months;
3. pathway plans need to be completed and reviewed within timescales;
4. quality of pathway plans needs to improve; chronologies need to be up to date;
5. case summaries need to be updated at least every 3 months and all young people need an up to date delegated authority completed; using Signs of Safety approach with young people to help them engage in their wellbeing/safety goals via their pathway plan and reduce risky behaviours;
6. improve the timeliness of discharge of care orders when young people have returned home or applications for SGO;
7. improve approach to building stronger support networks around young people by improving staff's confidence to hold family network meetings and devising support plans for care experienced young people; offering workshops in relation to tenancy management,
8. budgeting, emotional wellbeing in conjunction with partner agencies such as housing solutions, strong young minds, children's finance and preparing for independence;
9. reduce the number of young people at risk of exploitation and provide accommodation options that enable young people to live within their local community

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**Summary: CWD Service (Les Knight – Head of Additional Needs)****What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area? (including comments on learning activity this quarter and impact)**

The ILACS inspection in June 2018 recognised that the quality of help and protection offered to children by the disabled children's team is a strength. It observed that workers know the children they are working with very well and they ensure that children's views are evident in their reviews and assessments. A recent internal focussed audit on 'the child's voice' also viewed this in a positive light.

The Ofsted focussed visit (Dec 2019) confirmed that CIN plans are tailored and responsive to children's needs. Packages of support are appropriate to needs identified and social workers are quick to ensure these are adapted if children's needs change or in response to crisis. Children's and carers views are consistently recorded and influence planning. Social workers know the children well and are skilled at communication with children using a variety of different methods and applying observational skills to ascertain children's wellbeing. Supervision is qualitatively better in this team, is well recorded and includes elements of reflection helping to ensure timely progress.

The Children with Disabilities (CWD) Team has been part of a 0-25 multi-disciplinary SEND service which has seen the CWD and SEN Assessment Team co-located since 2016. This has improved communication and joint working between the teams. Families requesting a statutory Education, Health & Care (EHC) assessment are now screened using an Early Help Screening Tool to establish whether there are any unmet care needs, which should improve the quality of the care advice into EHC Plans and ensure families get the appropriate support.

The CWD Team is fully staffed with permanent staff and has appropriate caseloads. The team is rapidly gaining experience having recruited the majority of its staff as newly qualified workers 2-3 years ago. The team receives regular positive feedback on the quality of its work from IROs, the legal team and education staff.

The ILACS inspection report also commented on strong and effective work with partner agencies (which) results in effective support to children and their families. Most of the team's referrals come via the multi-agency Single Point of Referral team which the team attends. Working relationships are strong with the transition team in adult well-being and the revised transition protocol describes expectations for cases transferring.

The Ofsted Joint Local Area SEND Inspection was undertaken in September 2016. No written statement of action resulted and inspectors commented that the local area has clear procedures in place to check that children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are safe. They also commented that leaders 'have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different partners who contribute to the implementation of the [2014 Children and Family Act] reforms'.

There is some further learning for the team around the Mental Capacity Act, Deprivation of Liberty and Liberty Protection Safeguards. The team has undertaken training from The Edge Training, a national leader in this area of work and one of the team has recently been trained to be a 'Best Interests' Assessor. However, recent cases in the Court of Protection have highlighted further learning is required.

**How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

Weekly and monthly performance reports are shared with Head of Service, Team Manager and the Director. These include CWD specific performance information. Performance concerns are addressed through supervision and are intended to be proactive rather than just reactive comment when performance has slipped. Feedback from HOS/AD Performance meetings

Team Managers sign all assessments. Court documentation is subject to Team Manager and Head of Service Quality Assurance.

All Staff are supervised in line with the corporate supervision timescales

Audits have been undertaken through the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and internal audit arrangements. Internal audit processes include auditors reviewing the case with the worker involved to promote learning and developing a shared view of a case. Processes for the administration of short breaks and direct payments have been reviewed as part of the corporate internal audit programme (SWAP). The findings from these audit processes have been shared with the team.

Learning from complaints and Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) findings/recommendations as well from court cases.

Views of parent/carers and the child is recorded on most workflow forms. Information is also gathered from the local parent carer forum including at the 6 monthly SEND Summits.

**Areas of strength, evidence**

1. The safeguarding of children with disabilities is a strength with timely and planned responses to individual cases. Regular supervision and the trackers used across children's social care ensures that cases do not drift.
2. The use of short breaks and direct payments has developed with families reporting that this is no longer an area of concern. The graduated use of short breaks supports families in a timely way and ultimately prevents some families breaking down.

**Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. Developing much greater consistency and focus around performance measures, e.g. visits within timescale.
2. Further work on the criteria and internal thresholds for the team (particularly around autism and mental health) to achieve clarity for referrers.
3. The development of a 'CWD Specific' training programme in conjunction with the principal Social Worker and the Social Work Academy.

<p>3. An experienced team of specialist disability support workers deliver a proportionate response to families with lower levels of need. The use of S2 CSDA 1970 allows support to be delivered without the need for a social worker being involved. Reviewing of these cases is via the EHCP Review offering a family a 'single plan' and review mechanism.</p> <p>4. Staffing stability and a strong team ethos supports team members to deliver a good service to clients.</p>	<p>4. Developing a greater understanding of the Mental Capacity, DOLs and LPS across all social workers in the team.</p> <p>5. To further develop 'working together' arrangements through the HSCB in order to improve improved understanding of roles and responsibilities within the system. Multi-agency working together includes ensuring that the team meets its responsibilities outlined in the updated Preparing for Adulthood Protocol.</p>
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### **Summary: Children and Families Performance team**

**What do you know about the quality and impact of your work on social work practice in Herefordshire?**

#### **Quality**

- Timely, regular reports are being produced and distributed to appropriate colleagues in children's' services.
- Accurate data is being produced and distributed.
- Performance analysts aligned with teams to ensure that their reporting needs are met and that queries on accuracy of data are resolved.
- Performance team lead attending monthly AD/HoS meetings to keep informed/up-to-date with the service and to respond to and get feedback on the reporting.
- Annex A/ChAT tool updated weekly and distributed monthly.

#### **Impact**

- Informs improvement plans. The Heads of Service have an accurate picture of their service area to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Enables measurement of performance against targets and regional and national data in key areas.
- Gives each service area clear quantitative picture of where performing well and where improvements are needed.
- Embedded analysis of performance as business as usual.
- Regular reporting can now identify trends within the service, which helps to measure the impact on children of decisions made.



- Helped to established Herefordshire on a regional basis as an organisation that wants to work with others to improve outcomes for children.

#### **How do you know it? (including outputs being measured)**

##### **Quality**

- Work/Reports are sensed checked before they are distributed. We do not send out any report which we are aware has inaccurate or questionable data.
- Close working with Heads of Service and teams to ensure data is accurate. Heads of service have a key worker in the team who they meet with regularly to discuss the monthly reporting and data to ensure quality of the data.
- Culture of checking any queries about accuracy of data and responding to those queries quickly and efficiently, keeping people informed of progress.
- Reduction in e-mails/queries that reporting is not accurate which indicates and increase in customer satisfaction that the reporting is accurate.

##### **Impact**

- Performance information provided is being used to measure performance improvement in individual areas and the overall performance in the Children and Families Directorate.
- Increased confidence in accuracy and presentation of information being distributed regionally and nationally.
- Increasing requests for more information to inform practice improvement e.g. requests for performance information for fostering & family support
- Every service area has weekly/monthly information as to measure its performance against key performance indicators e.g. visits/supervision
- Assisting to embed a climate of support and challenge within individual teams, based on accurate performance information.
- Enabling the organisation to measure performance against expected targets. These may be internal targets set by the service or comparisons to other authorities or Government expectations.

##### **Areas of strength, evidence**

1. Ability to meet core business requirement of producing clear accurate reports (we know this as the visit to Doncaster evidenced Herefordshire data reporting similar to their more established performance reporting)
2. Reporting and outcomes is online with a number of West Midlands colleagues (know this by attendance at West Midlands regional forums)
3. Skilled, stable team (no turnover, proficient SQL programming)

##### **Areas for development, intended impact, timescales**

1. To integrate more fully into the service generally; team managers, social workers. This will give a greater understanding of social work practice/challenges. (timescale: April 2020) Progress: Shadowing or teams had been scheduled in for March/April. These will be postponed and rescheduled for June/July (assuming current social distancing restrictions have been lifted)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Establish performance reports for areas of service not yet supplied e.g. family support, child exploitation/missing. (separate improvement plan with detail of all areas for reporting developments and timescales) Progress: CE/missing have now been signed off and regular oversight of reporting and Mosaic developments are now in place.</li> <li>3. Develop team and team culture from reactive to proactive. Identify areas of reporting that could be developed to support the service (timescale: January 2020), create a system for reporting requests that encourages dialogue and collaborative planning of reporting (timescale: January 2020). Progress: this have not been fully achieved in the timescale. New deadline May 2020.</li> <li>4. Integrate more into Children and Families Directorate ethos (e.g. pictures in reports to embed Herefordshire aims/values). Progress: Colour schemes and images are being trialed. (timescale: May 2020)</li> <li>5. Establish a pre-emptive self-service approach to performance indicators to support team managers in managing workers performance improvement of the key areas (e.g. visits due, timeliness of activities).</li> <li>6. Create a 'Performance Team Improvement Plan' to structure the progress and goals of the team in a way that has rigor, challenge and evidence of progress.</li> </ol>
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