

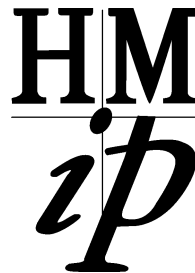
Annual Performance Assessment and Joint Area Reviews**Self-assessment****Part 2: The template for completion****Name of Authority: Herefordshire**

Adult Learning Inspectorate
 Audit Commission
 Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)
 Healthcare Commission
 HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
 HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
 HM Inspectorate of Court Administration
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When completing this form:

- **please refer to Part 1: Guidance on self-assessment for joint area reviews and annual performance assessment;**
- **please do not use a font size smaller than 11 point; and**
- **please ensure that the overall number of pages is no more than 20 for APA purposes and no more than 26 for a JAR**

PART A Background Information

A. Brief info about key contacts and arrangements for contribution to the APA

Name of Children's Services Authority:	Herefordshire Council
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Date self-assessment submitted:	31st May 2006
Signed/agreed on behalf of the Children's Services' Authority	
Name	Sue Fiennes
Position	Director of Children & Young People's Services
Signature	
How partners have been involved in completing this form:	
All the contributions have been made on an interagency basis through members of the CYP's Partnership.	
Signed/agreed on behalf of the Children's Services' Authority's partners:	
Name	Paul Bates
Position	Chief Executive of the PCT
Signature	

PART B Context and arrangements for joint working

1. Key contextual features

The JAR self-assessment completed in June 2005 set out the key contextual features, which affect the delivery of children's services in the local area. That information is still valid. Restructuring to manage the full agenda for children's services within the council has taken place. The PCT will continue to be co-terminous with the local authority and new arrangements between the Council and the PCT are being developed in moving towards children's trust arrangements.

The JAR

In the autumn of 2005 Herefordshire Children's Services were subject to a joint review. Performance was rated as 'adequate' or 'good' in four of the outcome areas. However, serious weaknesses were highlighted for the Staying Safe outcome with a rating of 'inadequate'. Capacity to improve was regarded as 'adequate'. The Youth Service inspection resulted in a judgement that the Quality of Curriculum and Resource was inadequate. These judgements posed a serious challenge to improve. The self-assessment had not anticipated the issues identified through the JAR inspection and this was also a challenge.

Since this assessment strenuous efforts have been made to address the weaknesses described in JAR and to identify additional capacity. (JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan). The following outlines achievements to date and areas for further work:

What we have achieved so far

- Further development of the existing Child Concern Model to redefine and widen the criteria for social work involvement (Recommendation JAR Report (REC) 1)
- Publication and dissemination of a new leaflet for all those working with children to explain the changed criteria (REC 2)
- New initiatives to ensure all vacant posts are covered and to improve social worker recruitment. Immediate work with agencies and a contract with Tribal for a national and regional recruitment campaign, has enabled new temporary and permanent staff to be recruited (REC 3)
- Appointment of a manager to lead regular independent professional scrutiny and analysis of children's social work (REC 1,2,4 and 17)
- A successful bid for consultancy support from the Children's Workforce Development Council and a new strategy is being developed (REC 3)
- Additional resources have been allocated: corporate contingency budget across all social care services £1.3m; funding for the JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan £100k; LSCB funding £149k and additional preventative service funding of £70k already identified within the Council and also by partners (REC 12). Three additional OTs appointed to improve access to service. (REC 8)
- Funding bid made to DoH which will lead to improved access to multi-agency Tier 4 CAMHS provision (REC 14)
- Shadow CYP's Partnership Board established to improve consultation with and involvement of children and young people (REC 15): Youth Council established.

Challenges remaining

- Adopting an enhanced strategic approach to delivering all of the Change for Children programme in Herefordshire across all agencies to maximise the efficiency of the delivery of the PIA Plan and the overarching Children and Young People's Plan (CYPPlan). (REC 12)
 - Development and delivery of a change programme for all of children's services

in the local area. The Office of Public Management is commissioned to assist.
 - As part of this change programme, equipping all managers at all levels with a sound understanding of the principles and practice of effective single and joint planning and commissioning of children’s services, modelling this on the national children’s services improvement cycle.

- To implement a developed and coherent performance management system which operates seamlessly across all levels of children’s services and is part of the whole Council approach. This also links with the outcome performance function of the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board, so that performance improvement is seen as ‘everybody’s business’ (REC: 17) The Institute of Public Care are assisting.
- To ensure that data collation and handling in children’s social care and across the whole of children’s services, is effective and that the data collected is robust, accurate and timely, so as to provide a sound basis for planning, target setting and effective performance management (REC 13, 17).
- Recruiting and retaining permanent social work staff to vacancies. Further work is required through the Workforce Strategy with CWDC support (REC 3).
- Delivering resources and capacity to ensure full delivery of the JAR Performance Improving Action Plan and for the CYPPlan (REC 12).
- Transformation of the existing Child Concern Model to develop Herefordshire’s Common Assessment framework to meet additional national requirements (REC 5,6) whilst changing ways of working and improving working relationships across agencies to provide greater clarity of roles and responsibilities (REC 5,6,12).

2. Factual Information

All demographic information about Herefordshire is detailed in the Children & Young People’s Plan. A profile of needs can be summarised as follows:

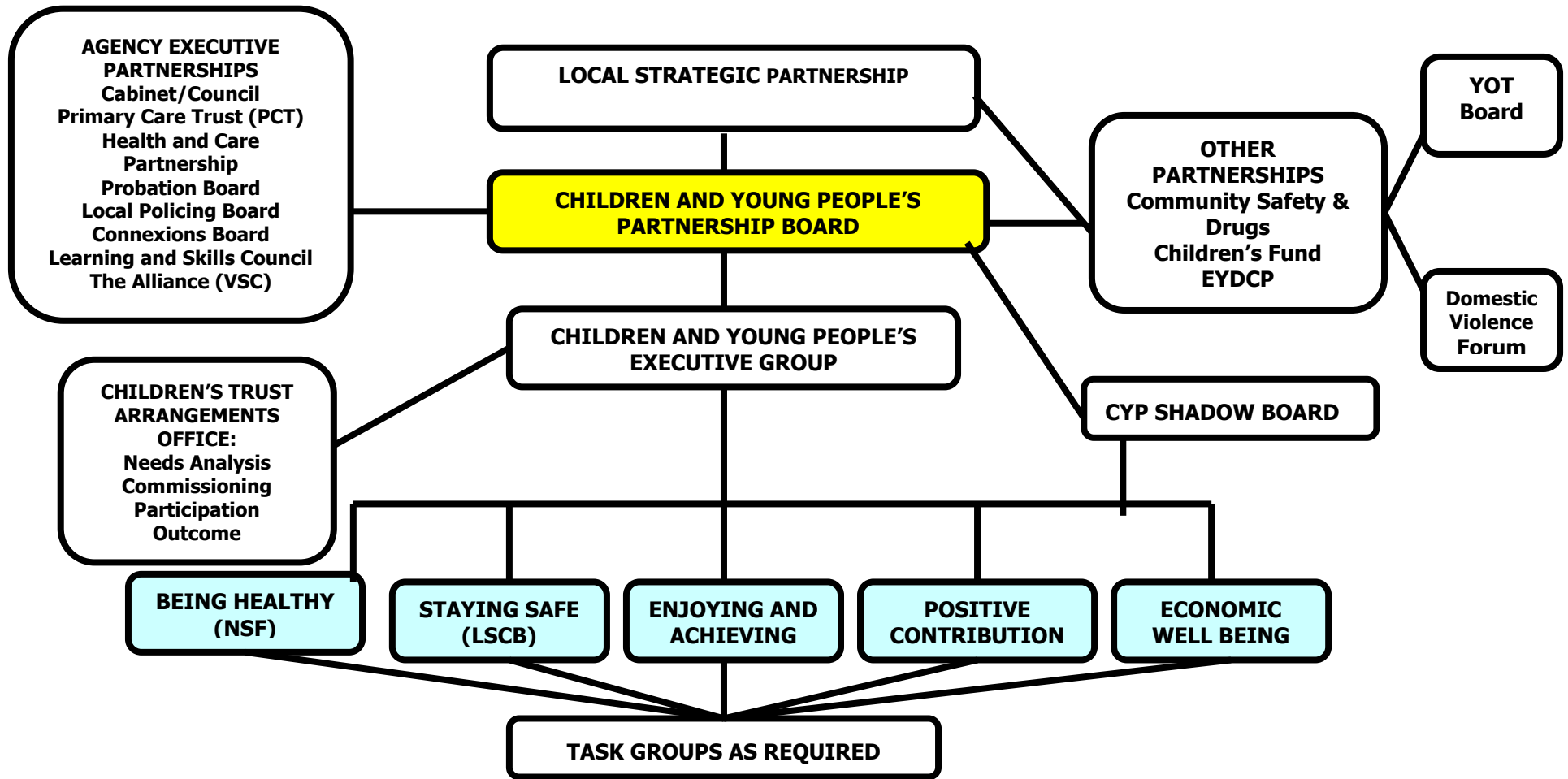
Profile of Need in Herefordshire

All children and young people	41,000	Children and young people with severe and complex needs	200
Children and young people with additional needs	8,000	Children and young people looked after	160
Children and young people in need	800	Children and young people on the child protection register	62

3. Arrangements for Partnership and Joint Working

The JAR identified partnership working as a strength. Since the JAR report further developments have occurred. A draft information sharing protocol has been endorsed. An officer in the PCT has been appointed to lead on joint commissioning. The Children and Young People’s Partnership Board is developing its governance arrangements moving towards children’s trust requirements; further to this, the Council and the PCT are exploring options for shared governance arrangements to oversee the delivery of all public services in the area. The present proposal for children’s trust and linkage arrangements is drawn below:

PROPOSED CHILDREN’S PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HEREFORDSHIRE



1. Priorities from the Children and Young People’s Plan (please refer to CYPPlan)

C&YP Plan Priorities for improvement	JAR Recommendations plus Priorities Meeting
BEING HEALTHY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving outcomes on mental health. Improving outcomes on physical health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective implementation of the multi-agency healthcare planning procedures for looked after children. Improve access to Occupational Therapy Services. Ensure appropriate social care support for the families of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Improve communication with parents and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities in terms of both the assessment of need and planning of provision. Improve access to hospital in-patient (or specialist outreach) provision to meet children and young people’s mental health needs (Tier 4 CAMHS). Improve dental health of children.
STAYING SAFE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translating the Child Concern Model into the Common Assessment Framework (JAR Action Plan). Ensure safeguarding arrangements are strengthened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that appropriate criteria are set for the involvement of the local authority’s professionally qualified social care staff in child protection cases. Ensure that these criteria are clearly understood by all concerned and consistently applied in practice. Ensure that there is an effective workforce strategy to address the recruitment and retention problems within the local authority’s care service. Ensure that a written record is made of all contacts with the social care duty team. Ensure there is a single referral, assessment and service planning framework for children in need, which is consistently and effectively applied in practice. Ensure that the training, guidance and support needs of all staff contributing to the implementation of the Child Concern Model are addressed, both in terms of the time required to undertake the tasks involved and the necessary skills.
ENJOY AND ACHIEVE	
<p>Improving standards in education across all sectors and tackling underachievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standstill in KS2 performance in ‘05. Raising the attainment of low-achievers in KS4.
POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<p>Reducing anti-social behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-time offenders and recidivism rates. Drugs action.
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving learning and recreation including access and housing. Improving learning outcomes for 14-19 year olds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve housing provision for both single young people and families. Youth Matters Agenda. Post-16 staying-on rates.
VULNERABLE GROUPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving outcomes for children Looked After. Improving outcomes for children with LDD by integrating processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAC who are NEET Transition planning for young people with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities (LDD). Post-16 strategy for children with LDD.
SERVICE MANAGEMENT	
<p>Integrating service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve action planning to deliver strategic aims and objectives and ensure that associated resourcing needs are met. Improve information systems within the Council’s social care services to enable better management oversight and evaluation of service effectiveness. Improve co-ordination of consultation with children and young people to support their participation in strategic planning and review. Strengthen performance management processes involving elected members and senior officers including the Partnership Board and the Council’s Children’s Scrutiny Committee.

Please provide the following self-assessment grades

Only required for a joint area review

Areas for judgement	Grade for <i>being healthy</i>	Grade for <i>staying safe</i>	Grade for <i>enjoying and achieving</i>	Grade for <i>making a positive contribution</i>	Grade for <i>achieving economic well-being</i>
The contribution of <i>publicly funded services collectively</i> in maintaining and improving this outcome for children and young people.					

Publicly funded services	Grade
Capacity to improve	

Required for the joint area review and annual performance assessment.

The council's children's services	Grade
The contribution of <i>the council's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	2

The council's children's services	Grade
The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people	2

Additional area for judgement in 2006 only	Grade
Children's social care services	2

PART C Needs analysis, impact and involvement.

The reports and plans given at the beginning of each of the outcome sections give the descriptive detail about each outcome and give an assessment of strengths and weaknesses. This is not repeated in the sections below. The assessments focus on progress that has been made since the JAR report was published, and on the priorities that have been set for the next planning period.

Being healthy

The JAR rated Being Healthy as 'good'. (3).

Related evidence: JAR self-assessment (pp 12-13, 20-21)
JAR Report (pp 14/16)
JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan
Children and Young People's Plan (pp 28/29)
APA Dataset.

The JAR rated local health services for children as 3 (good), but the health community takes seriously the need to continue to improve health services for children, as well as to work very closely with social care services as part of the wider improvement task required by the 1 (inadequate) rating for social care. The PCT and Hereford Hospital Acute Trust are therefore active partners in taking forward the children's services agenda: strategically, as members of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board; and operationally, as members of its various sub-groups. A senior PCT operational manager has joined the JAR action plan review group which meets weekly to performance manage the implementation of the plan. This high level of health community engagement will continue throughout the forthcoming organisational changes resulting from the NHS reforms. Talks are underway about the development of a Herefordshire Public Service Trust, and discussions about the location of the Children's trust within this are taking high priority at both the PCT and the Council.

The key targets and goals for Herefordshire are set out in the JAR report, and the CYPP. There were four main areas where JAR recommendations related specifically to being healthy. Progress has been made in each of these as follows:

1. Ensuring effective implementation of multi-agency health care planning procedures for children Looked After

The designated nurse for the PCT has led this work. All health care plans have now been copied for insertion in social care notes. Where Herefordshire young people are placed outside the County, the local areas have been written to, and a copy of the plan requested. The records of looked after children who are placed in Herefordshire from outside the County are now being checked to ensure all have health care plans within the notes. A new procedure has been introduced. Social Care audits of casework are now cross referenced to health care scrutiny of all records. Single agency guidelines to inform health staff of their roles and responsibilities in the joint safeguarding process have been produced by the designated nurse, and disseminated widely. The post of Looked After children's nurse is currently vacant and recruitment prospects are being enhanced by a re-banding of the post.

An area for development is the involvement of young people and families. Although a foster carer has been active on the Healthy Care Standard Working Group, which has agreed leaflets on health assessment, further work involving young people remains a priority. A National Healthy Care Standards event is being led in June by NCB to manage

this.

2. Improving access to occupational therapy services

This has improved significantly. A 12-week target from referral to assessment is now being met. This has been achieved by a programme of change, including an additional post being created to provide an ASD Specialist within OT. At Easter, new assessment groups were established in children's centres, bringing children into playgroup environments for assessment. The Council is appointing a housing OT to relieve the pressure on PCT staff for assessment and enable more therapeutic intervention. In the summer term, OT staff will be visiting special schools once a term to train staff thereby improving the quality of OT support in the school setting.

3. Improving access to inpatient CAMHS

This remains challenging since Tier 4 provision is Birmingham-based and historically under-provided across the region. A regional Tier 4 commissioning strategy has still to be agreed and this long-standing piece of work is unlikely to progress in the short term as PCTs are reconfigured. However, a joint Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire PFI bid for a new unit for young women with emotional and behavioural issues has been submitted to the SHA and a response is awaited. All tiers of activity are being reviewed to ensure needs are being met effectively, including those with complex needs.

4. Improving communication with parents and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities

This is being addressed by establishing groups of parents of CAMHS users, led by a social worker who is part of the CAMHS team and linked in to LDD nurses. This has created a structure to move this work forward.

Further work is in progress and the Council for Disabled Children is assisting with developing a series of workshops with parents as well as developing standards for communication with parents and carers. There is also work to improve and update the existing Children's Services Directory to provide better information.

Other Priorities

1. Increase in the percentage of 2 year olds who are up-to-date with MMR immunisation from 2004/2005 baseline (82% baseline)

Since the JAR, local pharmacies have run an MMR immunisation take-up campaign. This was identified as one of the six annual public health campaigns which community pharmacies deliver as part of their new contract. Locally specific leaflets were prepared for pharmacies, giving figures for local disease outbreaks as well as locality based figures for vaccination coverage.

2. Increase in percentage of babies who are breast fed in the county from 2004/2005 baseline (70% baseline)

Breastfeeding continues to be a priority area across the County, with good partnerships with Surestart, who have led on La Leche training and on the establishment of a Baby Café in Leominster. Over £200k of LPSA2 money is being used to establish a 2-year peer support project aimed at increasing breastfeeding rates among teenage mothers across the County, and among all women in the South Wye area of high social deprivation. This project will begin in the summer of 2006, and will involve the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator, as well as PCT and Acute Trust staff. Local women will have training opportunities as well as representation on the Project Steering Group.

3. Increase in percentage of babies born to South Wye mothers who are breast fed from 2004/2005 baseline (244/392 were breast feeding)

See 2 above.

4. Improvement in percentage of 5 year olds free from dental decay from 2001/2002 baseline (58% baseline)

The poor oral health of children in Herefordshire has been specifically linked to the lack of fluoridation and a presentation on the safety of fluoridated water has been given to the

Health Scrutiny Committee. The PCT has now formally requested the SHA, in line with new statutory arrangements, to work with the local water provider to conduct a feasibility study on fluoridation. Risks to dental service provision were created by the introduction of the new dental contract in April 2006, but special arrangements have been made to ensure looked after children have priority access through the Dental Access Centres, and that all children and young people who are refused NHS care by their current dentist are able to receive treatment through the Dental Access Centres. New surgeries are being planned throughout the County, which will again ease any access difficulties.

5. Reducing year on year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 (no baseline figures until September 2006)

A multi-agency steering group on obesity is led by the PCT and is currently working on a key resource for September 2006 publication, which will be for use by colleagues throughout health and social care, giving advice on local services, and on interventions. Baseline measurement of children in Reception and Year 6 is being planned, consistent with the most recent guidance, and the PCT has identified a small resource to deliver this.

6. Reducing teenage conceptions by 50% from 1998 by 2010 (37.2 rate per 1,000 women aged 15-17)

The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy continues with its successful implementation and the 2010 target is likely to be met. Within the overall excellent rates, there are hot spots and these have been identified and strategies are in place to bring changes.

7. Reduce hospital admission rates for accidents among children from 2002 baseline

Reducing hospital admission rates for accidents is in development. Analysis of baseline and subsequent data is underway to inform the interventions required, which are likely to include targeted parenting support. Developing an integrated hospital and community paediatric service is a service priority and may be important in addressing this area of work.

8. Improvements in access to CAMHS

CAMHS access is under close scrutiny and waiting times were noted at the time of the JAR to have reduced significantly. Waiting times from GP to consultant appointments are monitored via weekly returns with a monthly notification of any breeches which are acted on immediately. The regional CAMHS support worker is to work with Herefordshire on capacity and demand modelling for CAMHS as a whole, and an initial workshop is planned for June. Improving access to Tiers 1, 2 and 3 is part of the response to limited Tier 4 provision so that escalation of need is minimised.

Data collection for measuring the agreed indicators will be led by the Public Health Department at the PCT in the short term.

9. Improvements in Drugs Action

(See Positive Contribution page 20)

10. Transitions work for young people with disabilities.

A multi agency task group is due to reconvene on 4th May with membership from a range of agencies. A steering group and a new post of co-ordinator will be established to implement the recommendations of the task group. New standards have been drafted. Workshops will be arranged with policy support from National Council for Disabled Children.

11. Single Assessment framework for LDD

See JAR Action Plan for implementation and impact of CAF and Enjoy and Achieve section.

Areas for improvement remain and these include:

- **Involving children and young people in analysing, planning and delivering services.** A shadow CYP Board is in place. (See Positive Contribution for further details).
- **Pro-active approaches to diversity.** The ethnic profile of Herefordshire is changing

rapidly but there is a lack of robust information. Health organisations have developed strategies such as translation of leaflets on accessing health services; establishment of a health visitor led drop-in group for Portuguese mothers and young children; and developing multi-agency links to explore data issues. However, the pace of ethnic change is such that this work is becoming more urgent.

- **Implementing the Children, Young People, and Maternity NSF.** Although this is a 10-year implementation date, the need to performance manage the implementation of the NSF locally has been recognised. A baseline audit is underway and this will be used to develop an action plan to ensure effective work towards 10-year implementation.

For full details of targets and timetables please see health plans, particularly the Local Delivery Plan.

Staying safe

The JAR rated Staying Safe as 'inadequate'. (1).

Related evidence: JAR self-assessment (pp 13/14 and 21-22)
JAR Report (pp 17-21)
Children and Young People's Plan (pp 30-31)
APA Dataset.

The JAR rated safeguarding in Herefordshire as inadequate. The JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan includes full details of all the measures taken to address the recommendations in the JAR Report.

Safeguarding activity including children in need of protection

The JAR Action Plan has taken forward all the recommendations. Considerable progress has been made on:

Recs1-4

- Realigning and confirming thresholds within the Child Concern Model for social work involvement. As a result the number of referrals to the duty service and the number of initial assessments completed has risen. A steady increase is expected in referral activity over the coming year towards the target of 210/10,000 (CH141).
- Ensuring all contacts with the duty social work team are recorded with new systems in place and additional supervisory and casework monitoring arrangements. A reconfiguration of the duty system is planned.
- As well as increasing referral rates, comparable improvements are planned in assessment activity and completions (CH143/DIS1704) while reducing re-referral rates (CH142).
- Recruitment to vacant social work posts (8) and an increase in the number of duty social workers (2, plus an Assistant Team Manager).
- Information about thresholds has been distributed widely and additional training sessions have been held with the Child Concern Model consultants and others.

Recs 5-6

- Development of common processes (CAF arrangements) are under way. The approach is to build the new national requirements on the strengths of the existing Child Concern Model.
- Developing and piloting the new CAF will take place in the Autumn and the whole county roll out will follow. A project plan is in place and the new CAF will be piloted from January 2007 within the South Wye cluster as well as the integrated service for

children with disabilities. Supporting materials and guidance for the new framework will be included in the training programmes to be commissioned for October-December 2006, prior to pilot.

- Early intervention to prevent problems escalating and to improve the outcomes for children and young people. A countywide Matching Needs and Services audit (October 2005) and a localised audit of additional needs within the South Wye area (April 2006) are informing this work. As a result an additional 70k has been allocated for family support services.

Herefordshire has established the Local Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) from 1st April 2006. The HSCB has published a booklet on safeguarding arrangements within Herefordshire. Additional resourcing of £149k for the HSCB has been identified to recruit a business and development officer as well as providing additional training support and an independent chair. Recruitment is under way.

Overall the performance data for child protection is positive. All children on the Child Protection Register continue to have an allocated social worker and reviewing of these cases (C20) has returned to 100%. Rates of registration (CH01) have moved much closer to the comparator group average and CH02/03 (rates of conferencing and registration) are in line. A regular internal audit of all re-registered cases is in place to ensure that any practice deficits are identified.

Immediate changes to safeguarding practice within the duty service were made following publication of the JAR. New procedures for the recording of all contacts with Social Care were implemented in January 2006. Additional decision-making capacity has been made available through the recruitment of one extra f.t.e. assistant team manager. Standard templates for the auditing of decisions and case records are now in place and form the basis of a routine report from the relevant service manager to the Senior Management team. An initial review of the existing configuration of social work services has taken place. A decision on the preferred configuration to referral and assessment services will be made in July 2006.

The Inspection findings for schools on Staying Safe are as follows; 79%- good/outstanding; 100%- satisfactory and above for tested cohort (9/05 – 3/06). Herefordshire schools all have designated teachers and safeguarding is seen as a high priority.

Children Looked After

Rec. 7

- Immediate measures have been taken to ensure that healthcare assessments and planning for children Looked After are effective. All assessments have been audited. In future childcare review chairs will audit and review assessments.
- NHC Standards will be fully adopted later in the year with the support of NCB starting with a workshop in June.

Outcomes for children Looked After within this county are generally good. The rate of children becoming Looked After (CH39) has slowly declined over the medium-term and is close to the comparator average. Nearly ninety percent of children Looked After will be placed with either a foster or adoptive family. Of the former, one fifth will be placed with relatives and friends. The ageing of the Looked After cohort as a whole is seeing increasing pressures on costs, particularly with residential provision. However, Herefordshire has a Section 31 Agreement between PCT and Children's Services to fund such provision. Additional preventative services are planned to support families more effectively and to reduce the number of children Looked After further. The family support commissioning

process will have this as a major objective with the additional funding which has been allocated. All children Looked After continue to have an allocated social worker. The achievements of the authority in securing placement security and stability (A1/D35/2065SC) were noted by the JAR and re-emphasised within the conclusions of the latest inspection report of the fostering service (March 2006). While "children are consistently matched to carers who can meet their needs", at least four other local factors have been identified as making a contribution to improving outcomes for this cohort.

- That sound procedures and practices on safer caring are not just in place but used.
- That contact opportunities with birth families are maximised (and has formed part of the developing service with NCH).
- That an effective and purposeful advocacy and consultation service is in place for children and young people.
- That carers feel well supported and advised to secure the best for children and young people entrusted to their care.

The inspection noted that the actions identified in February 2005 had been addressed almost in their entirety "indicating a positive response to regulation and an ability to drive change".

For full details of targets and timescales, please see JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan.

Enjoying and achieving

The JAR rated Enjoy and Achieve as good (3)

Related evidence: JAR self assessment (pp 14-16 and 23-24)
JAR Report (pp19-21)
JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan
Children and Young People's Plan (pp 32-34)
APA dataset
Local Authority Data (LADP)
PANDAS
School inspection reports
National Youth Agency audit
Council data

Herefordshire's children and young people enjoy and achieve well in comparison with national averages and in line with pupils in similar authorities. Herefordshire has many high performing institutions in all phases of education: mainstream schools, early years settings, the sixth form college and some work based learning providers. There is a shared commitment to continuous improvement and a strong emphasis on partnership working. We seek to improve the performance of our schools to at least match that of our statistical neighbours and to remain above national averages.

Key challenges and priorities for improvement

1. Further improving Early Years provision

Effective monitoring informs the level and focus of Council support for a diverse workforce. High quality training by Council and international experts and access to accredited training at levels 1-4 results in well-qualified leaders (97% at level 3+). Feedback indicates that support is highly valued and influences practice. Performance remains above the national average. Council training on self evaluation results in 58% of settings now holding QA accreditation. The number of settings judged to be satisfactory or better has increased to

96% in 2006. The pre-school area SENCOs are highly regarded and have significantly reduced the number of children referred for statutory assessment. They offer accredited training in speech and language development in partnership with the PCT that has improved practitioner interactions with children. A learning network focused on the Reggio Emilia approach has disseminated good practice. There are four fully operational Children's Centres in the authority; the Foundation Stage regional director has identified good practice in one.

2. Improving achievement in primary schools

This year the Council has focused support on addressing the 2005 standstill in maths and science, the weakness in boys' writing and gaps in attainment between boys and girls by:

- raising teacher expectations, especially at the higher levels, by promoting the use of 'layered curricular targets' in reading, writing and mathematics. This builds on the model that is being successfully used in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP);
- engaging with a number of schools, in particular their leadership teams, on recognised national programmes that have the specific aim of raising standards:
 - **Primary Leadership Programme - 21 schools**
 - **Sustaining Success - 3 schools**
 - **Intensifying Support Programme - 4 schools**
- providing professional development for teachers on collecting appropriate evidence for teacher assessment at Key Stage One in mathematics and science: strategy consultants work with teachers to improve the provision for AT1 *Using and Applying* in mathematics and Sc1 *scientific enquiry* in science. Good practitioners from last summer's assessment process share with colleagues, their experiences and approaches to assessment;
- continuing to deliver the 5 day mathematics course for KS1 teachers, stressing the need to provide opportunities for pupils to experience AT1;
- promoting Visual Literacy (e.g. 'Telling Tales' film project) in order that the less motivated writer, often boys, will become more engaged in the writing process;
- monitoring closely the impact of literacy and numeracy intervention programmes in targeted schools;
- identifying schools where girls consistently perform as well as boys in mathematics and sharing their strategies with colleagues in other schools;
- supporting schools that, through the Primary Learning Networks programme, have specifically identified a mathematics focus.;
- supporting Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) provision and training in effective use. All schools have at least one IWB and 93% of primary schools have an IWB in every classroom. The National Whiteboard Network recognises Herefordshire as a lead authority in the use of IWB technology.
- Monitoring of the actions listed above, through school reviews, lesson observations, pupil progress meetings and course evaluations indicate positive progress. (see Primary Action Plan)

3. Improving achievement in KS3 science at L5+

The Council has employed additional consultant support to work with targeted schools at Key Stages 3 and 4. Inspection at Weobley High School recognised improvements in science that had been a failing department.

4. Improving the percentage of pupils gaining 5+A*-C at GCSE

Council consultant, AST and inspector support is prioritised for schools with low value added attainment. Strategies in 2005-2006 include:

- working with senior and middle leaders on school self evaluation through joint data analysis, lesson observations, work scrutiny and student interviews;
- developing Assessment for Learning (AFL) as a county-wide priority;
- supporting a countywide subject specific CPD day on AfL for all high school teachers in most subjects;

- co-ordinating and disseminating strategies from the DfES LIG, Performance Collaborative and SIA SfCC programmes;
- the Excellence Cluster programmes on improving monitoring and provision for gifted and talented students and providing effective inclusion support for students with behavioural difficulties;
- the Aimhigher programme that is raising the awareness and aspirations of disadvantaged students about further and higher education;
- supporting increased vocational courses at KS4 with sharing of experience across and beyond the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP), Leading Edge Partnership and LIG networks that are improving student attendance and motivation across schools;

Tracking progress and tackling under-performing students is improving. Mentoring is focused. Study leave is becoming rare, replaced by imaginative revision classes. Inspection this year has recognised progress in achievement in 2 priority schools. Next steps are to support improved use of assessment in planning, consolidate teacher advice on how to improve and support personalised learning approaches.

5. Improving the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C at GCSE in English and maths

Consultant and AST support is targeted at schools with lower achievement and less experienced teachers. Experience of Key Skills is shared across schools. We have a LPSA2 target and will maintain a focus on English and maths.

6. Improving the percentage of pupils gaining 5+A*-G grades at GCSE

At GCSE in 2005 the percentage of students gaining 1+A*-G pass was 98.3%, placing the Council in the 8th percentile nationally for year on year improvement. (APA, LADP) This good performance by lower achieving pupils in 2005 contradicts the AWI inspection of 2004 and JAR of 2005. The percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*-G passes was 92.4% an increase of 2.5% from 2004 and 2.2% above the national average (LADP). However, we are pushing for further improvement through: training on better use of TAs, supporting more focused work on target setting and differentiated provision, building on the successes of Aimhigher, encouraging sharing of self esteem, building learning power and encouraging boys strategies, further widening of the vocational curriculum and increasing entry for accreditation. Next steps will be to improve mapping and analysis of achievement in non-GCSE provision and analysis of the progress made by vulnerable groups.

7. Sustaining and improving the consistency of A-Level and post 16 results

The Council convenes a post 16 group of curriculum leaders who share practice and consider data, developments and issues. The majority of A-Level students are at Hereford Sixth Form College, the sixth highest performing college nationally in 2005. Results at A-Level for Herefordshire as a whole were well above the national average. The pass rate in school sixth forms was above the national average at AS level and in line at A-Level. APS was slightly below the average although the rate of improvement is higher. Overall value added in 2005 in schools was just above the national at A-Level and above at AS level. (PANDA, NMS). Entry for AVCE is low although training in summer 2006 for the new AVCE is being taken up. All sixth form provision has been inspected in the last 2 years; of the 4 schools one was found satisfactory and three good and the college outstanding.

8. Improving the achievement of children Looked After

Small numbers make analysis of individual pupil progress important. In 2005 of 17 LAC, 14 pupils (82% of LAC cohort) entered GCSE of whom 100% gained 1+A*-G. 11 pupils gained 5+A*-G grades although only one gained 5+A*-C. This represents an improvement on previous years but remains a challenge for all officers.

9. Improving the achievement of pupils with SEN

Pupils' achievement remained higher in primary than secondary in 2005. The Council is targeting training and support at secondary SENCOs in tracking individual pupil progress, literacy interventions, leading the whole staff on differentiating teaching and knowledge of alternative curriculum. The Council is jointly evaluating provision with SENCOs to support

them in self evaluation.

10.Improving the statutory assessment process for SEN

Revised exceptions protocol and more rigorous processes have led to a rise in the percentage of new statements prepared in under 18 weeks (95.7% in April 2006). We are on target to improve.

The rolling out of the Council "banded" funding programme for early intervention is reducing the percentage of pupils with a statement and, similarly, reducing the percentage of new statements.

The number of SEN appeals to Tribunal is minimal; of three in 2004 all were withdrawn and of 2 in 2005 one was withdrawn.

The percentage of reviewed and discontinued statements is a weakness. The Council is restructuring and evaluating current annual review protocols and monitoring more rigorously documentation and partnership working with schools to improve tracking of pupil progress.

11.Improving the integration of SEN needs assessment and planning processes into the new Common Assessment Processes CAF (Child Concern Model)

The Council is consulting on definitions of LDD and other shared terminology and plans to use the successful "banded" funding model of 4 levels of provision as the basis of a revised CCM (CAF) with parity of thresholds.

12.Improving monitoring of pupil progress among vulnerable groups and using data to evaluate provision

The Council has strengthened its LDD monitoring team so that we are beginning to track the progress of vulnerable groups more effectively. We are adopting the regional LA Self Evaluation Schedule from May 2006.

13.Full time provision for excluded pupils

Full time provision is available and offered to each pupil. There has been a significant drop in tuition hours in 2005. This is being monitored closely by the Social Inclusion Officer. Early intervention has been extended in KS2. Council intervention and leadership by a successful special school headteacher led to improvements in a PRU recognised by a satisfactory inspection judgement in Spring 2006. Inspection in Autumn 2005 judged another PRU outstanding.

14.Developing further the 14-19 strategy

IFP funds have been maximised and, augmented by school funds, increased the vocational curriculum again this year and more new courses are on line from September 2006. Aimhigher events have enthused young people in targeted schools where aspiration is traditionally low. A new, alternative, work-focused curriculum (ALPS) for disaffected learners has started well and schools timetable core subject provision. A Young Apprenticeship hospitality course will start in September 2006. Central support capacity has been affected by illness, funding changes and reorganisation. The Council is currently advertising a curriculum development post at senior leader level. Ways to develop provision is a constant agenda item for all strategy and senior leader networks. Distance, time and transport remain barriers although a mixture of central and local developments is emerging. Next priorities are to consolidate courses, improve mapping and analysis of outcomes, create an area prospectus and advance planning towards diploma provision.

15.Improving accredited learning outcomes for young people working with the Youth Service

In 2005 the Youth Service significantly increased the number of accredited learning outcomes of the young people they work with (2005 = 490, 2004 = 369) although they did not meet their target and outcomes remain below national figures (NYA audit). Awards cover a good range of recreational and personal development areas. Young people at risk of NEET who follow an alternative curriculum are included in the awards.

16.Sustaining and further improving the effectiveness of schools

The Council targets intensive support at schools identified with weaknesses, particularly for

leadership, self evaluation and teaching and learning. In 2005-2006 inspections have judged some of these schools satisfactory and improving, two primary schools have a notice to improve and are already making progress with key issues.

17. Falling rolls

The Council has held meetings with headteachers, commissioned a report on federated and collaborative approaches nationally and initiated a school organisation review. The school community understands the issues and need for changes.

18. Recruitment and retention of headteachers

Recruitment is becoming problematic in small primary schools. The Council delivers locally determined and some NCSL training for heads, deputies and aspiring leaders. We fund a mentor programme and support networking. We encourage acting headteacher opportunities. This year we alerted Chairs of Governors to headteacher workload issues ran a conference on work life balance and have subscribed to the Worklife Support programme for all employees. The next step is to review all related strategies and draw them into a policy.

19. Teacher supply in secondary English, maths, science and ICT is difficult

The Council prioritises consultant support in these subjects to support implementation of National Strategies, new teachers and networking. A science specialist school collaborates with the Council to offer additional support and training. A school bid for maths and ICT is current.

20. Sudden increase in EAL numbers

The Council has increased its teacher support team and training programme. The Council has also increased language support in co-operation with employers for the largely East European communities. Good practice in schools is identified and shared. The next step is more sophisticated tracking and analysis of individual pupils' progress since numbers remain statistically small.

For full details of targets and timescales, please see School Improvement Service Plan.

Making a positive contribution

The JAR rated Positive Contribution as 'good'. (3).

Related evidence: JAR self-assessment (pp 16-18 and 24-25)
JAR Report (pp 21-23)
JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan
Children and Young People's Plan (pp 35-37)
APA Dataset.

The 5 main areas for improvement from the JAR report are:

1. Improving consultation and participation and its impact, at county level.

This has improved significantly, for example:

- A Shadow Children and Young People's Partnership Board is now in place since Jan. '06 and meets regularly. The Shadow Board comprise young people representing a range of backgrounds and minority groups. They are helping to produce a CYP version of the CYP Plan which is currently in a final draft. Two young people from this group were elected to sit on the CYP Partnership Board.
- The Herefordshire Youth Council was set up in March, '06 following elections. There are 19 young people on the Council plus a further 4 from the Youth Council Action Group. The group is meeting regularly including a 2 day residential event. They have a clear vision, terms of reference and a dedicated website.
- The Youth Council are discussing their representation at the UK Youth Parliament.
- In addition to the work with the Shadow Partnership and the Youth Council the Youth

Service routinely holds local Youth Forums in which young people develop and present their views. Members have become more confident and are able to represent the views of others in public discussion.

Other Consultation with Young People

- The Council now has a consultation strategy and is adopting the Hear By Right standards. All appropriate partners have been informed.
- The Children's Fund has many examples of involving young people in the running of its work. One example is the evaluation panel made up of young people. This panel routinely visit the projects supported by the CF to form evaluations. Their findings are then presented to the full CF Partnership.
- Extended Schools Remodelling Programme has included young people from school (years 4-11) in four out of five workshops.

2. To provide greater involvement for children and young people with LDD in the planning and review at individual level.

(See also Transitions Work- Being Healthy page 11)

As part of supporting self-evaluation of SEN provision, a pilot group has been trialling 'Voice of the Child' activities designed to support children with LDD in giving their views. This will be evaluated and extended in the Autumn term, '06.

3. Further support to help develop appreciation of other cultures.

- The Education Race Equality Officer has developed a comprehensive programme of support to schools directly aimed at improving pupil appreciation and understanding of cultures other than their own.
- The programme includes the distribution of resources to schools e.g. the Heartstone Project, the wide use of persona dolls and the local Healthy Schools website.

4. Ensure that those youngsters most at risk of anti-social behaviour are identified and reached.

Steps to further improve this area are in place and more are planned:

- Measures to identify young people at risk of anti-social behaviour and to reduce that risk, was judged as being satisfactory by JAR. At a strategic level, partnership work is good but at the operational level there is mixed success at reaching the groups most at risk. The YOS target for 2006/7 is to have a 2% reduction in direct/first time entrants. They are planning to meet this target by a significantly expanded prevention provision. This will be achieved by the recruitment of a full-time prevention manager and extending the work of the Children's Fund. The Children's Fund Panel (aka Youth Inclusion and Support Panel – YISP) now covers the whole county and the age range has been expanded up to 17 years. In addition, YOS plan to recruit an additional parenting worker and hopefully a restorative justice worker from 2007. The Prevent and Deter strand of the POPOs strategy is now in place with active involvement of all appropriate agencies. The Children and Young People's Plan identified reducing anti-social behaviour as a priority and outlines the actions required and planned.
- In terms of re-offending after 24 months, the Hereford and Worcester YOS have done reasonably well. From the baseline in 2001 there has been an improvement generally in the percentages of young people at pre-court, first tier and custody stages. Robust intervention from all agencies, in particular the YOS, will ensure this trend continues.
- Since 2001/2 the rates of children Looked After issued with a final warning, reprimand or conviction in the county has fallen. Herefordshire has been consistently and significantly better than the national average since 2002/3. The work of the Children and Young People Directorate's specific team to support children Looked After and the local YOT will ensure that this good work is continued. Consultation with children Looked After was judged by the JAR to be good. The Total Respect programme is being used to encourage greater uptake of the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service.
- The participation of Herefordshire children Looked After during their reviews has been good with 88% communicating their views compared to only 83% nationally.

- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts are used by the Police and YOS to reduce anti-social behaviour. Recent steps to involve schools and educational support services are being developed further.
- A 12 month programme is being developed in schools to provide diversionary activities for vulnerable young people. It is proposed that 4 projects per school term, for up to 10 young people, are held.
- Herefordshire Housing and other Registered Social Landlords are delivering an anti-social behaviour session at the forthcoming Crucial Crew events.
- In addition to the work outlined above, the CYPP identifies several further actions to ensure better outcomes on antisocial behaviour are achieved, e.g. identification of persistent truants along with appropriate follow-up measures, development of parenting courses and family support.

5. Delivery of the Young Person's Substance Misuse Plan (Drug Action)

- Implementation of the plan is carried out by a sub-group of the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership (HCSDP). Over the last 6 months real improvements have been made in the commissioning and planning processes for this area; a clear, focused plan with relevant targets has just been finalised for 2006/7. The partnership also now has a Commissioner in post to ensure service level agreements are adhered to and performance assessed against them.
- We are still awaiting some year end performance figures. However, the YOT Drugs worker has performed particularly well, with 98% of Young Offenders being screened for substance misuse; 85% of those who require specialist assessment receiving it within 5 days and 97% who needed Tier 2 to 4 intervention receiving it within 10 working days.
- HCSDP are currently undergoing a review of performance against targets, delivery structures and processes; areas for improvement are currently being identified. Herefordshire has just been identified for and agreed to participate in the High Focus Area Phase 2 work, with the Home Office and DfES; we shall be one of 30 partnerships across the country. Areas identified for work are: local delivery and accountability; early identification/targeted interventions with children Looked After; children of substance misusing parents and Tier 3 treatment provision.

Other Factors

Schools

- All Herefordshire schools have a school council. In order to satisfy the criteria for National Healthy School Status (NHSS) students have to be actively involved in decision-making. To achieve NHSS schools also have to have in place effective policies on drugs, bullying, behaviour, sex and relationships education and physical activity and it is a requirement that students are consulted on all school policies. Due to their ongoing support to schools, the Healthy Schools team are very confident that 54% of the county's schools will achieve the status before December 2006 and all schools by 2008 (LAA).
- Data from OFSTED reports September 2005 – March 2006 show the good work done by schools in regard to making a positive contribution. Including PRUs, 3 schools achieved outstanding (Grade 1), 15 achieved good (2) and 3 achieved satisfactory (3). No schools were judged as being inadequate (4). The Healthy Schools work will ensure this is sustained.
- In 2003/4 secondary permanent and fixed-term exclusions were above the regional but below the national average. Permanent exclusions, however, fell by 15% in 2004/5. Primary permanent exclusions in 2003/4 were in line with both regional and national averages with fixed term exclusions notably below both these averages. This position was maintained in 2004/5. The Children's Services Directorate and the secondary Headteachers group are currently working together to improve consistency in

exclusions and to explore further support for KS4 students with challenging behaviour.

Youth Service

- The numbers of young people aged 13-19 reached by the service has gradually increased since 2003 - 4 when new criteria and standards were introduced which required more intensive work with a smaller number of young people. Herefordshire is not achieving the national targets in three of the four key performance areas but has maintained steady improvement in all areas over the last 3 years.
- The youth service leads on the consultation and involvement of young people and has held countywide text elections for the Youth Council, which is an independent and autonomous body, and in the future will support the Shadow Children and Young People's Partnership Board. These two groups will be responsible for the new Youth Opportunity Fund distribution totalling £165,000pa.
- Through its partnerships with the Voluntary Youth Work Sector, a much wider group of young people are supported in making positive contributions in their local areas. We will be working through these partnerships to increase volunteering opportunities for young people through the new national 'v' volunteering organisation.

Connexions

Herefordshire Connexions plan to continue their range of projects that either involves young people through consultation and decision making or preventive work with those deemed to be most at risk of anti-social behaviour. These include:

- Positive Activities for Young People – a range of diversionary activities for young people in Hereford city;
- TASK – working with young people in school year 11 assessed as needing help to build confidence, self esteem etc to better enable them to make a successful transition;
- New Projects – Summer activities for young people who have left school but have not been offered employment, education or training;
- Consultation – a part-time worker is employed to consult with each of the 22 categories of vulnerable young people;
- Recruitment - Connexions maintain a pool of young people who are trained to actively assist in the recruitment of staff.

For full details of targets and timescales, please see Youth Service Plan, YOS Business Plan and Young Person's Substance Misuse Plan.

Achieving economic well-being

The JAR rated Achieving Economic Well-Being as 'adequate'. (2)

Related evidence: JAR Self-Assessment (pp 18-19 and 25-26)
 JAR Report (pp 24-26)
 JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan
 Children and Young People's Plan (pp 38-40)
 APA Dataset

The JAR followed shortly after a very positive Area Wide (14-19) Inspection and ministerial acknowledgement of a very good example of an AWI Action Plan resulting from this. The JAR agenda was broader and, in addition to the issues raised in the AWI, identified areas for development with regard to accommodation and to the provision of childcare places.

1. Housing provision for vulnerable young people and families

- The Council has brought homelessness and Housing Advice Services back in-house with a renewed focus on prevention including family mediation and a Safe Moves Project. Use of B&B accommodation for all client groups is reducing and the out-turn of homeless acceptances by the Council has reduced from 510 in 04/05 to 401 in 05/06 exceeding targets for 05/06 and 06/07.

- Herefordshire met targets for affordable housing in 05/06 and has set enhanced targets for properties built and acquired during 2006/07 @ 161 units. Strategic Housing and Social Care are providing £500k to secure 6-10 units of additional accommodation for care leavers off the open market. An additional 2 self contained flats are being provided in partnership with a local housing association.

2. Provision of childcare places

Based on the 04/06 Action Plan analysis and audit carried out by the Children's Information Service CIS for the EYDCP – Herefordshire were asked to create 856 out of school places. For the period April, 2004 – March, 2006 Herefordshire created 951 places. Successive audits and the JAR Report, however, have highlighted the need for more out of school places particularly in rural areas and places were not always conveniently placed for parents. However, providing school places may not be economically viable or convenient for users. More recently a significant proportion of childminders have been meeting the community needs in the more rural areas.

3. Post-16 Strategy and Transition Planning for young people with LDD

- (Please see point 10 Being Healthy). The multi-agency task force is coordinating the work of the Vulnerable Young People sub-groups of the 14-19 Strategy Group.
- Transition Pathway resourcing will be enhanced and the scope of the work extended. Short-listing is under way for 2 posts – a lead worker and a transitions worker. The remit is extended to cover more vulnerable young people, including all those in special schools and PRUs; those with EBD and mental health problems and children Looked After.

4. Post-16 staying on rates

The Connexions Activity Survey in November 2005 recorded an increase of 1% in the proportion of the year 11 leavers remaining in full-time education (71.7% to 72.7%). There was a reduction of 1.7%, however, in the proportion entering work-based learning, giving a small overall reduction of 0.7% in entry to all forms of post-16 learning. The LSC has a reduced budget for work-based learning and increasing success in the achievement of full apprenticeship frameworks, which qualify for a significant achievement payment, - 53% locally, compared to 47% regionally and nationally – means that fewer apprenticeships can be supported, although priority is being given to 16-18 year olds. Overall participation rates in learning in the 16-18 age range were ahead of the previous year's figures at the end of March, 2006. (Date source: DfES NCCIS).

5. NEET (including children Looked After who are NEET)

The proportion of 16-18 year olds who are NEET stood at 7.1% in Herefordshire at the end of March. At the same time, participation rates in education, employment and training (EET) for other vulnerable groups stood at: LDD 74% (national 76%); Care Leavers (52%) NB: This is a small cohort of 25; Teenage mothers 27% (national 24%).

The next key NEET target date is November 2006, when the target to be achieved is 4.9%. Major factors affecting progress towards achievement of the target are:-

- A larger 16-18 cohort in the Connexions sub-region (up 1.8%);
- A detailed analysis of NEET joiners and leavers shows the majority have some post-school experience of EET and significantly fewer young people are leaving the NEET group for jobs, when compared with the same period for the previous year.

The local strategy for hitting the NEET target includes:-

- Maximising the take up of available opportunities, including running a clearing house system over the summer months with opportunity providers;
- Developing new opportunities, where possible, in demand areas: see 7 below;
- Enhancing job search skill of young people via Job Clubs run by Connexions PAs.

As well as responding to the JAR, partners are maintaining the momentum of the AWI Action Plan and improving performance against other key indicators.

6. The AWI Action Plan is set out in detail and monitored on a regular basis by the 14-19 Strategy Group, using a traffic light system. Good progress is

being made:-

- Some NEET young people have produced a DVD aimed at helping their peers. The DVD will have accompanying notes and a lesson plan for use in school.
- A comprehensive 16-19 prospectus was produced in 2005 and went via schools to year 11 pupils and directly to parents at home. This provides a good platform for the 14-19 Area Prospectus. A working group is already established.
- Research with a range of 16-17 year old drop-outs and other NEET young people identified. A range of improvements in preparation, including better careers education and guidance and greater awareness of access to PA support and to student services support in colleges. Another important outcome is a standard data-sharing form on early leavers, as a means of prompt referral for further advice and support and also as the basis for ongoing analysis of early leaver data.
- Schools and colleges will shortly be consulted on an updated framework for information, advice and guidance (IAG) and on the respective responsibilities of Connexions and of schools/colleges. The framework anticipates the requirements of the national 14-19 Implementation Plan and of Youth Matters for local consultation. The Learner Support Sub-Group of the 14-19 Strategy Group has made recommendations for improving access to impartial IAG.
- Proposals to increase resourcing for, and the scope of, the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service are being considered by the CYP Strategic Board.
- Key occupational sector pathways have been mapped as an aid to career planning.

An initial set of performance indicators for 14-19 have been identified which can be benchmarked and, where appropriate, drilled down to individual provider level. This will inform work with Children's Services on a single system of performance measurement.

7. The range of opportunities has been enhanced for all young people, including those from vulnerable groups:-

- The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) at KS4 currently has 2,340 students enrolled across KS4, at levels from entry level to level 2. Recruitment for 2006-07 will anticipate 14-19 requirements by working to align timetables and to fund only courses offered by schools in partnership with other schools and/or providers.
- The ALPs programme is ESF funded. Provision includes a range of short, accredited courses – basic skills, ASDAN and DoE – and extended work experience. A total of 245 students from 15 schools were enrolled at the end of February. ESOL courses will be added in 2006-07 for the children of migrant workers.

Other provision includes:-

- A Young Apprenticeship programme in catering and hospitality.
- ESF-funded pre-E2E provision is now in place
- November and January starts for NEET young people on broad, general vocational programmes at the College of Technology.
- PAYP with additional £13,000 funding from local sources.
- The UProject for year 11 leavers who have not received an offer of learning or work.
- The Task Project, a local collaboration between Connexions and the Youth Service.
- Consultancy to generate additional work-based learning opportunities.
- A multi-agency "Young Mums to Be" programme.
- Mencap working with local providers to deliver accredited work experience.

8. Post-16 Achievement

(See Enjoy and Achieve page 16 & 17)

9. College Provision

Phase 1 of the Folly Lane campus development has been approved. Phase 2 has been approved in principle. Land based provision and the development of complementary curriculum is likely to be further enhanced by the incorporation of the whole Holme Lacy campus within Herefordshire College of Technology.

For full details of targets and timescales see 14-19 ActionPlan (version3).

PART D The Management of Services for children and young people

A new structure for the Directorate has been created, and from 1st April 2006 is being implemented. The new structure will facilitate integrated working, joint commissioning and effective performance management.

1. In what areas of work have the most sustained improvements been achieved and why?

Since the JAR Inspection a range of service delivery and performance management improvements have been secured. The JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan has been used to focus on performance management discipline alongside service improvements. The renewed Corporate focus on performance management has further promoted this priority. The most sustained improvements are in:

- Safeguarding arrangements.
- Systems for performance management.
- Tackling suitable housing for vulnerable groups.
- Improving outcomes for children with LDD.
- Participation of children and young people in planning and developing services.

2. Have new or joint approaches to service delivery and partnership working been successful? In what way?

- The JAR commended the strength of partnership working. The CYP's Partnership Board has continued to develop and lead the work. At service level, successful partnership working has been achieved in transition planning; in the implementation of the Children's Centre Programme; in the effective development of the healthy schools initiative (LAA), and in the first year pilot of extended schools.
- Effective inter-agency working in the Portage and 'HappiKids' schemes at the Green Croft Centre has produced a clear analysis of need and gap analysis; resulting in the appointment of a shared Care Social Worker 01.06.06. This will increase assessment of potential shared carers and provide quicker access to services.
- The extended schools strategy is being developed in partnership with headteachers and the Early Years Service. The Council sees this as a major tool to increase early intervention.
- There are joint working arrangements for children with complex needs whose needs cannot be met locally with a pooled budget in place (Section 31 Agreement).
- The Children's Centre SureStart programme continues to be successful in joint approaches to service delivery.

3. How effective are your performance management and review processes overall?

- The development and implementation of improved performance management is a top priority for the CYPs Directorate. The recent DfES commissioned review of the JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan also reinforced this as a priority. The Council has commissioned the Institute of Public Care (IPC) to support and challenge the Directorate in delivering improved performance management and monitoring systems. Over the next 9 months the Council will be working with IPC to modernise and implement robust performance management systems with dedicated programmes of staff development and training. The Directorate has an Annual Operating Plan with links to the Corporate Plan, CYPPlan and staff review and development arrangements.
- The Senior Management Team continues to be focussed on delivery of the JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan. The performance management arrangements for this are in line with the corporate overhaul of performance management systems (see JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan for details).
- The new Directorate structure has a dedicated Performance Management function. This area of responsibility will include data collation, analysis, and benchmarking with regular performance reports being shared between the unit and Service Managers.

- The Planning, Audit and Review Managers function in children's social work has been strengthened, as have all managerial and supervisory activities in this area.
 - The CYP's Partnership Board will oversee delivery of improved outcomes for children and young people (please see chart on page 7 for proposed arrangements).
- 4. How well are you developing your workforce to manage change?**
- The Council is, with the support of Children's Workforce Development Council, planning and developing a Children's Workforce Strategy for the local area. The corporate Head of HR is leading on this with a dedicated project manager. An interagency planning meeting is being held in mid June facilitated by CWDC.
 - The Council is also rolling out the Championing Children programme across children's services with OPM – July-Oct 06. In the creation of the new Directorate and in the development of integrated working, training is being organised to focus staff on actioning outcomes and to develop a shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviours for managers, through the 'Championing Children' programme (see JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan). Staff are attending GOWM Learning Sets on the Change for Children programme (Commissioning and Workforce Strategy).
 - An example of significant challenge is a review of school provision being undertaken which will explore how standards of teaching and learning and the challenges of the wider agenda can be met in a situation of falling rolls.

The use of resources

5. What evidence do you have that you are providing value for money?

The Corporate Assessment concluded that the Council provides good services at good value. The Corporate Assessment and JAR noted the Council also provides good or very good universal services, and good individual services. Earlier BV reviews, recent user comments, benchmarking and inspection reports suggest that value for money is being achieved.

6. Is your expenditure in line with projections and if not what actions have you taken to resolve this?

Budget management is good, and early warning systems and contingency sums have been created to avoid any major budgetary problems. These funds have been created to meet variable and unpredictable demand.

7. Have you made any significant shift in expenditure to support priorities? Has this been effective?

In every year since 2000/01 additional cash from within the Council's own resources (£4.7M over 3 years) has been found for social care. Within the limited funding available, Gershon efficiencies have been sought from the School Transport Budget. Savings achieved in this area are being used, with money from the Council, to implement the JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan and associated priorities. Budgetary provision for SEN and to support non-English speaking families has also increased. In relation to the JAR Report recommendations, additional resources have been allocated as follows: Corporate contingency budget across all social care services £1.3m; funding for the JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan £100k; LSCB funding £149k and additional preventative service funding of £70k already identified within the Council and also by partners (REC 12). Three additional OTs appointed to improve access to the service. (REC 8)

8. How effective is your commissioning of services? How do you know?

The authority will be adopting the DfES Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework as its system for developing commissioning of children's services. A PCT manager has been placed with the authority to work on the development of joint commissioning arrangements. This will bring together existing good practice in a coordinated arrangement.

9. What has been the impact of any pooled resources?

A pooled budget for children with complex needs is in place, allowing the needs of the individual to be met by the various agencies through panel arrangements and effective joint commissioning. There is effective joint commissioning using pooled budgets for children requiring out of County placements. In addition there is development work to commission jointly supported housing and schooling along with Shropshire and Worcestershire. Initial work on recommissioning of family support services is under way.

Capacity to improve

10. How far does the council have the capacity to improve its services for children and young people?

There is strong Member support for children and young people's services. The Cabinet is fully committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in Herefordshire. The Council is taking the necessary steps for future improvement particularly to improve performance management and the quality of service provision at Corporate and Directorate level. Corporate and Directorate restructuring is designed to provide the necessary capacity to ensure that services for children and young people will be delivered effectively. The Herefordshire Connects Programme is transforming the way the Council conducts its business and will provide investment for future service delivery.

11. How far do local services for children and young people overall have the capacity to improve?

The strong history of partnership working is enabling the further development of Children's Trust Arrangements. The framework and plans to monitor and review services and to prioritise are being developed along the lines of the proposed structure chart for the CYP's partnership. The impact of falling numbers of children; greater numbers with high levels of need, present a challenging picture; effective steps are being taken to mitigate the impact, including enhanced intelligence gathering; up to date information about needs; informed priority setting and service commissioning.

12. What needs to be done to bring about further improvement?

- Effective implementation and monitoring of action planning.
- Robust commissioning and delivery of plans.
- A thorough and effective performance management culture and system.
- Clear and confident leadership.
- Improved communications systems within children's services to provide clarity of purpose and to align everyone's efforts to improve outcomes for children and young people.

13. What are the barriers to improvement and what strategies do you have to overcome them?

Barriers to improvement are perceived to be:

- Gaps in performance management systems.
- The engagement of staff at all levels and in all agencies.
- Increasing the pace and improving the coordination of change.
- Modernising frameworks and systems for service monitoring and delivery.

These issues are being addressed strategically through:

- Robust action to develop and embed performance management systems with specialist external support.
- Enhanced communication channels.
- Levering added capacity internally within the service and from the corporate centre as well as from other agencies such as OPM and IPC.