

Supplement to the agenda for

Scrutiny Management Board

Monday 16 December 2024

1.00 pm

Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Pages

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AGENDA ITEM 5

Questions from members of the public – Scrutiny Management Board, 16 December 2024

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Ms Reid Hereford	Per Local Authority Interactive Tool (31 March 2024), the rates per 10,000 children are: Children in care: Herefordshire: 114 Statistical Neighbours' average (SNs): 67 Children in Need: Herefordshire: 466 SNs: 287 Section 47 enquiries: Herefordshire: 276 SNs: 161 Child Protection Plan: Herefordshire: 60 SNs: 34 Cafcass care applications: Herefordshire: 10.30 SNs: 9.05 In 2023-24, the Children and Young People Directorate spent £63,500,000 (budget: £51,800,000) ie overspent by £11,700,000, including £8,700,000 overspend on children in care. In 2024-25, according to Appendix C of Agenda Item 7, the "Approved Revenue Budget" of the Children and Young People Directorate is £67,222,000 (£64,919,000 plus "Supplementary Budget Approval" of £2,303,000). However, the above LAIT figures suggest that its budget is materially too high.	Scrutiny Management Board

	Will Herefordshire Council establish a Reunification Team to reduce the number and cost of children in care and, if so, by when?	
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Response:

Reunification of children back to parental care is very much something we are supportive of and conscious to consider through our care planning for individual children. Where "reunification" is agreed we have our Edge of Care and Home team (ECHO) who offer support for rehabilitation programmes and this service has remained a central county wide service in our recent locality re-design so it is able to respond to all children in care cases wherever they reside. Please see attached parents leaflet outlining the offer and the professionals road map we follow. This is a substantive team of staff who work in addition to social workers and family support workers in our children in care and child protection teams to support in delivery against child protection and care plans to both keep children at home and to reunify them where it is safe and in their best interests.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 2	Mr Jeremy Milln Hereford	At the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board on 28 th October, Herefordshire Council gave a glowing account of its project management. Members heard about the Council's knowledge system which stored relevant documentation so that another manager could pick things up straight away. Yet it had to admit at Council on 6 th December that for the various active travel projects for which the last administration won considerable Government funding, most unprofessionally it minuted no record of its regular meetings with the DfT's Active Travel England. So much for the Nolan principles for openness and accountability. Given the limitations of Verto, this makes it impossible for anyone else to understand and scrutinise the process by which decisions are later made, essential if we are to evaluate them properly. The Council is asked to explain how it proposes to improve on this performance?	Scrutiny Management Board

Response:

Thank you for your question. This question was answered twice at Council on Friday 6 December 2024. You can find the answer in the Council minutes at Questions to Council.



Information for families about the Edge of Care / Home Team (ECHo)

- The ECHo team can assist you and your family in your most difficult times to support you to continue to care for your child at home safely.
- We also help children who are in care to return to live at home with their families.
- We are available to support you several times per week, even on weekends and evenings.
- We can help with parenting skills, managing relationships and healthy choices, among many other things that we do.
- Our team has family support workers, a family therapist, a domestic abuse specialist, and a recovery worker to help with substance misuse problems.
- ➤ We will work with you to implement an ECHo family support plan. This work takes place over a 3 to 6 month period.
- We also work closely with your social worker to make sure we are all achieving the best outcomes for families.





court at 4-month point if possible; effort should be made to discharge the care order at pace, as quickly as is safe

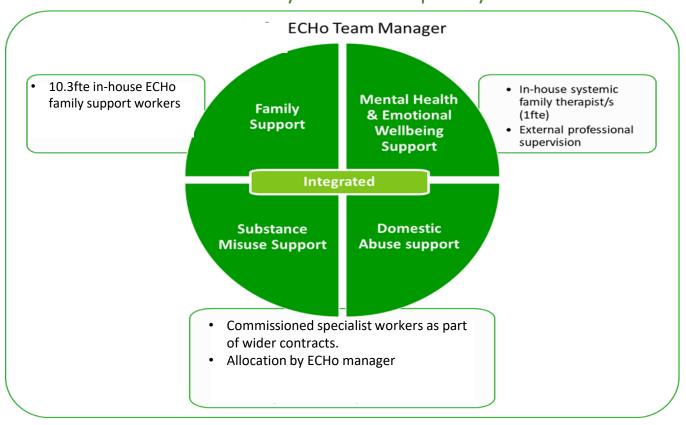
in place

Final
ECHo
report
provided
on child's
file



Led by a multi-disciplinary team

"The ECHo (Edge of Care/Home) model is relationship-based, strengths-based and solutions-focused"



Core principles:

- 1. We work with the whole family, mainly in the home environment but also in other community settings
- 2. We dedicate more time to support individual families than other types family support or social care roles can normally offer
- 3. We work together as a multi-disciplinary team
- 4. We apply evidence-based interventions
- 5. We work with each child and family to develop clear and measurable goals, which we will review on a regular basis
- 6. We are responsive to changing needs
- 7. We work closely with the Safeguarding and Looked After services, with multi-agency partners and the voluntary sector

ECHo practice model (2)

- ECHo works systemically, understanding families as a system, and investing time and resources into understanding how they relate to and communicate with one another
- Systemic family therapist to make a systemic formulation of the family's situation and offer family therapy
- Systemic family therapist will guide ECHo
- team members to shape plan

Systemic Approach

- Solihull approach will guide family support workers' interactions with children and families
- ECHo family support workers trained in Solihull Approach

Solihull Parenting

A parenting programme focusing on containment, reciprocity and behaviour management

The ECHo team may also apply elements or tools from other approaches, for e.g. PPP, Graded Care Profile, Respect Young People Programme, Engage Programme, Sensory Integration

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- Every family is offered a family group conference
- Family Group Conference Coordinators will support families to develop a Family Plan, which can be reviewed throughout the period of ECHo support

Family Group Conferencing

A process led by family members to plan and make decisions for a child who is at risk.

Non-Violent Resistance Approach

- The NVR parenting approach as an alternative to behavioural approaches based on rewards and consequences
- NVR strengthens the relationship between parent and child.
- ECHO team trained in NVR approach