

Agenda

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Date: **Tuesday 1 June 2021**

Time: **10.15 am**

Place: **Hereford Town Hall, St Owen Street, Hereford, HR1
2PJ**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01432 383690

Email: matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 383690 or e-mail matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the Children and young people scrutiny committee

Membership

Chairperson Councillor Carole Gandy
Vice-Chairperson Councillor Diana Toynbee

Councillor Graham Andrews
Councillor Paul Andrews
Councillor Kath Hey
Councillor Phillip Howells
Councillor Mike Jones

Co-optees Andy James Parent Governor Representative – SEND Sector

Agenda

PUBLIC INFORMATION COVID PHYSICAL MEETINGS BASIC OPTION

NOLAN PRINCIPLES

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interest in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.

4. MINUTES - TO FOLLOW

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 20 May – *not available at the time of despatch. The minutes of the previous meeting will be circulated as a supplement ahead of the meeting.*

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To receive any written questions from members of the public.
Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Tuesday 25 May. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:
councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

To receive any written questions from members of the council.
Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Tuesday 25 May. Accepted questions and answers will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to:
councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.

7. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

To note receipt of the non statutory Improvement Notice, establishment of Improvement Board and the involvement and role of scrutiny in the Children Services Improvement Plan.

8. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PERFORMANCE REPORT

To update the Scrutiny Committee about progress in relation to the Local Authority's Corporate Parenting Duties and to answer key questions of the Committee.

9. UPDATE ON PEER ON PEER ABUSE RECOMMENDATIONS

To receive an update on the recommendations and progress arising from the reviews in respect of peer on peer abuse.

10. REPORT OF WORK OF PREVENT AND DISRUPT GROUP TO ADDRESS

Pages

9 - 26

27 - 40

41 - 68

69 - 84

**CHILD EXPLOITATION AND THE CURRENT RISK OF EXPLOITATION IN
HEREFORDSHIRE**

To provide detail on the work of the prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire.

11. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

85 - 88

To review the attached work programme for 2021-22.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 27 July 2021.

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

In view of the continued prevalence of covid-19, we have introduced changes to our usual procedures for accessing public meetings. These will help to keep our councillors, staff and members of the public safe.

Please take time to read the latest guidance on the council website by following the link at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings and support us in promoting a safe environment for everyone. If you have any queries please contact the Governance Support Team on 01432 260201 / 261699 or at governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions. Thank you very much for your help in keeping Herefordshire Council meetings a safe space.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO: -

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Recording of meetings

Please note that filming, photography and recording of this meeting is permitted provided that it does not disrupt the business of the meeting.

Members of the public are advised that if you do not wish to be filmed or photographed you should let the governance services team know before the meeting starts so that anyone who intends filming or photographing the meeting can be made aware.

The reporting of meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the reporting to ensure that they comply.

The council may make an official recording of this public meeting or stream it live to the council's website. Such recordings form part of the public record of the meeting and are made available for members of the public via the council's web-site.

Public transport links

Hereford Town Hall is a few minutes walking distance from both bus stations located in the town centre of Hereford.

**The Seven Principles of Public Life
(Nolan Principles)**

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Title of report: Children's services improvement plan

Meeting: Children and young people's scrutiny committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 1 June 2021

Report by: Chief Executive

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To note receipt of the non statutory Improvement Notice, establishment of Improvement Board and the involvement and role of scrutiny in the Children Services Improvement Plan.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The improvement notice is noted;**
- b) The Committee reflects upon the establishment of an improvement board and what role it will play in ensuring that the improvements set out in the improvement notice are achieved;**
- c) The committee provides views on whether the chair of scrutiny should be a member of the improvement board; and**
- d) The committee agrees to develop a new approach to scrutiny and their role using best practice from other authorities who have had improvements boards in place.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options:
 - a. The DfE have issued a non statutory intervention notice. If the council decides not to act upon the intervention notice, the DfE could decide to issue a statutory intervention notice or take action to move the children’s social care service to a trust.
 - b. At a meeting of Extraordinary Council, it was resolved that as a result of the adverse high court judgement relating to children’s social care that an improvement board be established.

Key considerations

2. Full council unanimously supported on 27 April 2021 the establishment of an improvement board as part of the assurance and improvement strategy following the High court Judgement.
3. The creation of an improvement board to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Children’s Services Improvement Plan forms part of the strategy. Early engagement with the regulators enabled the Department for Education (“DFE”) to agree to appoint a DFE advisor to chair the board.
4. Full council were advised that the DFE were considering what action they might take to ensure children receive the services they deserve. The type of intervention is dependent on the severity of the situation, how long the authority has been underperforming, and the perceived capacity for improvement. It was recognised that the DFE had a difficult decision to make.

Improvement Notice

5. On 18 May the DFE made their decision and issued the council with a non statutory improvement notice. Although the Minister, Vicky Ford MP recognised that the council was committed to addressing the serious concerns, she decided that the lack of progress and improvement to children’s social care services since the 2018 Ofsted inspection; exacerbated by serious failings identified following Justice Keehan’s High Court judgment (published 16 April 2021), notification of three additional cases of concern to be assessed by the court, and practice inconsistencies identified by Essex as part of a Partners in Practice high-level review last month necessitated intervention.
6. The non statutory intervention is set out in the notice (see appendix A). To comply with the notice the council is required to undertake the following actions by the end of April 2022 or sooner where appropriate;
 1. To work with the appointed Improvement Advisor, Gladys Rhodes White;
 2. To establish an Improvement Board chaired by Gladys Rhodes White;

3. To agree and submit to the DFE an improvement plan;
 4. To demonstrate appropriate and sustainable improvement in accordance with the plan.
7. The improvement plan must cover the following areas;
- a) Serious concerns in respect of the council's children's services, following failings outlined in the High Court Judgement published on 16 April 2021; in addition to other court cases coming up, where it is expected that further practice failings will be identified;
 - b) Failures in the leadership and management of children's services have been identified, along with evidence of poor-decision making, and drift and delay in some historic cases. Interim posts, (Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director), have been appointed to help stabilise the current leadership;
 - c) Essex Partners in Practice visit to the council in April 2021 identified longstanding issues of inconsistent practice;
 - d) Insufficient improvement has been made since Ofsted last inspected in 2018 and two subsequent visits in 2019;
 - e) recommendations from the DFE advisor.
8. To ensure there is clear evidence of progression the notice is clear that;
- the content of the improvement plan and a record of progress against it must be kept up to date;
 - the improvement board will oversee implementation and progress against the objectives in the plan, to a timetable agreed with the Department;
 - reports to the improvement board should include data, analysis and recommendations supported by evidence of the impact of improvements on the quality of practice and experience of children and families;
 - the council should highlight those objectives which are slow to progress and highlight where contributions need to be strengthened; and
 - the views of frontline staff and of children and young people will be taken into consideration in the development of practice and standards
9. Gladys Rhodes White will provide the DFE with a report on progress or concern on a 6 weekly basis.
10. The DFE will undertake reviews of progress against the improvement plan at least every six months and more regularly as appropriate. These reviews will cover culture, performance, leadership, management and governance, workforce management oversight, early help and multi agency arrangements.
11. The council will undertake a self assessment before these reviews which will include;

- a. Progress against the improvement plan objectives;
- b. Staff surveys;
- c. Staff supervision and feedback.

Improvement Board

12. The purpose of the Improvement Board will be to;
- To oversee the implementation of the improvement plan that meets the requirements of the non-statutory ministerial improvement notice for Herefordshire Council.
 - To ensure resources are secured to facilitate the required improvements in a timely and sustainable manner
 - To ensure that services to children, young people and families in Herefordshire deliver consistently good outcomes.
 - To provide assurances to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, elected members, partners and service users that progress is achieved and maintained.
13. The draft membership is currently;
- DFE Advisor - Gladys Rhodes White MBE
 - Chief Executive -- Paul Walker
 - Leader to the Council – Cllr D Hitchiner
 - Improvement Board Lead – Name tbc
 - Interim Director of Children Services - Cath Knowles
 - Solicitor to the Council - Claire Ward
 - Cabinet Member for Children & Families - Cllr F Norman
 - Chair of Childrens Scrutiny/Opposition Member Cllr C Gandy
 - Local Government Association - Claire Burgess
 - Safeguarding Partnership Chair (Independent Scrutineer) - Liz Murphy
 - Clinical Commissioning Group - Lisa Levy and Ellen Footman
 - West Mercia Police - Edd Williams
 - Principal social worker – Joe Davenport
 - Primary school representative - TBC
 - Secondary school representative – TBC
 - Minute taker - Caroline Marshall

14. The first meeting of the improvement board is being arranged for 14 June at 10.00 am to 12.00 noon. For the suggested full terms of reference see appendix B.
15. The standard items on the agenda each month for the board will be
 - Update on progress of the plan
 - Director report on Priority actions
 - Risk log
 - Input from partners
 - Staff reference group – feedback
 - Safeguarding partnership
 - DfE update
 - Communications
 - AOB

Scrutiny

16. Currently the chair of scrutiny is listed as a board member given the importance of ensuring that all parts of the system are involved and committed to the actions in the improvement plan. However thought should be given to how best to use scrutiny.
17. The current plan is that the Director of Children's Services report on priority actions, the DfE advisor's 6 weekly report and communications will be reviewed by cabinet and children scrutiny as standard items. This provides support and challenge to the Board by being able to bring to bear a different perspective on their priorities.
18. It is suggested however that rather than just reviewing progress reports (which after all will be being reviewed elsewhere) scrutiny develops areas of distinct work from the number of priority actions and explore issues and dependencies relating to those actions, identifying risks and pressures which might work against the council delivering improvements, and understanding what mitigations might be made. The Board will be driving forward the improvement but it is anticipated that the board would appreciate assistance in delving into some of the knottier issues and contributing to the work being undertaken to improve.
19. A more distinct role for scrutiny will prevent duplication. There is a risk that between cabinet and scrutiny some issues may fall between the gaps or, that scrutiny will shadow what cabinet is doing with little value. An early conversation with the DfE adviser will assist in identifying where scrutiny focus might lie.
20. At this committee's meeting on 20 May 2020 one item already identified was reviewing themes from notable cases and the care concerns emails. A standing panel will be established to oversee this work.

21. At the same time as agreeing how best to use scrutiny. There is also an opportunity to develop the role of the committee and seek support and guidance from other local authorities about the lessons their scrutiny committees have learnt from working with an improvement board. Developing key lines of enquiry and the effectiveness of questioning and challenge will strengthen the committees work.

Governance Structure

22. It is vitally important that the governance framework is understood.
23. The diagram below illustrates the following:

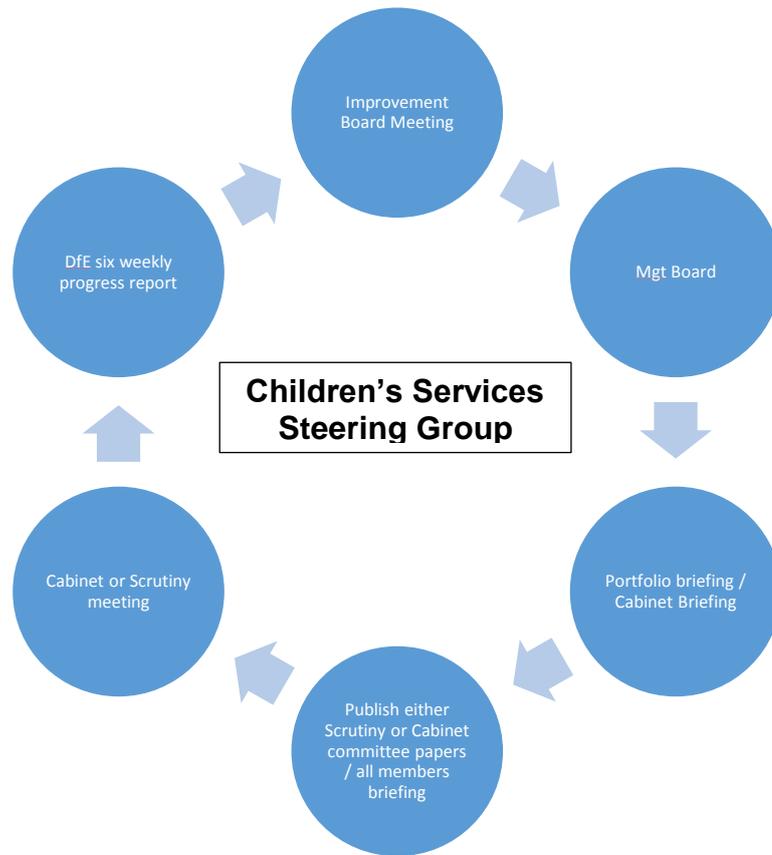
The Improvement Board is an internal body seeking to ensure that progress is being made and escalating areas of concern to the DFE, Cabinet and the Chief Executive. The Board will have a web page where all minutes of meetings and information will be published.

There will be a shadow board of officers, who will be the “engine room” working on the service improvements needed to necessary changes.

Cabinet are responsible for overseeing the plan and ensuring that progress is made as set out in the improvement notice. They are also responsible for the resource allocation. Cabinet members will be briefed informally as part of the normal cycle of portfolio and cabinet briefings.

The chief executive is responsible for making the changes necessary to improve the services. He is supported in this role by a children’s services steering group that meets weekly to ensure all aspects of improvement and risk is managed and co ordinated. Management Board also provide a check and balance to the plan and are advised of progress. A resources board is also in place to monitor spend and value for money.

Full council is due to have an update on the progress of the strategy and improvement work to date in October 2021.



24. It will be important that the cycle of work is quickly established. Currently it is timetabled over a six week rolling programme based on the activity below;

Week	Meeting
Week 1	Improvement Board meeting Children's services steering group meeting
Week 2	Management Board Children's services steering group meeting
Week 3	Portfolio Briefing and Cabinet Briefing Children's services steering group meeting
Week 4	Publish Cabinet / Scrutiny Papers / all member briefing / Improvement Board Children's services steering group meeting
Week 5	Cabinet or Scrutiny (alternating) Children's services steering group meeting

Week 6	Progress report to DfE Children's services steering group meeting
---------------	--

Community impact

25. The notice requiring improvement will have both a direct and indirect effect on the lives of both the current and future children and families in Herefordshire.
26. Keeping children safe is one of the most important things this council does and the details in this report support whatever action is required to ensure children and families receive the services they deserve.

Environmental Impact

27. There are no environmental impacts.

Equality duty

28. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
29. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.

Resource implications

30. There are significant revenue resource implications for the improvement work required. There are no expected capital resource implications.

31. The resource implications are not included in the base budget. As detailed below the anticipated additional resource requirement for the next two years is £5.222m.

32. The improvement board will receive monthly reports monitoring spend incurred as part of the monthly update.

Revenue cost	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Improvement board	130	130	-	260
Support for family's	100	100	-	200
Legal	551	551	-	1102
External legal fees	525	325	-	850
Human resources support	364	289	-	653
Assurance and transformation	292	85	-	377
interim Staffing	890	890	-	1,780
TOTAL	2,852	2,370		5,222

Funding streams	2021/22	2022/23	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Ear marked reserves	2,852	2,370		5,222
TOTAL	2,852	2,370		5,222

Legal implications

33. The legal implications are already set out in this report.

Risk management

34. The notice is very clear should the council be unwilling or unable to comply with this improvement notice, or should ministers not be satisfied with the council's progress at any stage, ministers may choose to invoke their statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the council to enter into an appropriate arrangement to secure the improvements required in children's services.

35. Statutory improvement notices could be issued and more critical or enduring underperformance may necessitate the use of Statutory Directions compelling the

council to take certain actions. In extreme cases the DFE can direct partial or complete outsourcing of children services to a third party or the establishment of a children's trust.

Consultees

36. The leader, deputy leader and all of cabinet have been advised of the notice. Gladys Rhodes White and the DFE have been consulted on the draft Improvement Board terms of reference

Appendices

Appendix A – Covering letter and Improvement Notice

Appendix B – Suggested Improvement Board Terms of Reference

Background papers

None identified.



Vicky Ford MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

18 May 2021

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL: SERIOUS FAILINGS IN RELATION TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

I am writing in relation to the lack of progress and improvement to children's social care services in Herefordshire Council ("the council") since the 2018 Ofsted inspection; exacerbated by serious failings identified following Justice Keehan's High Court judgment (published 16 April 2021), notification of three additional cases of concern to be assessed by the court, and practice inconsistencies identified by Essex as part of a Partners in Practice high-level review last month. I was shocked and saddened to hear Justice Keehan's judgment and the experience of the family and children involved, and am very concerned about the picture the judgement paints of the performance of children's social care services in Herefordshire and whether children are safe. I am also aware of other court cases where the forthcoming judgements are likely to identify further practice failings. The Essex visit in April 2021 identified longstanding issues of inconsistent practice, and I am also aware that insufficient improvement has been made since Ofsted last inspected in 2018 and two subsequent visits in 2019. It is apparent there have been serious failings in the leadership and management across the children's services department, and that interim positions have been brought in to help stabilise this.

Children's social care services are so important to the most vulnerable children locally and this means that it is essential that they are delivered to a high standard. No children should be left at risk of harm, and the welfare interests of children and families should be paramount to any decision made about their future. Keeping children safe is the most important responsibility that local authorities carry out and is one of the most important priorities for this Government.

I need to be confident that the council is taking the right actions to secure both immediate and sustainable improvement. This is why I have already agreed to appointing Gladys Rhodes White as DfE Improvement Adviser to set up and chair an Improvement Board as soon as possible.

I am today, also confirming, on behalf of the Secretary of State, that the Department for Education will issue the council with an Improvement Notice. A copy of the Improvement Notice is attached and will be published on GOV.UK on 18 May.

I consider that the Improvement Notice should last for a minimum of 12 months, until the end of April 2022, and until such time that the Secretary of State is satisfied this is no longer required. Formal reviews should be built in at appropriate stages to reassure me that sufficient progress has been made or indeed to reflect quicker progress than expected.

I understand from my officials that the council recognises the seriousness of the concerns raised in relation to Herefordshire's children's services and have already put in place steps to start addressing these. I welcome this commitment. I have also expressed my concerns to Herefordshire's local MPs to ensure that rapid action is taken, and improvement remains a priority.

My officials will continue to work closely with the council and the adviser over the coming weeks and months, to ensure that the necessary progress is being made. I am copying this letter to David Hitchiner (Leader of the Council), Felicity Norman (Lead Member for children and families and deputy leader), Paul Walker (Chief Executive), Claire Ward (Solicitor to Council and Monitoring Officer) and Catherine Knowles (Interim Director of Children's Services). I am also copying this letter to Bill Wiggin MP (North Herefordshire) and to Jesse Norman MP (Hereford and South Herefordshire).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicky Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vicky Ford MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Improvement Notice

To: Herefordshire Council ('the council')
Plough Lane
Herefordshire
HR4 0LE

This Improvement Notice is issued to Herefordshire Council on 18 May 2021, following significant concerns highlighted by the publication of Justice Keehan's High Court Judgement on Friday 16 April 2021, further cases of concern in the court system and inconsistent practice identified by Essex as Partners in Practice in April 2021; demonstrating a lack of pace and progress to improve children's services since the 2018 Ofsted inspection.

1. This Notice is given to address:
 - a) Serious concerns in respect of the council's children's services, following failings outlined in the High Court Judgement published on 16 April 2021; in addition to other court cases coming up, where it is expected that further practice failings will be identified.
 - b) Failures in the leadership and management of children's services have been identified, along with evidence of poor-decision making, and drift and delay in some historic cases. Interim posts, (Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director), have been appointed to help stabilise the current leadership.
 - c) Essex Partners in Practice visit to the council in April 2021 identified longstanding issues of inconsistent practice.
 - d) Insufficient improvement has been made since Ofsted last inspected in 2018 and two subsequent visits in 2019.
2. To comply with this Notice, the following actions are required of the council, working with its partner agencies ("partners") as identified by the Children Act 2004 (Section 11).

Adviser arrangements

3. As you are aware, the Secretary of State has appointed an Improvement Adviser, Gladys Rhodes White, to provide advice to the Department and the council. The council will work with the adviser for a minimum of 12 months, and until such time that the Secretary of State is satisfied this is no longer required.

Improvement plan

4. The council's improvement plan will deliver appropriate and sustainable improvement. The plan should cover the areas identified in paragraph 1 (a to d), as well as recommendations made by the Improvement Adviser appointed by the Department. The plan should be submitted to the Department for Education ("the Department"), and by a date determined by the Improvement Adviser.

5. To ensure there is clear evidence of progression:
 - a. the content of the improvement plan and a record of progress against it must be kept up to date;
 - b. the council must ensure there is an improvement board established with an independent chair in place (to be set up and chaired by the DfE Improvement Adviser), that has full support from the Chief Executive and Council Leader, to oversee implementation of the improvement plan and report to the improvement board on progress against the objectives in the plan, to a timetable agreed with the Department. It can commission updates from partners in order to do this;
 - c. reports to the improvement board should include data, analysis and recommendations supported by evidence of the impact of improvements on the quality of practice and experience of children and families;
 - d. the council should highlight those objectives which are slow to progress and highlight where contributions need to be strengthened; and
 - e. the views of frontline staff and of children and young people will be taken into consideration in the development of practice and standards.

Department for Education reviews

6. Officials or advisers from the Department will undertake reviews of progress against the improvement plan at least every six months and more regularly where appropriate.
7. These reviews may cover but are not exclusive to: culture; performance; leadership, management and governance; workforce and management oversight; early help; and multi-agency arrangements.
8. From time to time, the Improvement Adviser may require that a diagnostic review or assessment of performance in a specific service area is undertaken by a local authority or other party agreed with the Department.
9. The Department will offer dedicated improvement support through its Partners in Practice arrangements and may consider additional requests for support as part of the review process.
10. For any review or assessment, the council must provide the persons conducting it with:
 - a. access to, and time with, staff and leadership;
 - b. accurate and up to date data on performance and quality;

- c. facilities to carry out the reviews;
- d. access to case files, minutes of meetings, supervision records or any other relevant information.

11. Prior to any reviews, the council should provide its own assessment of improvement. This may reflect, but is not limited to:

- a. progress against the improvement plan objectives;
- b. staff surveys;
- c. staff supervision and the quality of feedback.

12. Taking account of the measures set out in this improvement notice and the diagnostic report once produced by the Department’s Improvement Adviser, the council should aim for actions included in the improvement plan to be delivered by the end of April 2022 or sooner, where appropriate.

Improvement against the above measures will be assessed as follows:

13. The Improvement Adviser will provide to the Department, 6 weekly reports of progress or concern against the areas set out in this notice; and progress against the improvement plan; and any other such information relevant to the improvement journey.

Failure to comply with this Improvement Notice by the assessment dates or poor progress:

14. Should the council be unwilling or unable to comply with this improvement notice, or should ministers not be satisfied with the council’s progress at any stage, ministers may choose to invoke their statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the council to enter into an appropriate arrangement to secure the improvements required in children’s services.



18 May, 2021

Signed: Date:

Emily Whitehead

A senior civil servant in the Department for Education

SUGGESTED
Terms of Reference
[all meetings will be held over MS Teams]

Board Purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To oversee the implementation of the improvement plan that meets the requirements of the non-statutory ministerial improvement notice for Herefordshire Council. 2. To ensure resources are secured to facilitate the required improvements in a timely and sustainable manner 3. To ensure that services to children, young people and families in Herefordshire deliver consistently good outcomes. 4. To provide assurances to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, elected members, partners and service users that progress is achieved and maintained.
Board Members	<p>DFE Advisor - Gladys Rhodes White OBE Chief Executive -- Paul Walker Leader to the Council – Cllr D Hitchiner ? Improvement Board Lead – Name tbc Interim Director of Children Services - Cath Knowles Solicitor to the Council - Claire Ward Cabinet Member for Children & Families - Cllr F Norman Chair of Childrens Scrutiny/Opposition Member Cllr C Gandy - TBC Local Government Association - Claire Burgess Safeguarding Partnership Chair (Independent Scrutineer) - Liz Murphy Clinical Commissioning Group - Lisa Levy and Ellen Footman West Mercia Police - Edd Williams Principal social worker – Joe Davenport Primary school representative - TBC Secondary school representative – TBC Minute taker - Caroline Marshall</p>
Other attendees will be invited to meetings when required for specific agenda items.	<p>Head of HR Tracey Sampson Interim Head of Legal Services Kate Charlton S151 Officer Andrew Lovegrove Other elected members ? Vice chair of scrutiny ? Assistant directors from children and families directorate Other partners?</p>
Detailed Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure there is clear evidence of progression: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the content of the improvement plan and a record of progress against is up to date; b. to oversee implementation of the improvement plan and receive reports on progress against the objectives in the plan, to a timetable agreed with the Department.

	<p>c. commission updates from partners as required to monitor progress of objectives in the improvement plan.</p> <p>d. analyse and receive assurance that there is evidence of the impact of improvements on the quality of practice and experience of children and families;</p> <p>e. highlight those objectives which are slow to progress and highlight where contributions need to be strengthened; and</p> <p>f. ensure that the views of frontline staff and of children and young people will be taken into consideration in the development of practice and standards.</p>
Accountabilities and Governance	<p>The Board will be jointly accountable to the Minister and Cabinet and will provide progress report on the implementation of the Plan highlighting areas of risk. The Chair is the ultimate decision maker on the Board.</p> <p>Progress will be reviewed by children and young person’s scrutiny and the Herefordshire children’s safeguarding partnership</p> <p>Update reports will be provided to full Council</p>
Frequency of Meetings	Monthly
Standard Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on progress of the plan • Priority actions • Risk log • Input form partners • Staff reference group – feedback • Safeguarding partnership • DfE update • Communications • AOB
Administration	<p>Papers will be circulated at least 3 working days in advance of meeting. Herefordshire Council will be responsible for the project management, administration, clerking and hosting of the board meetings and will ensure the minutes are taken and distributed to Board Members. The Chair will agree the minutes before circulation. Board papers will be shared as agreed by the Board depending on the documents at each meeting.</p>
Type of meeting	Virtual meeting and will be an internal meeting.
Access to information	TBC [webpage for improvement board]



Title of report: Looked after children performance report

Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 1 June 2021

Report by: Cabinet member children and families;

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To update the Scrutiny Committee about progress in relation to the Local Authority's Corporate Parenting Duties and to answer key questions of the Committee.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The committee reviews the information provided and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to secure further improvement and;**
- b) **The committee notes in its work programme that a further update will be provided in respect of Children in Care at a later meeting in September 2021.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; it is a function of the committee to review actions taken in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and make reports or recommendations to the executive.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Hilary Brooks, Chris Jones, Tel: 01432 383863, Tel: 01432 261596, email:
Hilary.Brooks@herefordshire.gov.uk, chris.jones@herefordshire.gov.ukl

Key considerations

2. This report briefly outlines the local authority's duty towards children in care as outlined in the Care Planning and Placement Review Regulations (2010 & 2015).
3. Furthermore, the report provides an infographic snapshot of the children in care.
4. **The Corporate Parenting Principles:**
 - The government, in 2018, set out guidance on what good standards of care is: This is guidance is called: ***“corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers”*** This is statutory and every local authority is required to apply these benchmarks in delivering services to Children in Care and Care Leavers. There are seven key principles and these are:
 - to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
 - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
 - to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
 - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
 - for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 - to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
5. A qualitative analysis of how Herefordshire Council is adhering to as well as promoting these principles shall be reviewed and this will inform our Corporate Parenting Strategy by September 2021.

Snap Shot of Children in Care:

6. Appendix A of this report provides an infographic analysis of statistical performance of Children in Care.
7. The snapshot shows that, on average, 320 children are cared for by Herefordshire Council. This has been consistent within the last 18 months. It is, however, worth noting that the number of Children in Care peaked at 355 in February 2020 but came down sharply within 10 months. The factor(s) contributing to the sharp rise and the sharp fall is under review.

8. Herefordshire Council is measured with other Local Authorities that have similar to or same demographic characteristics. They are called statistical neighbours. Furthermore, it is compared with West Midlands 'regional' neighbours.
9. In relation to Children in Care, Herefordshire Council has 88 children from every cluster of 10,000 children aged 0 to 18 in care. The average for West Midlands region is 95 from every cluster of 10,000 children. The England average is 67:10000
10. In terms of the local authority's statistical neighbours, of the three most closest are; namely: Shropshire 66:10000; Devon 51:10000 and Cornwall 44:10000.
11. It imperative to emphasise that many factors influences these statistics and, although a lower rate is generally better, it is important to take a holistic view of the statutory and non-statutory services available to children and young people in Herefordshire.
12. The number of children entering care on a monthly basis has increased marginally. However, this increase is relatively proportional to the overall increases across England due to the coronavirus pandemic.
13. It is important to highlight the five key wards where children are likely to come into care. South West Herefordshire has the highest number of children entering care.

Home Postcode	Number Of Children from that Postcode
HR2 7	66
HR6 8	29
HR2 6	23
HR7 4	22
HR1 1	19

14. As a service, we aim to review the challenges and factors contributing to these high numbers. A detailed analysis was done and incorporated in our Corporate Parenting and Placement Sufficiency Strategies.
15. When children come into care, and their plan is for them to remain in care long term, every effort is made to match them with appropriate placement option. As a result, significant numbers of children are in a stable placement. However, in Herefordshire, this is slightly below England average but, overall, comparable with the national trend. Every effort shall be made to sustain and improve this positive outlook.
16. It is imperative to mention that some children have high needs and, as result, moved placements more than three occasions within a year. The cohort of these children is 2% higher than England average. In response, an immediate priority is to review children and young people's placement sufficiency with the view of expanding placement options and also strengthening the resilience and capacity of our existing resources.
17. It is noteworthy to report that 55% of the children are cared for by our local foster carers. Our local foster carers are grouped into two categories; namely: those with relationship and ties with children either through blood or friendship (connected carers) and those who have no connection with the children (mainstream foster carers).

18. It is imperative to emphasise that both connected and mainstream foster carers are assessed approved, supported and supervised in accordance with the Fostering Services regulation 2011.
19. A significant number of children are cared for by foster carers with the independent sector. We are currently reviewing our internal fostering recruitment strategy to ensure that the existing pool of foster carers are retained while efforts are made to bring in more carers. Further details about a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy and implementation plan would be available by September 2021.
20. It is also our aim to review the number of children in residential care setting with the view of ensuring that their placement options remains appropriate and that their care plans for the medium to long term are clear and purposeful.

Community impact

21. Children in Care and Foster Carers are mostly residents of Herefordshire. They contribute to the local economy and therefore must be factored in and prioritised in the council's corporate plan.
22. Children in Care and Care Leavers must be prioritised in decision making strategic plans in relation to all key local services.
23. The term 'corporate parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by the council. Being a good corporate parent means we should; accept responsibility for children in the council's care; make their needs a priority; and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.
24. Corporate parenting responsibilities are not confined to elected members. All officers share the responsibility to promote the needs of looked after children. Key responsibilities of all officers are: to promote the life chances of looked after children and care leavers in their area of responsibility; and to consider the impact of decision making on looked after children and care leavers.

Environmental Impact

25. The key decisions and strategic plans relating to Children in Care indirectly contribute to delivering the council's [environmental policy commitments](#) and aligns to the following success measures in the County Plan.
 - Increase flood resilience and reduce levels of phosphate pollution in the county's river
 - Reduce the council's carbon emissions
 - Work in partnership with others to reduce county carbon emissions
 - Improve the air quality within Herefordshire
 - Improve residents' access to green space in Herefordshire

- Improve energy efficiency of homes and build standards for new housing

Increase the number of short distance trips being done by sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, and public transport

26. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the Children in Care of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

Equality duty

27. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows: A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
28. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
29. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes. This is carefully considered and adhered to in the day to day decision making of all Children in Care.
30. We are proactively looking to recruit a range of foster carers who are able to meet the diverse needs of the children across Herefordshire.

Resource implications

31. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation. The resource implication of any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to those recommendations.

Legal implications

32. There are no specific legal implications of the recommendation of this report

Risk management

33. The risks associated with the failure to ensure our children in care are provided with the care and support are:
- a. The council does not deliver sustained improvement. Too many children and young people receive a poor service, there is drift and delay, children, and young people receive high threshold services that are reactive. There is not sufficient capacity for good social work to flourish and there are not a range of effective preventative and edge of care services to support children and young people safely in families. The council then runs the risk of being judged as inadequate by Ofsted under the Inspecting Local Authority Children's services (ILAC's) framework.
 - b. Reputational. The council does not make progress quickly enough and adversely affects the recruitment and retention of social work staff. This can have a knock on effect of increasing caseloads, which in turn has the potential to negatively impact on performance and quality of services for children and families. Consequently, the council would have to invest significant resources to then rectify the situation.

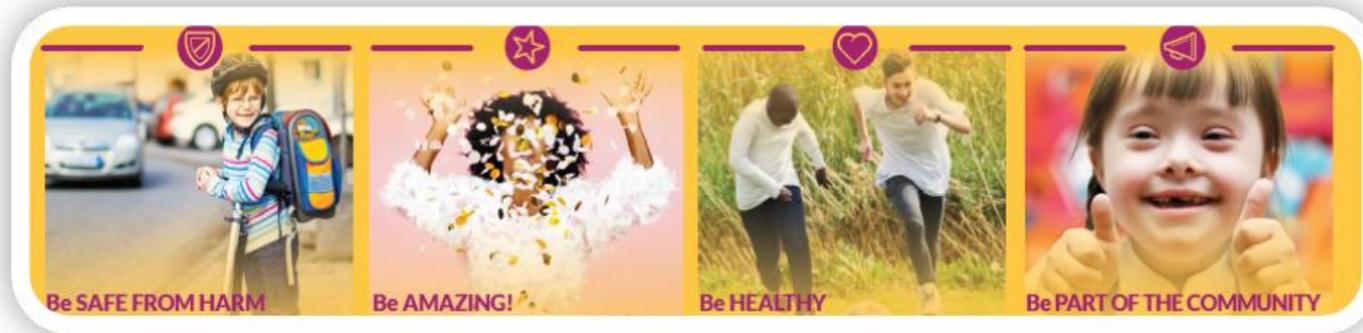
Consultees

34. The safeguarding and family support services regularly engage our children about the performance and delivery of our services to ensure that the voice of the child is heard within the feedback on our children and families within Herefordshire young people have been actively involved in safeguarding briefings to all newly and re-elected councillors.
35. We have completed a survey looking specifically at feedback from children and families looking at the outcomes received as a result of our services. This has provided us with rich qualitative data that will be used to enable us to continue our journey of improvement and influence our plans; and will be repeated at regular intervals

Appendices

Appendix A – Children and young people in care presentation

Children and Young People in Care – Key Questions for Scrutiny



	Current	May 2020
Number of Children in Care	318	346
Rate (per 10,000 of Child Population)	88	96

Numbers of Children and Young People in Care



The number of children in our care was at its highest for three years in December 2019 and February 2020 reaching 358 children in care. Since then, the number has steadily declined.

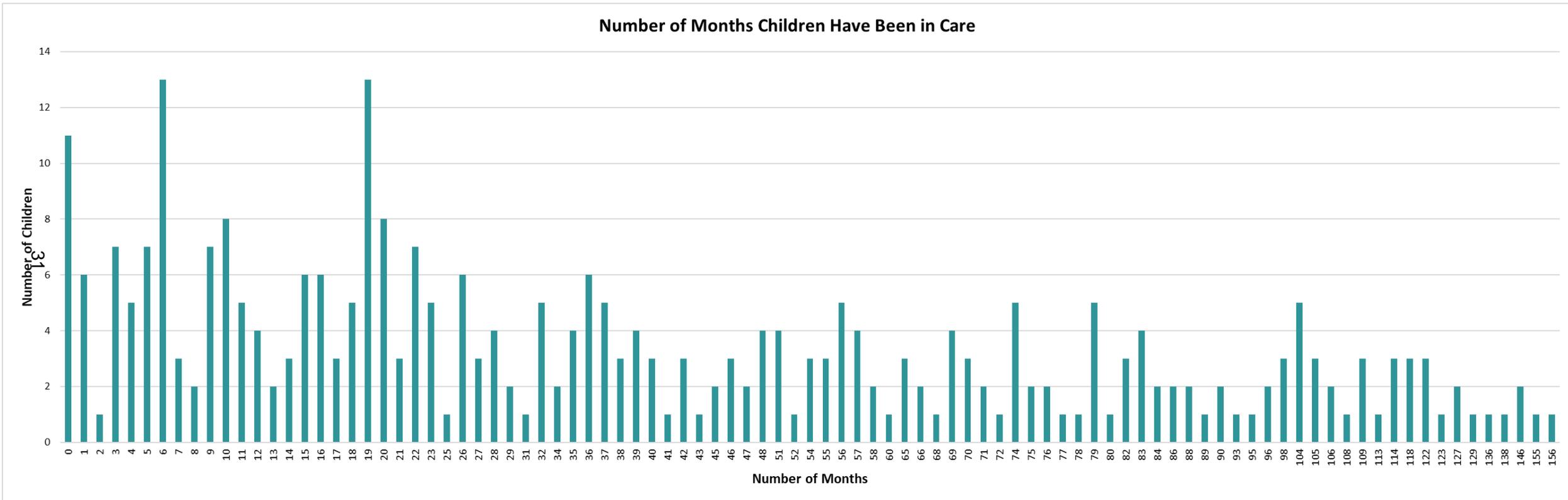
30

Number of Children Entering Care (Month)



Over the last 18 months there has been a focus on supporting families to prevent children coming into care and to identify where it is in the child's best interest to return home or find permanency through other routes. This initiative has been formalised through the Early Help and ECHo Service.

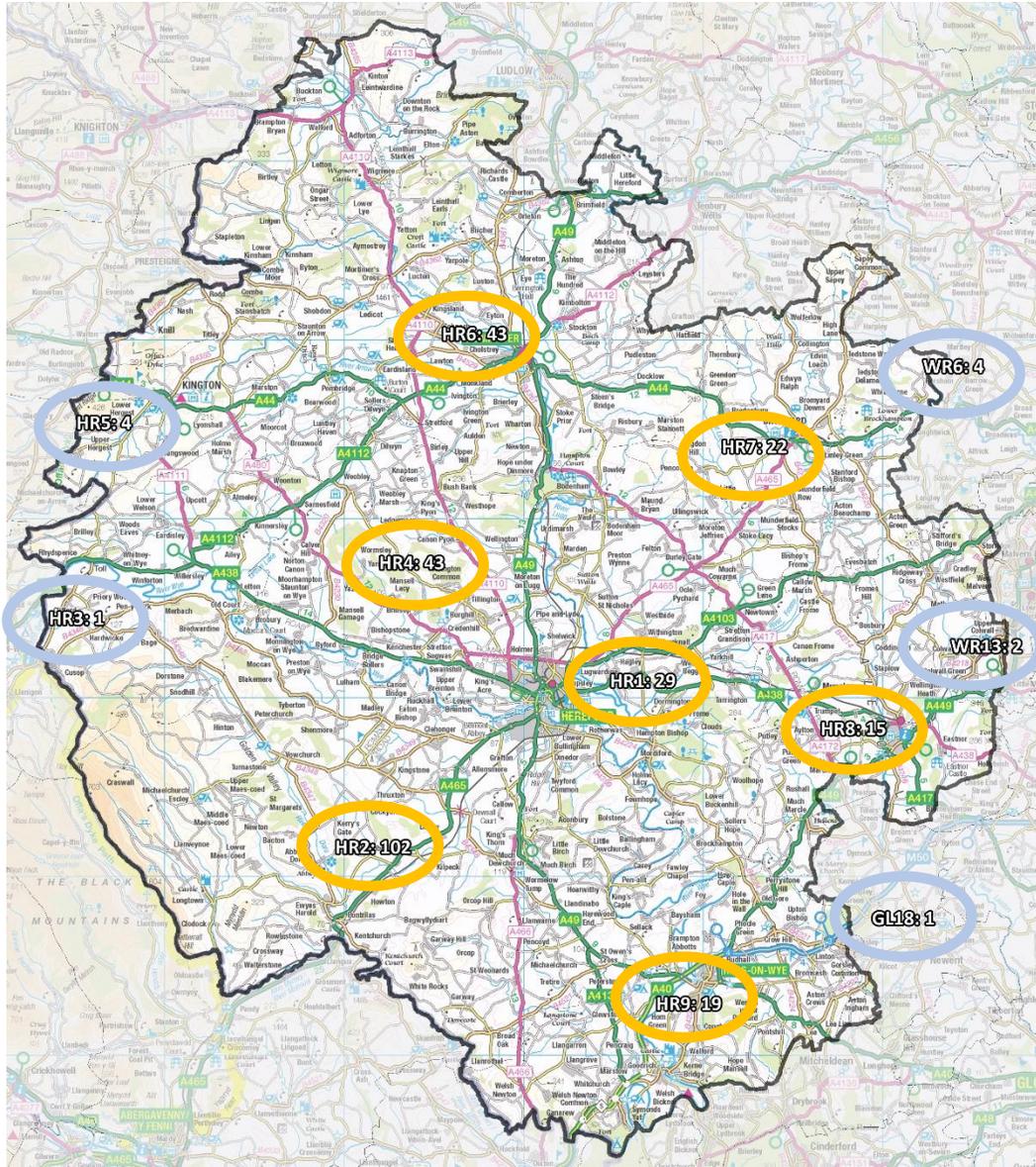
Length of Time in Care



The average length of time our current cohort of young people have spent in care is 3 ½ years. The time in care ranges from 108 children who have been in care for less than one year to 1 child who has been in care for thirteen years.

Where have the children come from?

32



Home postcode	Number of children from that postcode
HR1	29
HR2	102
HR3	1
HR4	43
HR5	4
HR6	43
HR7	22
HR8	15
HR9	19
WR6	4
WR13	2
GL18	1

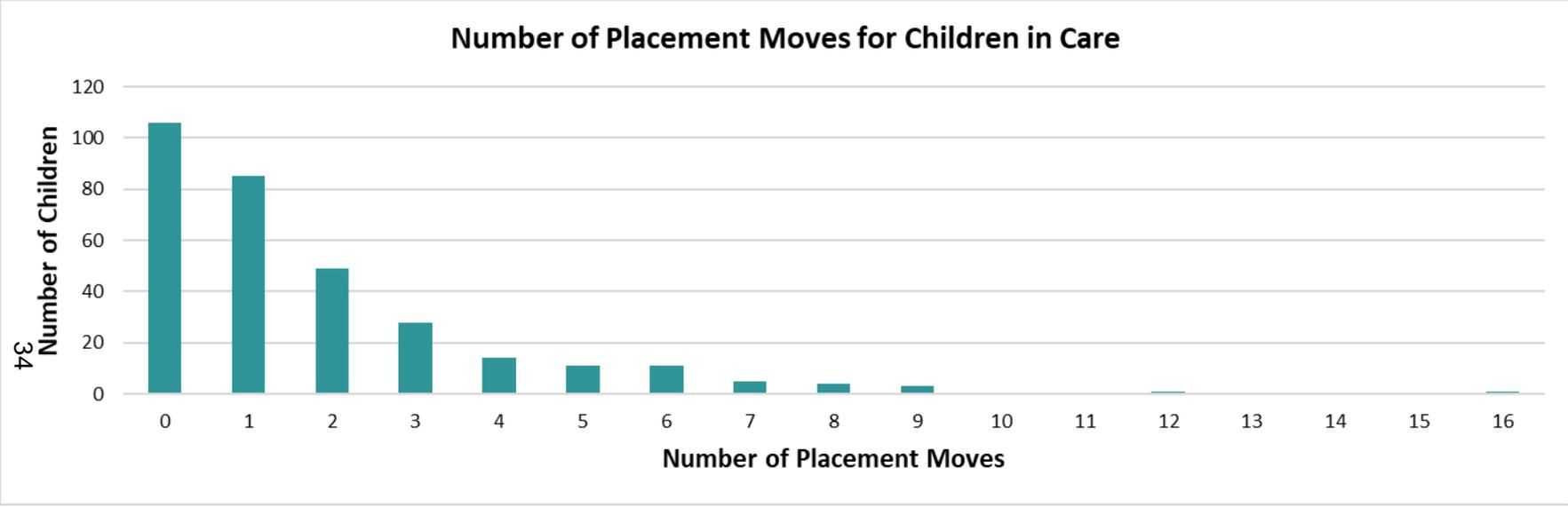
South West Herefordshire has the highest number of children entering care.

Home postcode	Children from that postcode ordered by number
HR2 7	66
HR6 8	29
HR2 6	23
HR7 4	22
HR1 1	19
HR8 2	15
HR4	13
HR4 7	11
HR4 9	10
HR9 7	10
HR4 8	9
HR6 9	9
HR1 3	6
HR2 9	6
HR9 5	6
HR2	5
HR6	5
HR5 3	4
WR6 5	4
HR1 2	3
HR9 6	3
HR2 8	2
GL18 1	1
HR1 4	1
HR3 6	1
WR13 5	1
WR13 6	1

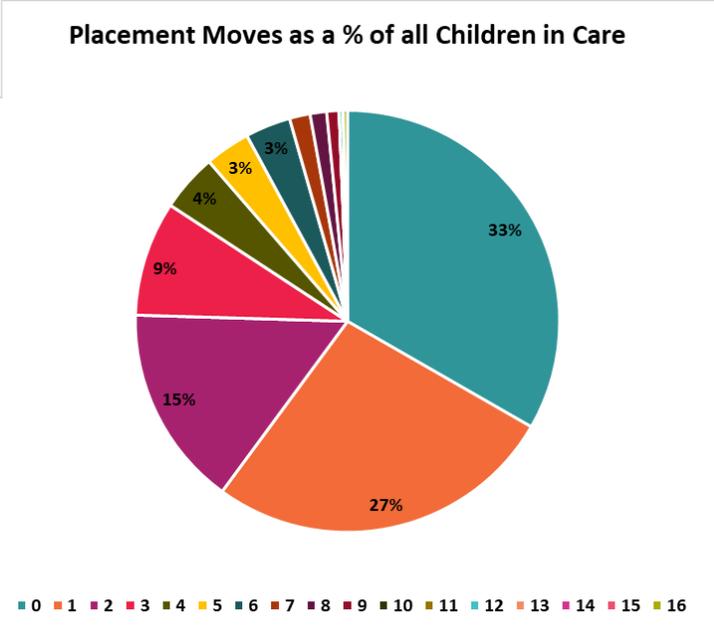
Where have the children come from (with Wards)?

Home Postcode	Number Of Children from that Postcode	Ward/s in Postcode Area
HR2 7	66	Belmont Ward / Hollington Ward / St. Martins & Hinton Ward
HR6 8	29	Leominster North Ward / Leominster South Ward
HR2 6	23	Hollington Ward / Pontrilas Ward / St. Martins & Hinton Ward / Tupsley Ward
HR7 4	22	Bringsty Ward / Bromyard Ward / Frome Ward / Hampton Court Ward
HR1 1	19	Central Ward / Burghill, Holmer & Lyde Ward / Aylestone Ward / Tupsley Ward / Backbury Ward / Hagley Ward / Three Elms Ward
HR8 2	15	Backbury Ward / Frome Ward / Hope End Ward / Ledbury Ward / Old Gore Ward
HR4	13	Central Ward / Credenhill Ward / St. Martins & Hinton Ward / St. Nicholas Ward / Three Elms Ward
HR4 7	11	Burghill, Holmer & Lyde Ward / Castle Ward / Credenhill Ward / St. Nicholas Ward / Stoney Street Ward / Three Elms Ward / Wormsley Ridge Ward
HR4 9	10	Burghill, Holmer & Lyde Ward / Central Ward / Three Elms Ward
HR9 7	10	Kerne Bridge Ward / Old Gore Ward / Penyard Ward / Ross-on-Wye East Ward / Ross-on-Wye West Ward
HR4 8	9	Burghill, Holmer & Lyde Ward / Castle Ward / Credenhill Ward / Golden Cross with Weobley Ward / Sutton Walls Ward / Wormsley Ridge Ward
HR6 9	9	Bircher Ward / Golden Cross with Weobley Ward / Leominster North Ward / Mortimer Ward / Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley Ward / Upton Ward
HR1 3	6	Backbury Ward / Bromyard Ward / Burghill, Holmer & Lyde Ward / Frome Ward / Hagley Ward / Hampton Court Ward / Sutton Walls Ward / Wormsley Ridge Ward
HR2 9	6	Belmont Ward / Golden Valley North Ward / Golden Valley South Ward / Hollington Ward / Stoney Street Ward / Valletts Ward
HR9 5	6	Kerne Bridge Ward / Penyard Ward / Ross-on-Wye East Ward / Ross-on-Wye West Ward
HR2	5	Golden Valley North Ward / Golden Valley South Ward / Pontrilas Ward / Valletts Ward
HR6	5	Bircher Ward / Bringsty Ward / Bromyard Ward / Golden Cross with Weobley Ward / Hampton Court Ward / Leominster North Ward / Leominster South Ward / Upton Ward / Wormsley Ridge Ward
HR5 3	4	Castle Ward / Kington Town Ward / Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley Ward
WR6 5	4	Bringsty Ward / Frome Ward / Hope End Ward
HR1 2	3	Aylestone Ward / Central Ward / Tupsley Ward
HR9 6	3	Kerne Bridge Ward / Llangarron Ward / Old Gore Ward / Pontrilas Ward / Ross-on-Wye West Ward
HR2 8	2	Hollington Ward / Llangarron Ward / Pontrilas Ward / St. Martins & Hinton Ward / Valletts Ward
GL18 1	1	Penyard Ward
HR1 4	1	Backbury Ward / Frome Ward / Hagley Ward / Hollington Ward / Old Gore Ward
HR3 6	1	Castle Ward / Golden Valley North Ward
WR13 5	1	Hope End Ward
WR13 6	1	Hope End Ward

Number of Placement Moves

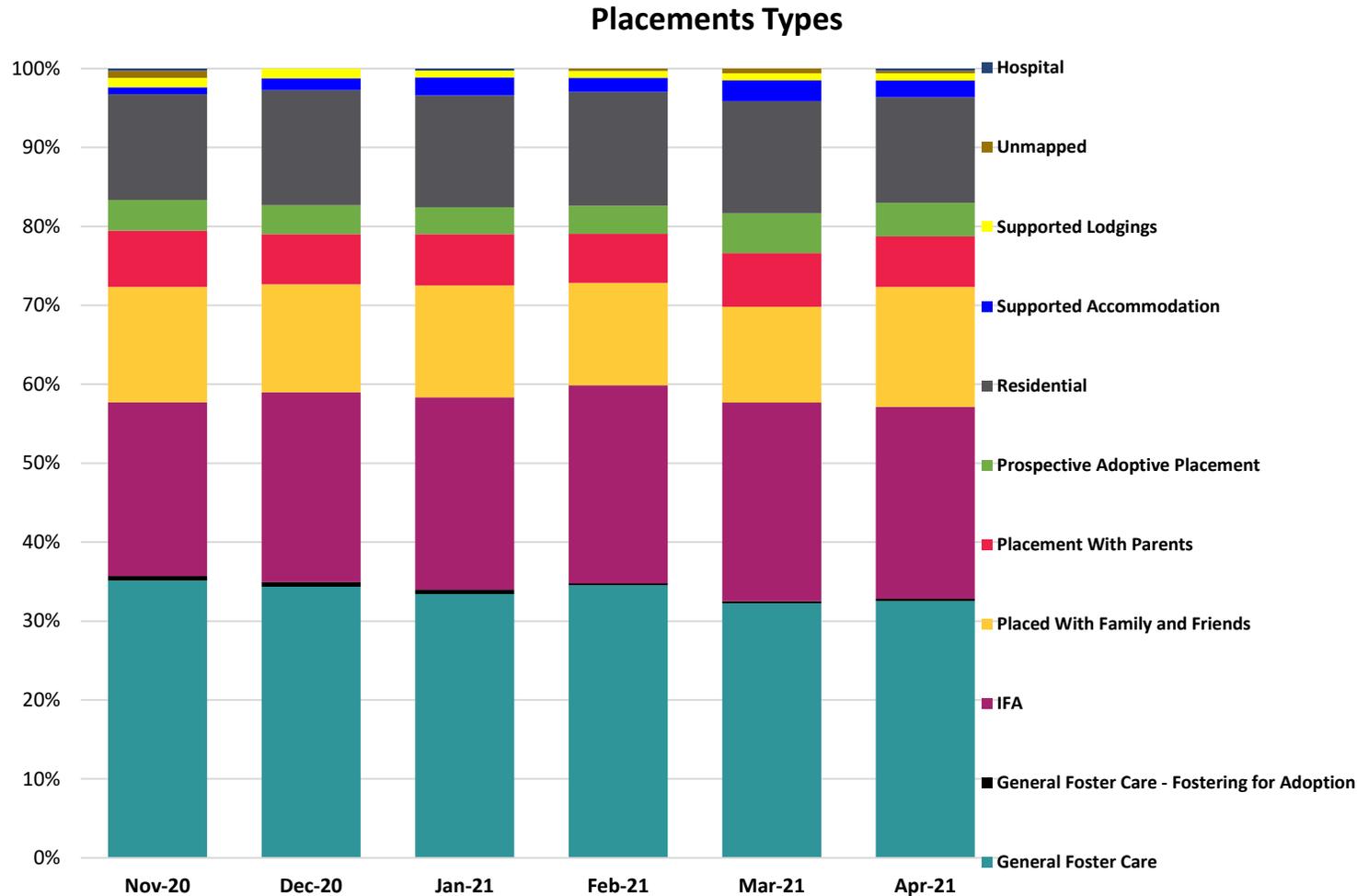


33% of our young people in care remain in their initial placement. 66% of our young people in care have had between one and nine placement moves. Two young people have had twelve or more placement moves.



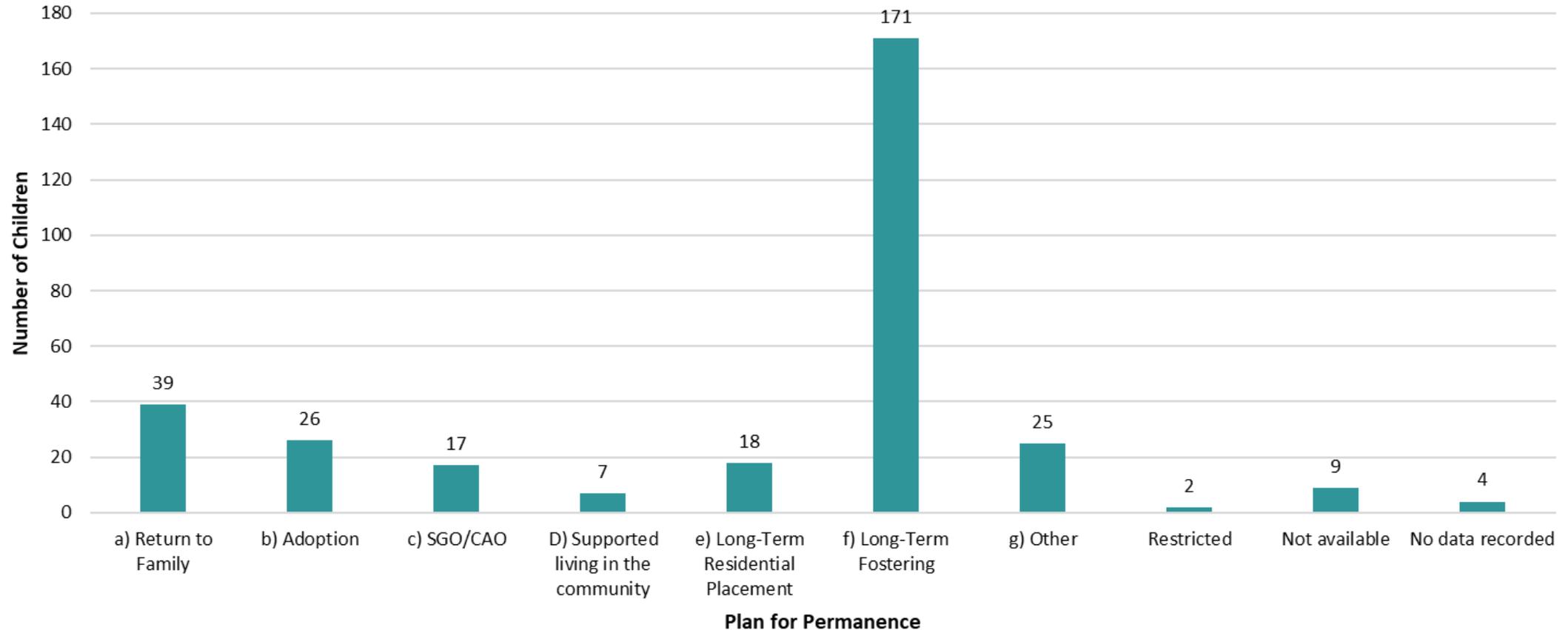
Current Placement Types for Our children

35



33% of Children and Young People in Care were placed with General Foster Carers and 24% were placed with Independent Foster Agencies. 22% of our Children and Young People in Care were placed with Parents or Family and Friends, 13% were in Residential and 5% were in adoption related placements. The remaining were placed in Supported Accommodation, Supported Lodgings and hospital.

Plan for Permanence



54% of our cohort have a permanence plan of long-term fostering.

NB: 'Not available' is where there is no review on the young person's record because they have been recently accommodated. 'No data recorded' is where the review has been completed but the permanence data has not been recorded.



Title of report: Update on peer on peer abuse recommendations

Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 1 June 2021

Report by: Cabinet member children and families;

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To receive an update on the recommendations and progress arising from the reviews in respect of peer on peer abuse

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The committee reviews the information provided and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; it is a function of the committee to review actions taken in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and make reports or recommendations to the executive.

Key considerations

2. There has been much focus on the issue of peer-on-peer abuse across the council for several years now – partly as a response to individual cases locally and as a response to the recognition this is a growing concern nationally. Guidance nationally has also evolved as the seriousness of the issue becomes better known. It is recognised that the quality of national data around this is weak.
3. In this national context, there have been several reviews commissioned since 2017 in relation to various aspects of peer-on-peer sexual abuse cases. The most significant being:
 - A review into the circumstances surrounding a case in 2017 and the sharing of a risk assessment document commissioned by the council but carried out by a third-party consultant.
 - Some externally commissioned reports into actions taken by elements of the council since 2017. (eg Cornwall Local Authority)
 - Various internal reviews and reports such as Spotlight reviews (2019), full council Cabinet reviews (2020) and scrutiny panel reviews over some years.
 - Independent reviews continue but usually with tight terms of reference and look at specific issues and not necessarily the wider context.

The terminology:

4. Some of the reviews considered aspects of wider peer on peer abuse (which could be bullying, verbal, online and other forms of abuse) but others specifically looked at peer on peer sexual abuse. These are not the same things and care must be taken to be clear about which issue is under discussion – whilst any such abuse is a serious and significant event, sexual abuse is a significant and serious part of the wider picture. As such peer-on-peer abuse is a wider child exploitation and contextual safeguarding issue. To date much has been focussed on the response of schools as that was where the initial issues appeared to sit but there is a need now to broaden our response to this by including other settings (for example, sports clubs) and the closer engagement of partner agencies. Peer on Peer sexual abuse is not simply an educational issue but a much wider one.

The recommendations from previous reviews and reports:

5. Since 2019, there have been three recent substantial reviews. Each led to a series of recommendations. To date there have been 30 agreed recommendations – some of which are unique and others of which overlap considerably. This paper summarises progress made in order to capture the full set of recommendations. There are three main current sets of recommendations as follows
 - Spotlight review as outlined in appendix 1 (December 2019),
 - A scrutiny committee review outlined in appendix 2 (2020), and
 - A Cabinet review outlined in appendix 3.

6. These three reviews are attached as separate appendices with an update on each of the various recommendations in detail. Although much of the review work (and subsequent activity) has focussed on schools and educational settings some of it includes a focus on other council services, including, for example, legal services.

Progress made:

7. Progress against the 30 recommendation has been either completed or significantly in all but one are near to completion; however, due to the nature of peer on peer it is important to recognise the need for work to be continually reviewed, for example introduction of possible new statutory guidance following a recent government review. Some of the recommendations require the engagement of outside agencies (including DFE and Ofsted) and others require an extensive consultation period and training activity.
8. It is also recognised that the impact of serious peer on peer abuse never dissipates. Lifelong harm is done. Disclosures can be a long time in the making and the needs of children and families evolve accordingly. It will remain a focus for the council and the time taken to put some of the recommendations in place does not reflect a lack of urgency. During the last 18 months urgent responses to individual concerns have taken place monthly.
9. In summary – of the 30 recommendations – 26 have been completed, 3 are in process with a near completion and one is being dealt with through the Youth Justice Board. The latter of which was following a recommendation that the executive work closely with the Crown Prosecution service and West Mercia Youth Justice Board to produce a joint risk assessment with the Youth Justice Board taking lead responsibility.
10. The 3 that have been delayed include the provision of a process of reconciliation – the full detail on why this was delayed is set out in appendix 2; however, in essence a key contributing factor was due to the response time for partners during the lockdown. The partners considered our requests and the design of a process, that will be unique, and fully independent that ensures they can respond to the very divergent and specific needs of families. The estimated time for completion is end of June 2021.
11. The second delay is with the reporting of the quality of recording of cases on our internal systems which was also recently identified in the recent judgement of Mr Justice Keehan. This is now being picked up through the improvement plan.
12. The final recommendation which has been delayed is the peer-on-peer induction for all members of staff within the Directorate including new starters. We can confirm this has been taking place since September 2020 and is ongoing; the intention now is to move to an online module for new starters; however, this module is awaiting development

The implications for the Council?

13. The council is currently undergoing a transformation in the way the Directorate works. Demands for training has increased. Consequently a wider approach to safeguarding has been recognised as an issue locally this remains a high priority for the council and will be addressed within the improvement plan.

Next Steps:

14. Whilst there is an understanding of why the focus has been on school level response to such issues, this now needs to be placed within a wider contextual safeguarding context. As such, whilst the guidance and training has been focussed on schools, the issue now needs to widen and formally sit under the Child Exploitation and Missing sub group as part of the Children's safeguarding partnership responsibility.
15. As previously identified in the child exploitation report presented to this committee both the Prevent and Disrupt group and the Peer on Peer Abuse and Sexual Harm connects with the Child Exploitation and Missing sub group. In respect of peer on peer abuse the focus here is on implementing previous work and the key recommendations on peer on peer abuse and the NSPCC project on sexual harm which was undertaken through a task and finish programme that commenced under the new safeguarding arrangements in January 2021
16. Peer on peer abuse is a key community concern both in Herefordshire and nationally and is not a single agency responsibility. Our next key development as part of our above partnership work is to establish a community forum whereby partners can reach out and engage with members of the public to transparently hear and discuss concerns.
17. The community forum will also share work on our joint response around peer on peer and sexual harm to enable a co-production on developing effective guidance and practice. This will provide a two-way engagement in an open and transparent approach in order to get from discussion to action. It is important to note that peer on peer is a wider partnership responsibility to safeguard children across all settings within Herefordshire. This ensures peer on peer expands beyond a single focus around schools, and enables the multi-agency responsibilities through the MASH and their duty to investigate concerns so we get the "right help at the right time".

Community impact

18. The approach to peer on peer abuse for children and families in Herefordshire is an important and integral part in the provision of safeguarding, education, health and care services for vulnerable children and their families throughout Herefordshire. This enables the council to work with children, young people and their families where this is possible to keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life; and secure better services, quality of life and value for money. This contributes to fulfilling the aims of the Herefordshire Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2019-2024 and the councils County Plan 2020-2024.

Environmental Impact

19. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

Equality duty

20. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to

-

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

21. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. This is a factual report highlighting the outcomes of the review into historic cases of peer on peer abuse, including areas of good practice, areas for improvement and the next steps that council will take. Peer on peer abuse is an Equality issue and the outcomes of the review demonstrate that the council has considered this and is committed to working to support those effected while exercising its Equality duty

Resource implications

22. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation. The resource implication of any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to those recommendations.

Legal implications

23. There are no specific legal implications of the recommendation of this report

24. However, the council, working with partner organisations and agencies, has specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties: section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on the council to provide services to children in need in their area. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 requires councils to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.

25. These duties placed on the council can only be discharged with the full co-operation of other partners, many of whom have individual duties when carrying out their functions under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Under section 10 of

the same Act, the council is under a duty to make arrangements to promote co-operation between itself and organisations and agencies to improve the wellbeing of local children.

26. In dealing with Peer on Peer abuse, government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (updated in September 2019 and again in June 2020) provides statutory guidance for schools and colleges who must have regard to the guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children

Risk management

27. There are no risks associated with agreeing the content of this report which provides information regarding the review of historic cases of peer on peer abuse and indicates how the work has been and is being taken forward

Consultees

28. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Summary of Recommendations and Executive Responses to the Spotlight review update

Appendix 2 Scrutiny recommendations – Peer on Peer review and executive response update

Appendix 3 - Peer on Peer Full Council Recommendations update

Background papers

None identified

Appendix 1 - Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses [Peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review]

In December 2019 a spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools was conducted.
The following was recommended to the executive:

<p>Recommendation i, ii and iii</p>	<p><u>School Policies</u></p> <p>i) That the executive promotes to all schools in Herefordshire the implementation of distinct, stand-alone peer on peer abuse child safeguarding policies;</p> <p>ii) That the executive works with all schools in Herefordshire to ensure that exclusion policies explicitly state the forms of peer on peer abuse that will result in permanent exclusion;</p> <p>iii) That the executive works with all schools in Herefordshire to ensure that peer on peer abuse policies contain provision for children inside and outside of the criminal justice system and children under the age of criminal responsibility;</p>			
<p>Executive Response</p>	<p>Partially agreed with the exception of ii) - commentary on the ‘exclusion policies’. Such policies do not exist in schools. Exclusions are normally covered within a school behaviour policy. Policy recommendation ii) above is therefore complex: Legal advice is to treat each case on a case by case basis and as such defining which forms will lead to permanent exclusion may not be straightforward because under equalities law and exclusion guidance a pupils’ SEND need and other safeguarding concerns e.g. criminal exploitation risk must be taken into consideration. However we will work towards clearer definition of what is deemed serious enough for exclusion.</p> <p>Work is already underway to promote stronger stand-alone policies in regard to peer on peer abuse. Many schools already have such policies. We will recommend that these policies should cover provision for children both inside and outside the criminal justice system and for children under the age of criminal responsibility.</p> <p>It should be noted that many of our schools are academies and we cannot guarantee or enforce such policies upon them. Ultimately it is the governing body of a school which has agrees all school policies whether it is a maintained or academy school.</p>			
<p>Action</p>	<p>Owner</p>	<p>By When</p>	<p>Target/Success Criteria</p>	<p>Progress</p>
<p>1. Stand-alone peer on peer abuse policies for all schools are promoted as best practice and that these policies should consider provision for children inside and outside of the criminal justice system and children under the age of criminal responsibility through briefings to HTs, COGs and DSLs</p>	<p>Learning and Achievement Team</p>	<p>31st January 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted reports state that safeguarding, including peer on peer abuse is 	<p>10.05.2021: The Learning and achievement team have worked closely with the national leads for peer on peer abuse, the university of Bedford to produce peer on peer guidance for schools.</p>

<p>2. Briefings to HTs, COGs and DSLs promote changes to behaviour policies that include information on what types of peer on peer abuse 'MAY' lead to a permanent exclusion</p> <p>3. The annual section 175/157 audit is amended to ensure it includes a new question relating to a separate peer on peer abuse policy</p>			<p>effective in all schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop reviews of school policies show that a school has a separate peer on peer abuse policy from September 2020 • Desk top reviews of school behaviour policies show that schools have considered what peer on peer abuse behaviours 'MAY' result in a permanent exclusion • Power point presentations from Education 	<p>Following an extensive consultation process, this was signed off by the University of Bedford at the end of March 2021 and was issued to schools for their return after the Easter break on 19th April. Training is being provided by the University of Bedfordshire to supplement the launch of this guidance in May 2021. The training is for all multi agency workers and includes all school DSLs.</p> <p>Notes of Visits to schools include a safeguarding section and resulting actions from school visits may include reference to the need to adopt a separate peer on peer policy if the school has not already got one in place (most do).</p> <p>The new policy has been promoted via Spotlight and leaders' webinars. The annual section 175.157 audit does include a separate question relating to the school having a separate peer on peer policy. This will be updated again in the Autumn of 2021 to refer specifically to the new guidance issued by Herefordshire.</p> <p>All OFSTED visits completed since January 2020 have found</p>
--	--	--	--	--

			<p>Safeguarding meetings, Primary Heads' briefings, HASH meetings and COG briefings evidence that points 1 and 2 have been promoted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 175/157 audit amended to include a new question on separate peer on peer abuse policies for the 2020/21 audit 	<p>safeguarding in schools to be effective.</p> <p>Separate work is being undertaken by a working party on school behaviour and it is anticipated that the focus of this year's autumn education conference will be Inclusion and behaviour. The new Herefordshire guidance includes reference to dealing with sexualised behaviours. It must be noted that under English law/guidance each case must be dealt with on a 'case by case' basis in order to ensure full compliance with SEND, Equal Opportunities and Human Rights legislation.</p>
--	--	--	---	---

<p>Recommendation v</p>	<p><u>Herefordshire Council review of historic cases</u></p> <p>That the executive provides the outcome of the current review (including lessons learned) into cases of peer to peer abuse referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to the spotlight review and the children and young people scrutiny committee;</p>
--------------------------------	---

Executive Response	Agreed. This will be provided to children and young people's scrutiny once completed within the work programme of the committee.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Provide a report on the outcome of the review, including lessons learned to the children and young people's scrutiny committee	Director of children and families	After the review has been completed which is due by end of April 2020	Report provided to children and young people's scrutiny	Review commenced January 2020 and completed September 2020 via a report presented by the AD for Education, Skills and Development to the Children's Scrutiny Panel

Recommendation vii	<p><u>Promotion of training in schools</u></p> <p>That the executive encourages all schools to invite the following trainers: CLD Trust ambassadors to provide training on positive relationships between peers; vulnerability trainers from the office of the police and crime commissioner; and the West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre.</p>			
Executive Response	Agreed – much training has already taken place and which addresses the above issues. We will commit to encouraging schools to invite or attend training being provided by the three organisations above.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
<p>We will undertake a review of trainers who could help support this work, including the three above, to contribute to an annual safeguarding conference. The programme is already in planning phase (February 2020)</p> <p>We will consider inviting these trainers to the next safeguarding conference</p>	Assistant Director, Achievement and Skills	November 2020	Successful annual conference programme includes the three specific organisations	<p>Review March 2020 to set up next conference</p> <p>10.05.2021: Unfortunately due to COVID all conferences had to be cancelled. However we have been able to invite a number of organisations to virtual DSL meetings.</p>

			mentioned above – and others	Training by the University of Bedford, national Leads in Peer on peer abuse will be taking place on 11/12 th May for mulita agency staff, including councillors and for school DSLs in the final week before half term. This training has had extensive requests for engagement including via Police, Public Health and other agencies. Evaluation has not yet been completed as this is only a recent part of the process.
--	--	--	------------------------------	--

Recommendation viii	<u>Risk Assessments</u>			
	That the executive works with the Crown Prosecution Service and the West Mercia Youth Justice Board to clarify responsibility for the production of the pre-conviction risk assessments for children attending court in peer on peer abuse cases and considers a suitable provider for risk assessments in the future.			
Executive Response	Not agreed. The Youth Offending Service are in negotiations with the Crown Prosecution Service on the matter of the completion of AIM assessments. The Youth Offending Service are the appropriate agency to lead on this. There is agreement from YOS that Children and Families are not the appropriate agency to complete AIM assessments. As such it is not an area for Children and Families to become involved with at this stage, as clarity on this matter will be reached via YOS discussions with CPS, and communicated via the West Mercia Youth Justice Board which Herefordshire DCS attends.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation ix	<u>Resource pool for schools</u>
--------------------------	---

	That the executive considers the establishment of a pool of resources for schools to access to address complex cases of peer on peer abuse.			
Executive Response	Partially agreed. We will look into what resources are available and promote what is suitable. If available, these will provide access to high quality advice and appropriate school level resources. However the quality of such resources is variable and schools are free to choose what resources they use. Additional resources in terms of time by specialist officers to support and advice is being planned and will have greater impact – and we can consider additional training for such advisers.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
We will undertake a review of which resources are likely to be helpful. There is little available at present and quality is variable. In addition we will provide on line advice and support. We will consider additional training and advice for specialists when working with schools.	AD Achievement and Skills	December 2020	On line support available	<p>Review May 2020 to agree which resources to publicise as appropriate. However, the greater need is for specialist officers to work with schools who are fully trained. Deadline for appointment is June 2020</p> <p>10.05.2021: Additional training resourced through University of Bedford. This will be completed by the end of May 2021. The new Herefordshire Guidance includes links to organisations who can provide support as well as resources.</p> <p>Some schools access their own resources, as they are able to do so. The pandemic has impacted on the DFE launch of their own Sex and Relationships Education guidance – this is now available to all schools and , although initially it was intended to be in place by 2020 this is now a</p>

				phased introduction until September 2021 (this is a national timetable for all schools in England). Herefordshire Council Public Health Team have purchased a subscription/license for all maintained schools from the PHSE Society for the previous 2 years. This includes free access to all of their resources to aid teaching of RSE in schools.
--	--	--	--	--

Recommendation x	<u>Family Support Workers</u>			
	That the executive considers what extra resources can be committed to the work of family support workers with schools.			
Executive Response	Agreed - We will consider what extra resources can be committed to the work of family support workers.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To offer link Early Help Family Support Workers to secondary schools who identify a need linked to peer on peer abuse. Additional resource required up to 3.0 FTE HC6 Early Help Family Support Worker.	Early Help Manager	September 2020	Families identified where there is either a risk of or peer abuse identified, supported and sustainable change achieved.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional funding identified by April 2020. 2. New staff in post by June 2020. 3. At least 6 months sustainable change achieved by June 2021. 4. May 2021 – EH staff engaged with the extra training provided by the University of Bedfordshire

Recommendation xii	<u>Council policies</u> That the executive gives consideration as to how to include reference to peer on peer abuse in relevant council policy (e.g. the children and young people plan).			
Executive Response	Agreed. Reference to peer on peer abuse is already included within the Herefordshire Children and Young People’s Plan 2019-2024.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To include Peer on Peer training as part of the induction of all new staff to the Directorate.	Director, Children’s and Families Directorate	ongoing	That all staff receive their induction within one month of starting their post	In the period July 2020 – February 2021 this was conducted by individual briefing sessions – this covered all permanent staff but did not cover all agency or temporary staff routinely. This will now be provided via an online course that is being developed by a working party under the leadership of Joe Davenport in Social Care – yet to be completed. The recent addition of many new interim staff has put this under pressure - the on line module should resolve this in the future.

<p>On 15 September 2020 the children and young people scrutiny committee considered the Peer on Peer Review Herefordshire MASH 2017 - 2019 report.</p> <p>Recommendations 1-3 and 5-11 are made to the executive Recommendation 4 is to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</p>				
Recommendation 1	That the committee calls on the executive to consider the recommendations of the committee during its finalisation of the Peer on Peer Review Herefordshire MASH 2017 - 2019 report;			
Executive Response	The executive has considered the recommendations of the committee during the finalisation of the report by officers that was commissioned through the chief executive and they have informed the final version of the report attached as Appendix 1 to the cabinet report.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
A final report of the review of the historic cases is attached.	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	13/11/20	The report is now final	Completed

Recommendation 2	That the committee recommends that the report is strengthened to provide an explanation as to why the CSO report of April 2017 was not circulated to schools prior to the commencement of the summer term in 2017 together with the risk assessment template. An explanation as to why it was not shared or mentioned at the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review is also required. The use of the term 'unhelpful', to describe the decision to not share the report, should be reconsidered and a stronger term adopted;			
Executive Response	Why the CSO report was not circulated to all schools will require investigation. The term unhelpful in the report has been reviewed and replaced			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To provide an explanation regarding the circulation of the CSO report and template and why it was not mentioned at the spotlight review of 2019.	Andrew Lovegrove, Deputy Chief Executive	December 2020	Explanation provided	Terms of reference are currently being scoped. This action now sits with the legal team.

Recommendation 3	That the committee recognises that risk posed to victims of peer on peer abuse is not merely physical but also emotional and psychological. In light of the handling of some cases detailed in the review report the committee recommends that there is a reassessment of the finding in the review that no children were put or left at risk;			
Response	Response: Risks can be physical, emotional and psychological as indicated in the report. The report finding was that, for the period in question, no children were put or left at risk. However, it is recognised that this wording means different things to different people and that it is a sensitive issue. It is further recognised that the absence of evidence largely rests on the records available from that time which were imperfect. It is acknowledged that the effects of peer on peer abuse can be and are profound and can affect survivors into and through their adult life. This is stated in the final version of the report.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
The report is to make clear that although the review found no evidence that children were put or left at risk of harm this is different to children potentially being affected emotionally and psychologically into adulthood by peer on peer abuse	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	Nov 2020	Report reflects the potential impact of its wording	Completed see appendix 1 to cabinet report. The wording was changed to reflect this issue.

Recommendation 4	That the committee retains a watching brief, through the quarterly performance report, on the reporting rates of peer on peer abuse and the performance of the council in response to reported cases. This progress will be monitored at meetings of the children and families performance challenge. Any concerns with reporting rates or the performance of the council will prompt a report to the following meeting of the committee to explain concerning trends;			
Executive Response	Agreed and will be reported on quarterly. The reporting office is the Safeguarding Officer in children and families directorate and this will be done via the challenge sessions. We also recommend that when reviewing the quarterly figures the council should consider including a review of the data drawn from wider organisations than within the council itself.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To provide the quarterly updates on the reports of peer on peer abuse allegations, and to review, in partnership with organisations beyond the council alone.	Children and Families Safeguarding Officer	On a quarterly basis but to include wider organisations as soon as can be agreed	That the committee are able to review information and performance and exercise their scrutiny function to inform practice	In place for council data but not yet beyond that. The first reporting period was April 2021 – report was submitted to Performance and Challenge Committee. The initial plan was for the January period but schools partial closures prevented this.

Recommendation 5	That the committee recommends that the <i>Response to Reports</i> flowchart for Herefordshire schools (appendix 1 of the review report) is enhanced with yes and no actions and is regularly scenario-tested with schools by the council. The flowchart should incorporate details of individuals accountable for actions and timelines for the completion of actions;				
Executive Response	Response: Agreed in part. The flowchart is not produced by Herefordshire - it is part of the national system which can be improved as the report makes clear. Herefordshire could draft a similar local version with details of the roles and timelines as suggested.				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
A 'local' flowchart will be produced to include aspects of the new SRE curriculum (which was due to be implemented nationally in September 2020 but delayed in it's implementation due to COVID-19)	Children and Families Safeguarding Officer	December 2020	New flowchart to be issued to all schools with the model guidance	In train. The flowchart submitted in the previous report was the national flowchart – the new guidance issued in Spring 2021 includes more appropriate versions for local use.	

Recommendation 6	That the committee recommends that schools that do not implement the model policy are held to account for the decision not to implement. Schools should be encouraged to share any policy which they feel supersedes or is superior to the model policy produced by the council;				
Executive Response	Response: Agreed in part. Schools are not obliged to adopt any suggested policies - and indeed Ofsted do not encourage that as a default response by schools; instead Ofsted encourage schools to develop their own individually. Officers will log conversations with those that choose not to do so as to their reasons and what they have as alternatives. We anticipate however that most (if not all) schools will want to use the model guidance and incorporate it within their polices. Officers will ask that this guidance be adopted as a matter of urgency.				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Legal to approve the model guidance and CM to share with schools and other agencies such as WMRASAC	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	End of December 2020	All schools have a copy and the Note of Visit completed when schools are visited shows whether they have adopted it - and if not why not - and a register kept.	The draft guidance has been approved by legal and is awaiting consultation response with The University of Bedfordshire as the national authority in this issue. The model guidance is now issued to schools and will remain open to review and allow for future comments and considerations.	

Recommendation 7	That the committee recommends that when consideration is given to an act of reconciliation there should be an assessment of long and short term processes to provide a variable response tailored to needs of children and families affected by peer on peer abuse. A longer term process would provide for comprehensive engagement with children and families who required and requested this level of reconciliation. A shorter term process would provide for those children and families who did not want or did not need to engage with the longer term approach. The reconciliation process is not intended to be counselling but to provide an opportunity for victims to be heard if they so wish. As such the process would need to differ according to each family.				
Executive Response	Response: Agreed. The recommendation to provide an opportunity for reconciliation will require more detail to be set out and will therefore consider how these aspects can be addressed.				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
The opportunity for reconciliation will be established in detail and will take into account the short and long term approach, in line with the views of children and families. The process is optional and would be conducted in accordance with the wishes of the families of the victims.	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	Jan 2021	This process be in place to offer to families by January 2021	See final summary – this has been delayed – a full explanation is in the summary in appendix 1 – full report – the delay is due to 3 reasons – including the speed of partner responses, the impact of the pandemic and the thinking about what this should look like, however we have now completed the various planning and expect this to be launched by early June – we apologise for the delay.	

Recommendation 8	That the committee recommends that a comprehensive plan of help and support for victims of peer on peer abuse and their families is developed by the council. This should include detail of what ongoing mental health support for children and families would be available				
Executive Response	Response: Agreed. This is already underway and forms part of the model guidance - but expert advice is that each case needs to be considered with sensitivity and on an individual basis. When incidents of alleged peer on peer abuse emerge - there is now a clear pathway for schools to operate with - and the committee recommends that we engage with voluntary groups who have expertise in this area - we can and are doing this. Officers are setting out what more could be done. The intention is to prioritise the support for the mental health of both alleged victims and perpetrators (the evidence indicates most are themselves children).				

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Complete and share the plans that are developed in partnership with wider agencies.	Safeguarding Officer	January 2021	Help and support for victims, survivors and perpetrators is enhanced	This is now in place with the exception of families who cochoose to go via mediation and reconciliation process – that is die in the next 3 weeks.

Recommendation 9	That the committee recommends that clarification is provided in the report around the distinction between policy and guidance. There should be an explanation of who was responsible for: providing peer on peer abuse policies for use in Herefordshire schools; the adoption of such policies; the production of guidance; and the sharing of new guidance.			
Executive Response	Agreed - there is a problem with the use of the word policy as most of our secondary schools have their own policies and we cannot enforce adoption. Guidance allows for more nuanced and detailed information to be shared. Draft guidance has been produced with support from others including the University of Bedfordshire who have a centre of expertise in peer on peer sexual abuse (as defined in the report) - it will be reviewed however continually and in the light of the forthcoming contribution of Ofsted and DFE			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Issue the approved model guidance and then establish a reporting mechanism listing which schools have adopted it or not – and not what they do instead.	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills / Safeguarding Officer	Jan 2021	Ensure all schools have discussed / adopted the guidance	Completed: Guidance has been issued to schools. Reporting will be through section 175/157 audit in November 2021 and through safeguarding audits and standards visits to schools.

Recommendation 10	That the committee recommends that the timelines in the recommendations in the review report should be finalised and include the title of those officers responsible for actions.			
Executive Response	Agreed – see refreshed timelines in appendix 1 to the cabinet report			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

The timelines in the report are agreed and has officer responsibility listed	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	13/11/20	Timelines and responsibilities agreed	Complete
--	---	----------	---------------------------------------	----------

Recommendation 11	That the committee recommends that a summary is provided at the foot of the review report detailing the scrutiny committee's recommendations and providing a recognition that the report was the start of a process to understand and address peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire. The summary should explain that not all elements of peer on peer abuse were understood and that improved data gathering, new guidance and new processes were being developed to attempt to come to terms with and address the issue.			
Executive Response	Agreed - the report was written to the specific terms of reference dates. The recommendations in the report (appendix 1) also note that nationally we could help improve wider systems of advice, prevention, recording and data analysis - we have made progress in this regard .			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
A summary will be provided at the foot of the report covering the scrutiny committee's recommendations and a recognition that in 2016 actions and understanding were limited. The action for improved data collection and guidance is being taken forward as there is still more to do to address this issue. Work will continue to be reviewed and developed.	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	Quarterly reporting on progress will reflect on these	All schools locally contribute to and understand the processes - and Herefordshire Council continue to engage with national organisations and local expertise.	In train

Appendix 3 - Peer on Peer Full Council Recommendations – published September 2020.

The following is a summary of the document recommendations agreed at full council. The text is a direct copy of the recording section from the initial review and the text in red is a brief summary update on each. Please be aware that this was not commissioned as a full report on all things peer on peer but a specific and time limited review of historic cases for a specified period. We have tried to make recommendations that answered the specifics of the cases but also broadened into some general observations for a general approach to contextual good practice.

The text in Red is a specific summary (May 2021) on the progress made on each one.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The 'what could we have done differently?' section above, alongside the recommendations agreed during the spotlight review, leads to the following recommendations:

Attached to each recommendation is a suggested timeline - these are subject to comment and approval by scrutiny panel.

- Continue to improve the quality of recording on MOSAIC for any cases, including peer on peer cases. This has improved significantly since 2017 but this review found that it could be improved yet further by maintaining the quarterly audit (already in place) on all cases and adding occasional sampling exercises to identify if recording is not adequate. In particular, record keeping should indicate what advice was given and what actions were taken and there is evidence that this is now taking place.

(Monthly audits starting September 2020 and to be conducted by education safeguarding officer)

A monthly review of the quality of the recording on mosaic has been completed since September 2020. These findings are then reported up to the quarterly Performance and Challenge meetings attended by officers and councillors. The first session this would have been available to report to was in the Spring term 2021 – however as schools were closed by then and dealing with the demands of partial closure meant the agenda was full, it was agreed the next opportunity would be March 2021. This was done – the presentation is attached as Appendix 4. It shows that although the quality of recording and follow up is much improved but still stubbornly variable. There is confidence that cases are not missed and that they are dealt with accordingly, but the tensions between confidentiality and full detail still show in some records.

- Issue wider guidance than the national expectations - by looking at all legislation that may impact on such cases. There is a timely opportunity to do this now. The national guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, has been updated again in July 2020 and a key appointment to support this work has recently been made in Herefordshire. Whereas schools, in general, have a right to implement their own

policies (partly because the process by which any policy is agreed is a key component of any policy), a model exemplar should now be issued given the importance of this issue. Herefordshire Council cannot enforce schools to adopt it however. The context around this issue has moved on considerably since 2017 and what was deemed appropriate then is no longer adequate if we are to learn from our experiences. There is an opportunity now to set an exemplar policy which can be leading edge practice.

(policy to be re-issued by Children's and Families Directorate by the end of January 2021 to allow for external consultation)

This is now completed – The general guidance was written in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire and was made subject to a full consultation. It is intended for use by schools when dealing with cases of peer on peer sexual abuse. It was a detailed and iterative process which also involved partner agencies and national experts. It was shared with both Ofsted and DFE for information only.

The policy was issued in April 2021 (the delay was in part a lengthy but detailed consultation process and because schools were partially closed during the Spring term 2021) and associated training is now underway.

- Reconsider what we do in terms of sharing risk assessments. A risk assessment has been shared with all schools (Autumn 2019). This is not the exact one produced in 2017 and things have progressed since then. Schools are ultimately responsible for their own risk assessment processes and multiple forms and guidance are now available. More importantly, we can provide guidance in completion of the process of risk assessments. There is a danger that multiple pro formas may confuse, but training in the process of risk assessment and prevention would outweigh this danger. The newly appointed safeguarding officer will lead on this aspect.

(to be a regular process but to be established by December 2020)

This is now completed. The reviewed risk assessment requirements are included in the new model guidance and now shared with all schools. This was also delayed from December 2020 but issued in April 2021. The Education Safeguarding Lead will be delivering training on these in June and July.

- Continually review and check that information is passed between educational settings where individuals known to have been either alleged victim or alleged perpetrator and who are moving between settings is shared. To protect confidentiality and sensitivity this process should be supported by the Local Authority and not left to individual settings to complete. Although there is an existing protocol, the newly appointed safeguarding officer should hold this responsibility as part of the role. For example, an alert system should be established in MOSAIC to identify when individuals are likely to be moving settings.

(to be established by the education safeguarding team by the end of December 2020) (to be established by December 2020 to allow time for consultation)

This is complete. This practice is now in place although two aspects since have emerged as needing further consideration. The first is where pupils move between counties when they move schools. This is more complex and we are considering how best to manage this. It is currently done via e mails, largely completed by the education safeguarding officer. The obvious risk is that cross council communication is less well monitored. The various referral routes do not make this easy.

The second is where pupils leave schools and then quickly return. This rare but important situation is now being managed by a notification process which mirrors the original process. In reality the schools are aware but the process of notification could be made more rigorous in this context.

- Establish a planned approach to engaging with families (and children) impacted by peer on peer abuse. This is to include the seeking of their views and from a starting point of belief and with the consent of the families. This would include the schools involved. The level of engagement needs to also take account of equalities legislation and allow for appropriate extra counselling to be offered.

(to be completed by January 2021 - safeguarding officer)

This is now in place but not yet publicised widely – which it now needs to be – and was delayed by the pandemic and the response of partner agencies and other local authorities. The recommendation was that an agency independent of the council undertook this on our behalf. Various partners were approached and eventually either disengaged or rejected the request. A successful partnership was agreed in May 2021. Then delay in publicising it is whilst the best possible approach to them is agreed. We expect this to be finalised by the end of May 2021. This also relates to the process of reconciliation – see later.

- Establish a school support network (using existing groups) to provide help and advice in the event of any cases, but particularly long standing cases. For example, this could include a network of expert Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to advise and new DSLs, support schools and families.

(to be established virtually by December 2020)

This is now complete and all schools will be made aware via the current training modules. New DSLs are paired with experienced DSLs to ensure that they have further support should they require it.

- Propose, via a development with DfE (and Ofsted), a methodology of capturing high quality data to allow authority areas to benchmark the incidence and severity of peer on peer sexual abuse cases. The national system is not transparent enough as yet and Herefordshire, given recent efforts and advice, is well placed to contribute to improving the quality and clarity of data on peer on peer sexual abuse.

(initial proposal to be shared with DFE and Ofsted by end of November 2020 – completed)

This is complete – DFE and Ofsted have been kept informed of our work via monthly contact. DFE are in approval of the model guidance and associated training. Regrettably, they do not yet plan to change the way they collect or use data and are not yet able to share county level data (which was the hope) – this may now change as they have invited us to be involved in monitoring the delivery of their new Sex and Relationships Education (also delayed by the pandemic) and have recently begun an investigation into their response to the ‘Everyone’s Invited sexual abuse in school website data. This is a proposal which is still in the very early stages of consideration but offers an opportunity to re-engage.

Ofsted do not share data beyond occasional inspection outcomes which is an unsatisfactory approach. This may also change as they have been asked to undertake the review into the ‘Everyone’s Invited’ website and sexual abuse allegations in maintained and independent schools. This report is due by the end of May but is proving controversial (‘are Ofsted appropriately expert to conduct such a review’ – opinion is divided).

- Ensure that all new members of staff appointed to the Directorate are given a wider safeguarding strand in their induction, which should include peer on peer sexual abuse. This should be aimed at prevention and risk assessment rather than historic analysis. It would help make Herefordshire a benchmark for good practice in this regard.

(initial induction activity to be in place by end of September 2020)

This is largely complete but two aspects have developed since this recommendation. Induction was conducted by individual sessions with new permanent staff. This thus missed agency staff and temporary staff. In recent weeks there has been much activity in this regard. The Education Safeguarding Lead worked with HR and business support to deliver safeguarding training including peer on peer abuse to all new starters from January 2020. An on line module is being developed by the principal social worker to ensure a more efficient way of inducting staff into safeguarding and peer on peer training is in place. This is not yet completed.

- That the council consider funding additional resources to support further peer on peer abuse training, in particular to support the educational specialist safeguarding post covering peer on peer abuse work (this post now exists - but additional resources available for peer on peer abuse training should be considered).

This is complete but the funding is coming from an existing school improvement budget. Although this is an appropriate use of such funding it is not additional but a refocus of funding. The next stage of this work is to move the focus of peer on peer sexual abuse to more broadly into contextual safeguarding rather than a simple

focus on schools. This will widen the need and a such additional resources may need to be made available.

(additional training is already arranged by Safeguarding Officer)

- That Herefordshire produces an exemplar peer on peer safeguarding guidance and model policy which is issued to all settings. It is acknowledged that whilst all schools deal with Peer on Peer abuse in their safeguarding policy as well as in other policies (such as a school behaviour policy, the anti-bullying policy and the online safety policy - cyberbullying and sexting) schools now need to be more clear and specific about their strategies around wider behaviours relating to sexist and sexual bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence. In all cases adoption of such a policy is inevitably voluntary (schools will have much in place already) but an exemplar will help with review work. There is the opportunity that given the experiences thus far, Herefordshire can become a centre for excellent practice in this area, in particular by adopting the good work done in this issue, such as by Suffolk and Nottinghamshire Local Authorities. This cannot be easily achieved without the following recommendation however.

(this is in train already - the model guidance is attached and will be issued once final partner consultation is completed. This guidance has been written in partnership with other specialist organisations - but will be reviewed annually in the light of additional expertise provided by a wider set of organisations.)

Complete – training associated with the policy and guidance is underway. (May 2021). The model guidance has been shared widely but will be kept under review as expertise develops and commentaries are added.

- Finally - Herefordshire Council needs to further acknowledge that the impact of such cases on the families and the children involved (irrespective of any findings) is likely to be profound. An apology has already been given for some of the early work - but we could do more. The council should strongly consider establishing and adopting a **process of reconciliation**; offering any family who wishes to use it an opportunity to share their experiences in a safe space with independent and expert support. Although we recognise there is as yet no formal process for such a statement (and as such the reconciliation process would need to be established and is likely to differ for each case), the opportunity it would present is the key. This is not intended to take the form of counselling sessions - that process differs - but rather a space where those who wish it can speak freely to have their voices listened to). If anything positive can come from such experiences then giving a voice to those who have experienced it can be something. It is also a better way of harnessing the experiences within the county to develop more leading edge practice. This cannot be achieved unless the voices of those affected are heard.

(timeline for consulting, engaging and establishing this process needs to start as soon as scrutiny / council agree)

This recommendation has been delayed, for which we apologise, but is now approaching finalisation. There were three main reasons for the delay. The first was that such a process is unique and had not been developed. The second was caused by delayed responses from organisations and partners approached as a result of the pandemic and the third was in finding a suitable partner who would agree to do this.

It was intended to be a blend of counselling for those who needed / requested it (however long after any incident it was asked for) – it was also potentially a need for an independent legal context where individual could discuss in confidence the circumstances of the family need and thirdly an awareness of the socio, educational, legal and emotional support services that may be required whilst acknowledging that each approach would require a bespoke response. It required a partner who could triage each case and have the full set of expertise and awareness to do so successfully. They also had to be fully independent of the council.

We have now sourced such a partner who is able to undertake this work on our behalf (late April 2021) and their suggestion is that the process would involve the following:

Stage 1 – make an offer and monitor how many respond and what the level of need is (hard data for the council but with no personal details).

Stage 2 – Remain fully independent – their responsibility is to the families not the council

Stage 3 – Listen – this may take more than one session.

Stage 4 – assess or triage the need for help and signpost accordingly.

Stage 5 – feedback to the council outside of the individual cases to strengthen lessons learned.

The initial contact will be via a web address and a reconciliation and mediation process by a service based out of county.

This is a significant offer and commitment by the council and whilst we regret the delay it is intended to be a permanent service and contractual arrangements are underway. There is also a second alternative being planned with a service closer to home which may help for families who need face to face support. The arrangements are almost complete.



Title of report: Report of work of prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation and the current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire

Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 1 June 2021

Report by: Cabinet member children and families;

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To provide detail on the work of the Prevent and Disrupt group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire. To include details of the current risk of exploitation to children in Herefordshire.

To facilitate the child exploitation summit to include a focus on modern day slavery.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The committee reviews the information provided and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to secure further improvement.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; it is a function of the committee to review actions taken in connection with the discharge of any functions

which are the responsibility of the executive and make reports or recommendations to the executive.

Key considerations

2. The Prevent and Disrupt group provide an effective tactical multi-agency response to all forms of exploitation involving children and young people, including care leavers. This includes child sexual exploitation, children missing from home or care, trafficking and modern slavery, criminal exploitation and online abuse
3. The attached presentation (Appendix A) provides an overview of the response to exploitation across Herefordshire and includes details of the current risk of exploitation to children in Herefordshire. Further analysis of data to better understand if we are making a difference in keeping our children safe is being undertaken. This will include direct feedback from young people themselves as part of the inter-agency commitment to a single practice approach (Signs of Safety).
4. As part of the inter-agency work on child exploitation, the Safeguarding Partnership has created the Child Exploitation and Missing sub-group, chaired by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding Quality and Improvement. The purpose of this group is to strategically join up all the work on child exploitation so we have a single view on young people at risk across Herefordshire and how we more intelligently work together to bear down on the causes and make more of a difference preventatively.
5. Importantly the Prevent and Disrupt group connects into the Child Exploitation and Missing sub group, as does the multi-disciplinary work on Peer on Peer Abuse and Sexual Harm, to ensure connectivity across these three important areas. In respect of peer on peer abuse the focus here is on implementing previous work and the key recommendations on peer on peer abuse and the NSPCC project on sexual harm which was undertaken through a task and finish programme that commenced under the new safeguarding arrangements in January 2021.
6. A new draft inter-agency protocol on sexual harm has been developed which with partnership agreement will go live in June 2021. Also inter-agency training from child exploitation staff will start in July 2021 to work with perpetrators of sexual harm to children. Finally partners are looking at rolling out the Brook multi-agency child exploitation risk assessment tool which uses a traffic light system to identify concerns to inform joined up responses.
7. Peer on peer abuse is a key community concern both in Herefordshire and nationally and is not a single agency responsibility. Our next key development as part of our above partnership work is to establish a community forum whereby partners can reach out and engage with members of the public to transparently hear and discuss concerns.
8. The community forum will also share work on our joint response around peer on peer and sexual harm to enable a co-production on developing effective guidance and practice. This will provide a two-way engagement in an open and transparent approach in order to get from discussion to action. It is important to note that peer on peer is a wider partnership responsibility to safeguard children across all settings within Herefordshire. This ensures peer on peer expands beyond a single focus around

schools, and enables the multi-agency responsibilities through the MASH and their duty to investigate concerns so we get the “right help at the right time”.

9. On the 21st May 2021, the Herefordshire Childrens Safeguarding Partnership hosted with our colleagues from Worcestershire a multi-agency conference on all forms of child exploitation including modern day slavery and peer on peer abuse. Members of Scrutiny were invited to attend. Members have previously identified their desire to lead and organise a future summit on child exploitation in its wider sense, which officers would be very willing to support.

Community impact

10. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting the progress on action completed and outcomes achieved.
11. Furthermore, enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives; improving access to learning opportunities at all levels and improved outcomes for all children and young people, and those contained within priority two of the health and wellbeing strategy.
12. The families and carers of vulnerable children and young people are experiencing different and improved approaches to service delivery as we continue our implementation of the actions set out in our plan and in the context of the plan’s status within the wider children’s development plan. This includes looked after children and care leavers up to the age of 25

Environmental Impact

13. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council’s Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

14. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
15. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of

policies and in the delivery of services. We continue to make sure that, as our improvement plan is implemented, we pay due regard to equality legislation.

Resource implications

16. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation. The resource implication of any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to those recommendations.

Legal implications

17. There are no specific legal implications of the recommendation of this report

Risk management

18. There are not specific risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Consultees

19. None

Appendices

Appendix A – Presentation - The Role of Prevent and Disrupt Group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire

Background papers

None identified.

The Role of Prevent and Disrupt Group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire

The overall purpose of the Prevent and Disrupt group

- ▶ Provide an effective tactical multi-agency response to all forms of exploitation involving children and young people, including care leavers. This includes child sexual exploitation, children missing from home or care, trafficking and modern slavery, criminal exploitation and online abuse.

Prevent and Disrupt group meetings

- ▶ The Prevent and disrupt group meets every month and is well attended by both statutory and non-statutory agencies. We normally have attendance from around 30 different agencies.
- ▶ We discuss hot spots/ places and themes around exploitation.
- ▶ As part of the information sharing process at these meetings, we have some successes in disrupting and protecting vulnerable children and young people.
- ▶ A police intelligence form was created in 2019 that allows agencies to share “soft intelligence” with police that would not warrant a safeguarding referral. Information received from this form feeds directly into the agenda for the meeting each month.

The objectives of Part A of the meeting

- ▶ To gather, share and retain information and intelligence relating to all forms of child exploitation (West Mercia Police).
- ▶ To identify themes in relation to victims, perpetrators and locations and report on these to the Child Exploitation and Missing sub group.
- ▶ To ensure robust multi-agency action plans are in place for identified concerns using the '4 Ps approach' (Prepare, Prevent, Protect, Pursue).
- ▶ To share information with relevant Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Safeguarding groups.
- ▶ To maintain an effective interface and information sharing with MARAC, MAPPA and MATAC.

Examples of effectiveness...

- ▶ One of these recent successes was following information shared by CCTV. They informed the group that a parking attendant had been approached by two young females saying that a male had been following them, making sexual gestures and asking them to get in his car. The images of the girls were shared with MASH education and the girls identified. They were visited at school by Police and accounts obtained. With the assistance of CCTV and other agencies the vehicle was identified and the driver identified and arrested.
- ▶ In relation to hot spots and places discussed, the locations were fed into 'Op Septre' (a local knife crime and anti-social behaviour initiative)– and local multi-agency patrols targeted these places disrupting criminal activity.

The objectives of Part B of the meeting

- ▶ To review risk management plans for young people assessed as ‘actual’ or ‘significant’ exploitation to identify any additional actions required in order to safeguard the child / young person.
- ▶ To discuss children and young people who are frequently missing.
- ▶ To identify young people for whom a National Referral Mechanism for potential victims of modern slavery (NRM) is required and the appropriate agency to lead on completing the referral.
- ▶ To review the outcome of NRM referrals (reasonable grounds decisions and conclusive grounds decisions).

Continue...

- ▶ To identify cases and share evidence for the consideration of a CAWN (Child Abduction Warning Notices) being issued and / or other disruption tactics.
- ▶ To share relevant information in relation to young people deemed 'high risk' who are known to the Youth Offending Service.
- ▶ To share relevant information as appropriate regarding ongoing / planned police investigations as it relates to individual children and young people as appropriate.
- ▶ Identify where concerns indicate that a complex strategy meeting is required.

Examples of effectiveness...

- ▶ In the last year, **five complex strategy** meetings have been convened following information shared as part of this operational group and this has resulted in successful disruption and creative community action.
- ▶ A recent example was a number of young people that were being targeted in the College Green Estate area of Hereford City Centre. There has been a significant decrease in incidents in this area relating to contextual safeguarding. Young people are sharing with professionals they feel safer in this area and that it is not a desirable area for perpetrators due to increased police presence.

Continue...

- ▶ During COVID restrictions we were able to share information regarding locations where vulnerable adults were temporarily housed and identify how these may become hotspots for Cuckooing.

Future Planning

- ▶ We are working on a Multi Agency Training Programme to tackle drug use amongst children and young people. The Programme should raise awareness and direct people to support available within Herefordshire. The Programme will be designed to be delivered to children at schools, parents and carers, and professionals.
- ▶ We are also exploring the option of flagging individuals on Mosaic and different recording systems when they are discussed on the Disrupt and Prevent Panel.
- ▶ We are working with the Safeguarding Board to create a Safeguarding Database system that capture and analyse the information shared from each forum which could be an effective tool for our strategy to prevent and disrupt exploitation activities.

Current Children on Risk Management Plan

- ▶ We have 43 children open to the Child Exploitation Team and subject to the Multi Agency Child Exploitation panel

79

30 - Moderate

13 - Significant

- ▶ Criminal

16

- ▶ Sexual

11

- ▶ Both

16

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

...

Work Programme 2021/22

Meeting date: 20 May 2021 – 2.00 p.m.		Despatch: 12 May	
Item	Description	Report Author	Form of Scrutiny*
Update on Children's Legal Team	To receive an update report on the co-ordination of the Children's Legal Team at Herefordshire Council and measures being implemented rapidly in response to the recent court judgement.	Kate Charlton	Performance Review
Meeting date: 1 June 2021 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 21 May	
Item	Description	Report Author	Form of Scrutiny*
Report of work of prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation and the current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire. Child Exploitation summit, to include modern day slavery	To provide detail on the work of the prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire. To include detail of the current risk of exploitation to children in Herefordshire. To facilitate the child exploitation summit to include a focus on modern day slavery.	Cath Knowles	Performance Review
Looked after children	To receive a dedicated performance report concerning looked after children.	Hilary Brooks	Performance review
Peer on peer abuse recommendations	To receive an update report on progress with the recommendations from the peer on peer abuse review and those made by the scrutiny committee.	Ceri Morgan/Andy Gill	Performance review
Meeting date: 27 July 2021 – 10.15 p.m.		Despatch: 19 July	
Youth Justice Plan	To endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 for approval by full Council and consider whether there are any comments the committee would wish to make that would inform the production of the Plan for 2019/20.		Pre-decision call-in of Policy Framework item
Corporate Parenting Strategy – annual update /	To consider the annual update to the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023.	Andy Gill/Hilary Brooks	Performance Review

Leaving care and preparing for adulthood	To receive details of what services exist to prepare care leavers and unaccompanied child asylum seekers for adulthood.		
Adoption Service and Fostering Service annual reports	To receive the annual reports from the adoption and fostering services and consider the outcomes and recommendations. To make recommendations to the cabinet member on the operation of the services during 2020/21.	Hilary Brooks	Performance review
Improvement Plan timescales report	To receive a project plan with timescales of all legal services teams actions, required as part of the overall improvement plan considerations be produced for the July meeting of CYPSC. (e.g. new escalation protocol and end of life protocol). As part of the project plan, a tasks vs resources available breakdown be produced to identify who does what to show: 1) Where resources and gaps exist; and 2) the actions and timescales to address them.	Cath Knowles/Kate Charlton	Performance Review
Children's Centre T&F scope	To consider a scoping document for a task and finish group concerning children's centres.		Policy review and development
Meeting date: 14 September 2021 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 6 September	
Impact of pandemic on opportunities for school and care leavers	To provide a report concerning how the council is intending to address the impact on school and care leavers of the potential economic downturn and reduced employment opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.	Ceri Morgan	Policy review and development / Performance review
Mental health	To provide a report concerning actions to address mental health problems arising from the pandemic and including a focus on pastoral support in schools and potential forms of funding from government.	Ceri Morgan/Public Health	
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) annual report and LADO and IRO annual reports	To receive and scrutinise the HSCP annual reports and IRO and LADO annual reports.	Hilary Brooks/Andy Gill	Performance Review
Meeting date: 23 November 2021 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 15 November	

Public Health – Dental Health and Childhood Obesity	To provide a report on the high-level action plan for improving oral health in Herefordshire and details of any progress against the recommendations in the oral health needs assessment. To provide an update on work of the council to address childhood obesity To provide detail regarding the Public Health England better start in life (BSIL) Programme.		Performance Review
Meeting date: 11 January 2022 – 10.15 a.m.		Despatch: 3 January	
Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	To seek the views of the committee on the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS), the budget proposals for 2021-22 relating to Children and Families.	Andrew Lovegrove, Josie Rushgrove	Pre-decision call-in/Policy review and development
Meeting date: 22 March 2022 – 10.15 am.		Despatch: 14 March	
Work programme 2022/23	To agree the work programme and meeting dates for the 2021/22 administrative year.	Democratic services	

Business to allocate

- Additional meetings of the committee to be arranged when updates on the Improvement Strategy are available.
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) – task and finish group – **Proposed**
- Funding routes to schools and governance around schools funding
- Early years intervention and prevention
- Progress report on savings proposals relating to foster carers and sufficiency strategy.

Briefing Notes:

Briefing note concerning the NEETs project			Briefing note – September 2021
Outcome of the audit of the reduction in child protection plans			Briefing note – Summer 2021
Elective Home Education and current trends			Briefing note – November 2021
Kick Start Programme			Briefing note – June/July 2021

* *Pre-decision call-in, Performance review, Policy review and development*