

Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Tuesday 26 July 2022 at 2.30 pm

Councillors Physically Present and Voting:	Councillors: Helen l'Anson, Jennie Hewitt (Vice-Chair), Phillip Howells (Chair), Mike Jones, and John Stone
Councillors in remote attendance:	Councillors: Graham Andrews, Toni Fagan
Co-Optees in attendance:	Wiktor Daron, Representative of the Archdiocese of Cardiff Sam Pratley, Representative of the Diocese of Hereford Fiona Reid, Representative of Families

Remote Attendees: Jenny Dalloway, Programme Director – Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire
Maria Hardy, Programme Manager, HWICB

Officers: Service Director for Improvement, Service Director for Safeguarding, QA and Improvement, Interim Statutory Scrutiny Officer, Principal Casework Manager, Assistant Director for Education, Development and Skills

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Andy James (Parent Governor Representative Co-Optee) and Cllr Diana Toynbee (Cabinet Member for Children and Families).

94. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

None.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

96. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the action log and recommendation tracker, insofar as there were a number of overdue items, including some for which the allocated work owners were no longer employed by the Council. There were also items marked as complete for which the Committee could not recall having had sight of the response, or where the response given had been unsatisfactory. Item 16 of the action tracker was highlighted as a particular example of this. It was agreed that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Officers would review the lists outside of the meeting and aim to bring an updated tracking document back to the next meeting of the Committee.

97. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 5 - 8)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

98. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were no questions received from Councillors.

99. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-2024 [VERBAL UPDATE & PRESENTATION] (Pages 9 - 22)

In accordance with section 4.1.31 of the Constitution, it was moved by the Chair that the order of business be varied to promote the Improvement Plan verbal update and presentation item above subsequent business on the agenda. The variation to the order of business was put to the vote and carried.

The Committee received a verbal update and presentation on the Improvement Plan Outline, delivered by the Service Director for Improvement. A copy of the presentation is attached as an appendix to the minutes. It was confirmed that whilst the Plan has been signed off, it was a working document and would be subject to ongoing refinement and revision as appropriate.

It was suggested by some Members that the Committee would benefit from seeing a form of prioritisation matrix in order to better understand where the Plan may be able to deliver 'quick-wins', and which areas may present longer-term challenges to deliver against. The Committee noted that Ofsted are currently conducting an inspection into children's services and suggested that this represented an ideal opportunity to embrace its findings and move the Plan forward constructively.

Most Committee Members broadly welcomed the vision and intended outcomes of the Improvement Plan, but insisted that it must be underpinned by soundly evidenced baseline performance measures to enable the Committee to effectively scrutinise progress and delivery against these indicators. In the absence of such measures, there was concern that the Plan would represent a 'tick-box' exercise without demonstrating tangible improvements. It was suggested that the six key Work Programmes identified in the presentation could provide distinct areas of performance measurement. The Committee further identified an interest in how the budget set aside for the Improvement Plan is being used, and how the measures in the Plan serve towards meeting the Council's current corporate objectives.

The Committee expressed concern that delivery of the Plan and the attempts to embed an improved working culture may be impacted by the instability of having numerous interim staff members in place rather than permanent recruits. Some Members also felt that more emphasis was required on preventative measures. Concern was also raised regarding the capabilities of the IT infrastructure to support the needs of the service. Officers confirmed that they were working to maximise the efficiency and outputs available from their current system, but the option to potentially accelerate a move across to a system with enhanced performance capabilities was being looked into.

Officers confirmed that a range of identified performance measures had been drawn up and these would be subject to further discussion and circulation prior to the next meeting of the Committee to ensure that they adequately capture the key areas of attention for the Committee for ongoing evaluation.

It was unanimously resolved that:

- i) The content of the verbal update and presentation be noted; and**

- ii) **Baseline key performance measures to enable the Committee to scrutinise delivery of the Improvement Plan be prepared by the Children's Services department for the next meeting.**

100. ROLE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 33-38 of the agenda and pages 3-6 of the agenda supplement, which provided a summary of the role of the Committee, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and the key strategic objectives for the Committee, in accordance with the overall strategic objectives agreed by the Scrutiny Management Board on 16 June 2022.

It was unanimously resolved that:

The general role and remit of the Committee be noted, and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Objectives for 2022-2023 be agreed.

101. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES - AUTISM PROVISION AND NURTURE HUBS (Pages 23 - 36)

The Committee gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 3-14 of the agenda supplement, and received a supplementary presentation from the Principal Casework Manager on current autism provision and nurture hubs in Herefordshire alongside areas under development. A copy of the presentation slides is attached as an appendix to the minutes.

The Committee noted that expenditure to provide placements at independent and non-maintained special schools (INSS) specialising in autism provision has increased significantly in the last five years from £400k to £2.9m, which is closely linked to the issue of insufficient provision locally. There is also a significant related cost to the Council's transport budget to transfer pupils to these settings. It was intended that the proposal to create a separate hub managed by an existing school in Herefordshire with highly trained staff qualified in the teaching of autistic pupils would help reduce reliance on the use of INSS. The Committee noted that the Council will be seeking expressions of interest to run the autism hub, and the Committee queried how schools or other organisations would be able to make an application to be a part of this, what criteria would be used to select the preferred partner and what the timeframe would be. This detail was not available at the meeting but was noted as an information request to be forwarded to the Head of Additional Needs.

The Committee also noted that to date, 38 schools have been trained or been given a date for training on autism awareness, with a further push planned to have the vast majority of Herefordshire schools engaged. The Committee queried what the reason might be for any reluctance on the part of schools to engage with the training, and the Principal Casework Manager suggested that this was likely to be down to schools being extremely busy and managing competing priorities.

The report and presentation also included an update on the SEND Green Paper 'Right Support, Right Place, Right Time' which was published in March 2022. It was considered that Herefordshire is generally well placed to implement the recommendations contained within the Paper, although there are some challenges around strategic leadership where it was considered that the Scrutiny Committee may be able to add value. It was confirmed that the Council is now due an Ofsted SEND inspection which would review the service areas of health, social care and education, with the last inspection having taken place in 2014, and the Committee noted that it is in their Work Plan to consider preparedness for such an inspection at its meeting in January 2023.

The Committee acknowledged the various challenges facing the service and the mitigations set out within the report, and identified that a key theme running throughout the debate had been the issue of inclusivity. Particular attention was drawn to the need for fuller engagement in the SEND agenda by senior leaders and greater encouragement to be given to mainstream schools to be more inclusive. On that basis, the Chair suggested that a report could be drafted on behalf of the Committee for consideration at the next meeting to sum up the Committee's work and key findings on this matter. It was suggested that this could include a possible recommendation that the Executive take a more proactive approach to engaging with schools to consciously promote inclusivity of pupils with identified SEN support needs.

It was unanimously resolved that:

The content of the report and presentation be noted.

102. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2022-23

The Committee gave consideration to the draft annual work plan 2022-23, which had been drawn up in earlier consultation with members of the Committee.

It was suggested that given the number of items identified for scrutiny, the delivery of the work plan might be aided by the arrangement of an additional meeting to take place in February 2023, subject to identification of appropriate topics for inclusion.

It was unanimously resolved that:

The Annual Work Plan 2022-23 be approved.

103. ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Committee gave consideration to the establishment of a task and finish group to explore the issue of recruitment and retention in the social care sector, as set out in the Committee Work Plan.

It was suggested by the Chair that consideration of a potential task and finish group should take place at next meeting of the Committee, since it was noted that in order for the Committee to establish any task and finish groups it would be necessary to be in a position to appoint its membership and draft terms of reference should also be formulated in advance.

It was unanimously resolved that:

The establishment of a potential task and finish group be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

104. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted its meeting dates for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year.

The meeting ended at 5.32 pm

Chairperson

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26
JULY 2022**

Question 1

From: A Attfield, Bromyard

I was looking over some of the published Committee papers, to find out what had happened to certain minuted actions. I could not find any information about them. I have worked with a number of public governance/committee structures, and a simple, rolling, updated, publicly available action list was always used as a standard part of effective governance; it helped ensure actions were completed in a timely fashion, and helped ensure action owners were held to account as needed. I was surprised not to find this in place. What mechanism does the Committee use to ensure actions are followed up and completed?

Response

Thank you for your question regarding the checking and tracking of actions arising from resolutions previously made by the Scrutiny Committee. This is an opportune moment to raise this query as we are now considering ways to improve and clarify the tracking of actions arising from Scrutiny Committee resolutions, which is proposed to be implemented from September 2022.

Already, however, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee has been tracking actions arising from previous committees through information reports published with its agenda papers; an Action Log report and a Recommendations Tracker report. You will be able to find these published as an appendix to the minutes and /or the Committee Work Plan on previous committee agenda papers. For the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee 26th July 2022, you will find these published as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Minutes at agenda item 4.

The Committee have included a recommendations tracker since August 2021 in recognition of the need to track scrutiny recommendations.

I hope this helps to clarify the process being followed at the moment. From September we hope to bring a report to Scrutiny Committees that provides greater clarity about this process and brings the different trackers into one report.

Question 2

From: F Reid, Hereford

I am interested in the LAC rate (Looked After Children) - i.e. number of children from every cluster of 10,000 children aged 0 to 18 in care – for Herefordshire and other areas.

What is latest LAC rate (and its date) for Herefordshire?

What is the latest number (and its date) of LAC in Herefordshire?

(Same date for both above.)

What is the LAC rate for:

- “Statistical Neighbours”: Shropshire, Devon and Cornwall?
- West Midlands region (average)?
- England (average)?

Please have the same date for all immediately above and state it. If the date is different from Herefordshire's latest figures, give the rate and number of LAC for the county as at that date.

Response

The rate per 10,000 in Herefordshire as at 12 July 2022 was 109 per 10,000. This equates to 391 children and young people, as of the same date.

Statistical neighbour and England average rates are published annually and the rates for the period to 31 March 2022 are not yet published.

The most recent published rates for our statistical neighbours and England are therefore for 31 March 2021 and are as follows:

Statistical neighbour average rate:	60 per 10,000
England average rate:	67 per 10,000
West Midlands rate:	85 per 10,000

At the same point in time, the Herefordshire rate was 87 per 10,000.

There is another useful and relevant metric here, being the rate at which children become accommodated in the year (rather than the overall total already detailed above)

The rate at which children became looked after in the year to 31 March 2021 was 23 per 10,000 similar to both the statistical neighbour rate (22 per 10,000) and the England average rate (24 per 10,000) at that time. The West Midland rate was 25 per 10,000.

The rate at which children were coming into our care during the period 2017 – 2021 had fallen from 31 per 10,000 in 2017-18 to 23 per 10,000 in 2020-21.

Data for the period to 31 March 2022 is not yet validated/published but we know that there was a rise in the rate of children coming into our care in the year, in part due to the rise in legacy unmet need that became apparent, and the rate rose to 44 per 10,000. We can also see that the rate at which children come into our care has been falling steadily over the past four months (and that the rate in June was back down to 20 per 10,000).

The picture is a complex one that cannot be explained in numbers alone and we would be happy to report further on this to the Scrutiny Committee in the future.

Supplementary question

The original question asked:

'What is the LAC rate for:

- "statistical neighbours": Shropshire, Devon and Cornwall?'

Therefore, please give the LAC rate for these specific counties as at 31 March 2021. In the *Looked After Children Performance Report* (scrutiny committee meeting on 1 June 2021) LAC rates were given for Herefordshire and its nearest "statistical neighbours", namely:

- Cornwall: 44 per 10,000
- Devon: 51 per 10,000
- Shropshire: 66 per 10,000
- Herefordshire 88 per 10,000

Response

As at 31 March 2021:

- Cornwall: 46 per 10,000
- Devon: 55 per 10,000
- Shropshire: 84 per 10,000

Please confirm whether or not the statistics in your (first) response for West Midland(s) are for West Midlands region (rather than West Midlands conurbation).

Response

The data is for the West Midlands region.

As at 31 March 2021, please advise the average length of time that children and young people have spent in the care of:

- Herefordshire Council?
- Cornwall Council?
- Devon Council?
- Shropshire Council?
- "Statistical neighbour" (average)?
- England (average)?
- West Midlands region (average)?

Response

For Herefordshire Council, as at 11 September 2022, the average length of time our current cohort of young people have spent in care is 3 years and 4 months (rounded to the nearest whole month).

Data for the other authorities/regions requested is not held by Herefordshire Council or centrally published.



Herefordshire
Improvement Plan
Outline for Improvement
Board

Lisa Arthey - Service Director
Improvement

6

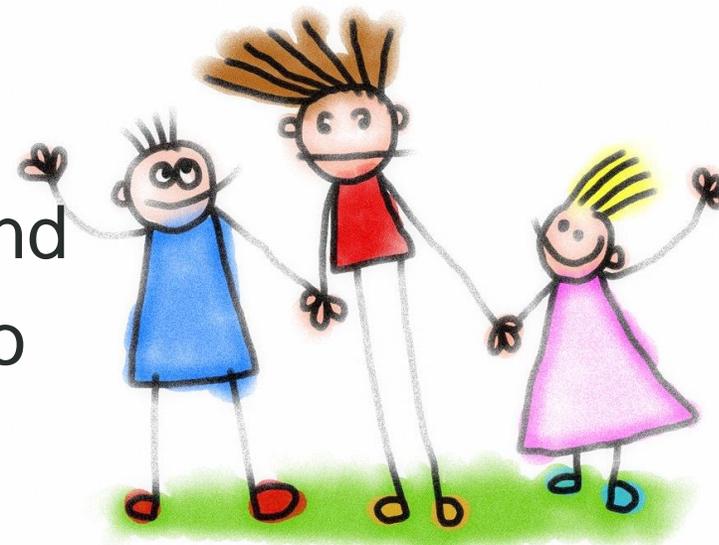
Vision - what we will achieve

All children and young people in Hereford feel safe, loved and valued and grow up with the confidence and skills to be the best they can be

10

Our Ambition is

Creating a child-centred county where children and young people are at the heart of everything we do



What are the outcomes we seek?



- We will try our very best to make sure that children and young people **get the right help at the right time.**
- We will keep our working relationships with children, young people and families **at the heart of everything we do.**
- **We will support parents and carers to make sure children and young people are safe at home, if at all possible, and nurtured by others if not.**
- We will work hard to provide children and young people who cannot live with their families with a **stable home.**

What are the outcomes we seek?



- We will make sure we take into account **the diverse backgrounds and needs** of children and young people.
- **We will keep written information** about children and young people in a way that recognises that the information **belongs to them.**
- ¹²• Listening carefully to what children, young people and parents tell us, **we will work hard to have positive endings when we move on.**
- We will create a **supportive working culture** that recognises the **importance of critical reflection and shared learning.**
- **We will keep a focus on making a difference to improving outcomes for children and young people.**

"... We need to be supported and receive high quality supervision ..."

Practitioners



Measures that Matter – Vital success signs

"... We want fewer changes in Social Workers and for Social Workers to be able to spend more time with us..."

Children and families

- Lower average caseloads
- Fewer social workers with caseloads of more than 24 children allocated to them
- Children in our care have fewer changes of allocated social workers
- Permanent social workers stay with us for longer
- More of our social workers are permanent
- All children will have an allocated social worker
- Fewer assessments by social care result in No Further Action
- Assessments are proportionate and timely
- Audits grade - more plans are graded as Good or Outstanding
- Our managers will audit cases
- Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Conference Chairs will complete effective mid-point reviews
- We respond appropriately and timely to complaints
- We receive fewer complaints
- Case holding practitioners will receive monthly supervision
- Children's files will evidence regular management oversight and supervision
- Senior leaders and managers (Service Directors, Head of Service, and Service Managers) will be permanent

"... Help and support needs to be of good quality at the right time and for the right period of time..."

Children & families



Where are we?

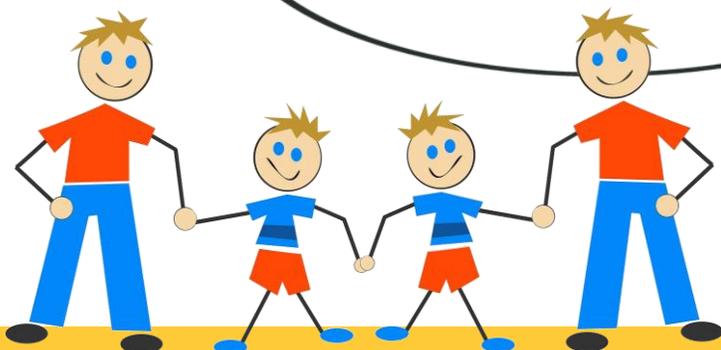
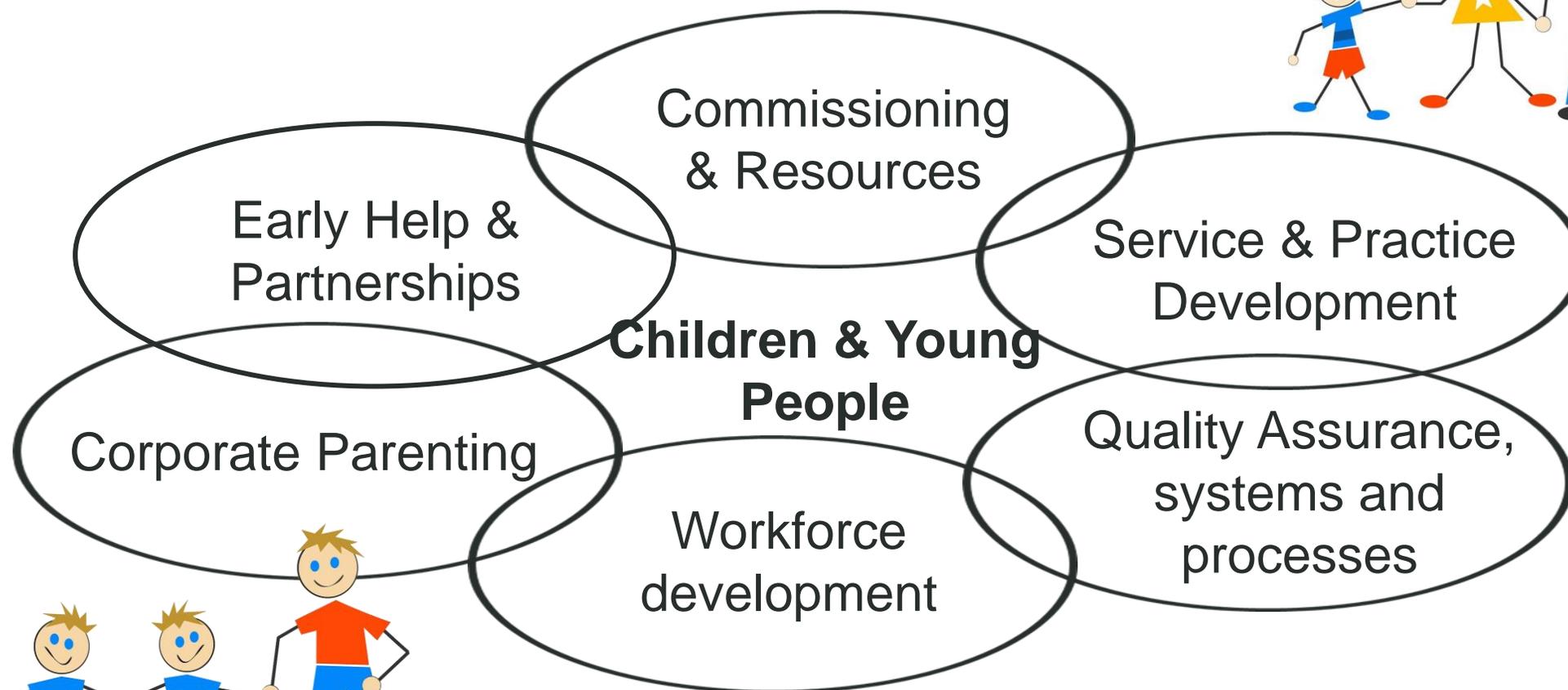


- Too many children in our statutory system - are they even the right children?
- Too many Children in Care
- ¹⁴• Too many children subject to CP - is that really keeping them safe?
- Lack of join-up with Early Help and wider community / private and third sector - what is Early Help?
- System is far too clunky, chunky and slow
- Children's voices are not heard and their stories are not recorded
- Too many changes of staff and managers to drive change
- Short term fix "plaster up" and move on mentality

Work Programmes to deliver



51



What we are doing - workforce prog board

- Dynamic plan for recruitment underway - myth busting
- Reviewing all JDs to ensure clear roles and responsibilities and are up to date for recruitment - JULY
- Recruitment - we have a designated HR person, Debbie Thompson - July
- Career progression pathway signed off and induction plan completed
- Salary paper will go to resource board
- Practice development leads - will be all attached to teams to support
- Coaching / mentoring / on the ground help and advice
- Reflective supervision / learning circles face-to-face
- Skills audit for all staff to assist with training / progression pathways

19



Early help work programme



- Prevention strategy formulation underway – Sept 2022
- Clear pathway out from tier1/2 and into 4 via Multi agency groups
- Shared assessment tool and audit process out – Sept 2022
- Work to look at what agencies need to be at our door - who do we want/ need to keep safe

- What do we need to prevent risk and need? - leads to wider commissioning of services
- Re-look at ECHO and EOC work
- Focus on Exploitation / DA work is a MUST



Resources and Commissioning programme

- Looking at what carers we have and what we will need - not just numbers but skills/ exp
- Homes - what do we need and where can we access - provider events - meet and greet the services- build relationships
- Market fair – commissioning providers much needed
- Re-brand and join up with those that seek our care
- Child profiles “all about me”
- Commissioning plan to ensure children are in the all-age process
- Young inspectors / IRO role
- Reducing need as well as meeting it – panels to determine need and allocate resources

QA, Systems and Data Programme Board

- Mosaic end-to-end review is needed asap
- Right system? Need to review
- Floor-walkers and touch point help urgent
- Forms / templates and more forms I be child focused
- Data rich but analysis poor - making data work for all/dashboards
- Audit
- QA framework launch
- ASYE increase
- What practice framework?



Service and Practice Development Board

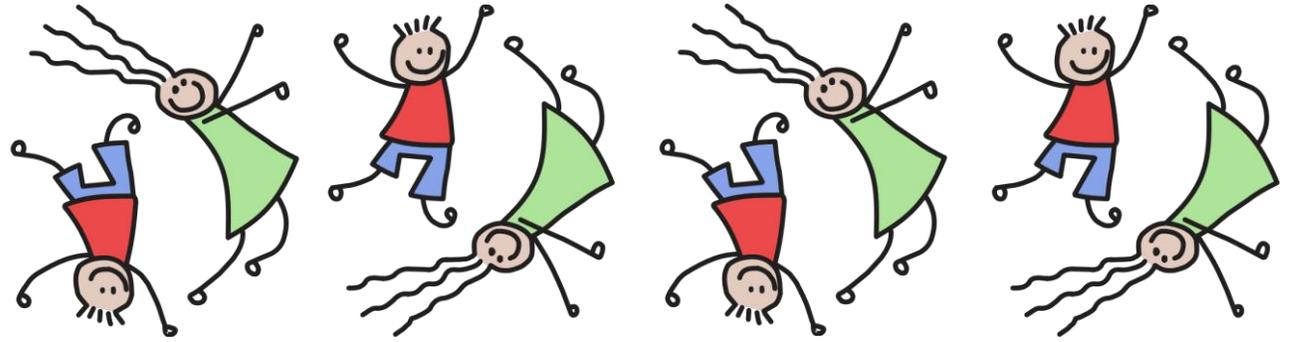
- Support to all managers and staff not just ASYE
- What does Good look like?
- Support tools for assessments and plans and direct work
- 8 PDPs linked across all areas will coach / mentor / support / learning circles / reflective group supervision
- Research in practice
- Skills audit to link to training and development plan
- Service re-shuffle - do we have all in the right place - as we decrease in children are we requiring resource elsewhere?

Corporate parenting programme

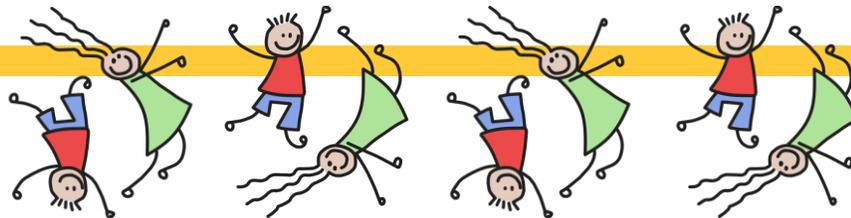
- Feeds up to the Corporate Parenting board
- LGA recommendations to be actioned
- ²¹• Better forums for all YP not just CIC - youth assembly
- Accommodation pathways
- Mental health support via SDQ
- PEPS - pupil premium usage
- Links to SEND – EHC
- Children in Care Charter
- Care experienced children voices



Progress so far



- Identified Corporate HR lead so 0-3 months plan for advertising/ recruitment underway - 3-6 months mid term schedule
- Business support regrade and local recruitment underway
- Practice Development Leads are all in and allocated to service areas to support staff and Managers- Boards all underway
- Skill audit of all staff underway for development career progression
- 2nd meeting for Prevention strategy / vision and Priorities
- LGA recs in Corporate parenting board / DcS led Member training



Special Educational
Needs and Disabilities -
Autism Provision and
Nurture Hubs

Autism Provision (green under development)

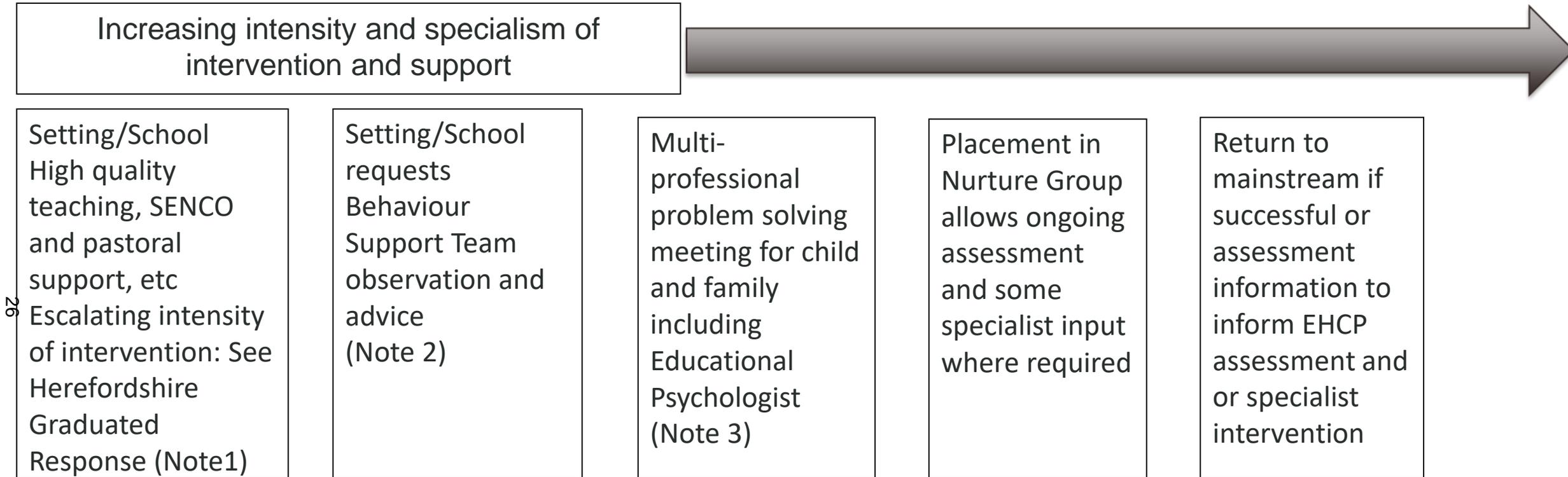
- Early Years – Multi-disciplinary Diagnosis, COSI Group, Early Bird, transition to school
- Mainstream Schools – **AET Training**, Outreach support from Hampton Dene
- Mainstream Autism Bases – Hampton Dene and Bishops. **Additional capacity at Hampton Dene. Further capacity needed. Another round of sufficiency work.**
- Secondary Autism Hub for autism and anxiety – finding suitable premises and bid for provider to lead it
- Special School cohorts already include autism. **Special Free School Bid being considered for Autism and LD.**
- Use of Independent and Non-maintained special school. **Need to reduce use**

Nurture Hubs

- To address attachment and childhood trauma (not autism)
- Intensive 1 year intervention
- Pilot agreed for 2 years from High Needs Block – cost defrayment
 - Leominster Primary
 - Broadlands Primary, Hereford
 - Ashfield Park, Ross
 - Lea and Gorsley Goffs combined
 - Lord Scudamore (from Sept 22)
- Extends SEMH continuum of provision See next slide
- 7 places per hub - 5 from own school and 2 from neighbouring schools
- Seeking geographical coverage
- Pilot project at Earl Mortimer for secondary
- Pilot of counselling outreach (Orleton Primary) to address travel difficulties for some

25

Proposed Graduated SEMH Pathway to address gaps



1. Link to Herefordshire graduated response/intervention guidance:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/16977/intervention_guidance_for_send_in_schools_and_other_educational_settings.pdf

2. The Behaviour Support Team (BST) are funded to conduct observations in EY and KS1 (up to Y1) and to provide advice on strategies. They will make a follow up visit. This service is free to EY settings and primary schools as part of our drive for identifying early. Work beyond this is charges by the Behaviour Support Team. Contact: Rhiannon.Thomas@herefordshire.gov.uk

3. Referral to multi-professional problem solving triggered by Social Inclusion Officer/ BST

Emotionally based school avoidance project

- EBSA is often underpinned by high anxiety. This may not be apparent to the adults who know the young person well. When anxiety is linked to school avoidance, the young person experiences anxious thoughts around attending school. They may also be fearful that they cannot cope in school.
- High levels of anxiety are particularly common in young people with autism. Although there is little research showing the prevalence of young people with autism and EBSA, evidence does suggest those with autism usually have increased anxiety so could be more at risk of EBSA. Pilot agreed for 2 years from High Needs Block – cost defrayment

Emotionally based school avoidance project

PHASE 1:
Low or intermittent
attendance falling
below 90%

- **PERSONALISED PLAN**
 - Gain the views of the child and family
 - Convene a 'Team around family'/TAF meeting
 - Establish a plan with a personalised approach and levels of support
- **PERSONALISED SUPPORT**
 - Suggested strategies:
 - regular contact with a trusted adult
 - a safe space to go to
 - contact with child and family every day they are not in school
 - identify emotional hotspots and provide support to reduce their impact

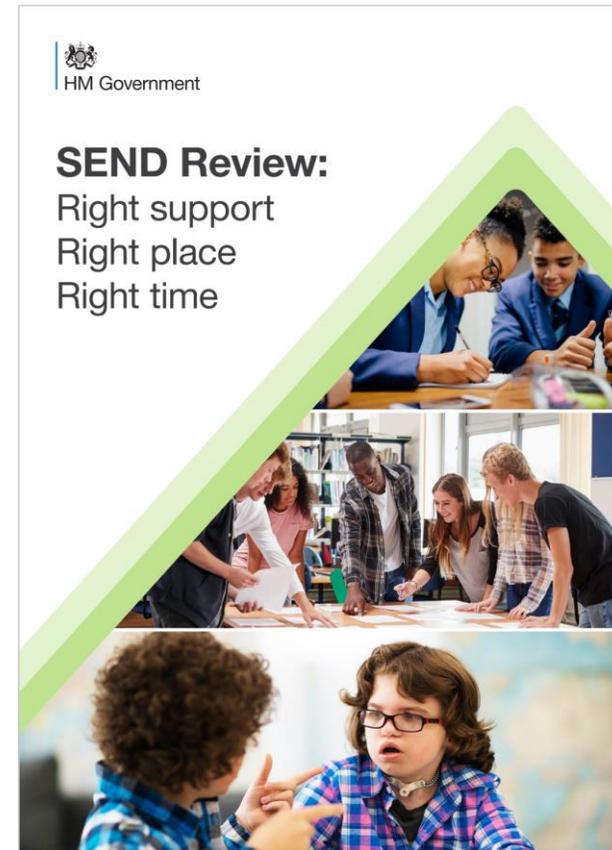
PHASE 2:
Persistent absence
after intervention for 6
weeks

- **INDIVIDUALISED PLAN**
 - Convene a TAF review meeting, evaluate and adjust the strategies
 - Involve other services if necessary, implement higher level of support.
- **INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT**
 - A graduated and achievable plan for return to school
 - Identify the sources of anxiety preventing attendance and create a hierarchy of manageable steps
 - Identify any learning or curriculum needs and support to reduce these
 - Significant daily contact from a trusted adult
 - An example of a support plan and its key features is outlined in Herefordshire's EBSA guidance

PHASE 3:
No longer attending
regularly after a plan
and individualised
support

- **MULTI AGENCY INTERVENTION**
 - Review the plan with a TAF, with consent of family and child discuss next steps and involvement of other agencies, including a request for the EP service to become involved
- **CONTACT THE HEREFORDSHIRE EPS FOR EBSA INTERVENTION IF:**
 - The non attendance is emotionally based
 - A gradual and individualised plan of support has not achieved attendance
 - The pupil has been attending in the last 3 months (longer term non-attendance may not be suitable for this intervention/project).

- SEND Review 2022-
Green Paper
- Right Support, Right
Place, Right Time



[SEND Review - right support, right place, right time \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Opportunity for all - Strong schools with great teachers for your child \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Objective

- All Children fulfil potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives

But...

1. Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for too many children, young people and their families.
2. Outcomes for children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision are consistently worse than their peers across every measure.
3. Despite the continuing and unprecedented investment, the system is not financially sustainable

What is not working?

- Inconsistencies in identification – schools biggest difference
- Settings ill-equipped to identify and support
- Not clear what parents can expect from local mainstream settings
- EHCPs seen as only way of getting support – increased pressure on the system
- Pressure for specialist – long journeys for children with highest needs

Financial resource and workforce capacity is pulled to the specialist end of the system so there is less available to deliver early intervention and effective, timely support in mainstream settings.

In Summary...

SEND Review identifies the problem namely...

- Nationally (and locally) spending a lot often with poor user satisfaction, despite the efforts of very committed staff across all agencies
- It is positive that it is clear that an inclusive system is what is needed...
- Use of standards to provide clarity welcomed... but open to interpretation
- ³² But the recommendations in the SEND Review and the Education White Paper still create tensions in support of anti-inclusive practice and a more fragmented system
- Maintaining the current EHCP system which can create a perverse incentives in the system.
- Also do not feel that the solutions proposed are strong enough levers to recreate a more inclusive system, e.g. Use of funding to drive change very limited and Ofsted inspection of schools limited focus on SEND.

Herefordshire is well placed to implement recommendations

Many of these are already wholly or partially in place:-

- SEN referral panel is not dissimilar to the proposed model – could be quickly adapted for the decision appeal panel
- Much improved co-production systems with parents and carers – Co-production Charter
- Already implemented the PRU funding model suggested, PRU more part of SEND landscape than in some areas – requirement for it to be ‘governed by SEND Partnerships
- Already operating a funding matrix; changing to a national model would not be too much of a challenge,
- Already have a good relationship with health partners.
- Already have a SEND Strategy (Partnership Group)
- Already have elements of the ‘Inclusion Plan’ in place in the form of the Strategic Action Plan
- Some elements of training for schools/settings, e.g. AET autism training, L3 SENCO award for EY
- FSW EHCP screening – review comments it is the lower level care needs
- Thinking around SEND dashboard already underway

More of a challenge...

- Strategic Leadership... depending on the nature of the partnership arrangements envisaged
- Review has a big focus on national standards for almost everything– Will take time and resource to embed
- Really poor data systems in education – digitised EHCP?
- List of independent school settings – how will this be commissioned?
- DSCO arrangements – statutory requirement for social care advice
- Streamlining of EHC and social care systems – different legislative strands
- Issuing new plans after annual review with statutory deadline
- What will Regions group look like? Funding agreements for LAs and hold LAs to account

Challenges for the SEN System

Main challenges are from increasing demand, the speed at which resource can be triggered and often inability to recruit quickly.

It is not possible to determine the full impact. There was increasing demand prior to the pandemic. It is hard to predict the long-term ongoing impact.

Areas impacted:

- SEN Assessment Team capacity
- Demand for specialist educational places for SEND.
- Waiting times for appointments at Children's Health Clinics - In particular, paediatrician, O/T, multi-disciplinary for autism (now caught up long waiting list)
- Children with Disabilities Social Care Team including Short Breaks and Placements for Children with a disability. Increasing demand and scarcity of providers

