

A G E N D A

Social Care & Housing Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday, 24th November, 2003**

Time: **10.30 a.m.**

Place: **Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

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

For any further information please contact:

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**County of Herefordshire
District Council**

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Social Care & Housing Scrutiny

To: Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs. E.M. Bew, Mrs. A.E. Gray, K.G. Grumbley, Mrs. J.A. Hyde,
R. Mills, Mrs. J.E. Pemberton, Ms. G.A. Powell and P. G. Turpin

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES	
To receive details of any Member nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on this Agenda.	
4. MINUTES	1 - 8
To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th September, 2003.	
5. UPDATE ON A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW ACTION PLAN (SOCIAL SERVICES)	9 - 16
To update the Committee on the Social Services aspects of a serious case review (part 8) action plan.	
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To consider commenting on the Green Paper: Every Child Matters	
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To report the results of the Better Care Higher Standards Annual Users Survey.	
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To consider the seventh annual progress report on the Home Energy Conservation Act project.	
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To report on statistical in-year performance for the Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate.	
14. BEST VALUE REVIEW -HOME SUPPORT-UPDATE ON PROGRESS	81 - 84
To outline the progress to date of the Best Value Review (BVR) of Home Support and the development of the Short Term Assessment Reablement and Review Service (STARRS).	
15. SOCIAL SERVICES AND STRATEGIC HOUSING BUDGET MONITORING 2003/04 - 6 MONTHLY REPORT	85 - 86
To inform the Committee of the budget monitoring position for Social Care and Strategic Housing for the first six months of the financial year 2003/04.	

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Education, Environment, Health, Social Care and Housing and Social and Economic Development. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises Policy and Finance matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

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- 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.
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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Social Care & Housing Scrutiny held at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 29th September, 2003 at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs. E.M. Bew, Mrs. A.E. Gray, K.G. Grumbley, R. Mills and P. G. Turpin

Voluntary Sector Mrs B. Millman, Ms. M .James
Representatives

In attendance: Councillors Mrs L.O. Barnett (Cabinet Member – Social Care and Strategic Housing) and P.E. Harling.

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs J. A. Hyde, Mrs J. E. Pemberton and Mrs G. A. Powell

12. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Brig P. Jones CBE substituted for Councillor Mrs J. A. Hyde.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests made.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That subject to amending the minutes to record that Cllr Mrs M. D. Lloyd-Hayes was Chairman and Cllr. Mrs. P. Andrews was Vice-Chairman in place of those listed, the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2003, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. SOCIAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE

The Committee were informed of the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) Report on Herefordshire Social Services Care Performance 2002-03.

The Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing reported that the SSI reported annually on Social Care Performance and that this SSI report, attached to the agenda report at appendix 1, came following the publication of the Joint Review report presented to Cabinet on 10th July 2003. The SSI report endorsed the sustained children's service progress and reminded the Council of the performance challenge in older people's services.

During the course of discussion the following principal points were noted:

- The increased use of the Herefordshire Direct Payments scheme was welcomed.

- That, while both staff and users or carers were involved with the signing off of assessments, this was ultimately the responsibility of the line manager. This practice had been reviewed as part of a quality audit of procedures.
- The Committee noted that rural transport problems were outside the scope of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

16. A REPORT ON HEREFORDSHIRE'S "AUDIT OF SERVICES" FOLLOWING THE VICTORIA CLIMBIE INQUIRY (THE LAMING REPORT)

The Committee were informed of the Social Services Inspectorate's (SSI) evaluation of Herefordshire's "audit of services to children in need in response to the practical recommendations of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry".

The Head of Social Care (Children) reported that the Government's principal response to the Laming report was in the document "Keeping Children Safe". A Green Paper "Every Child Matters" had also been published and contained recommendations, which linked to "Keeping Children Safe". The implications of both documents for Herefordshire would need to be considered and reported to a future meeting. Each Social Services Authority completed a framework entitled "Audit of Services to Children in Need in Response to the Practice Recommendations of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry". Herefordshire's self-audit had been scrutinised by the SSI and a copy of a letter from the Director of SSI which accompanied the Performance evaluation was appended to the agenda report. This indicated that the evaluation of current services was positive and stated that Herefordshire was serving most children well, and its capacity for improvement was promising. The Head of Social Care (Children) reported that a future report for Committee would bring together an update on progress on the Climbié audit and any additions prompted by the Green Paper.

The Committee congratulated those concerned for achieving this positive grade.

RESOLVED:

That

- (a) The evaluation of the Council's audit of Lord Laming's Inquiry recommendations be noted;**

and

- (b) The Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing update the Committee on the audit at a future meeting, including any additional requirements reflected in the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters'.**

17. EXTRA CARE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The Committee received an update with regard to the development of an Extra Care Housing Scheme within Hereford.

The Head of Strategic Housing Services reported that a housing needs analysis had been undertaken to support the need for Extra Care Housing provision in the County. The main findings of the analysis together with details of the current position regarding capital and revenue costs were set out in the report. He highlighted that concerning the Supporting People funding, an indicative level of £150,000 had been

suggested by the Extra Care Housing Trust as the level required to support such a scheme. However, it was not possible to “set aside” this level of funding. A project brief for the selection of a preferred partner Registered Social Landlord (RSL) was being prepared. This included a submission of financial information to develop the Extra Care Housing provision. He further reported that a bid would be submitted to both the Housing Corporation and the Department of Health to attract additional resources to the County.

He further reported that the potential site, identified at the former Local Authority nurseries, Ledbury Road, Hereford, had received Cabinet support on 25th September, 2003. If required, work would be undertaken to assist in the relocation of Unity Gardens to an alternative site. A detailed report outlining the costs of the scheme following the selection of the partnering RSL and other progress would be submitted to a future meeting.

The Committee noted that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) would be responsible for health care provision in the final scheme and in recognition of this would have a contribution to make to the scheme’s design.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and further updates be presented to future meetings.

18. DELAYED TRANSFERS OF CARE AND REIMBURSEMENTS

The Committee were informed of the background to implications of delayed transfers of care (delayed discharges) within Herefordshire.

The Head of Social Care (Adults) reported that delayed hospital discharges were a complex issue with a range of causes and solutions which generally fell into three categories: individual, organisational and structural levels, and these were further defined in the report. She reported that currently on a weekly basis, an average of between 16 and 20 people were delayed in Hereford Hospitals. Between 3 and 5 of those could be directly attributed to social reasons. She also reported upon the deliberate policy of moving patients, who were fit for discharge but who were unable to be appropriately placed, into the community hospitals in order to ensure capacity within the acute trust. She further reported that a number of initiatives to improve the patient pathway through the system were underway and these were further described in the report.

In relation to the Reimbursement Scheme, introduced by the Community Care (Delayed Discharges) Act 2003, the Head of Social Care (Adults) reported that the stated intention of the Act was that Social Services should pay for the care of an individual as soon as they became the responsibility of the Service. A Reimbursement Grant accompanied the Act under which Herefordshire had received £172,000 part year funding. The implications of the scheme and the grant were detailed in the report.

The Head of Social Care (Adults) introduced Mrs Fiona McLeod of the Department of Health’s Change Agent Team. While Hereford was not a ‘hot spot’ for investigation she had agreed to visit and undertake a brief review.

Mrs McLeod commented upon the issue of delayed transfers of care at Community Hospitals and the policy of their use to free up the community hospitals, which she felt clouded the true number of delays counted for reimbursement. She emphasised that the issue was not just the numbers involved but the whole care of the person. She also commented that an area of concern was the number of people waiting to go into the acute hospital, and in particularly the availability of funding. She

highlighted a local issue concerning the use of 'top-up fees' and whether they were only applied in exceptional circumstances.

The Committee debated the issue of patients becoming institutionalised. The longer they were in care the less likely they were to be readily capable of going home. It was noted that the Leominster whole systems pilot scheme had been able to free up the patient pathway through the system and experience from this pilot would be used to inform further developments. The Committee also debated issues relating to the 'risk averse' attitude to patient welfare and the implications of the 'Reimbursement Scheme'.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and further reports be made on delayed transfers of care, and the implication of the reimbursement scheme.

19. **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF CARER SUPPORT - STAGE 3 REPORT**

The Committee considered the Stage 3 report and outcomes of the Best Value Review of Carer Support Services.

The Head of Social Care (Adults) presented a report on the review together with a copy of the detailed review report, which had been circulated separately for members. She briefly outlined the background to the review and commented that the scoping exercise had proved complex due to the nature of the service. The Review Group's recommendations were set out in the report.

The Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing commented that the review had been a thorough piece of work. However, she expressed a number of concerns regarding the recommendations, particularly the likely impact upon resources within the Directorate.

The Committee appreciated the important work undertaken by carers in the County and noted the estimated cost to the County were this work to be financed by the Council. The Committee agreed that the review process had been rigorously applied and, not wishing to hold up the review process, recommended that the review proceed to the next stage. However, in view of the concerns expressed regarding resource implications it was suggested that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cabinet Member (Social Care and Strategic Housing) and the Director meet with the Review Group to discuss the recommendations, reporting back to Committee in due course.

RESOLVED: That the Stage 3 report be submitted to the Strategic Monitoring Committee for consideration and it be suggested that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cabinet Member (Social Care and Strategic Housing) and Director meet with the Review Group to discuss the recommendations in relation to Directorate resources.

20. **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF HEREFORDSHIRE ADOPTION AND FOSTERING SERVICES - STAGE ONE**

The Committee were informed of the progress of the Best Value Review and the Stage One report of the review process: the initial diagnosis and analysis.

The Children's Services Manager reported that Stage One of the review had been completed and copies of the stage one report had been circulated to Members separately.

The Committee briefly discussed the work of the Fostering and Adoption Service and noted the fluctuating numbers in care. They also discussed the Council's position as Corporate Parent and suggested that the Director arrange for a seminar be held for all Members of the Council to inform them of the implications and their responsibilities.

RESOLVED: that

(a) the Best Value Review Stage One Report on Fostering and Adoption Service be accepted and;

(b) a seminar be held for all Members of the Council on the implications of the Council as Corporate Parent.

**21. SOCIAL SERVICES AND STRATEGIC HOUSING BUDGET MONITORING
2003/04 - 4 MONTHLY REPORT**

The Committee were informed of the budget monitoring position for Social Care and Strategic Housing for the first four months of the financial year 2003/04.

The Head of Business Services reported upon the budget position and highlighted that the overspend carried forward from 2002/03 had been £582,000. She reported that key risk areas had been identified within the budget, which included assumptions made about residential and family placements for children, fairer charging income projections and grants income. Initial budget planning included some limited contingency provision to meet unquantified but likely pressures during the year.

In relation to Strategic Housing she reported that while an underspend of £191,000 had been carried forward to 2003/04 this had been allocated to projects and the projected year-end position indicated a small underspend of £5,000.

The Committee appreciated the demonstration of efficiency in the Directorate and the business like approach to the need to balance the budget against service provision.

RESOLVED: that the budget monitoring report for the first four months of the financial year be noted.

22. SCRUTINY OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE PLAN

The Committee were advised of arrangements for monitoring the Herefordshire Plan.

The Committee were informed of the partnership arrangements for delivering the Herefordshire Plan. The report detailed responsibility for delivering and monitoring each of the 10 ambitions; the Cabinet Member within whose remit the ambition fell and the Scrutiny Committee responsible for scrutinising progress.

The Committee discussed the degree of integration between Directorates in achieving the ambitions. It was suggested that the Strategic Monitoring Committee consider the level of monitoring allocated to scrutinising the achievement of the Plan. It was further suggested that consideration might usefully be given to producing an accessible, public summary of the Plan.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and it be recommended that Strategic Monitoring Committee consider the level of monitoring allocated to scrutinising the achievement of the Plan.

23. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING)

The Committee received a presentation by Councillor Mrs. L.O. Barnett, Cabinet Member (Social Care and Strategic Housing) on the policy issues affecting this programme area and the main priorities.

The Cabinet Member referred to the SSI and Audit Commission report, which stated that, at the present time, Herefordshire Council Social Care was serving some people well with promising prospects for the future. She commented that an action plan to improve services had been produced which would be the foundation of change and innovation over the lifetime of the present Council. The challenge and aims for the Cabinet and the Directorate would be to drive forward change and innovation necessary to serve all vulnerable people well.

The following are the main points of the presentation:

- There seemed to be a lack of understanding regarding the areas covered by Strategic Housing, which needed to be tackled, and she proposed that a seminar for members on this issue be arranged.
- More developments were needed in housing to support improvements in the County. This would be achieved by continuing to work closely with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and other partners; good budget management and efficiency across the partnership.
- As reported in an earlier item, while there was a budget deficit, the budgets were being managed effectively. Staff would continue to find new and innovative ways to provide the services within existing resources.
- Budget plans for 2004/05 and onwards indicated a need for more financial investment, particularly for older people.
- A priority must be to reduce the delay in vacating hospital beds and the Council must avoid fines for delays. She acknowledged that government targets imposed upon the hospitals complicated the issue. The development of a 22 bed Intermediate Care Centre at Hillside would only address the problem in part.
- A report was expected on the STARRS pilot project based at Leominster Community Hospital. This would provide an opportunity for joint working with the PCT to support and enhance Community Reablement Services.
- Supported housing, based on the Supporting People Strategy and the SMART House, would be investigated to see whether further technology would assist in keeping more people in their own homes.
- Negotiations with Shaw Homes were progressing. This would be a ten million pound investment, where five residential homes owned by the Council would be managed by the partner, and monitored by the Council.
- A report was expected to go before Cabinet shortly on the provision of affordable housing.
- The business case for investment in older peoples' services would be finalised in the autumn of this year.

The Cabinet Member summed up that the main priorities for the programme area were to:

- Continue to work with the Primary Care Trust to reduce the delays in vacating hospital beds;
- Continue significant changes in the delivery of Home Care Services over the next 18 months;
- Ensure continued progress on the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets relating to older people and homelessness;
- Seek an early decision on “A Care Village” for Hereford City and request policy support on the further development of extra care housing in Herefordshire from the Scrutiny Committee;
- Drive forward the affordable housing agenda with other Cabinet Members;
- Make the case for future investment in older people services; and
- Make sure that the Council’s arrangements to respond to the Green Paper – Every Child Matters - were robust.

The Committee acknowledged the need to look at the bigger picture and to appreciate that change was needed. They debated a number of issues raised during the presentation including the Fostering and Adoption Service and the potential effects of the Empty Homes Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan on housing provision.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs L.O. Barnett for her presentation.

24. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme for the Committee. A copy of the current programme had been appended to the report.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.55 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

**UPDATE ON A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW ACTION PLAN
(SOCIAL SERVICES)****Report By: Head of Social Care (Children)****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on the Social Services aspects of a serious case review (Part 8) action plan.

Financial Implications

2. None identified

Background

3. The Head of Social Care (Children) in his role as Chair of the Herefordshire Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) presented the Serious Case Review report to the Committee on 25th October 2002.
4. The report included an Action Plan which had been approved by the ACPC in October 2002.
5. A progress report was last presented to the Committee in July, 2003.
6. It will be noted that all tasks either have been completed or will be completed as scheduled.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the contents of the progress of Social Services part of the Serious Case Review action plan be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report on a Serious Case Review, October 2002

Serious Case Review
(M.E. Action Plan October 2002)

No	Recommendation	Objective	Actions Required	By when	By whom	Outcome
	ALL AGENCIES					
6	<i>Full family histories should be taken and regularly updated; and these are to include a family structure (including past partners and children), dates of birth and addresses</i>	To ascertain current practice of agencies represented on ACPC To identify any recommendations for change to ACPC	Complete SSD position statement Report recommendations to ACPC	June 2003 October 2003	SM SM	Completed July 2003 Completed July 2003
	CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES					
7	<i>A Child Protection Conference should normally be convened at the point of a Looked After child returning home when the reasons for the accommodation are child protection issues. Any exceptions should require inter-agency agreement through a Planning and Review Officer.</i>	To improve planning process for children returned to the care of their parents	Issue interim guidance to social work teams and planning/review unit. Incorporate into fully revised Child Protection procedures Publish and disseminate procedures to SSD staff	With immediate effect March 2003 April 2003	SM SM/LM SM/LM	Guidance issued September 2002 Published July 2003 Published July 2003
8	<i>The General Practitioners of all</i>	Clarify conference	Issue interim	With	SM	Guidance

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	family members should be invited to and receive the minutes of Child Protection Conferences.	membership	guidance to planning/review unit	immediate effect	ACPC	issued September 2002 Protocol amended
10	<p>The decision to de-register or not to register a Looked After Child should only be taken if their legal status is secure and they are not having any unsupervised contact.</p> <p>NB This recommendation amended by ACPC January 2003 to the following:</p> <p>Where a child on the register also becomes Looked After and where there are provisions for unsupervised contact, then a conference should consider carefully whether adequate safeguards are in place to enable deregistration of the child</p>	To ensure consistency of inter-agency practice with children on the Child Protection Register who are also Looked After	Amend existing protocol	October 2002	ACPC	Protocol amended
			Issue interim guidance to planning/review unit and social work teams	With immediate effect	SM	Guidance issued January 2003
			Amend existing protocol	June 2003	ACPC	<i>Revised protocol issued July 2003</i>
			Issue amended protocol	June 2003	SM/GS	
SOCIAL SERVICES						
20 (1)	Team Managers should not hold cases, other than in temporary circumstances if covering sickness (4 weeks maximum).	To assure case work accountability	Identify and manage unallocated cases	Continuing	SM /operational managers	Overseen by fortnightly Performance Improvement Group since

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	<i>workers who are unavailable.</i>		report on service pressures to ACPC	continuing	SM/HL/ operational managers	As 21 above
22	<i>Team Managers should draw to the attention of Senior Managers any significant resource shortfalls which impact on the allocation of registered or statutory cases.</i>	As recommendation 21	As recommendation 21			
23	<i>Current Social Services procedures require that the Service Manager be consulted on initiating Care Proceedings and applying for a Care Order. It is recommended that the decision to withdraw proceedings should also require Service Manager approval. It is also recommended that in these circumstances a written Children's Plan should be prepared for the Court.</i>	To ensure consistency of decision making across the service	Issue interim guidance to social work teams Incorporate within fully revised Child Protection procedures Publish procedures and disseminate to SSD staff	With immediate effect March 2003 April 2003	SM SM/LM SM/LM	Guidance issued September 2002 <i>Completed and published July 2003</i> <i>Completed and published July 2003</i>
24	<i>In the light of the findings of this Review that (i) Placement with Parent regulations were not adhered to; (ii) that the Looked After Children Review was significantly late; and (iii) that the Statutory Medical examination did not take place, it is recommended that Social Services ensure that adequate systems are in place to monitor adherence to all these requirements. A current audit of these categories of children/cases is suggested in</i>	Ensure adherence to and compliance with procedures for Looked After children.	Revise, publish and disseminate Looked After procedures to SSD staff Monitor performance of Looked After reviews Undertake audit of Looked After children placed with	Summer 2002 Continuing April 2003	AS SM/Planning & Review unit SM	Completed Summer 2002 High level performance maintained since Spring 2002 <i>Completed January 2003</i>

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	<i>order to satisfy the Department and the ACPC that standards are being met; a historical audit of cases/children from 1999 – 2001 (i.e. the period under review) may also need to be considered.</i>		parents between 1998-2001	April 2003	SM	<i>Report to Head of Service/ACPC April 2003</i>
25	<i>Social Services' files should identify clearly who is holding case responsibility.</i>	To assure case work accountability	Provide summary report to DMT/ACPC on key audit findings Incorporate within new procedures for professional responsibility in case recording Audit adherence to new procedures	April 2003 April 2004	SM/SH/LH SM/Planning & Review unit	<i>Case Recording and Records and Management Policy published May 2003</i>
26	<i>The supervision of Team Managers should be ensured in order to monitor the quality/quantity of their work.</i>	To enable consistent and effective evaluation of workload pressures	Implement revised supervision policy Review existing standards in the light of any amendments arising from 20(2) above	December 2002 April 2003	SM/JD/CC SM/JD/HL	<i>Implemented December 2002</i> <i>Supervision Policy re issued July 2003 within children's Services Procedures</i>
27	<i>Social Services are recommended to ensure that all managers and social workers know and understand legal, regulatory and procedural requirements surrounding Looked After and accommodated children.</i>	To assure best practice and compliance with regulatory framework	Revise, publish and disseminate procedures Provide for at least one substantial audit of Looked After children procedures within annual business plan of planning & review unit	Summer 2002 Continuing	AS SM/planning & review unit	Completed 2002 Second audit on care planning for pre-school Looked After children scheduled Autumn 2003

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			Provide schedule of annual audit commitment to ACPC	April 2003 (and yearly thereafter)	SM/LM	Reported to ACPC April 2003 (Audit and Evaluation Business Plan)
			Provide annual report to ACPC on key audit findings for Looked After children	April 2004 (and yearly thereafter)	SM/LM	

KEY: -

- SM** Steve Merrell, Children's Services Manager (Operations)
- JD** Jon Dudley, Children's Services Manager (Resources)
- LM** Linda Maden, Planning and Review Manager
- GS** Gaye Sheridan, Development and Training Officer Herefordshire ACPC
- HL** Henry Lewis, Head of Social Care (Children)
- AS** Adam Scott, Team Manager
- CC** Chris Cooke, Project manager
- SH** Sophie Hughes, Project Manager

GREEN PAPER: EVERY CHILD MATTERS**Report By: Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider commenting on the Green Paper: Every Child Matters.

Background

2. The Green Paper: Every Child Matters sets out the Government's proposals for reforming the delivery of services for children, young people and families.
3. The Green Paper was produced in response to the findings of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry conducted by Lord Laming.
3. A copy of the summary of the Green paper is appended. Comments have been invited by 1st December 2003.
4. The Committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to express any views which the Executive can then take into consideration when preparing its response.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee considers whether it wishes to comment on the Green Paper.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None



Every child matters summary

Foreword by the Prime Minister



For most parents, our children are everything to us: our hopes, our ambitions, our future. Our children are cherished and loved.

But sadly, some children are not so fortunate. Some children's lives are different. Dreadfully different. Instead of the joy, warmth and security of normal family life, these children's lives are filled with risk, fear, and danger: and from what most of us would regard as the worst

possible source – from the people closest to them.

Victoria Climbié was one of those children. At the hands of those entrusted with her care, she suffered appallingly and eventually died. Her case was a shocking example from a list of children terribly abused and mistreated. The names of the children involved, echoing down the years, are a standing shame to us all.

Every inquiry has brought forward proposals for change and improvement to the child protection system. There have been reforms. Things have got better for many. But the fact that a child like Victoria Climbié can still suffer almost unimaginable cruelty to the point of eventually losing her young life shows that things are still very far from right. More can and must be done.




Every child matters – Summary 1

Responding to the inquiry headed by Lord Laming into Victoria's death, we are proposing here a range of measures to reform and improve children's care – crucially, for the first time ever requiring local authorities to bring together in one place under one person services for children, and at the same time suggesting real changes in the way those we ask to do this work carry out their tasks on our and our children's behalf.

For children for whom action by the authorities has reduced the risk they face, we want to go further: we want to maximise the opportunities open to them – to improve their life chances, to change the odds in their favour. So in addition, this Green Paper puts forward ideas on a number of related issues, including parenting, fostering, young people's activities and youth justice. All these proposals are important to children's health and security.

Sadly, nothing can ever absolutely guarantee that no child will ever be at risk again from abuse and violence from within their own family. But we all desperately want to see people, practices and policies in place to make sure that the risk is as small as is humanly possible. I believe that the proposals we are putting forward here constitute a significant step towards that goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Blair". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Introduction

This is a summary of the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters*, which sets out the Government's proposals for reforming the delivery of services for children, young people and families. It builds on existing measures to ensure that we protect children at risk of harm and neglect from negative outcomes and support all children to develop their full potential. The Green Paper is available from The Stationery Office. Copies can be ordered by mail, telephone and fax from:

The Stationery Office
PO Box 29
Norwich
NR3 1GN

General enquiries: 0870 600 5522
Parliamentary Hotline 0845 7023474
Fax 0870 600 5533

It can be downloaded online at www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters

A children and young people's version of *Every Child Matters* is also available on the above website.

If you have any comments about the Green Paper please e-mail them to: Consultation1.CHILDRENSGP@dfes.gsi.gov.uk. The closing date for consultation is 1st December 2003.



Every child matters – Summary 3

Related publications

The Green Paper is published alongside *Keeping Children Safe*, a detailed response to the practice recommendations made by Lord Laming in his report of his inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié. Copies of this can also be purchased from The Stationery Office.

Two further related documents are also published on the same date, *Raising the Educational Attainment of Children in Care* – a report by the Social Exclusion Unit and *Youth Justice – The Next Steps*, which sets out more detailed proposals to build on recent youth justice reforms.

Copies of *Educational Attainment of Children in Care* can be purchased at the following address:

Social Exclusion Unit
7th Floor, Eland House
Bressendon Place
London SW1E 5DU

Or by calling 0207 944 8133. It can be downloaded at www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk.

Youth Justice – The Next Steps is available online at www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters

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Summary

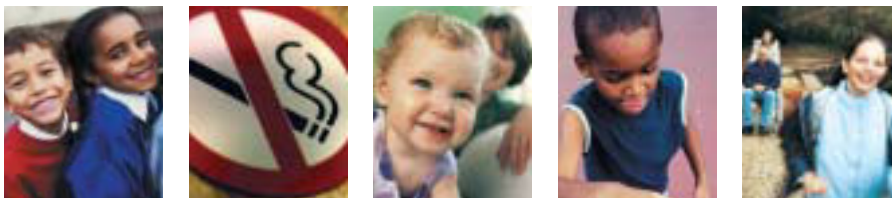
Past failings

1. The death of Victoria Climbié exposed shameful failings in our ability to protect the most vulnerable children. On twelve occasions, over ten months, chances to save Victoria's life were not taken. Social services, the police and the NHS failed, as Lord Laming's report into Victoria's death made clear, to do the basic things well to protect her.

2. From past inquiries into the deaths of Maria Colwell and Jasmine Beckford to recent cases such as Lauren Wright and Ainlee Walker, there are striking similarities which show some of the problems are of long standing. The common threads which led in each case to a failure to intervene early enough were poor co-ordination; a failure to share information; the absence of anyone with a strong sense of accountability; and frontline workers trying to cope with staff vacancies, poor management and a lack of effective training.

3. The most tragic manifestation of these problems is when we fail to protect children at risk of harm or neglect. But the problem of children falling through the cracks between different services goes much further. Too often children experience difficulties at home or at school, but receive too little help too late, once problems have reached crisis point.

4. We need to ensure we properly protect children at risk within a framework of universal services which support every child to develop their full potential and which aim to prevent negative outcomes. That is why this Green Paper addresses the needs of children at risk in the context of services we provide for all children.



5. As Lord Laming's recommendations made clear, child protection cannot be separated from policies to improve children's lives as a whole. We need to focus both on the universal services which every child uses, and on more targeted services for those with additional needs. The policies set out in the Green Paper are designed both to protect children and maximise their potential. It sets out a framework for services that cover children and young people from birth to 19 living in England¹. It aims to reduce the numbers of children who experience educational failure, engage in offending or anti-social behaviour, suffer from ill health, or become teenage parents.

Where we are now

6. Over the past few years, we have seen that progress is possible:

- in education, last year we saw our best ever results in all key stages
- there are 500,000 fewer children living in households with relative low income than in 1997
- since 1997 the reconviction rate for young offenders has reduced by 22 percent
- the Government's teenage pregnancy strategy has produced a ten percent reduction in conception rates among under 18 year olds since 1998
- many of the measures put in place now, including Sure Start and measures to tackle low income through welfare to work and tax credits, will only see their full dividends in years to come.

7. But there is still more to do. Truancy remains a persistent problem. There are still too many 16 to 18 year olds not in education or training, and the educational achievement of children in care remains far too low. On many fronts, including low income, the gap in achievement between different socio-economic classes, and the number of children who are the victims of crime, we need to do more to catch up with other countries.

8. Overall, this country is still one where life chances are unequal. This damages not only those children born into disadvantage, but our society as a whole. We all stand

6 Every child matters – Summary

to share the benefits of an economy and society with less educational failure, higher skills, less crime, and better health. We all share a duty to do everything we can to ensure every child has the chance to fulfil their potential.

Where we want to get to

9. Our aim is to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people.

10. When we consulted children, young people and families, they wanted the Government to set out a positive vision of the outcomes we want to achieve. The five outcomes which mattered most to children and young people were:

- **being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- **staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect
- **enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- **making a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- **economic well-being:** not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

11. The Government has built the foundations for improving these outcomes through Sure Start, raising school standards, and progress made towards eradicating child poverty. This Green Paper sets out our existing plans to build on these successes through:

- creating **Sure Start Children's Centres** in each of the 20 percent most deprived neighbourhoods. These combine nursery education, family support, employment advice, childcare and health services on one site

- promoting **full service extended schools** which are open beyond school hours to provide breakfast clubs and after-school clubs and childcare, and have health and social care support services on site
- increasing the focus on activities for children out of school through the creation of a **Young People's Fund with an initial budget of £200 million**
- increasing investment in **child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)** to deliver a ten percent increase in CAMHS capacity each year for the next three years. All areas are expected to put in place a comprehensive CAMHS by 2006
- improving **speech and language therapy**. The forthcoming National Service Framework for Children will set out proposals to improve services, including training para-professionals, supported by specialist staff
- tackling **homelessness**. By March 2004, no homeless family with children should be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, unless in a short term emergency
- **reforms to the youth justice system**. The Government intends to revise the Child Safety Order to make it more effective and build on the success of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme by using it more widely as an alternative to custody. We will also create a new range of community sentences and make greater use of a wider range of residential placements such as intensive fostering for young offenders, including for 10 and 11 year old persistent offenders.

Green Paper proposals

12. We are building on the progress already made by focusing action on four main areas:

- supporting parents and carers
- early intervention and effective protection
- accountability and integration – locally, regionally and nationally
- workforce reform.

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Supporting parents and carers

13. The Government intends to put supporting parents and carers at the heart of its approach to improving children's lives, where support is needed or wanted. To build additional capacity in this area, the Government has announced the creation of a Parenting Fund of £25 million over the next three years. We are consulting on a long term vision to improve parenting and family support through:

- **universal services** such as schools, health and social services and childcare, providing information and advice and engaging parents to support their child's development
- **targeted and specialist support** to parents of children requiring additional support
- **compulsory action** through Parenting Orders as a last resort where parents are condoning a child's truancy, anti-social behaviour or offending.

14. All children deserve the chance to grow up in a loving, secure family. Through the adoption modernisation programme, local authorities are already delivering significant increases in adoption of looked after children. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 will further strengthen this programme of reform. This Green Paper consults on measures to tackle the recruitment and retention challenges in foster care, and to ensure that foster carers have the skills and support they need to care for vulnerable children. The Government is seeking suggestions for radical and imaginative ways of encouraging people to become foster carers and ensuring they are valued and recognised.

Early intervention and effective protection

15. Some children will always require extra help because of the disadvantages they face. The key is to ensure children receive services at the first onset of problems, and to prevent any children slipping through the net. We will do this by:

- **improving information sharing** between agencies to ensure all local authorities have a list of children in their area, the services each child has had contact with, and the contact details of the relevant professionals who work with them. The Government will remove the legislative barriers to better

information sharing, and the technical barriers to electronic information sharing through developing a single unique identity number, and common data standards on the recording of information. We will expect every local authority to identify a lead official with responsibility for ensuring information is collected and shared

- **developing a common assessment framework** across services for children, covering special educational needs, Connexions, Youth Offending Teams, health, and social services. The aim is for basic information to follow the child to reduce duplication
- **introducing a lead professional.** Children known to more than one specialist agency should have a single named professional to take the lead on their case and be responsible for ensuring a coherent package of services to meet the individual child's needs
- **developing on the spot service delivery.** Professionals will be encouraged to work in multi-disciplinary teams based in and around schools and Children's Centres. They will provide a rapid response to the concerns of frontline teachers, childcare workers and others in universal services.

Accountability and integration – locally, regionally and nationally

16. We want to put children at the heart of our policies, and to organise services around their needs. Radical reform is needed to break down organisational boundaries. The Government's aim is that there should be one person in charge locally and nationally with the responsibility for improving children's lives. Key services for children should be integrated within a single organisational focus at both levels. To achieve this the Government will:

- legislate to create the post of **Director of Children's Services** accountable for local authority education and children's social services
- legislate to create a **lead council member for children**
- in the long term, integrate key services for children and young people under the Director of Children's Services as part of **Children's Trusts**. These bring together local authority education and children's social services, some

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children's health services, Connexions, and can include other services such as Youth Offending Teams. Children's Trusts will normally be part of the local authority and will report to local elected members

- require local authorities to work closely with public, private and voluntary organisations to improve outcomes for children. Local authorities will be given flexibility over how this partnership working is undertaken
- in relation to child protection, require the creation of **Local Safeguarding Children Boards** as the statutory successors to Area Child Protection Committees.

17. To support local integration, the Government has created a new **Minister for Children, Young People and Families** in the Department for Education and Skills to co-ordinate policies across Government. The Government has brought responsibility for children's social services, family policy, teenage pregnancy, family law, and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) into DfES.

18. The Government will encourage joining up locally by:

- ensuring children are a priority across services. Local bodies such as the police and health organisations will, subject to consultation, have a new duty to safeguard children, promote their well-being and work together through these partnership arrangements. We intend to give local authorities a duty to promote the educational achievement of children in care
- setting out clear practice standards expected of each agency in relation to children
- rationalising performance targets, plans, funding streams, financial accountability and indicators
- creating an integrated inspection framework for children's services. Ofsted will take the lead in bringing together joint inspection teams. This will ensure services are judged on how well they work together

- creating an improvement and intervention function to drive up performance by sharing effective practice, and intervening where services are failing.

19. Real service improvement is only attainable through involving children and young people and listening to their views. This Green Paper sets out proposals for a new **Children’s Commissioner** to act as an independent champion for children, particularly those suffering disadvantage. The Commissioner will report annually to Parliament through the Secretary of State.

Workforce reform

20. The people who work with children are central to keeping them safe and helping them get the most out of life. We owe a debt of gratitude for the difficult and challenging work that they perform. We want to value the specific skills that people from different professional backgrounds bring, and we also want to break down the professional barriers that inhibit joint working, and tackle recruitment and retention problems. Our goal must be to make working with children an attractive, high status career, and to develop a more skilled and flexible workforce. Over time, and subject to consultation and resources, the Government would like to develop a package of measures to deliver this:

- a workforce reform strategy to improve the skills and effectiveness of the children’s workforce developed in partnership with local employers and staff. This will review rewards, incentives and relativities across children’s practice with the aim of moving towards a framework that fairly rewards skills and responsibilities, and ensures effective incentives for good practitioners to stay on the front line
- a high profile recruitment campaign for entry into the children’s workforce
- a comprehensive workload survey to address bureaucracy, and identify ways of freeing up time for face to face work with children and families
- more flexible and attractive training routes into social work, including expanding work based training routes for graduates
- common occupational standards across children’s practice linked to modular qualifications which allow workers to move between jobs more easily

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- a common core of training for those who work solely with children and families and those who have wider roles (such as GPs and the police) to help secure a consistent response to children's and families' needs and a better understanding of professional roles
- the Chief Nursing Officer will undertake a review of the contribution that health visitors and other nurses and midwives can make for children at risk
- a leadership development programme to foster high calibre leadership.

21. The development and delivery of workforce proposals will be taken forward through two new bodies. A **Children's Workforce Unit**, based in the Department for Education and Skills, will develop a pay and workforce strategy for those who work with children. The Children's Workforce Unit will work with the relevant employers, staff and Government Departments to establish a **Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Children and Young People's Services** to deliver key parts of the strategy.

Next steps

22. The Government would like to hear your views on the framework set out in the Green Paper. The paper contains specific questions on which views are sought – we have not reproduced these here as they need to be read within the context of the full paper. You can, however, view them online at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters>

23. The consultation on *Every Child Matters* will run until 1st December 2003. A response form is available from the downloads section on the above website. Responses should be e-mailed to Consultation1.CHILDRENSGP@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

24. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the Government intends to introduce legislation as soon as Parliamentary time allows.ⁱⁱ

i The Green Paper covers all children in England. The policies and proposals it contains apply to England only except where they relate to non-devolved responsibilities, such as Home Office services, where they apply equally to Wales. Both the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Executive have expressed keen interest in and closely followed the development of the Green Paper and they will each consider which parts of the approach being adopted in England they will seek to adopt respectively.

ii A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) to accompany the proposals contained in the Green Paper has been prepared and is available on the DfES website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters In addition to commenting on the Green Paper proposals, you may wish to comment on the contents of the RIA, which will be revised during the course of the consultation to take account of up-to-date information.

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

DfES Publications
PO Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham NG15 0DJ
Tel: 0845 6022260
Fax: 0845 6033360
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BETTER CARE HIGHER STANDARDS ANNUAL USERS REPORT

Report By: Head Of Adult Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To report the results of the third Better Care Higher Standards Annual Users Survey.

Financial Implications

2. None identified.

Background

3. On 1st July 2000 Herefordshire launched its first joint Better Care Higher Standards Charter, required by the Department of Health (DoH), covering key standards of service in Health, Social Care and Housing Services. The Charter applies to adults over 18 years old, having long term care needs.
4. The DoH requires authorities to submit an annual report, setting out how well they have performed against the standards published locally. Each authority collects the data for its own performance, which is collated in a single report (see Appendix 1 and supporting annexes).
5. The report to this Committee focuses on the data covering housing and social care, although the main report to the DoH (Appendix 1) contains information on all the authorities involved in Better Care. The local Health Trusts approve separately the sections of the report covering their service performance. This Committee is thus being asked to examine the contents of the report applying to the Council and note information being provided by the other Authorities.
6. The full results are set out in detail in the attached Annual Report 2002-2003 (Appendix 1) and its own two annexes.
7. Results reported in the section on Headline Results in the Annual Report include:-

iii	111 of 122 (91%) respondents considered that they received help from social services quickly after a decision was made (74% 2001-2)
iv	108 of 119 (91%) respondents thought that the help they received from social services was excellent or good (73% 2001-2) with another 5 people thinking the help they received was fair (total thus 95% excellent to fair for 2002-3; 87% 2001-2)

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Leslie Libetta, Project Manager - Adults on 01432 260729

v	72 of 123 people were given all, and another 44 given some of the help or services they thought they needed. This amounts to 116 of 123 in total (94%) (88% in 2000-1)
vi	52 of 69 (75%) people needing equipment for daily living received necessary equipment within three weeks (63% 2001-2)

8. For Social Care and Strategic Housing the results for 2002-3 show a maintained or improved performance for every standard for which it is responsible. This is a commendable result. In particular the standard for approving Disabled Facilities Grants continues at 100% within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's target time, and by a considerable margin.
9. Whilst performance for all standards has improved, some areas in Social Care still allow for further improvement, and remedial work is ongoing especially on Standards linked to Performance Indicators.
10. It should be noted that performance reports based on different data sets and emanating from different sources can give different pictures of local performance. Thus nationally reported Performance Indicators, based on the statistical Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) data, can suggest different levels of performance compared with local data.
11. It is impossible to provide a categorical explanation of differences in reported performance. However it is worth noting that the local data is essentially the subjective view of service users of their direct service provision experience, whilst the PAF statistics are a reflection of the data recorded in and collated from an electronic system, which results can thus only reflect the volume of data entered onto the system. Great energy is being expended in the Directorate to improve data entry, to ensure published statistics reflect the full volume of work undertaken by staff.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the contents of Better Care Higher Standards Annual report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- LAC(2001)6



BETTER CARE HIGHER STANDARDS

ANNUAL USERS AND CARERS REPORT

2002-2003



DRAFT



Better Care Higher Standards

Annual Users & Carers Experience Report – 2002-2003

Executive Summary

- I. This is the third joint Annual Better Care Higher Standards (BCHS) report, for people with long term care needs.
- II. It again reaffirms the commitment to Better Care Higher Standards by Strategic Housing, Social Care and local Health bodies.
- III. It reports user and carer experiences across around 32 key areas of service delivery covering the three sectors of service provision.
- IV. To capture data for social care service users, 241 questionnaires were sent out in February 2003 and 124 were returned - a 51% response rate - (252 & 162 (64%) in 2001-2)
- V. Housing, the Acute Trust and the PCT have individual systems to collect and report performance data.
- VI. This year's data has been compared with data from 2001-2 wherever comparative data exists. Within Social Care there is comparative data for seventeen Standards. All show improved performance, with some quite significantly improved; e.g. provision of information shows a doubling of measured performance year on year. This local performance data needs to be read in conjunction with nationally reported performance using central Department of Health data, and demonstrates that data drawn from different samples can give rise to varying results for identical performance areas.
- VII. Housing performance against its numerical standard for decisions on Disabled Facilities Grants shows it has maintained performance at 100% within the target time of 4 months.
- VIII. Performance in acute health trusts has been sustained at the high level reported last year. Positive experience was reported against all standards by between 78 and 95% of patients (72-100% 2001-2).
- IX. The PCT are currently establishing an annual patient survey that will come into effect next year. The survey will include the collection of data for BCHS purposes. Therefore for this year only no data is being report for the PCT against their BCHS targets.

User and Carer Experience Monitoring

In past years the DoH's Personal Social Service User Annual Survey was used to collect social care Better Care Higher Standards performance data. This year it changed its focus to elderly home care. To collect the Better Care data a separate survey is now conducted. The other partners to the Better Care Charter (the PCT, Acute Trust and Housing) use their own method to measure their performance annually. This report therefore, as in previous years, presents individual sets of data where provided from the respective partners. The headline results are covered in the following sections, with the full results set out where appropriate in annexes.

1 Social Care User Survey

Headline Results

- i. 241 questionnaires were sent out in February 2003 and 124 were returned - a 51% response rate - (252 & 162 (64%) in 2001-2). The sample consisted of all new adult clients who received an initial assessment and subsequent service between October and December 2002.
- ii. There were seventeen performance questions and two additional information questions contained in the questionnaire. Headline results are now reported briefly here. The full results are contained in Annex 1. We follow the DoH methodology of discounting 'blank' and 'not applicable' responses in calculating performance figures.
- iii. 111 of 122 (91%) respondents considered that they received help from social services quickly after a decision was made (74% 2001-2)
- iv. 108 of 119 (91%) respondents thought that the help they received from social services was excellent or good (73% 2001-2) with another 5 people thinking the help they received was fair (total thus 95% excellent to fair for 2002-3; 87% 2001-2)
- v. 72 of 123 people were given all, and another 44 given some of the help or services they thought they needed. This amounts to 116 of 123 in total (94%) (88% in 2000-1)
- vi. 52 of 69 (75%) people needing equipment for daily living received necessary equipment within three weeks (63% 2001-2)
- vii. Last year we identified particular concern over three results. These were copy of care plan (29%), initial reviews (43%), and provision of complaints information (18%). We have improved performance in all these areas, which now stand at 32%, 46% and 40% respectively. This is only an interim position, since we are working to improve performance yet further, especially in the provision of care plans, over the remainder of 2003-4.
- viii. In summary, an improvement in performance for every social care standard is a significant achievement for staff. The performance for some standards has now reached a very high level and the task will be to sustain performance over the coming year. However the Directorate is not complacent and there is room for improvement in a number of standards. Moreover and data collected through different mechanisms for national performance tables can give different pictures of performance. Therefore it is possible to read different assessment of performance in Herefordshire from different sources of data. However there is targeted work currently being directed towards a number of key Performance Indicators over the rest of the year, aimed at improving performance in next year's national annual PI report .

2 Housing User Survey

This is the third year that data has been collected and reported on the key Housing Charter Standard for the time lapse between the receipt of a full application for a Disabled Facilities Grant and its approval. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister rules allows a maximum of six months to provide a written decision. Herefordshire works to a local standard of 4 months.

Between May 2002 and April 2003 100% full applications received were processed within 4 months (100% 2001-2) . Actual times taken were in fact 100% completed with 3 weeks (with an approximate average per written application of 2.1 weeks) Actual performance for the year averaged a highly commendable 1.8 weeks and reflects the very high standard of service provided in Herefordshire.

A target of seven days for visits to discuss community alarms was included in the 2001-2 Charter. However as reported last year, the target worked to is actually 10 days, to reflect and utilise existing data systems. Using the information available for this standard (i.e. 10 days) it shows that the standard was met in 83% of cases (60% 2001-2). This represents a significant improvement in performance year on year.

3 Acute Health Care – leaving hospital

The Patient Advice and Liaison Officer questioned 20 patients in total: 10 patients from a cross section of wards, including both elective and emergency admissions, about their experience against the Charter Standards applying to leaving hospital. A further 10 patients completed questionnaires whilst in the discharge lounge waiting to go home. The patients were randomly chosen and included 'simple' discharges and more complex discharges when the Discharge Liaison Team had also been involved. In summary, the performance ranged from 95% to 78%, which represents good to excellent performance. (The full results can be found at Annex 2).

Action Plans

Social Care

The new Charter, issued earlier this year, has been updated where necessary to reflect changed local and national priorities across Health, Housing and Social Care. The Charter is designed to run for a period of 3 years, thus avoiding the need for a new charter to be developed every year. Many of the standards in the previous charter have remained in tact, and thus provide comparative data to enable performance monitoring. However it is recognised that Government will be introducing new target Performance Indicators over the coming years (e.g. times for assessments as well as provision of equipment and care packages). Thus whilst the Charter itself will not be extensively rewritten each year, individual standards will change, or the Charter Standards will have to be added to.

Housing

The transfer of the Council's housing stock was completed in 2002. The nature of the Charter's standards relating to housing have thus changed, with the Strategic Housing Authority setting standards that are mainly delivered by housing providers.

Acute Health Care

The Standards to which Hereford Hospitals Trust will be working to in the new Charter are continued from 2001-2. A new Patient Advice and Liaison service officer is now in post. The undertaking of the annual collection of Better Care performance data is now established as part of that officer's work.

Principles of Standards Setting

The Principles have been continued from previous years, thus the following final section is mainly reproduced from last year's report.

The Principles that follow were first established three years ago, but continue to be the principles used in deciding appropriate Charter standards. In practice, we are moving to a position where the standards become 'settled' and do not change year to year. There is however some fine-tuning still to do, but we anticipate that many of the 2003-5 standards will be

carried over from year to year. Inevitably, the standards will never become absolutely fixed, since new policy requirements will bring new issues that we will wish to monitor. The Principles for standard setting are:-

- The Standards should focus on the issues that are most important for the user and carer, as recommended by the Better Care steering group in previous years. However new Standards required by central Government will require occasional amendments or additions.
- Where possible they should be measurable using routinely collected data, through existing information systems.
- Where data is not routinely collected, standards should be sampled through annual surveys to measure user and carer experiences. Surveys of users and carer views will exploit existing survey vehicles whenever possible, such as the PSS User survey, PALS survey work and patient surveys.
- Where possible, standards will be based on existing working processes and protocols, to facilitate training and ensure Charter standards are integrated into key working practices.

These Principles ensure that they have real value for users and carers, as well as helping successful implementation by front line staff. Using these principles will also ensure that the authorities can monitor their performance effectively.

Leslie Libetta
Project Manager – Adults
lilibetta@herefordshire.gov.uk

October 2003

PSS USER SURVEY 2002-3 RESULTS

Annex 1

(Sent = 241; Returned = 124)

Compulsory Questions

	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/3	2001/2 %
1) Did Social Services staff take note of any important matters relating to your race, culture or religion?	23	30	59	8		120	37.70%	31.50%
2) Did you get the help quickly after a decision was made to provide services?	111	8	3	Not applicable		122	90.98%	74.00%

Finding out about Social Services and other local services

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
3) Before you started getting services, did you see, or have any information (e.g.. A leaflet or poster) about the sorts of services that social services could provide?	53	62	5	Not applicable		120	44.17%	24.20%

	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
4) Did we provide information on how to get in touch with organisations in your area that give independent advice or advocacy services?	63	42		15		120	52.50%	46.60%

	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
5) If requested did we provide information or advice on how to contact other services or organisations?	68	20	21	9		118	70.10%	54.80%

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Assessing your needs

	Yes, all	Yes, some	None	Don't know	Not Applicable	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
6) Were you given the help or services that you thought you needed?	72	44	6	1		123	94.31%	88.00%

	Yes	No	Don't know	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
7) Did we ask for your written consent during your assessment to share some of the information you provided?	34	49	31		114	29.82%	16%

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
8) Did we give you a typed copy, or other version, of your assessment?	46	56	12			114	40.35%	31.30%

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
9) Did we provide you with a clear statement of what you were expected to pay once your financial position was known?	57	37	17			111	51.35%	45.20%

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
10) After you agreed and signed your care plan did we give you a copy?	35	51	22			108	32.41%	29.30%

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
11) Since receiving help, have you been asked how things are working out or whether you would like anything changed?	52	54	6			112	46.43%	43.20%

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
12) If applicable to your situation did we tell you about provisions of services through Direct Payments?	30	23	17	45		115	42.86%	26.20%

Equipment and Services

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
13) Did we provide all items of equipment for daily living agreed as necessary, within three weeks of your assessment being completed?	52	8	9	49		118	75.36%	62.80%

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
14) If you live, or are going to live, in a care home have we ensured your care plan identifies any extra services that you or your family have to pay for?	3	6	3	106		118	25.00%	9.10%

Complaints

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
15) Were you told how to complain about the services if you wanted to?	35	47	5	30		117	40.23%	18.20%

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable	(blank)	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/02 %
16) If you have made a complaint, did it get dealt with to your satisfaction?	7	8	2	88		105	41.18%	36.40%

Summary

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Grand Total	2002/03 %	2001/2 %
17) Overall, what do you think of the help you received from Social Services?	61	47	5	1	5	119	90.76% ex&good 94.96% ex/gd/fair	73.3% ex&good 87.3% ex/gd/fair

Ethnicity

	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese	Any other ethnic group	Grand Total
To which of these groups do you consider you belong?	116						116

100.00%

Filling in the form

	No	My Social Worker	A relative	A neighbour	A friend	Other	Grand Total
Was this form completed on your behalf? If yes, who completed your form?	44	4	26	0	3	6	83
	53.01%	4.82%	31.33%	0.00%	3.61%	7.23%	92.77%

NOTE: N/As & Blanks not used to calculate percentages

Hereford Hospitals Trust Better Care Higher Standards Survey Results

Number Surveyed - 20

Question	WARD										Total	
	L1	T1	Le1	Le2	M1	L2	M2	T2	F1	W1		
Involvement in decisions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Medicines Explained	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Care after hospital discussed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Discussed home situation	✓	✓	✓	✓	NO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Equipment arranged	✓	✓	N/A	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	7
Referral to Social Worker	✓	✓	N/A	✓	N/A	✓	N/A	✓	N/A	✓	✓	6

DISCHARGE LOUNGE

Question	DISCHARGE LOUNGE										Total	
	DL1	DL2	DL3	DL4	DL5	DL6	DL7	DL8	DL9	DL10		
Involvement in decisions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓	9
Medicines Explained	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	N/A	✓	8
Care after hospital discussed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Discussed home situation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Equipment arranged	N/A	✓	✓	✓	NO	✓	✓	N/A	✓	NO	✓	6
Referral to Social Worker	N/A	NO	✓	✓	NO	✓	✓	N/A	✓	NO	✓	5

Summary Totals

Question	Wards	Discharge Lounge	No. Surveyed	Total	% positive
Involvement in decisions	10	10	20	19	95
Medicines Explained	9	8	19	18	94.7
Care after hospital discussed	9	10	20	19	95.0
Discussed home situation	9	10	20	19	95.0
Equipment arranged *	7	6	15	13	86.7
Referral to Social Worker *	6	5	14	11	78.0

* Where applicable

HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995

Report By: Head of Strategic Housing Services

Wards Affected

County Wide

Purpose

1. To consider the seventh annual progress report on the Home Energy Conservation Act project.
2. The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) puts a duty on Energy Conservation Authorities to draw up strategies to improve energy efficiency in all housing and to report annually on progress made in implementing them. This report introduces the seventh annual progress report and outlines Herefordshire's progress against the baseline energy consumption in April 1996. The progress report is enclosed separately for Members of the Committee and is available to the public on request.

Financial Implications

3. None within this report, as it is for information purposes only.

Background

4. This report outlines measures and activities undertaken within the reporting period, which have had a direct saving on domestic energy consumption and a reduction of greenhouse gases associated by the burning of fossil fuels. The report was submitted to the Government Office for the West Midlands on the 29th of September 2003.
5. In 1996, the District Councils of Herefordshire pledged to help reduce domestic energy consumption by 30% over a 15-year period. In year seven we can report that there has been an overall improvement of 11.18% since the baseline taken in 1996.
6. Examples of projects found within this report are as follows:

Herefordshire Council Special Energy Efficiency Scheme (SEES)

Private Sector Housing, Special Energy Efficiency Scheme was in its fourth year up to this reporting period and has provided energy efficiency grants to 5146 properties to a value of approximately 1.55 million pounds between April 1999 and March 2002. Within this reporting period measures have been installed to 1815 properties. Typically measures have included loft & cavity wall insulation, draught proofing window & doors, 'A' rated condensing boilers, heating controls, and hot water tank jackets. This year also included solar hot water heating and external wall insulation. The Local Authority has set up a partnership with Scottishpower who have pledged £500k towards this scheme over the next three financial years with Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) funding.

No & Low Carbon Technologies for Mobile Homes in Rural England and Wales

On 10/02/03, the Authority was successful in obtaining funding for a feasibility study from the Energy Savings Trust (EST) for their 'Innovation Programme'.

The project entitled 'No & Low Carbon Technologies for Mobile Homes in Rural England and Wales' was a successful application to the Energy Savings Trust and has received 70% grant funding of £10,000 for a feasibility study to investigate the potential for mobile homes to incorporate energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.

The project was in competition with 32 other applications from across the country, and was one of only 18 successful projects to be chosen.

The project partners include our neighbouring Authority in Wales, Powys County Council, two Energy Agencies and two Energy Efficiency Advice Centres.

The project, which is targeted on 'hard-to-heat' homes situated off the gas main network, is looking at mobile home parks and tying this in with energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies such as ground source heat pumps, wind turbines, solar hot water heaters, photovoltaics, and the sale and purchase of green electricity.

The feasibility study has been a success with EST and therefore on 31st of October 2003, the partnership was able to submit its bid to EST for the Innovation Programme Implementation fund (up to £90,000).

If successful, this bid would pay for management of the project over two years. The scheme is looking at six mobile home parks across Herefordshire and Powys, targeting up to 180 homes to a works value of over one million pounds. Pending the success of this bid the Partnership will also apply for the DTI, Clear-Skies Community Fund (up to £100,000) for capital measures.

Development of Computer Software for Primary Schools for Key Stage Two of the National Curriculum

A project in partnership with the software company, MVM Ltd, has been commissioned to develop software for Primary Schools and Key Stage Two pupils (7 to 11 years of age). This is looking at energy efficiency in the home, which is part of the National Curriculum under the subject heading of Sustainability. The Authority has secured 'fi-School' primary schools of Herefordshire. Our Energy Efficiency Advice Centre will deliver the fifty percent of the funding from the energy supplier Npower (£5000) for the development of this programme. The remaining fifty percent of the funding will come from the software company themselves. The software is due to be ready in December 2003 where it will be piloted next year in the 20 'Eco training.

Recommendation

THAT the latest position of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 progress report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, Herefordshire Councils Seventh Progress Report from the 1st April 2002 to March 31st 2003

ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2002-2003**Report By: Children's Service Manager (Resources)****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

1. To present to the Committee Herefordshire's Adoption Service Report.

Financial Implications

2. No financial implications.

Background

3. Adoption is one of the ways that children who have been cared for by the Authority receive permanent decisions on where they live.
4. The attached report (Appendix 1) outlines the activity last year in this important area. The pressure on placements and the new adoption legislation coming into force again highlights the importance of these services for making permanent decisions for children.
5. There have been staffing pressures over the last year but this has not reduced the striving for the highest standards in the whole process of preparing children for adoption as well as matching children with potential adopters who may live many miles from Herefordshire.

RECOMMENDATION**THAT the annual report for 2002/03 be received and noted.****BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ADOPTION AGENCY

REVIEW FROM THE SECOND YEAR OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE FROM 1ST APRIL 2002 – 31ST MARCH 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

This is a report of the second year of Herefordshire as a stand-alone Adoption Agency since its final split with Worcestershire in April 2001.

During this year we used LPSA funding to employ a play therapist, Sheren Brealey, to prepare and support the children through the move to adoption.

Sheren then took up her post in September 2002.

Many of the changes in the service which were evident in the first year have continued, despite the lower number of children being presented to the Adoption Permanency Panel –

- It is still inadvisable to place Herefordshire children in the county for confidentiality reasons (and sometimes for security as well).
- The high use of inter-agency placements (90%) for Herefordshire children has continued.
- The greatest challenge has been the need to find children suitable for our approved adopter, who cannot take children from Herefordshire – ‘children finding’.
- The increase in the workload has continued to rise –
 - The children needing families present more challenges because they are more damaged.
 - The work involved in responding to adverts for children in ‘Be My Parent’.
 - Specific requirements in finding the right family.

II. REVIEW OF RESOURCES

1. Category of Adoptive Applicants

There are no longer specific categories of adopters. Prospective applicants are considered on the basis of what they can offer realistically and if this meets the needs of the children who require adoptive families. The regional and national need must be considered even if this is different from the local requirements, as we have to offer our resources to other authorities.

Applicants are prioritised on this basis.

There are still, however, criteria for those who wish to be considered for very young children (except or children with complex needs).

- i. Applicants must be childless because they are unable to have their own children.
- ii. Their fertility investigations must be complete and be some indication that they have come to terms with their infertility sufficiently to move towards

adoption in a positive manner (while acknowledging that the loss will revive in the future).

- iii. Preference for those who are married.
- iv. Together at least three years.

For other applicants if there are fertility issues then ii still applies (often secondary infertility).

All applicants must be in a stable relationship of at least three years.

The main area of change is that we will consider adoptive applicants from outside the Herefordshire border, providing the distance does not make an assessment impractical. Priority will be given to Herefordshire's need, as these applicants could become resources for our children.

2. **Adoptive Applicants approved 1st April 2002 – 31st March 2003.**

Between April 2002 and 31st March 2003, **10**, Adoptive Applicants have been approved by the Herefordshire Adoption Permanency Panel.

This number continues to be lower than before the split from Worcestershire. It would appear that the significant increase in inter-agency work finding families, the 'children-finding' for adopters and the introduction of the competency element in assessments have been factors in this decrease.

Factors effecting the decrease

- i. Increase in inter-agency work, which is time-intensive.
- ii. The same effort is invested in finding children for our families – 'children-finding'.
- iii. Competency element in assessments and increase in statutory checks and the time involved in CRB.
- iv. There appears to be an increase in the number of applicants who have to be counselled out of adoption. Despite the training, a significant number do not get the message that the children needing families are more difficult and that there are no 'straight-forward' babies.
- v. This situation is complicated by our adopters need to have 'added extra' if they are to be chosen by other authorities.

Year	No.
1999/2000	11
2000/2001	13
2001/2002	9
2002/2003	10

These resources break down as follows –

1 st time adopters	7
2 nd Placement adopters	2
Applicants for specific child	1
Applicants for disabled children	0
Inter-County Applicants	0

Of the first time adopters, approval was for the following –

Number accepted for 2 children	4
Number accepted for 1 child only	3

Number who would accept either sex	6
Preference that one of a pair is a girl	1
Preference for a boy	2

The age-range was again very diverse, which illustrates the attempt at precision when looking at the age of children applicants can consider -

Age	No.	Age	No.
0 – 2 years	3	3.5 – 5.5 years	1
0 – 4 years	0	3 – 7 years	1
0 – 5 years	1	2 – 8 years	1
0 – 6 years	1		
0 – 8 years	1		

One applicant was for a specific child of 7 years, which disrupted during introductions.

Of the 3 adopters who were approved for 1 child 0 – 2 years, 2 were for second placements when the age and needs of the first child restricted what the applicants could consider.

Further information –

- All applicants are of British/white heritage.
- All are heterosexual and all but one comprised a married couple

3. **Herefordshire Applicants who have had a child placed in the year.**

In this period **6** adoptive couples had children placed. This is an improvement on the first year but the continued low level of placements reflects the difficulty of placing Herefordshire children and the increasing complexity of finding the right children for our adopters. However, the increase reflects a different and more pro-active approach to 'children-finding'.

- Two couples had single Herefordshire children who were 2nd placements. Both couples lived either on the border or just outside.
- Four couples had placements from within the Consortium, involving 6 children.

4. **Current Resources – Approved Adopters Waiting for a Placement at 1st April 2003.**

On April 1st 2003, there were **9** potential adoptive families waiting for children.

1 st time applicants	9
2 nd placement applicants	0
Child over 3 years (1 child)	6
Applicants approved for 2	3
Applicants 'on hold'	0

1st Time Approved Adopters for children under 3 years

Total = 3 applicant

- One couple waiting since 1996; there have been several potential matches, the most suitable they turned down.

- Single applicant is disabled and waiting for a child with similar disability.
- One couple have a birth child with Fragile X Syndrome and there has been little interest in them.

2nd Placement Approved Adopters

Total = 6

- **Three couples** are approved for 2 children and have been approached about several potential matches, none of which has yet materialised.
- One of these couples have changes circumstances, (moved to live above their pub), which has slowed down the task.
- **Three couples** are experienced parents but –
- Of those, one cannot consider a child where there is no adoption allowance because of very recent financial problems brought about by the ‘foot and mouth’ epidemic. Several Authorities have been interested in them but have not yet gone beyond the ‘interest’ stage.
- Another couple have a narrow age-range of 2years (3.5 – 5.5).
- The third couple already have 3 sons and want to extend their family by adoption.

Approved Adopters ‘on hold’

Total = 0

Single Parent Adopters

- We have **one** single parent adopter, offering a placement to a child with a specific disability – a child with restricted growth. She is now available, having waited until she was in an adapted house, which could meet the needs of herself as an adoptive parent. To date she has not had any possible placements.

5. Approved adopters referred to the Qest midlands Consortium, BAAf Link and the Adoption Register..

The major change in the new Adoption Service has been the change to working inter-agency, finding placements for our children from other Authorities and also finding children for our adopters.

This has meant that **all** applicants are referred to the West Midlands Consortium as soon as they are approved. They are encouraged to be pro-active themselves by looking through ‘Be My Parent’ and ‘Children Who Wait’.

Interest in our adoptive families was slow to start. Since the first few placements, there appears to be a growing interest in approaching Herefordshire for resources. There are several authorities with whom we have a reciprocal arrangement, which appears to be working to our mutual advantage. It is unusual for an Authority to **not** place within their boundary and the perception is that if you are promoting your adoptive couples they must be the ones who are ‘limited’ or ‘left over’. Outside these reciprocal

arrangements, our adopters need to have something 'extra' before being considered by other Authorities.

6. The number of Applicants not accepted by the Agency or withdrawn.

In this year, **6** couples were withdrawn or had their application brought early to Panel.

- One couple were brought early and the panel recommended that their application should not proceed. The applicants had not met any of the competencies and appeared to have learnt nothing from the training course. They made representation after the 28 days had lapsed, but were allowed to represent their views to the Adoption Permanency Panel. Specific arrangements were laid down by the Panel, which might have enabled the application to proceed.
- Of those withdrawn, 2 couples had had a disruption and were ready to acknowledge that adoption was not right for them; one couple had been offered several children and when linked with a child, disrupted at the introduction stage, causing a severe reaction in the child. One couple were withdrawn for reasons of ill-health and the other as they had waited too long for their second placement and it was recognised they were unlikely to be offered a child as their age range was very limited (0 – 10 months).

7. Background Offers made by approved Adopters witing placement at the beginning of April 2003. (These areas represent those factors most difficult to find in applicants)

Backgrounds couples would consider	1 st time placement	Over 3 years & siblings
Face to face contact with birth parents	2	1
Face to face contact with birth siblings and wider family	4	2
Children with significant physical disabilities	1	0
Children with significant learning disabilities	2	2
Children with uncertain prognosis	5	4
Children with serious mental health backgrounds	1	1
Children sexually abused	1	1

III. CHILDREN PRESENTED TO THE HEREFORDSHIRE ADOPTION AND PERANENCY PANEL FROM 1ST APRIL 2002 – 31ST MARCH 2003

1. Numbers

The number of Herefordshire children presented to the Adoption and Permanency Panel during this year was **13 + 9** for **permanent fostering**.

Children accepted for adoption	13
Children where the recommendation could not be given	1
Children accepted for permanent fostering	9

This figure of 13 is less than last year when 17 children were accepted and the year 2000/2001 when the number was 20 (the highest figure ever and representing 30% increase on the previous year and more than 100% increase on the average number of 9 of previous years).

Of the **9** children accepted for permanent fostering, three siblings were accepted earlier in the year for adoption but had their care plan changed (thus reducing the 2000/01 figure to 18 children) when their birth father withdrew his consent. Five other children were presented for the first time and **4** were subsequently linked with Herefordshire foster carers. **One** of these children is still waiting for a permanent family.

2. **Areas of origin**

Hereford City	12
Bromyard	0
Ledbury	0
Leominster	0
Ross-on-Wye (s Hfd)	1

3. **Age Range**

0 – 12 months	4
12 – 24 months	4
2 – 3 years	1
3 – 5 years	3
5 – 7 years	0
7 – 10 years	1

4. **Sex distribution**

The **13** children, comprised **6 boys** and **7 girls**

5. **Single/sibling distribution**

Single boys	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 – under 12 months • 1 – 3 – 5 years
Single girls	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – 12 – 24 months • 1 – 3 – 5 years • 1 – 8 year old
Sibling pairs	1	2 girls aged 2 and 4 years (separated from 2 other siblings)
Three siblings	1	2 girls aged 2 & 3 years; 1 boy age 1 year

Age	No	Sex
Under 3 years	9	3 girls; 6 boys
3 – 5 years	3	All boys
Over 5 years	1	1 girl

6. **Background**

All the children's backgrounds are complex. What is of note this year is that although there are **8** young children out of **13**, only **1** child was placed with consent. This is a significant difference from 2001 – 2002 when 6 out of 19 children were in consent situations (and 2 out of 20 in 2000 – 2001).

IV. CHILDREN LINKED WITH ADOPTERS APRIL 2002 – MARCH 2003

1. **Numbers**

Families were found for **17** children in this period although **11** children were actually placed with adoptive families in 2001 – 2002

Reasons placements did not proceed

Consent withdrawn by birth parent	3 (sibs)
Placement disrupted at introductions	1
Placement stopped at Review stage of introductions by Herefordshire	2 (sibs)

Children placed for adoption who were accepted by the Panel in the same year	2
Children placed for adoption who were accepted by the Panel in the previous year	9
Children placed who were waiting for families at April 2001	0

2. **Disruption of placements**

A distinction needs to be made between a planned link not proceeding and the disruption of a placement. New guidelines have been agreed with the West Midlands Consortium, summer 2003.

An adoption placement can be said to have disrupted if –
'the child or children have been placed with a view to adoption and cease to live with the prospective adopters by returning to the Looked After system of the Placing Agency before Order, or entering the Looked After system of the authority in which the children are placed, for a period of three years after the making of an Adoption Order'.

During 202/3 there were no disruptions of placements.

Placements did not proceed for 3 children linked with adopters. In one case the placement did not continue when the applicant withdrew. The link with adopters for two siblings was stopped at the Review stage of introductions. This decision was taken by Herefordshire and against the wishes of the adopters. There was increasing evidence that the adopters could not meet the needs of the children.

Sadly, one of our children was killed in a tragic car accident on 6th June 2002, 10 weeks after he had been placed for adoption. His prospective adoptive mother was seriously injured in the accident, but has since recovered.

3. **Children who Wait at 31st March 2003**

Children waiting for placements at 31/3/03	15
Children still in Court Proceedings	10
Children with placements identified (carer being assessed)	1
Children waiting, presented to Panel in 02/03 (Proceedings complete)	2
Children still waiting from previous Panels	2

4. **Inter-Agency placements**

Of the **11** children placed for adoption in 2002 – 2003, **9** were placed outside Herefordshire. This continues to represent the change of policy, that Herefordshire children are placed outside the Authority for confidentiality and security reasons.

When searching for the right family, we look first at our own resources to check whether it would be safe to place 'in-county'. Sometimes, the adoptive family's location makes this possible.

Our first consideration is to approach the West Midland Consortium (a group of 13 local authorities in the Midlands who share resources), followed by other local authorities and then the voluntary Adoption Agencies.

Over the year Herefordshire has further developed reciprocal arrangements with 5 local authorities within the Consortium, involving an exchange of resources.

Children placed in Herefordshire	2
Children placed via the West Midlands Consortium	3
Children placed in other Local Authorities	6
Children placed via voluntary Adoption Agencies	0

Many Herefordshire children are featured in the British Agency for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) magazine 'Be My Parent' (BMP), published 10 times a year.

	Children	Household
Featured in 'Be My Parent' during the year	12	8
Paced this year via BMP	6	4
Where BMP has failed to produce a resource to date	0	0

V. CHILDREN LINKED WITH ADOPTERS APRIL 2002 – MARCH 2003

The separation from Worcestershire has continued to have an impact on the way we run the Herefordshire Adoption Service.

The major change has been the low possibility being able to place our children with approved Herefordshire adopters with sufficient security and confidentiality. This results in the need to find adoptive families outside the county boundary for children where adoption is the child care plan.

Herefordshire Children

The advantage of this change for our children has been that by widening the search for adopters, the quality of the adoptive families found has been very high. Our search is now nation-wide, ensuring we find the best adoptive families available at the time to meet our children's needs.

The change to a stand-alone service has given impetus to increase the skill and thoroughness with which children are prepared and moved to their new adoptive families. New standards have been introduced and monitored by the team manager to ensure consistency of service to Herefordshire's children. New skills are being developed and used.

The positive impact of the play therapist attached to the team (from LPSA funding) has already been evident. Three of the children we have placed this year in the families had a previous placement stopped – when preparation had been done with them, introductions almost complete and their 'good byes' said. We could not have managed such successful transfers to more suitable families in the time or manner without the skill of the play therapist working alongside the child's social worker.

Therapeutic work undertaken by the play therapist has given us a greater understanding and insight into the inner world of the child – which can only be helpful in deciding whether they can meet the child's long term needs.

Disadvantages have been in the greatly increased volume of work and expenditure. Extending our search nationally has increased the workload by at least 300%. For a significant number of children we have had a response rate upward of 50 families. All enquiries have to be contacted as a matter of good practice and courtesy. For some of the children there is little response, which poses a different problem.

The increase in court requirements has complicated the task. Court directions have led to children being featured in 'Be My Parent' unnecessarily. One child, for whom we could have found a family via the Consortium, was featured in 'Be My Parent' and the 70 responses had to be followed through and by the court's direction a specific question asked of all enquirers. Any difference of view between the Local Authority and the Guardian ad Litem impacts on the homefinding task.

Herefordshire adopters

The most significant difficulty following the final split with Worcestershire has been the impact on Herefordshire approved adopters. As Herefordshire children cannot be placed with them the challenge is to find the right children for our adopters. They are disadvantaged because we cannot place our children with them.

All authorities large enough (as Herefordshire and Worcester were) place children within their own authority. It is cost effective and providing this meets the needs of the children has to be seen as the best practice.

The result is that the Adoption Service is now involved in 'children-finding' for adopters.

This can be just as time-consuming as homefinding for children. It takes time for other authorities to realise that Herefordshire adopters have the qualities they are looking for. It is often assumed that if adopters are made available to other authorities they have less skills.

The reality that adoption is changing and involves increasingly damaged children is difficult for the public to accept at a time when adoption has a high profile and the media message is 'anyone can adopt'. Considerable time is spent counselling out applicants who cannot meet the complex needs of adopted children or who, if they were approved, would never be chosen for a child.

One of the reasons authorities place within their boundaries is the financial implication. An inter-agency fee is charged for adopters (see attached fees). Herefordshire Adoption Service has sought to reduce this cost by arranging 'exchange of placements' with authorities with the same level of practice. At present exchanges have occurred with 5 different local authorities. Our priority, however, is still to find the best family for our children.

The challenge for 2003/2004 is the implementation of the new Adoption and Children Act 2002 and setting up an Adoption Support Service by October 31st 2003. The new Act involves far reaching changes for both Children and Families Teams and the Adoption Service.

Hazel Couch
Adoption Team Manager
September 2003

Inter-agency Fees Between Consortium Member Agencies

<u>Number and Age of Children</u>	<u>Consortium LA members</u>	<u>LA generally</u>	<u>Voluntary Organisations including Consortium Voluntary Organisations</u>
Baby 0 – 1yr No Specific Needs	One third in total £3,781	£11,344	£17,823 + 1/6 Post Adoption Support £2,970
Single Children 1 – 5 yrs No Specific Needs	Two thirds in total £7,562	£11,344	£17,823 + 1/6 Post Adoption Support £2,970
Sibling Groups 2 or more Children or Children with Specific Needs	Standard LA Inter-agency Fee	LA Inter-agency Fee	Voluntary Organisations Fee

Permanent Fostering Placements

Two thirds of the LA Inter-agency fee for recruiting and preparing the family and the placement of the child.

1 Child	£7,562
2 Children	£11,344
3 Children	£15,125

One third of the LA Inter-agency fee charged on an annual basis for support to the placement.

1 Child	£3,781
2 Children	£5,671
3 Children	£7,562

Interagencyfees0703

COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS (2002/2003)

Report By: Head Of Social Care (Children)

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider a report on the operation of the complaints process and procedures.
2. This is the First Annual Report for Herefordshire Council's Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate on the operation of the Complaints Process and Procedures in respect of Adults, Children's, Strategic Housing Service and Business Service. The reporting period is from 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 with an update of April to September 2003 in year results, it provides information on:-
 - Changes introduced
 - Procedures
 - The number of complaints, comments and compliments
 - Lessons learnt
 - Training for staff
 - Links with the Corporate Complaints system and the West Midlands Complaints Officer

Financial Implications

3. No direct implications.

Background

4. The Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure was introduced in response to the following legislation: Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, amended by the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 (Section 50) and Children Act 1989, Part iii, Sections 24, 26, 59, Schedules 6 and 7 and Regulations and Guidance Volume 3..
5. Within the Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate a specific Complaint, Comments and Compliments leaflet has been introduced. It is a reflection of the broader requirements of Herefordshire Council's Corporate Procedures. -There are two separate versions of the leaflet: the main leaflet is for members of the public and service users, the second is aimed primarily at Children and Young People. The

leaflets give information on how to make a complaint, who to contact, and the timescales for response, along with other helpful contacts and information. The leaflets were introduced in September 2002. This coincided with the employment of a Complaints Administrator to monitor and run the complaints procedure for Social Care and Strategic Housing. The Administrator also ensures that the leaflets are available to everyone by request and are displayed in reception areas of all offices, and given out at different stages to Service Users.

6. The Directorate has a duty to comply with general complaint reporting, which does not fall within the boundaries of the National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990) and the Children Act (1989). Complaints that do not fall under these guidelines are called Corporate Complaints and are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. The Directorate reports quarterly to the corporate complaints committee with an annual report to this Committee.

CHANGES INTRODUCED

7. In April 2002 a computerised Complaints Comments and Compliments system (ComTrac) was implemented. It is an in house system, developed for corporate use, which has also been adopted by Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate. The system enables the monitoring of number of complaints, comments and compliments by service. These are in turn categorised to enable a further breakdown when analysing the information. The needs of the Directorate to comply with other legislation has meant the need to run a separate database alongside ComTrac to gather more detailed information, which the Directorate is required to report on. This includes such things as ethnicity of the complainant and whether or not there is involvement of an MP, or Councillor, on behalf of a complainant.
8. One of the immediate changes resulting from the implementation of the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure was the creation of the Complaints Administrator post. The volume of work associated with Complaints, Comments and Compliments that the Social Care and Strategic Housing receive, indicated to senior management a requirement to have a person solely dedicated to this area. The post was created to enable a person to set up the process, administer the system, monitor the procedures, feedback on the learning from Complaints, whilst raising awareness of the procedures amongst staff. An appointment of a Complaints Administrator was made in October, initially to focus on setting up a system, clearing the backlog with a timescale set for December 2002.
9. On creation of the Complaints Administrator post, Complaints, Comments and Compliments from all four service areas of Social Care and Strategic Housing were focused in one place. This meant that they all adhered to the same system and procedure which consequently meant changes in the methods already in use. The Complaints Administrator ensures that all cases are dealt with in the same time scales and are logged in the same manner, thus facilitating the download of information every quarter, and subsequently at the end of every financial year.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

10. Procedures apply to Complaints, Comments and Compliments under the National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990) and the Children Act (1989). It has four key stages. The following is extracted from the leaflet:

“Informal – “On the spot” problem-solving

Usually the problem can be sorted out straight away. – Tell whoever you have contact with what has happened (i.e. Social Worker) and they can often sort things out there and then.

Stage One – Quick solution

Occasionally a more senior person (Team or Service Manager) needs to look at what has happened. You have the right to ask for this. Once the Complaint has been received, this will be acknowledged by letter within 2 working days and you should get a reply in writing within 10 working days, unless otherwise advised (which could be up to 28 working days).

Stage Two – Making it Formal

You may wish to have an independent opinion, someone from outside the Team or Directorate, for more serious matters, or you may not be happy with the outcome at Stage One. The Complaints Officer / Administrator will arrange for your complaint to be investigated by an Independent Investigator. You will receive a written report from them, and will also be told of any recommendations for change.

Stage Three – Independent Review

If you are unhappy with the outcome at Stage Two, you can ask for an Independent Review Panel. A Three Person Panel, chaired Independently will review the whole situation, meet with you to hear what you have to say, and decide if:

- The investigation process was carried out fairly
- The conclusions were reasonable
- Any more can be done

Local Government Ombudsman

Relevant legislation says the Ombudsman must look for ‘maladministration’ by a council that has caused you ‘injustice’. This means something that the council has done wrong, or failed to do, that directly affected you. But the Ombudsman cannot question whether a council’s decision or action is right or wrong simply because you disagree with it, and they may not investigate your complaint if they decide the injustice is only slight. Your complaint to the Ombudsman should be made within 12 months of when you first knew about the matter you are complaining about.”

THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS.

11. Although the period is relatively short for statistical purposes from which to draw any conclusions, there does appear to be an evident increase in the number of complaints after the implementation of the Complaints procedure. This may be due it part to the introduction of processes and procedures for stanardising throughout the Directorate
12. Table 1 records the number of complaints received during the period April 2001 to September 2003.

Table1

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2001/02	1	1	2	3	3	1	3	4	6	2	4	4
2002/03	2	5	7	5	10	7	8	5	9	7	7	9
2003/04	8	11	8	2	6	7						

13. The total number of complaints (2002/2003) also needs to be considered in the context of the total number of Service Users within the Directorate. The 81 complaints represent 0.74% of the 11,000 average numbers of people with an open service as at 31 March 2003.
14. Complaints are a good way of monitoring the services provided by the Directorate. We welcome complaints that provide us with the opportunity to improve the services we offer, as we try as best we can to learn from these.
15. Table 2 is a breakdown of this years Complaints, Comments and Compliments from April to September.

Table 2

April – September 2003				
	Complaints	Comments	Compliments	TOTALS
Adults	54	8	30	92
Children	14	3	10	27
Housing	18	0	18	36
TOTALS	86	11	58	155

LESSONS LEARNT

16. Each complaint, comment or compliment has the potential as a learning exercise for the Directorate. Each is taken on its merits. The introduction of the Complaints Administrator post has enabled a comprehensive review of Directorate wide information around the subject and a concise monitoring of performance to be readily available.
17. Of the complaints received during the period April to September 2003 four led to changes in practice.

LINKS WITH THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS SYSTEM AND THE WEST MIDLANDS COMPLAINTS OFFICER

18. Staff have been always been aware of the need to record complaints and how to action them. The introduction of centralised monitoring arrangements as well as the requirements for recording compliments and comments has identified a need for additional training to ensure a robust mechanism exists and is fully utilised.
19. The Complaints Administrator now attends the Directorate Staff induction meetings and gives an overview of procedures as well as issuing the Directorate leaflets. The meetings have been found to be very productive in ensuring new staff are fully aware of the procedures and the reliance on them to ensure compliance.
20. An education programme for staff already in post has been developed and will be formally delivered to each of the Service Teams on a rolling programme starting in 2004.
21. The post of Complaints Administrator liaises with the corporate complaints function, providing it with necessary performance information and acting as an interface between the Directorate and corporate function on a daily basis. The post also represents the Directorate on the corporate steering group for the application of information technology to record, analyse and display all relevant complaint, compliment and comment based information.
22. On a wider level the Directorate has strong links with the West Midlands Complaints Officer Group. The group is specific to the needs of Social Care and forms part of a national forum. It meets on a quarterly basis to discuss and review experiences as well as develop protocols for local use. It provides a useful forum to ensure that our experiences and aspirations are heard.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report on Herefordshire Social services performance be noted

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

SUPPORTING PEOPLE INSPECTION

Report By: Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To receive feedback on the inspection of the Supporting People arrangements in Herefordshire.

Background

2. 'Supporting People' is the name given to the programme of providing housing related support to a wide range of vulnerable client groups.
3. In September 2003, the Herefordshire Council Supporting People arrangements were subject to an inspection by the Audit Commission, assisted by representatives from the Social Services Inspectorate and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. . It is expected that the draft report on the inspection will be received in November 2003. It was considered opportune to provide the Committee with an overview of the inspection and the Supporting People programme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

HEREFORDSHIRE PLAN AMBITION GROUPS

Report By: Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To receive a briefing on the operation of the Herefordshire Plan Ambition Groups.

Background

2. The Committee was informed at its meeting in September of the approved arrangements for scrutinising the Herefordshire Plan.
3. The Committee was reminded that the Partnership is led through ten ambition groups which take responsibility for delivering each ambition in the Plan. The Ambition Groups are supported by a Management Group and Board of senior officers from the core partner organisations.
4. The ten ambitions are
 - Improve the health and wellbeing of Herefordshire People
 - Reduce crime and disorder and make Herefordshire safer
 - Tackle poverty and isolation in Herefordshire
 - Encourage communities to shape the future of Herefordshire
 - Develop Herefordshire as an active, vibrant and enjoyable place to be
 - Protect and improve Herefordshire's distinctive environment
 - Provide excellent education, training and learning opportunities in Herefordshire for all ages
 - Meet Herefordshire's accommodation needs
 - Support business growth and create more and better paid work in Herefordshire
 - Develop an integrated transport system for Herefordshire
5. It has been suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to have more information on the operation of the ambition groups and a briefing will be given at the meeting.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2003/04**Report By: Information Systems Manager****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. To report on statistical in year performance for the Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate performance indicators for the first 6 months of 2003/4.

Financial Implications

2. No direct implications, however, top performing authorities will be rewarded by the relaxation of government grant conditions.

Background

3. The Department of Health (DoH) publishes statistical Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) information on the performance of all Social Services Departments. This report provides an analysis of the national set of 49 indicators covering the two service groups, Adult Services and Children's Services for the period April to September 2003.
4. The DoH ranks performance in five bands ranging from Band 1 - 'investigate urgently' to Band 5 - 'very good'. In accordance with the Strategic Monitoring Committee's decision, information contained within this report is provided on an "exception-reporting basis". Only those indicators falling in the 'investigate urgently' or the 'very good' category are included in this report.
5. Strategic Housing performance is monitored by Best Value indicators and regularly reported to the Government Office of the West Midlands and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Children's Services

6. Direct comparison with previous year's performance is difficult as the DoH continues to introduce new performance measures and refine existing indicators. In particular, banding for in year performance has to be carried out using the previous years banding values. Also some indicators can only be measured once a year.
7. During the reported period, Children's Services performance in Herefordshire for the 18 children's PAF indicators was maintained at a consistent level. In this report, we highlight certain indicators on an exception basis, as agreed at previous meetings of the Committee. The complete set of indicators is show in appendix 1. Those to be highlighted show:
 - 6 indicators are rated in the top two bandings.

- 2 indicators are rated in the lowest two bandings.

“ Very Good” rating

- 1 indicator received the top ‘very good’ rating:

A1 Stability of placements of children looked after (BVPI 49) – Herefordshire has remained in the top banding for this indicator for the last two years.

“ Investigate Urgently” rating

- 1 indicator received the lowest ‘Investigate Urgently’ rating:

A3 Re registrations on the Child Protection Register – Historically performance for this indicator has been in the top banding. However, a number of children from the same family were registered on the Child Protection Register at the end of 2002/03 which resulted in a poor performance rating. An improved performance is expected by the end of 2003/04.

Adult Services

8. As with Childrens Services, direct comparison with previous year’s performance is difficult, as the DoH continues to introduce new performance measures and refine existing indicators. In particular banding for in year performance has to be carried out using the previous years banding values. Also some indicators can only be measured once a year. During 2003/04, Adult Services performance in Herefordshire for the 31 Adult PAF indicators remained constant. The complete set of indicators is shown in appendix 1. Those indicators to be highlighted based on exception reporting show:

- 7 indicators were rated in the top two bandings.
- 13 indicators were rated in the lowest two bandings.

“ Very Good” rating

2 indicators received the ‘very good’ rating:

C27 Admissions of supported residents aged 18-64 or over to residential/nursing care – Herefordshire has improved on performance during the period moving from a “good” banding to a “very good” banding.

D43 Waiting time for care packages – Herefordshire’s performance has maintained in the “very good” band.

“ Investigate Urgently” rating

2 indicators received the lowest ‘investigate urgently’ rating.

D38 Percentage of equipments and adaptations delivered within 7 days – The measurement criteria for this indicator has changed from 3 weeks to 7 days. Remedial action is in hand to ensure improved and timely management of the process to ensure delivery within required timescales.

D39 Percentage of people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (BVPI 182) – Following the introduction of a revised Community Care Assessment form, performance has remained low. Evidence suggests that clients are receiving a statement of their needs; but that internal recording remains an issue. A performance presentation is being given to all Adult Teams to ensure Herefordshire's target of 85% is achieved for 2003/04.

Housing Services

9. Following stock transfer to Herefordshire Housing, the number of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) has reduced to 3, although indicator BV183 is measured and reported in two parts - parts A and B. A summary of the quarter's performance up to September 2003, against target is as follows:

Exceeded target	2
Not achieved target	1
Total	3

10. Of the 3 indicators that can be reported on a quarterly basis, 2 indicators have exceeded target during the second quarter. These are:

BVPI 64: Number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned to occupation or demolished during 2003/2004 as a direct result of Local Authority action– Performance for the second quarter at 12 dwellings has matched that of the first quarter at 13. Targeting long-term empty properties results in more complex issues to be resolved to enable the property to be brought back into use, therefore less completions are initially forthcoming. It is expected that the annual target of 30 units will be met during the last quarter.

BVPI 183a: Average length of stay of households that include dependant children in:

- A) Bed and Breakfast accommodation** – The target performance of 6 weeks has been exceeded in the second quarter with an average recorded stay of 4.8 weeks, this compares favourably with the second quarter's figure of 5.3.
- B) Hostel accommodation** – The target of 12 weeks has been exceeded with the second quarter performance recorded at 4 weeks compared to 29 weeks for quarter 1.

11. One indicator has not met target. This is:

BVPI 62: Proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a result of direct action by the Local Authority – The performance for the second quarter was 0.54%, which is an improvement on the first quarter performance which stood at 0.46%. With an annual target of 3.0% it is considered that the trend will lead to the meeting of the 2003/2004 target.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT (a) the report on Herefordshire Social Care and Strategic Housing performance be noted;
- and
- (b) areas of concern continue to be monitored.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

SERVICE AREA: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (CF) (April - September 2003)										
PAF Area	Indicator				2002/03 Performance	Band 2002/03	Performance	April - September 2003/04	Band	Performance
	PAF	BVPI	LPSA							
A. National Priorities and Strategic Objectives	A1	BVPI 49		Stability of placements of children looked after	10	5	J	7	5	J
	A2	BVPI 50		Educational qualifications of children looked after [joint working]	65	4	J			J
	A3			Re-registrations on the Child Protection Register	36	1	L	27	1	L
	A4	BVPI 161	ü	Employment, education & training for care leavers [joint working]	76	5	J			J
B. Cost and Efficiency	B7			Children looked after in foster placements or placed for adoption	90	4	J	91	4	J
	B8	BVPI 51		Cost of services for children looked after *	417	4	J	508	3	K
	B9			Unit cost of children's residential care *	2328	2	L	4270	2	L
	B10			Unit cost of foster care *	227	4	J	260	3	K
	C18			Final warnings/reprimands and convictions of children looked after	2.1	3	K			
	C19			Health of children looked after	88	5	J			
C. Effectiveness of Service Delivery and Outcomes	C20	BVPI 162		Reviews of child protection cases	100	5	J	98	4	J
	C21			Duration on the child protection register	**	4	J	**	4	J
	C22			Young children looked after in foster placements or placed for adoption	97	4	J	97	4	J
	C23	BVPI 163	ü	Adoptions of children looked after	6.4	3	K	7.5	4	J
	C24		ü	Children looked after absent from school [joint working]	6	4	J			
D. Quality of Services for Users and Carers	D35			Long term stability of children looked after	58	3	K	51	3	K
E. Fair Access	E44			Relative spend on family support	35	4	J			
	E45			Ethnicity of children in need	2.71	2	L			

* Definition changed 2000/01. Performance is based on new definition
 ** This value has been suppressed - indicators based on small numbers are potentially unreliable and may lead to the disclosure of information about individuals
 For indicators B8-B10, C21 and E44 best performance is band 4, not 5

SERVICE AREA: ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLES (AO) (April - September 2003)										
Paf Area	Indicator									
	PAF	BVPI	LPSA		2002/03 Performance	Band 2002/03	April - September 2003/04	Band		
A. National Priorities and Strategic Objectives	A5				11.2	5	J			
	A6				12.6	2	L			
	B11		ü		13	2	L	16	2	
	B12	BVPI 52			435	2	L	337	4	
	B13				347	3	K	312	2	
	B14				490	4	J	410	2	
B. Cost and Efficiency	B15				389	3	K	519	2	
	B16				755	2	L	656	2	
	B17				18.5	2	L	8.3	3	
	C26				68	4	J	68	4	
	C27				2.1	4	J	2.0	5	
	C28	BVPI 53	ü		4.0	2	L	5.5	2	
	C29				3.4	3	K	3.1	2	
	C30				2.5	4	J	2.2	3	
	C31				1.5	3	K	1.5	3	
	C32	BVPI 54	ü		78	2	L	73	2	
C. Effectiveness of Service Delivery and Outcomes	C33		ü		23	3	K			
	C51				35	3	K			
	D37				86	3	K	87	3	
	D38	BVPI 56			95	4	J	36	1	
	D39	BVPI 58			73	1	L	72	1	
	D40	BVPI 55			30	2	L	22	2	
	D41				60	3	K			
	D42				6	2	L	6	2	
	D43				3	5	J	3	5	
	D52	BVPI 182			68	5	J	34		
D. Quality of Services for Users and Carers	D53	BVPI 190			72	5	J	65		
	E47				-	2	L	0.60	2	
	E48				-	2	L	1.00	4	
	E49				67	2	L	99	4	
	E50				71	4	J	71	4	
	E. Fair Access									

* Definition changed 2000/01. Performance is based on new definition

** This is a new indicator for 2002/03

*** Based on the 2002/03 PSS Elderly Home Care User Experience Survey - no previous data to compare

**** This value has been suppressed - indicators based on small numbers are potentially unreliable and may lead to the disclosure of information about individuals

BEST VALUE REVIEW – HOME SUPPORT – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

Report By: Head of Social Care (Adults)

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To outline the progress to date of the Best Value Review (BVR) of Home Support, and the development of the (Short Term Assessment Reablement and Review Service) STARRS

Financial Implications

2. None associated with this report.

Background

3. The BVR of Home Support was completed in 2000. Progress on the improvement plan was impeded by a lack of management capacity to take this forward. Difficulties were experienced in recruiting a project manager. In November 2002, a project consultant was appointed, followed in February 2003 by a project manager. The team was expanded in July 2003 with the appointment of an undergraduate student.

The BVR team made three recommendations:

- a. To address the insufficiency of current home support activity delivered as part of a planned reablement service.
- b. To address the greater cost of in-house Home Care, being more expensive than that provided by the independent sector home support.
- c. To address the difficulty of equitable access to home support across the County.

The improvement plan includes:

- A review of the contracting arrangements with the independent sector.
- A change of purpose of the in-house traditional home care service from simply care to reablement.
- The transfer of long term maintenance home support to the independent sector.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Suzanne Hughes (Service Manager)
on 01568-616397

Progress

STARRS Pilot

4. To understand the practical implications of implementing the recommendations, a locality was identified as a pilot site. Moving a number of in-house staff into a dedicated team to provide a reablement service developed the STARRS service.
5. The aim of STARRS service is to:
 - Promote independence through “supporting rather than doing”.
 - Enable service users (predominantly older people) to continue living in their own home and communities.
 - Prevent inappropriate admissions to hospital/residential or nursing care homes.
 - Prevent loss of independence by timely return to home from hospital.
6. STARRS is limited to a 6-week period of intervention, during which continuous reviews and adjustments are made to the care plan, depending on the progress being made with the individual’s personal objectives. The service is free for up to six weeks.
7. The STARRS pilot was launched in Leominster in June 2003. Leominster is typical of town and rural complexities in service delivery in Herefordshire. The evaluation of the pilot identified the following:
 - The size of the reablement service required;
 - The numbers of staff required supporting the service;
 - The training requirements of staff and supporting agencies;
 - The need for therapy input;
 - The challenge of the commissioning arrangements with the independent sectors;
 - The positive impact on discharge arrangements from Community Hospitals;
 - The need to link with intermediate care provided by District Nurses.
8. A significant number of those who received the STARRS service met their personal objectives and regained sufficient independence to require no further support. Others, who at the end of the six-week period had an ongoing requirement for home support, were provided for by an independent agency.
9. Through the in-depth assessment and ongoing reviews, it has been possible to demonstrate that the intervention resulted in a much smaller ‘ongoing’ package of support.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Suzanne Hughes (Service Manager)
on 01568-616397

10. Shortage of care staff in the independent sector has caused difficulty for the pilot; recruitment is also a problem for the in-house service.
11. Contracts based on a specific number of care hours will be developed to help the independent sector develop. This method of contracting will provide a more stable environment for independent agencies and help them to increase their ability to recruit and train staff.
12. An area of Leominster will go out to tender this month for 110 care hours. It is estimated that five WTE care staff would be required.
13. Care packages currently held with the in-house service will move into this volume contract. Service Users in that area will receive a review and any changes in their care arrangements will be explained and discussed with them. This will have the effect of freeing up capacity in the in-house team, allowing for the reablement cases to be taken on. An option for staff that wish to continue providing long term maintenance home care to be seconded to the independent sector is being explored.

Further Implementation

14. Lessons learned from the Leominster pilot will be used in the implementation process in the Ross-on-Wye area, early in 2004.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the progress with the best value review be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Best Value Review Stage 3 Report – Social Care & Housing Monitoring & Review Committee - 22 November 2000.
- Best Value Review Stage 3 Report - Strategic Monitoring Committee - 9 January 2001.
- Social Care & Strategic Housing Project Plan – Social Care And Housing Scrutiny Committee – 13 March 2003.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND STRATEGIC HOUSING BUDGET MONITORING 2003/04 – 6 MONTHLY REPORT

Report By: Head of Business Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the budget monitoring position for Social Care and Strategic Housing for the first six months of the financial year 2003/04.

Financial Implications

2. As detailed within the report.

Background

3. Following the Council's Performance Management Framework, budget monitoring reports should be made at 4, 6, 8 and 12 months. This is the second budget monitoring report for the financial year 2003/04 to the Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee, and takes into account expenditure incurred up to the end of September 2003.
4. Monthly budget monitoring reports continue to be presented to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. This is in addition to monthly reports made to the Cabinet Member (Social Care and Strategic Housing), County Treasurer and the directorate management team.

Social Services Budget 2003/04

5. The budget for the financial year 2003/04 was set by Council on 7th March 2003. The total net budget available for Social Care in 2003/04 is £33,262,950. In addition, there are Government grants totalling £6.6million. The directorate objective is to balance the social care budget overall in 2003/04. Managers have been set targets to achieve this.
6. At the last meeting of this Committee on 29th September 2003, the reported projected year end position for Social Care was £466,000 overspent. This figure *included* the £582,000 overspend carried forward from 2002/03.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Sue Alexander, Head of Business Services, on 01432 260069 or Anne Silley on 01432 260545

7. The position at the end of September 2003 shows a continued improvement on the impact of the brought forward overspend from 2002/03. At the end of September 2003, the projected year end position for Social Care indicates an overspend of £376,000, showing some reduction in the “debt” which was carried forward from 2002/03.
8. The potential financial risks identified in the last report to this Committee are still valid. The key risk areas include maximisation of grants and childrens agency placements.

Strategic Housing Budget 2003/04

9. The 2003/04 budget for Strategic Housing is £1,247,000. In addition, an underspend of £191,000 has been carried forward from 2002/03.
10. At the end of September 2003, the projected year end position for Strategic Housing is an underspend of £98,000. This includes the underspend brought forward from 2002/03. Once again key risk areas have been identified within the budget projections, including homelessness expenditure which continues to be a difficult budget to manage.

Summary

11. In summary, whilst the budget settlement for 2003/04 was positive, it must be viewed in the context of continuing service pressures. The Directorate has put in place measures designed to manage expenditure for 2003/04 within budget. It is essential that the risk areas highlighted be continually reviewed to ensure that this target is delivered.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the budget monitoring report for the first 6 months of the financial year be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None