

PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Report By: Director of Children's Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To continue the routine reporting on the improvement in outcomes and performance management.

Financial Implications

2. The dedicated improvement budget has been used effectively and is on target to be fully spent by end of March 2007.

Considerations

3. The new approach to the action plan was endorsed by GOWM and the updated plan is attached at Appendix 1.
4. The December 2006 Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) Improvement Board for Herefordshire endorsed the achievements for 2006. These are attached as Appendix 2 and informed the second report to the Minister along with the positive but separate outcomes for 2005-06.

On 2 key indicators Herefordshire has achieved excellent results.

Education qualifications of children looked after – Herefordshire, is TOP nationally.

Stability of placements of children looked after, Herefordshire, is 2nd nationally. On several others we are in the top group :-

- Education, employment and training for care leavers – 6th nationally.
 - Children looked after in foster placements or placed for adoption – 21st nationally.
 - Reviews of child protection cases – 18th nationally.
 - Adoptions of children looked after – 20th nationally.
 - Timing of core assessments – GOOD.
5. The 2006/07 Directorate Plan identified 10 priorities. Progress has been made in all ten areas and there is now a solid foundation of satisfactory performance across the Council's children's services and with partners. Specifically the following have been achieved:
 - The Children & Young People's Board is fully established and has reviewed the Delivery Plan for this work. All of which is progressing well.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Sue Fiennes, Director of Children's Services on 01432 260039

- The Local Safeguarding Children's Board has been established and has a development and business plan.
 - Developments in integrated frontline services have been achieved by the further opening of Children's Centres, Extended school provision and assessments and transition progress for children with disabilities.
 - The Child Concern Model has now been developed into the Common Assessment Framework and this is being piloted in the South Wye area and across children with disabilities. It includes a significant training of over 200 staff on common definitions and language. This will do to two important things: (i) make sure that the children and their families experience one approach; and (ii) it will help us in our development with the kind of integrated working arrangements that are relevant for Herefordshire.
 - The Children & Young People's Partnership Board has developed an information sharing agreement and is ready to sign this off.
 - The performance in key areas has been regarded as good as particularly this relates to paragraph 4.
 - The improvement plans have, with two exceptions reported elsewhere, been delivered to time and standard.
 - The workforce strategy for the whole area is now ready for local consultation.
 - The disability strategy is now ready for consultation and will link to the inspection findings for adults with learning disabilities. In addition, there has been a national report on transitions from school to adult life and this will be used as a template for our improvement locally.
 - There have been significant practitioner work aspects on the development and support for families strategy which will assist in informing the integration models described earlier. This task was not completed in 2006/07, however, it was felt important to obtain more ownership and practitioner's views before proceeding to conclude this by April 2008.
6. A summary of the current position on improvement was part of the Integrated Performance Report to Cabinet in January 2007.
 7. The exceptions highlighted were Disability Strategy and Workforce Strategy. The concerns both from the Council and GOWM perspectives were the pace of the projects and the standard of the strategy reports presented.
 8. Additional capacity has been secured to ensure comprehensive reports are available for the March GOWM Board.
 9. The test is now to demonstrate that in these two areas, project management approaches are sustainable into the future. GOWM are holding a review with the respective project teams prior to the March 2007 GOWM Improvement Board.
 10. There will be an independent evaluation by IPC of the progress on performance management reporting to the March 2007 GOWM Board. An Interim Performance & Improvement Manager is now in place and the recruitment process is underway for

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the substantive post. The team is being built currently from existing resources and the action plans are on track.

11. The social work staffing position is that 50.3 are filled, of these 5 are agency staff. This means the agreed target for March (50) is exceeded.
12. The third and currently final report to the Minister will be presented after the March Improvement Board. It remains the ambition to ensure sufficient progress against the agreed success criteria to satisfy GOWM and DfES so that routine performance assessment and improvement activity can be re-established.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the progress as at February 2007.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous improvement reports to Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.