

# Annual Performance Assessment – self assessment

## PART A – Background

<b><i>Name of Children's Services authority</i></b>	Herefordshire Council – Children and Young People's Directorate
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<b><i>Date self assessment submitted:</i></b>	26 June 2008
<b><i>Agreed on behalf of the Children's Services authority:</i></b>	Sharon Menghini, Director of Children's Services
<b><i>Involvement of partners in the self assessment</i></b>	All partners in the Children's Trust have been involved in the preparation of the self-assessment. Each Outcome Group identified the key strengths and areas for improvement for their outcome as an initial exercise and then commented on, and updated, subsequent drafts of the self assessment. The Management Group of the Children's Trust specifically focused on strengths and areas for improvement in relation to Management of Services and the Children's Trust Board took an overview of the entire document.

# PART B – Context

## Key contextual features

- Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county of 842 square miles; the city of Hereford is the major location for employment, administration, health, education facilities and shopping. The five market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington are the other principal centres. At 0.8 persons per hectare, Herefordshire has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest population density in England. Just below one-third of the population lives in Hereford City, about a fifth in the market towns and almost half in the rural areas.
- The current population of Herefordshire is 177,800 (mid-2006 estimates), a growth of just under 2% since 2001. However, the number of under 16s is forecast to continue to fall until 2016, and numbers are then expected to stabilise at around 29,000 (9.4% below 2006 levels). Herefordshire has low proportions of ethnic minorities; around 3.7% of the county’s resident population (2005 estimates) although it has substantial numbers of short-term international migrants, employed predominantly in agriculture
- The most deprived areas in Herefordshire are within Hereford (South Wye and Central) and Leominster. Transport and communication infrastructures are key for the county, as they impact on employment, health, access to services and quality of life.
- In general, health in the county is relatively good, with people in Herefordshire expected to live longer than the average regionally and nationally. However, there are pockets of poor health, predominantly in Hereford City and Leominster. Low average wages, coupled with relatively high house prices, mean that housing affordability is a major issue in the county. Herefordshire has relatively low levels of crime, comparing favourably with similar areas for key crime categories, such as vehicle crime and domestic burglary although anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and common assault are slightly higher.

## Arrangements for joint working

- In the summer of 2007, arrangements were put in place to support the move to a Children’s Trust in Herefordshire, replacing the existing Children and Young People’s Partnership Board. The Children’s Trust arrangements comprise all agencies that commission or provide services for children and young people.
- The third sector (community and voluntary sector) is represented at every level of the structure, particularly in terms of its role as a key provider of local services.
- Further information on the work of the Children’s Trust and associated plans and strategies is available on the Council’s website at [http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community\\_and\\_living/young\\_people/26247.asp](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community_and_living/young_people/26247.asp)

## Priorities for children and young people

- The local priorities for children and young people, as agreed in the Children and Young People’s Plan 2008-2011, are set out below:

**Priorities for Children and Young People in Herefordshire 2008-2011**

<i>Be Healthy</i>	<i>Stay Safe</i>	<i>Enjoy and Achieve</i>	<i>Positive Contribution</i>	<i>Economic Wellbeing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote emotional health and well-being and improve access to universal and targeted mental health services</li> <li>• To promote healthy lifestyles generally and, in particular, to reduce obesity and dental health problems in children and young people</li> <li>• To provide quality information and services to reduce substance misuse, including alcohol abuse</li> <li>• To provide quality information and services to improve sexual health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce the impact of domestic abuse on the lives of children in Herefordshire</li> <li>• To ensure that referrals of children in need to children’s services are timely and appropriate</li> <li>• To promote e-safety in order to reduce the risks associated with media and the commercial world</li> <li>• To raise awareness of bullying in order to reduce the impact and incidence of bullying (in and out of school)</li> <li>• To ensure safer recruitment practices across all agencies working with children within Herefordshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve the educational attainment of children and young people, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2</li> <li>• To improve school attendance, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4 and for looked after children</li> <li>• To provide a broad, balanced curriculum (both in and out of school) that engages children and young people in learning, play, cultural and recreational activities at all ages</li> <li>• Improve prospects of children and young people, particularly vulnerable groups, in terms of addressing social inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase the participation of children and young people in shaping strategies and services that affect their lives</li> <li>• To increase access to positive activities for all children and young people, including volunteering and targeted activities for vulnerable groups</li> <li>• To reduce offending, anti-social behaviour and bullying by children and young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To implement a strategic approach to support young people into employment, education and training</li> <li>• To ensure all 14 to 19 year olds have access to the 14-19 learning entitlement</li> <li>• To implement a strategic approach to employer engagement that fits with the 14-19 learning entitlement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enabled by...</b></p> <p>A quality infrastructure to support service delivery across partner agencies            Quality assured services based on effective performance management and active involvement of service users            Targeted and pooled resources providing cost-effective services</p>				

## PART C – Analysis, involvement and impact

### Be Healthy

#### Our areas of strengths

- Overall, children in Herefordshire are healthy. Children continue to have a good start in life with 79% starting life being breastfed, compared with 72% nationally. A pilot peer support project to improve breast feeding rates among all women, including teenage mothers, has been operating in South Wye since January 2007. The formal evaluation is underway and early feedback shows that targets have been exceeded. Breastfeeding peer counsellor training to educate mothers to support other mothers within their community has trained 20 mothers in South Wye, four of whom are teenage parents.
  - Perceptions of “being healthy” expressed in the last Tellus survey compare with national figures. 83% of children said that they were very or quite healthy (86% nationally) with 23% reporting that they ate at least five portions of fruit or vegetables each day (23% nationally). 71% had done at least 30 minutes of sport or other activity for three or more days in the last 7 days, compared with 73% nationally.
  - All schools are engaged in the Healthy Schools programme and as at March 2008, 74% of schools had achieved Healthy Schools Status against the national Healthy Schools Standard. The service continues to be rated ‘green’ by Government Office West Midlands. Children’s Centres in Hereford City have been working with Early Years settings and Healthy Schools to develop a Healthy Pre-schools approach for the under 5s and have worked with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to develop a training programme for healthy eating aimed at Early Years and Extended Services.
  - The number of teenage pregnancies is low and has reduced again with a fall of 29.6% from the baseline (2006 figures). The national target of a 50% reduction from the 1998 baseline will continue to be challenging to achieve because Herefordshire started from such a low percentage. Hotspots have been identified across the county, with South Wye a particular concern. A recent independent review of policy and audit of provision against the national standards confirmed that the service response in South Wye was ‘exemplar/good practice’.
  - Work is ongoing to address the priority of improving dental health of children and young people. There has been an increase in the number of whole time equivalent dentists from 11 to 15 in 2007/2008 in order to meet the target of clearing waiting lists. 7 dental access centres, together with a mobile unit, are in operation. A feasibility study on ‘fluoridation’ has been commissioned by the Strategic Health Authority from Welsh Water and the report is expected in June 2008. In relation to preventative work, a programme of dental hygiene is covered through science and PSHE in primary schools’ Key Stage 1 and again in Key Stage 2 every year. This involves the school nurse or visits to dental surgeries and follow-up work at school.
  - Positive improvements continue to be made in relation to substance misuse assessment and treatment. In 2007/2008, all young people supported by the Youth Offending Service were screened for substance misuse and of those having identified needs, 100% received appropriate assessment within 5 working days. Following the assessment, 100% accessed the early intervention services and treatment services they required within 10 working days
  - Health services for looked after children, including access to them, are very good with health assessments being maintained at 90% in 2007/2008, ahead of statistical neighbours. There is a designated doctor and nurse for looked after children and those requiring dental care have the highest priority of all.
  - Two 8-week “Care2Cook?” courses and some one-off events funded by the Food Standards Agency have been run during 2007/2008. Around 24 looked after children and care leavers aged 14-19 have been involved, several of whom have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All participants received an award at the annual celebration event, four have already achieved a Food Hygiene Certificate at Level 1, and five more are due to sit this exam shortly. Evaluation (written and a group discussion) by the young people was very positive, especially in terms of social and peer support. Comments from the young people captured in a scrapbook which they helped to create include:
    - *‘I would now make a roast dinner at home and maybe carrot cake.’*
    - *‘I would like to come again and learn more.’*
- Two ‘graduates’ of the first course have continued to develop their skills by helping others who have been in care and aim to pursue careers in catering.

- A health passport for all children and young people in the Council's care has been developed, funded by Government Office West Midlands, in partnership with the National Children's Bureau. This ensures an ongoing health record is maintained for each child, which follows them through placements and beyond. Young people were involved in the design of the passport, and have welcomed this document as a way of keeping their health plans and personal details safe, and ensuring they have a comprehensive record of their health history when they leave care. The passport has also been welcomed by social workers and foster carers as a means of ensuring young people's health needs and details are encapsulated in a single document.
- Healthy lifestyles for children and young people in care are successfully promoted via free access to leisure facilities for them and all members of their foster families. A service level agreement with Halo, the Trust responsible for these facilities, has been in place to secure this provision since 2005 and during 2007/2008, 1059 sessions were accessed by looked after children. The Healthy Care Programme has been adopted by Herefordshire to ensure the above services are well co-ordinated and future developments are based on rigorous multi-agency assessment of need.
- Positive progress continues to be made in relation to a comprehensive child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) within the overall CAMHS strategy. Waiting time for assessment is 8 weeks, which is ahead of the national target of 11 weeks. A multi-agency universal training programme is being actively provided and additional funding was made available to ensure no waiting lists for children and young people referred to CLD Youth Counselling Trust, a third sector partner. In 2007/2008, this organisation received 16 referrals of looked after children. The national target of a 10% increase in activity has been achieved and full use has been made of the increased funding allocation to secure additional capacity across the third and statutory sectors.
- Two outreach workers are now in post in Ross and Leominster as part of the targeted service and are able to provide consultations to health visitors and staff across agencies. A vacant psychology post has been reviewed and is now tailored to meet the mental health needs of schools and children and young people in education. Tier 3 CAMHS now offers specialist supervision to school nurses.
- Looked after children have priority access to CAMHS and one psychologist has a specific remit for these children and young people. As part of the recent CAMHS needs assessment, a consultation event was held with 19 looked after children aged between 9 and 18 years who were asked who they talked to when they felt worried about things. One of the key messages from this consultation was concern about access to appropriate support and this is being taken forward as part of the overall CAMHS strategy.
- Services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided via an integrated team. In the past 18 months, all referrals are considered at a single, multi-agency meeting. This provides a structure to share knowledge between professionals so there is a clear understanding of which professionals are involved with any child or young person. This process reduces duplicate referrals and allows professionals to join up their assessment processes, reducing the number of professionals visiting one family. The multi-agency meeting occurs weekly and considers between 15-30 referrals per week.
- The provision of short breaks has also improved with 109 provided during 2007/2008 to a range of families. The Children with Disabilities service continues to have two additional Family Support Workers funded through the PCT Partnership Fund. This has provided additional support to families who have a disabled child. The new staff provide the full range of family support ranging from behaviour modelling and short break sessions to monitoring child protection plans in conjunction with the allocated social worker. In the past 12 months, a service level agreement has been established with a partner agency, providing sessional support and family linked short break care. Referrals for this service come from the Children with Disabilities Team. Services for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be closely linked to the Carer's Hub activity as it develops over the next year.

## **Our areas for improvement**

- Within the overall CAMHS strategy, there are a number of areas of focus for the coming year, including establishing a process of continuous consultation with groups of young people who are traditionally hard to reach in order to ensure that the service they receive is fit for purpose. CAMHS training for universal services and professionals will continue to be developed by the existing outreach workers, together with the CAMHS specialist team. The national target of 18 weeks waiting time to treatment will present a challenge to local services and an action plan is being developed which will focus on new ways of working to achieve the target.

- The level of obesity among children is consistent with national averages. The 2007 weight and height survey showed 8.9% of children in reception class were obese (a slight increase on the 2006 figure of 8.7%) and 16.7% in year 6 (again a slight increase on the 2006 figure of 16.3%). Obesity in Year 6 is an area of focus and is a target in the new Local Area Agreement. However, more children have opted out of the survey this year. This mirrors the national trend and it is generally the obese children that do not take part. An obesity Care Pathway has been developed for referrals from other sources and a working party has been established to incorporate antenatal women and children up to the age of 5, looking at the prevention and identification of obesity in toddlers. A pilot project of the *Mind, Exercise, Nutrition and Diet* (MEND) programme will be run later this year, which involves counselling and lifestyle changes, for children with obesity and their parents.
- Improving dental health of children and young people remains a key priority for the Children's Trust and all children and young people requiring dental care are prioritised. The focus is on preventative work, using a designated consultant and nurse time. An additional part time oral health promotion worker is currently being recruited who will spend some of their time in schools.
- Although admissions of under 16 year olds account for only 5% of all alcoholic-specific hospital admissions, the actual number rose from 9 in 2002 to 30 in 2006. More girls than boys aged 14 and 15 are being admitted. The Teenage Lifestyle Survey in 2006 reported that 26% of respondents had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey. Year 10 girls are a particular concern and figures from CLD confirm that under-16 males and females represent the biggest increase in presentations for alcohol related issues. New investment has been made available in secondary schools to focus on alcohol awareness, using 2XL, a third sector organisation, and a number of initiatives continue to be run in partnership with the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership, including targeted work with young people on alcohol issues through a local service Zig Zag and media campaigns.
- The local roll out of the national Chlamydia Screening Programme commenced in August 2007. The target for 2007 was 2,800 samples from screening sites including schools and further education, training venues, community pharmacies and postal kits. Responses from screening sites were disappointingly low, with many young people not accepting the offer to take a test. An accelerated action plan to offer the service at night clubs and sports centres increased the number of samples; although the target was still not achieved. Between August 2007 and March 2008, 865 samples were successfully processed. The 2008/2009 target is for 17% of 17-24 year olds in Herefordshire to have a Chlamydia screen (which equates to 3,400 samples). In order to achieve this target, activities include expansion of screening sites to include schools, General Practice, Youth Services and community based pharmacies and a sustained media campaign to engage screening sites and young people.
- Good progress is being made on a transition programme and plan for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Momentum on improving transitions needs to be maintained and the pilot activity will be linked to and embedded within the Disability Strategy. This will be further enforced by the progression of a jointly commissioned 'Carers Hub' services (cf Stay Safe).

## Stay Safe

### Our areas of strengths

- Arrangements for combating domestic violence have been strengthened. An Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) has been appointed and has been able to retrieve information in far more depth than the attending Police Officer, which in turn allows the risk assessment and subsequent care plan to be more accurate and robust. The number of care plans for domestic abuse victims has risen from 12 to 25 in the last two months. The specialist domestic abuse court has been established, operating on a weekly basis with an increasing number of domestic abuse cases being referred. Personal victim support and court attendance of the IDVA is expected to reduce the volume of statements withdrawn by victims which, again, will increase prosecutions in this field; and hopefully provide victims and their children with reassurance. A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference working group is in place and conferences are planned to take place in 2008/2009. A recent Domestic Violence conference was well attended, leading to an increased awareness for professionals and practitioners with regard to the criminal justice system remedies in relation to domestic abuse and how they can improve outcomes for victims.
- Improved safeguarding arrangements identified in the last two Annual Performance Assessments continue to be maintained. Government Office West Midlands has confirmed that positive progress is being made in relation to safeguarding. They noted that "Performance is improving in most areas and in some cases very well"
- Significant progress has been made in relation to establishing and embedding the infrastructure for a safe environment in Herefordshire. The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) is operating well and the Chair of the Board has a standing place on the Children's Trust Board. A Children and Young People Sub Group is being established, with a particular focus on recruiting children and young people from vulnerable groups. Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children, which were launched in October 2007 by HSCB and are also available electronically, are reviewed twice a year under the tripartite arrangements and amended or updated accordingly. The HSCB multi-agency training programme has been expanded in 2007/2008 from 24 courses to 70 per annum, with additional specialist courses to link with need and new guidance/legislation.
- The last Tellus survey noted that generally children and young people feel very or quite safe in Herefordshire compared with national figures – 78% feel very/quite safe around the local area (74% nationally), 73% on public transport (63% nationally), 87% going to and from school (85% nationally), 79% in school (85% nationally) and 96% at home (95% nationally).
- A Section 11 audit of all partner agencies has been undertaken by the HSCB and the results and areas highlighted for improvement have been sent to partner agencies with a request for an action plan to be developed. The timescale for completion of the action plans is September 2008 and their implementation will be monitored by the HSCB and reported through the Children's Trust.
- The rate of referrals has levelled off in 2007/2008 to 236 from the high number in 2006/2007 (266). The introduction of the revised Herefordshire Common Assessment Framework across the whole county in 2008/2009 may cause another increase, based on experience in other authorities. 22.1% of referrals were repeat referrals within 12 months which compares favourably with statistical neighbours (26.7% for 2006/2007). Both indicators are part of the set of RADAR performance indicators which continue to be monitored monthly by the Directorate Management Team (DMT).
- There has been an increased focus on timely and regular updating of core assessments, which has resulted in improved completion rates – 71% completion rate in 2007/2008, 5% ahead of target and 10% ahead of the 2006/2007 outturn.
- A successful overseas recruitment of social workers took place in February 2008 resulting in an additional seven social workers scheduled to join the service from September 2008 onwards. The secondment policy for unqualified staff to progress through the qualification route has been extended in order to put in place a career structure and retain local staff. A benchmarking exercise in relation to referrals and initial assessments, undertaken in 2007/2008, highlighted a number of areas for further, more detailed process benchmarking with statistical neighbours, which is due for completion in September 2008.
- Compliance with the requirements to minimise child abuse and neglect are good. There is a consistent application of agreed referral, assessment, planning and review arrangements and clear Interagency Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children (see above). A process for learning from serious

case reviews has been established and Ofsted's first evaluation of a serious case review produced a rating of 'good'.

- Arrangements to support looked after children are good. The looked after children population remains stable, averaging 170 per year and 158 in 2007/2008, with the trend moving downwards. The majority of looked after children come into local authority foster care or are placed for adoption (85% in 2007/2008). Only 12% are in residential accommodation which is always considered as the last resort for provision. A Family Group Conference pilot is being developed in partnership with NCH in order to further develop preventive services for young people on the cusp of care. An over-arching strategic review of preventive services is anticipated to review referral pathways by October 2008.
- Placement stability over the last 12 months (three or more placements) is good at 6% in 2007/2008, as is long term placement stability at 70%. The recent foster care inspection rated the service as 'good with some outstanding features'. Particular strengths noted were the new health passport (cf Be Healthy), children being well matched with foster carers, robust recruitment, assessment and vetting processes for Foster Carers Panel, high level of educational support (cf Enjoy and Achieve), range and quality of consultation with children and young people (cf Positive Contribution), and improved management and procedural infrastructure of the service.
- Support for adopted children and adoptive families is very good and was particularly noted in the recent adoption inspection. There is a low incidence of disruptions for children placed by Herefordshire and with Herefordshire adopters. Adopters are prepared for the realities of parenting an adopted child through training courses and homestudy. A range of ongoing support services is provided, including direct work, support groups, and opportunities for adopted children to have some fun together. In addition, direct and indirect contact is promoted between birth parents and siblings and adoptive families via the Letterbox system and birth parents have a choice of counselling from an independent agency or Herefordshire adoption social worker when adoption has been identified as the plan for their child.
- Planning and provision for looked after children is very good. 99% of reviews were completed on time in 2007/2008 and 11.7% of looked after children were adopted in 2007/2008, a significant improvement on 2006/2007. This has had a positive impact on the educational attainment (cf Enjoy and Achieve) and health of looked after children (cf Be Healthy).
- Increased service provision for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has led to more families having access to short breaks (cf Be Healthy). The options have increased providing families with additional choice, for example, via the ongoing additional Family Support Worker hours, sessional support or family based short breaks. This activity will be further enhanced through the delivery of the agreed strategies for children and young people with disabilities and the integrated Carer's Hub model.
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are in place and a MAPPA 2 Co-ordinator is now in post in Herefordshire. The inter-agency MAPPA 2 & 3 process, although resource intensive, clearly provides a sound forum for information sharing, raising concerns and a shared action response. The newly implemented MAPP 2 partnership provides an arena for the identification of potential lower level / less immediate offending, enabling agencies to reach children who potentially become vulnerable to matters which level 3 MAPPA would not consider. It also provides support to agencies normally entrusted with child protection and a further safeguard to any inter-agency strategy and/or conference.
- Consultation on improving family support highlighted the issue of 'hidden harm' for the children of substance misusing parents. The issues are complex, there may be a risk of a child following the parent's behaviour, the child may take on caring responsibilities, and extended family members may take on the parenting role. There has been positive dialogue between the different agencies and partnerships that have a stake in improving the outcomes of members of such families. A Hidden Harm Action Plan has been produced to help ensure that children are safeguarded and their families receive appropriate support.

## **Our areas for improvement**

- To continue to address the staffing issues in children's social care, there is a clear recruitment and retention strategy in place. Agreement for a further overseas recruitment campaign to Australia has been secured for July 2008. The outcomes of the process benchmarking with statistical neighbours, due for completion in September 2008, will be used to further improve performance in relation to initial assessments.

Performance against timescales for initial assessments remains a key challenge for the Council – 57.4% were completed to timescale in 2007/2008 and 52.1% of referrals led to initial assessments.

- One of the knock-on effects of the significant staffing shortages referred to above has been allocation of child protection cases to social workers, particularly in the final quarter of 2007/2008. Although, at the end of March 2008, 14.3% of the children subject to child protection plans had not been allocated to a social worker, by the middle of April 2008, this had reduced to 0%. The issue of unallocated child protection cases arose shortly before the end of March and is not a long standing problem but one that commands constant monitoring. If cases cannot be allocated for any period at all, they are kept under close monitoring and review, with interim child protection plans agreed by the service manager and team manager and shared with other agency professionals who are already involved. This indicator has been added to the RADAR indicators for scrutiny by DMT on a monthly basis.
- Particular attention is currently being applied to the implementation of systems to further improve the safeguarding infrastructure in Herefordshire, notably the Integrated Children's System (ICS), 'ContactPoint' and a new social care IT system, Corelogic Frameworki. Comprehensive action plans are in place, with supporting training programmes, with implementation of ICS and Frameworki by November 2008 and ContactPoint by March 2009 (cf Management of Services).
- The last Tellus survey showed that 19% of children considered that they had been bullied in school in the last month, compared with 17% nationally. 48% felt that their school deals very or quite well with bullying, compared with 57% nationally. An anti-bullying policy was launched in January 2008 which applies to all Children and Young People's Directorate (CYPD) settings. Schools have access to a web-based database for logging incidents of bullying. Take up of the provision has been slow but is steadily improving and an audit will be undertaken each year with schools to assess take up and continue to encourage schools to log incidents.
- The need to implement a systematic approach to CRB checking has been identified as an area for improvement across children's and adults services. Owing to the implications for the wider Council and PCT, the joint Assistant Chief Executive (HR) is the identified lead and is taking forward a corporate action plan. It has also been included on the joint corporate risk register.
- Although significant progress has been made in relation to establishing HSCB and the Safeguarding Procedures, attention is now focused on embedding them and making clearer links with the Children's Trust. The Child Death Overview Panel was implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and is continuing to develop in response to Government requirements. Recruitment of an Independent Chair is underway with an appointment expected in September 2008. HSCB is working to ensure that the Children and Young People's Sub Group is established with clear terms of reference and a robust way of working
- Support for young carers is important and a 'web based' Carers Hub, funded by the Council and the PCT, is being established by Herefordshire Carers Support. The Hub will provide a signposting service for adult and young carers. It will also provide services to young carers including groups and one to one support. A specific post is in place for parent/carers of children with disabilities. This role will support this group of parents in a range of areas, for example, accessing appropriate support groups, one to one support and referrals on to other services. One of the key outcomes for the Hub will be to facilitate improved integrated family support where there are families that require provision from both adult and child focussed services. The Carers Hub will also provide professionals with access to carers' views within the county to continue to develop services to assist them with their caring responsibilities (cf Be Healthy).
- Private Fostering policy is clear and well understood within social care. However, there is a need to relate more explicitly some of the over-arching policies and guidance to the requirements of the 2005 Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations and the National Minimum Standards and Replacement Guidance. Linked with this process, there is a need to raise the profile of private fostering once again. This is particularly relevant given new minority communities arriving in Herefordshire. In response, a review process has been established to focus on this specific area, with a re-launch of the policy area proposed for September 2008.



## Enjoy and Achieve

### Our areas of strengths

- Outcomes for children and young people in this area have improved significantly through a substantial improvement in educational standards at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.
- The Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) data shows that Herefordshire is above the national average in average point scores and in the percentage of children achieving a good score in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication Language and Literacy. The county's model of moderating the FSP reflects best practice of shared observations and professional dialogue.
- Personal development and wellbeing are very good as a result of explicit support from the Council's 'Values' education programme. Herefordshire won a Leading Aspect Award for this work across its schools in June 2007. OFSTED results up to March 2008 showed that 93% of primary schools achieve good or better ratings for Personal Development and Well Being. In addition, 95% of Herefordshire's primary schools are delivering Primary Modern Foreign Language provision, compared with 85% of schools nationally. 86% of Herefordshire's schools are participating in the eco-schools initiative, the second highest participation rate in the country.
- Key Stage 2 results improved significantly in 2007, reflecting the focus of work by the Council. 77% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 Mathematics in 2007, an improvement of 2% and now in line with national performance. These results were the highest in the West Midlands. Boys' performance at Level 5 or above was 2% above the national average and girls showed a 4% improvement. English has improved at Level 4 or above to 81% and is above the national average. Boys' English results have improved by 4% although girls continue to outperform boys at both Level 4 and 5. Level 5 performances have improved by 5% for boys and 2% for girls and are above the national figures and in the upper quartile for year on year change. In 2007, Herefordshire Key Stage 2 results showed above national for two levels' progress in both English and Maths, with good improvement since 2005. Herefordshire is above national for combined attainment in both English and Maths at Level 4 and writing conversion rates at Level 2-4 are above national.
- Key Stage 3 results continue to improve. 79% of pupils achieved Level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 English in 2007 which is a 2.5% improvement on 2006/2007 and 5% above the national average. Although there was a slight drop of 0.8% on the previous year, 78% achieved Level 5 or above in Mathematics, 2% above national figures. This reflected a drop in results in this subject nationally, although the drop was lower locally than nationally. 78% achieved Level 5 or above in Science, 5% above the national figures.
- Nearly every young person gained at least one GCSE or equivalent qualification with 93.6% achieving 5 A\*-G GCSEs, including English and Maths. 62% achieved 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent, in line with national figures. A particular success was Wyebriidge Sports College which saw a 19% improvement from 33% to 52%. The gap between 5 A\*-C and 5 A\*-C including English and Maths reduced from 13.6% to 10.6%. Results in both English and Maths separately improved. At Wigmore High School, 93% of pupils achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs.
- During 2007/2008, no high schools were in negative Ofsted category and Herefordshire had the highest percentage of high schools in the outstanding Ofsted category in the country. All high schools and the special secondary school have specialist school status.
- Early years provision has been enhanced throughout the county. 99.2% of three year olds accessed a free early years place in 2007/2008. There is a robust training programme in place for early years providers which is developing the quality of the workforce. A growing number of practitioners are able to access the Early Years Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree and training for Early Years Professional Status. A comprehensive 3 day training course has been delivered to prepare all settings and schools for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework which becomes statutory in September 2008. Quality Improvement Processes are having an impact on the quality of settings, with 98% settings currently judged by Ofsted to be at least satisfactory and 65% either good or outstanding.
- Support for speech and language development is a key strength. 2007 saw a significant reduction (approximately 30%) in the number of referrals to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) for pre-school children. There are a number of contributory factors including a variety of groups, such as Sign and Rhyme, Fun2Talk, Elklan – Let's Talk with under 5s, which are held for parents and children at Children's Centres. Children's Centres have been instrumental in enabling this countywide approach by funding SALT. In addition, there is a rolling programme of Elklan courses for early years practitioners helping them to

support the speech and language development of children under 5. This has been accessed by 50% of settings and 500 practitioners and is recognised nationally to be a model of best practice.

- Educational attainment of looked after children remains stable, in spite of the difficulties faced by this cohort and the high proportion of children with statements of special educational need (SEN) (39.42% in the full cohort and 40% of those leaving school). 75% of looked after children leaving school in 2007 achieved at least one GCSE A\*-G or equivalent, 60% achieved 5 or more A\*-G and 15% achieved 5 or more A\*-C. Attendance of primary school pupils remains stable with 3.85% of sessions missed. An agreement has been reached with the National Strategies advisor regarding missed marks for young people absent from school attending therapy on a regular basis. The educational achievements of looked after children are closely monitored and support to social workers, carers and schools is provided on educational matters by the Education Liaison Support Service (ELSS) who also provide high quality training. Every school has a designated teacher for looked after children and since 2005/2006, there have been no permanent exclusions of looked after children. Transition points are closely monitored and supported by the service. All school trips are centrally funded and taster sessions of activities to promote self-esteem are promoted and funded through a charity. A successful reward scheme is operated to recognise achievements, however small, and includes a highly successful annual celebration evening.
- 100% of statements of SEN, including and excluding exceptions, were issued during the year maintaining excellent performance from 2006/2007. Final statements have also been issued in a timely manner and performance in meeting the 26 week deadline has been good over the past two years. Appeals to the SEN and Disability Tribunal continue to be low with only two new appeals registered in the calendar year 2007. The council seeks to work actively with parents to resolve concerns as far as is possible and only one of these registered appeals proceeded to a hearing.
- The number of statements of SEN continues to reduce as a consequence of funding and support arrangements focussed on enabling mainstream schools to assess and intervene purposefully at an early stage without a statement of SEN. Outreach arrangements from local specialist provisions have supplemented central support teams to help mainstream schools make arrangements that achieve positive outcomes for children even where there are relatively significant special needs. Overall numbers of statements at the January 2008 census show an 8.3% reduction on the January 2007 census number.
- Herefordshire has met its 2007/2008 target of supporting a third of its schools through a thorough process of self-evaluation in the area of SEN. The Quality Mark in the Self Evaluation of SEN has been well received by schools and the three year target set for all Herefordshire schools to participate is on track. A cluster support structure has been developed with primary schools in anticipation of the Inclusion Development Programme. 100% of Herefordshire primary schools are associated with supportive Intervention Partnerships and these will play a key role in the dissemination of the Inclusion Development Programme.
- There were 31 permanent exclusions in 2007/2008, including 8 primary pupils. The current number of exclusions in 2008/2009 has reduced to 11, including one primary pupil. The Social Inclusion Officer has been actively involved with five successful Managed Transfers of primary pupils and works closely with staff in all schools supporting Pastoral Support Programmes, appropriate school support and help available from external agencies in order to prevent exclusion. Training for school governors of the discipline committee takes place each autumn and schools are regularly provided with annual local statistics and updated exclusion guidance from DCSF.
- Overall, attendance in both secondary and primary schools is in line with the national average. Three secondary schools were designated priority for persistent absence (PA). Action plans were implemented in these schools, with a range of additional support offered, resulting in improvement. One school has improved its performance sufficiently to no longer be designated a priority for PA. The Education Welfare Service has begun project work with primary schools, to increase awareness of the importance of school attendance from the earliest age. It has also targeted attendance awareness raising for families with children moving into reception class. The Service has been involved in the first phase of the CAF and supports schools in undertaking CAF work, with the Education Welfare Officer taking the lead professional role where appropriate.
- Family support provision has developed opportunities to access activities that enable families to enjoy and achieve together. For example, Leominster Children's Centre operates a successful group for dads and their children, which has helped fathers to form stronger bonds with their young children. The targeted support of the Children's Fund Panel also supports families to develop their relationships through structured activities, including family outdoor pursuit activities, mask making, golf, or bowling. Such activities have

helped parents to understand their responsibilities, improve their capacity to be good parents and improve family relationships.

- The Council's Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) programme aims to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents in order that they can help their children learn and improve. The Adult & Community Learning Service, of which the FLLN programme is a part, achieved a 'good' status in their Ofsted inspection in 2007. There has been increased uptake of below level two parents attending courses and also achievement of National Skills for Life qualifications over the last year in the FLLN programme.

## **Our areas for improvement**

- Improving attainment at Key Stage 1 is a priority for the Council and its partners. This is being taken forward by the universal offer of training on the Renewed Framework with particular emphasis on guided writing and number concepts in mathematics. Targeted maths intervention for Key Stage 1 using models and images (structured number line work for schools with poor Maths Key Stage 1 results and NUMICON programme as a Quality First approach) is also being used.
- Work is ongoing to maintain and improve performance at Key Stage 4 and the achievement of 5 A\*-G at GCSE or equivalent. This includes improving attendance overall and the attendance of targeted pupils through the development of Behaviour Partnerships. Greater curriculum breadth and choice will also be provided at Key Stage 4 (cf Economic Wellbeing).
- The percentage of looked after children missing more than 25 days' schooling is the focus of sustained work by the Council and its partners. Closer monitoring has identified issues relating to the attendance of young people in private agency placements/residential providers. Ensuring better attendance is being addressed through tighter monitoring of private providers through the Individual Placement Agreements. Attendance of looked after children at Key Stages 3 and 4 is a particular issue.
- Focus on reduction of persistent absence in identified secondary schools is being targeted through the attendance strategy and the Education Welfare Service. This requires access to reliable and timely data, information and analysis and work has begun to address this during 2008/2009. Attendance functions need to be more closely integrated with school improvement. A focus on primary school persistent absence is a new priority for the National Strategies Team. A review of the Education Welfare Service is underway to meet these new challenges, with recommendations for future service configuration to be made by the end of June 2008.
- In relation to early years provision, the focus is on improving the quality and capacity of provision. The target is to have all settings graded good or better by Ofsted. This is being addressed by ensuring all settings attend EYFS training and increasing the number of settings involved in rigorous Quality Improvement Processes. There is a need to improve outcomes for children on the Foundation Stage Profile for lower achieving groups, such as children with English as an Additional language (EAL), boys and the travelling community. Training has been delivered in all schools and settings in relation to the national guidance on supporting boys and children with EAL in the EYFS. A contract has been agreed with Greenways Play, a dedicated organisation working with the travelling community, to deliver portage based activities
- The gender divide at all levels of educational provision, including early years, remains a challenge for the Council and its partners. Whilst boys' performance improved, there is still a significant writing gap between boys and girls at Level 4 and above, with girls achieving more highly. In Maths, conversion rates show girls less likely to make two levels progress from Key Stage 1 to 2, and are less likely to achieve higher levels at both Key Stage 1 and 2. Actions taken so far include writing focus on media literacy to encourage reluctant writers through the renewed framework, and Film Projects to promote visual literacy skills. An action research project into girls and maths involving 10 primary schools aims to improve teaching and learning through the use of 'girl-friendly' strategies.
- Concerted support is being given to the two primary schools in the negative Ofsted category with an expectation that they will show substantial improvement within the expected timeframe. One school has been removed from 'Notice to Improve' (NTI) having achieved a good rating overall, and one has been removed having achieved satisfactory progress. In 2007/2008, one further primary has been in NTI and as a result of council support, has achieved a satisfactory HMI monitoring report. A further school is in the Special Measures category and local monitoring shows satisfactory progress.

## Make a Positive Contribution

### Our areas of strengths

- Excellent consultation processes are in place with children and young people, including the Youth Council, Shadow Children's Trust Board and school councils. 95% of schools have school councils. The makeup of the Youth Council and Shadow Board reflects the profile of the population and specific groups, including looked after children, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are also represented.
- Consultation with children and young people has proactively shaped the priorities in the new Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011. In addition to the Shadow Board, which meets regularly and whose members participate in all Groups of the Children's Trust, a major consultation event in October 2007 ("You Talk, We Listen") highlighted key concerns for young people and was the basis for formulating the Hear By Right action plan.
- The 2007 Youth Survey reported that 31% of children and young people feel that they can influence decisions affecting local services, and this compares well with the figure for adult perceptions which is 29%. A similar percentage (31%) of children and young people feel that Herefordshire Council does enough to give them opportunity to influence decisions, a significant improvement on the baseline figure of 13.8% (2003).
- Volunteering rates for children and young people remain high, and well ahead of adult rates. The 2006 Teenage Lifestyle Survey revealed that 35% of children and young people undertook voluntary work at least once a month. The last Tellus survey showed that 75% had done something to help family and friends and 28% had done something to help a neighbour or someone else in the local area. Successful bids for Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF) grants have been made by members of the VOICES group of looked after children, and have directly benefited children and young people in care. 980 young people have been involved as project leaders in making applications to the YOF and YCF and 6885 young people have been potential beneficiaries of the activities and facilities provided. Projects have covered a wide range of activities, including Ross Youth Music (community music workshops, training and performance).
- Participation of looked after children is actively encouraged and 100% of children and young people participate in their reviews. VOICES provides feedback on services for children and young people in care and runs a comprehensive programme of events, courses and activities throughout the year for this group. The young people concerned are regularly informed about how their input has made a difference. An advocacy service has been in place since 2001 for looked after children and is managed through the Connexions Service. The average referral rate is four cases per month, with the number of interventions in relation to each case ranging from one to 90. The length of the advocacy support provided varies greatly, depending on the complexity of the issue raised and ease of resolution and can be from a day to a year.
- The 'Prevent and Deter' Strategy continues to be effective in identifying those young people at risk of committing anti-social behaviour and putting in place programmes to reduce this risk. The assessment of the scheme by Government Office in September 2007 rated it 'green' and there is good agency participation. The decision making processes have been streamlined and multi-agency programmes are now delivered in a more coherent manner. The Youth Offending Service (YOS) now support the police in assessing the risks associated with young people committing anti-social behaviour at the ABC stage. Support for families is also being provided with the scheme co-ordinating the process for delivering parenting provision linked to anti-social behaviour referrals. The success of the scheme can be shown by the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System in 2007/2008 which was 290, substantially below the target of 322 and the previous year's outturn of 396. This represents a reduction in first time entrants of 14.7% compared to the baseline year 2005/2006.
- The rate of recidivism in 2007/2008 showed a significant downward trend at 46.95%, below the target of 47.5% and below the previous year's outturn of 50%. The YOS implemented a new management of risk and risk led case planning policy during 2007, and most practitioners have been trained to deliver the Pathways Plus offending behaviour programme.
- The proportion of young offenders aged 16 and over who are in education, employment or training (ETE) was 74% for 2007/2008, an improvement on the 2006/2007 outturn of 45%. The increase in performance is partly due to the implementation of the YOS Ngage Project which provides support to young offenders in seeking and maintaining ETE placements.

- Transition pathway planning continues to be a high priority for the Council and its partners. A multi-agency transitions protocol has been developed which outlines the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved in the transition of young people from age 14 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and their families. A scheme is currently being piloted with Barrs Court Special School and Weobley High School using new Transition Plan paperwork which meets the Government's new agenda of personalisation and is due to end in July 2008. It monitors young people who have statements of SEN or who are on banded funding levels 3 and 4, and who are in years 9 to year 11 (Weobley) and up to year 14 (Barrs Court). An evaluation of the scheme has been running in parallel with the pilot and early indications show that this has had a positive response.
- In addition to the pilot, a multi-agency transition-planning meeting takes place quarterly. This enables strategic knowledge of the number of young people progressing through the system and their conditions. It provides the opportunity to discuss particularly complex individuals, who may require significant and diverse services as they move through the transition phase and on into adulthood (cf Be Healthy).
- A wide range of organisations, including the third sector, have formed a strong purposeful Play Partnership for Herefordshire. A robust action plan has been developed in response to consultation and in line with the Herefordshire Play Strategy. Approximately 5,000 children and young people aged 8-19 are currently benefiting from a wide range of play centre activities.
- Extended schools and Children's Centres are working together to provide access to a wide range of opportunities for children and young people, as well as increasing levels of family support. For example, Coningsby Children's Centre provides babysitting courses for teenagers drawn from the local high school and youth centres. The CAMHS outreach worker based in the Children's Centres provides professional support to Extended Schools as well as the Centres.

## **Our areas for improvement**

- Whilst there are very good, and well developed, consultation processes in place with children and young people, the aim is to develop the consultation processes with vulnerable groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The development of the Children and Young People sub group of the Safeguarding Board is one area for development but other mechanisms are needed to ensure the meaningful engagement of vulnerable groups in the Children's Trust and service delivery.
- The Hear by Right action plan has been developed, with extensive engagement of children and young people and is now being implemented. Better communication and involvement were key themes and in response a website with positive activities has been set up. A new communication strategy is being developed and more resources have been allocated to hearing the voice of young people.
- In line with *Aiming High for young people: A ten year strategy for positive activities*, promotion and mapping of positive activities is in place through myherefordshire.com website but needs further development. Research on the uptake by vulnerable groups will be taken forward by the Positive Contribution Outcome Group, in conjunction with the Vulnerable Young Peoples Group, in 2008/2009 with the intention of commissioning activities to address gaps identified. The 2007 Youth Survey indicated that, across the county, 50% of young people were unsatisfied with activities and places to go in Herefordshire and this figure rose to 64% in South Wye.
- In 2007/2008, there was an increase in the proportion of looked after children issued with final warnings, reprimands or convictions over the previous year's outturn. The YOS and CYPD are working on a joint protocol to address the issues, following a detailed analysis of the relevant cohorts of young people and the types of crimes in which they are involved.
- Reducing the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System and the rate of recidivism continue to be priorities. The YOS is reviewing its delivery in Herefordshire to ensure better targeting of referrals. It has formed an interventions working group to review and evaluate current YOS interventions, establish a core offer and ensure consistent implementation of the Pathways Plus programme.
- There is a need to ensure that children and young people have a stronger voice in terms of their teaching and learning, and developing key aspects of personalisation. Practice in some schools is very strong in this area and can be the catalyst for improvement across the county
- Although there has been significant increase in performance in relation to young offenders in ETE, it remains below the national target of 90% and this area will continue to be a focus for improvement.

- Proposals for the development of a Children in Care Council are being finalised, placing this development at the heart of a revised governance structure to oversee the Council's corporate parenting agenda. The Council should be in place by September 2008, with tangible evidence of the impact of young people on strategic and operational plans by November 2008.
- Following the pilot for the transition pathway planning outlined above, the focus will be on evaluating and learning the lessons of the pilot and then rolling it out across the county. The pilot schools have changed their transition planning, adopting person centred approaches to transition which involves taking into account every aspect of the young person's life to help shape their future. Connexions Transition Team in partnership with the council, Mencap and Family Carers have held several events for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, their carers and families to inform them of future opportunities.
- There is much good work underway to help parents to develop their parenting skills in Herefordshire. However, there is a need to ensure that this work is better coordinated and effectively targeted to meet identified need. A parenting support action plan is being developed with the wider work to reshape family support.

## Achieve Economic Wellbeing

### Our areas of strengths

- The outcomes for young people in terms of basic qualifications and training are very good, with 74.8% of learners gaining qualifications at Level 2, a 2% point improvement on 2005/2006. The improvement is replicated at Level 3 which stands at 49.2%, a 1% point increase. Both levels are above the national average. Take up of post 16 education and training is also strong with 95.6% of year 11 children in 2007/2008 continuing in post 16 learning, significantly above the national average of 87.2% in 2006/2007.
- Post 16 attainment in the county is very good. The average point score per student for A/AS levels is above the English average. The Sixth Form College is a Beacon provider with success rates at all levels above the national averages. Whilst the rates at Herefordshire College of Technology (GFE) are below the national rate, they are consistently improving year on year with the gap closing on the national averages. Work based learning is also of a good quality with success rates above national averages.
- The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) fell again in 2007/2008 to 5.4%, one percentage point below the 2006/2007 outturn and below the national figure for 2006/2007 of 7.7%. Despite the uncertainties around the current economic situation, the county is on course to meet the 2010 Government target of 4.8% and has included a target of 4.7% in its new Local Area Agreement.
- The Council recognises the importance of strategic leadership of the 14-19 agenda, which is reflected in the current change programme (cf Management of Services) and specifically the creation of a post at second tier level of Head of Improvement and Inclusion. This role is being carried out by an interim Head of Service who, with the Director of Children's Services, is providing strategic leadership for joint planning and commissioning, addressing the challenges of the Machinery of Government changes and developing major collaborations required by the implementation of Diplomas
- The 14-19 Consortium continues to develop with roles and responsibilities becoming embedded. The Consortium meets regularly and drives the working groups which look at learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD), information, advice and guidance (IAG) and Curriculum as well as the four Local Area Networks. The Consortium is currently considering the impact of the Machinery of Government changes to ensure that the structure will be fit for purpose in coming years. The Education Business Partnership is already embedded into the 14-19 Team alongside Aimhigher and both programmes successfully interact with school partners.
- The 14-19 Education Plan is in development and consultation activities are currently planned to engage both directorate colleagues and external partners and stakeholders in its development. Partners will determine the priorities for the next period, which will include clarifying and refining the structures already in place. These activities will dovetail with the stakeholder engagement and planning activities linked to the Machinery of Government and should strengthen communication between stakeholders. The Education plan will assess the commissioning needs of the 14-19 Partnership as well as contain the detail of the Diploma Strategy and Employer Engagement Strategy.
- Curriculum Development has been a significant priority in the last year with a countywide curriculum group and network operational groups facilitating relationships between schools and other providers in order to bring about changes to the Key Stage 4 curriculum offer (cf Enjoy and Achieve). Schools are liaising to offer collaborative programmes, mainly BTECs, and also advertising amongst colleagues so students from nearby schools can infill programmes that are undersubscribed. As well as these informal arrangements, the two Young Apprenticeships (YA) programmes continue to run successfully with the first Herefordshire cohort due to complete this summer and funding guaranteed for further starts in September. In addition, Wyebridge Sports College is leading a home grown YA in Sport to meet identified needs that national YA funding could not support.
- The 14-19 Consortium passed through the Diploma Gateway with five lines agreed for a 2010 start and three lines for a 2009 start, pending the outcome of the three appeals submitted. The council has also been successful in securing approximately £270,000 of funding from the LSC and European Social Fund (ESF) to run the School Engagement and Pre-NEETs programme for disaffected and disengaged Key Stage 4 learners. This will build on the successes of the previous ESF funded programmes to reduce the numbers of young people becoming NEET.

- As well as offering an increased number of applied and vocational options, schools are being supported and guided by the 14-19 team to improve the offer of work related learning (WRL) activities. Work experience placements are complemented by a range of other activities including interviews, talks, tasters, visits and countywide enterprise events.
- Connexions Personal Advisors are linked to all schools, colleges, Pupil Referral Units and special schools with partnership agreements in place in all those establishments setting out joint arrangements for delivering IAG. Information is provided to all those in year 9, year 11, in post-16 education and all parents/carers of year 9 and year 11 children on options, progression routes and job search. The Connexions service has been commissioned for the period April 2008 to March 2010.
- The percentage of looked after children who are NEET continues to show excellent performance with only one care leaver out of the identified cohort not in education, employment or training. The Aftercare Service continues to develop a range of services and opportunities that support care leavers into education, employment and training (EET), including a worker with a specific responsibility to source, facilitate, support and enable care leavers to be in EET. This worker also provides support and guidance to other Aftercare Workers case managing difficult to place care leavers. Corporate parent links have been re-established with other services within the council and partner organisations such as AMEY. 100% of care leavers aged 19 are living in suitable accommodation. This has been achieved by increasing the number of supported lodgings providers and supported independent living units.
- Young people in care and care leavers are regularly trained and supported to interview professional staff, up to and including the Director of Children's Services. Two young people who are 'experts' by experience, in that they have been in care, are currently employed by the Council in posts specifically designed for a care leaver.
- 77.9% of children with disabilities aged over 14 years of age had a transition plan in 2007/2008. 100% of 18 year olds had a plan in place before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Transition reviews take place for all year 9 statemented pupils and those banded level 3 and 4. All year 11 young people and those in post-16 education with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have individual guidance interviews and Section 140 assessments if they are moving on to further learning.
- Direct payments have been in place for children with disabilities for a number of years, enabling families to employ a carer for their child with assistance from a local organisation that can support the recruitment process, payroll etc. A number of families, particularly those with terminally ill children, feel unable to manage the responsibilities of being an employer at a very difficult time for the family and other services assist families in these circumstances.

## **Our areas for improvement**

- Workforce reform for 14-19 requires further development. Although local arrangements are in place, training requirements identified and opportunities are sourced, there is a need for a more joined-up and strategic approach to this area. This will be addressed by the collaboration between the 14-19 Consortium and team and the newly appointed Workforce Strategy Manager (cf Management of Services).
- Data collection processes in respect of all 14-19 learners need to be streamlined. The directorate's Performance team is being developed to support this, with input from the LSC and Connexions in particular. The data collection needs have been identified and processes and systems will begin to be implemented. This will improve tracking for all learners but also specific vulnerable groups including NEETS, looked after children, teenage parents and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Full-time education provision for those with learning difficulties is good but there needs to be better progression routes into work-based learning opportunities. Data collected for the Area Prospectus is being used to analyse the current offer and research is planned to determine whether there is significant breadth of choice for learners. This will dovetail with the impending roll out of the Foundation Learning Tier where progression routes and gaps in provision will be clearly demonstrated. Level 1 programmes are also being developed (in advance of the Foundation Learning Tier) and procured to address the relatively low levels of learners with LDD engaging in Apprenticeships. This programme will seek to provide a clear progression route for learners with additional support needs.
- Whilst there is average progression from Entry to Employment (E2E) into work based learning and further education etc, performance this year shows that the numbers progressing into employment without training



are high. Work is ongoing to address this through the development of the Just for You and Youth Express programmes (contracts funded by the ESF and LSC) which provide intensive personalised support for young people who are NEET or at risk of being NEET. This complements E2E and aims to improve progression into work based learning.

- The number of young people completing an Apprenticeship declined last year and this has been identified as a key issue within the Children's Trust Economic Well Being Outcome Group. As the largest employers in the county, the Council and PCT have committed to the Public Sector Skills Challenge which seeks to increase the uptake of Apprenticeships within the public sector locally.

## **PART D – The management of services for children and young people, the use of resources and the capacity to improve**

### **The management of services for children and young people**

#### **Our areas of strength**

- Significant progress has been made on the overall capacity to improve since the last APA in terms of ambition, planning and performance management and partnership working; all of which underpin the key strengths in delivery, outlined in the previous pages, across the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. This has been further strengthened by the partnership between the PCT and the Council, providing increased opportunities for different ways of working. In particular, the newly appointed Directors of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning have already signalled a clear commitment to invest in children and young people, recognising that they are the adult population of the future.
- The vision and ambition to deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire is huge and there is a commitment to improvement and change across all the organisations involved with delivering services for children and young people. The Director of Children's Services is leading a major change programme, involving the reorganisation of the CYPD, in order to further improve capacity and address the challenges of the *Every Child Matters* agenda. A new senior management structure has been agreed and two new Heads of Service will start in September 2008. In the meantime, interim Heads of Service have been appointed to take forward specific tasks, recognising the potential of losing momentum on key aspects of work during the change process. The reorganisation will deliver locality work, aligning with the revised Herefordshire Common Assessment Framework and the Family Support and Parenting Strategies and will be operational from January 2009 onwards.
- Improvements have been made to the management structures to deliver the *Every Child Matters* agenda. Children's Trust arrangements were introduced in Herefordshire in July 2007, building on the previous Children and Young People's Partnership. The Trust Board is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services and Welfare and the Management Group is chaired by the Director of Children's Services. The Third Sector is a key partner in the Children's Trust arrangements, being represented at all levels. The Shadow Board of children and young people plays a critical role in the Trust's work, has representatives from different age groups and includes children with additional needs. The Management Group comprises the leads for the five Outcome Groups and the chairing of each Outcome Group is allocated across the partner agencies:
  - *Be Healthy – PCT*
  - *Stay Safe – Herefordshire Council*
  - *Enjoy and Achieve – Herefordshire Council*
  - *Positive Contribution – Youth Offending Service*
  - *Economic Wellbeing – Connexions*
- The priorities in the new Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 have been developed through a comprehensive mapping of need and user feedback. The needs mapping, which has also informed the draft Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, led by the Director of Public Health, included:
  - analysis of performance indicators and other research information, including population estimates;
  - survey outcomes, including the Youth Survey, Tellus2 survey and Teenage Lifestyle Survey
  - consultation with children and young people, including the Shadow Board and the major consultation event in October 2007 ('You Talk, We Listen')
  - review of the 2004-2007 Plan, led by each of the Outcome Groups of the Children's Trust
  - feedback from inspections, including the 2007 APA and the 2007 Priorities meeting
- The Children and Young People's Plan provides the overarching framework within which individual partners, as defined in the Children Act 2004, deliver their contribution. For the CYPD, this contribution is set out in the three-year directorate plan which, in turn, is supported by a network of team plans and then individual staff appraisal (Staff Review and Development). The directorate plan is structured around the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes and for each outcome identifies the high level actions, indicative budgets and teams who will deliver the objectives identified. Other statutory partnerships, including the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership, have business and action plans which identify the actions and resources needed to deliver their contribution to the overarching priorities.

- The CYPD completed a full programme of equality impact assessments in 2007/2008, in line with its Comprehensive Equality Policy and the Council is working, with the PCT, towards a single diversity scheme for both organisations. Other partners represented in the Children's Trust have equality schemes and action plans in place.
- The performance management infrastructure has improved significantly through the introduction of a comprehensive quarterly Performance Digest, including data and analysis of all national and local performance indicators, and monthly RADAR performance indicators. The performance function of the CYPD is responsible for performance management across the wider Children's Trust arrangements, thus ensuring an integrated and flexible approach. Quarterly reporting timetables are aligned to enable Outcome Groups to consider their performance and report, on an exception basis, to the Management Group and Trust Board. The performance function provides advice and challenge to each level of the Children's Trust arrangements to ensure a continual focus on outcomes and improvement.
- The role of elected Members in performance management has also improved. The Cabinet Members for Children's Services and the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee review the Digest and the Cabinet Members also review the RADAR performance indicators on a monthly basis. A briefing session for the Scrutiny Committee was held in January 2008 to look at the content of the Digest and identify how they can use it to challenge performance.

### **Our areas for improvement**

- The change programme involving the reorganisation of the CYPD is in the early stages of implementation and will be operational from January 2009. The new senior management structure will be in place from September 2008 and the new Heads of Service will play a key role in designing and implementing the structures needed to deliver the vision for children's services in Herefordshire.
- Although the Children's Trust has come a long way in organisational terms, there is a recognition at the Board level that further improvement is required to embed the arrangements further. This is being supported by the wider joint working arrangements between the Council and the PCT. Key areas for improvement identified by the Children's Trust Board are commissioning (cf Use of Resources), ambition and strategic lead; and performance management and accountability (see below).
- In relation to performance management, particular emphasis is now being given to better analysis of data and then interpreting it into management action at the front line. There is also a need to integrate all elements of performance, including finance. The role of elected Members in supporting performance management is also being further developed. Peer support through the Improvement and Development Agency is being provided to the Lead Member for Children's Services and Welfare and the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to increase their effectiveness. Specific briefing sessions for all Members of the Council are timetabled over the next two years to focus on specific areas of performance; the first of these in April 2008 considered the new Children and Young People's Plan and the work of the Outcome Groups and Shadow Board. The RADAR performance indicators have also been refined for 2008/2009 to focus on areas requiring closer scrutiny.
- A number of strategies were developed and agreed by the Children's Trust in 2007/2008, including the family support strategy and children with disabilities strategy, following extensive consultation with practitioners and service users. Clear action plans are being developed to ensure that they are capable of being delivered on the ground in order to make a real impact on children, young people and their families. Interim Heads of Service have been brought into the CYPD to provide further capacity to do this and provide some continuity in the move to the new structures. Progress will be actively monitored to ensure the desired outcomes are being achieved, services are being reshaped to include family support elements and costs are being contained. This will consolidate the move to locality based working and full implementation of the revised Herefordshire Common Assessment Framework.
- The first phase of the revised Herefordshire Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child was completed in 2007/2008 with an external evaluation. The directorate and partners have considered the first phase of implementation and have now put detailed plans in place to ensure a successful countywide CAF approach is in place through 2008/2009 in line with an agreed action plan, including a full programme of multi agency practitioner training.
- A multi agency workforce strategy was developed in 2007/2008. The Council also engaged with the Children's Development Workforce Council, contributing to the development of an interactive Core Skills Training tool. This should be available for implementation in 2008/2009. The Council is strengthening its

lead role by appointing a Workforce Strategy Manager to drive forward the strategy and coordinate activities across the directorate and with partners.

## **The use of resources**

### **Our areas of strength**

- A pooled budget is in place between the Council and the PCT for specialist out of county placements. This is managed through a Joint Agency Meeting, led at a senior level across partner agencies. It is supported by the directorate's Contracts Officer who provides professional support and expertise in order to improve value for money for all partner agencies.
- Social care contracts and service level agreements have been reviewed through the directorate's Contracts Officer which has led to a tightening of performance requirements and monitoring intervals. This will support the re-tendering process in 2008/2009 as part of the overall commissioning framework and review of the Area Based Grant.
- A strategy has been developed and is being implemented to address the social work staffing issues, as part of the overall Workforce Development Strategy.
- The consequent increase in surplus spaces as a result of falling rolls in schools has been recognised. A radical approach, involving school amalgamations and closures, has been forcibly rejected. Alternative solutions are being explored with schools, including investigating different forms of school organisation, such as federations, third party use of surplus space, delivering extended schools and wider children's services from schools, considering changes to formula funding methods of schools and, through the Local Admissions Forum, amendments to the current school capacity and admission levels.
- A review of the directorate's financial arrangements has been completed which recognises that improvements need to be made to the way in which the financial resources of the directorate are managed in order to meet the needs of children and young people within the constraints of reducing resources. An action plan is being devised which the Resources Directorate will be implementing, in partnership with DMT and managers in the directorate.

### **Our areas for improvement**

- In Herefordshire, the children's element of the Area Based Grant (ABG), amounting to some £3.7m, has been devolved to the Children's Trust to manage and allocate. Whilst in this first year (2008/2009), priority is being given to maintaining existing services, a fundamental review of those services, including outcomes and value for money, is being undertaken to inform the allocation from 2009/2010. Each Outcome Group will review areas of spend within their area of responsibility in a series of challenge workshops to be held during June. The outcome of the workshops will be to identify gaps in provision, value for money of existing services and areas for additional investment. This will then inform commissioning of services from September 2008 for implementation from April 2009.
- The commissioning process for children's services will be enhanced and mainstreamed within the overall framework proposed by the newly appointed joint Director of Integrated Commissioning, which will provide strategic and operational focus across the PCT and Council. The ABG review workshops have played a major part in establishing commissioning needs for 2009/2010. Within the overall corporate framework, further work is planned on the Trust's commissioning framework, making best use of the partnership approach set out in the Children and Young People's Plan and the use of pooled budgets where they add value.

## **Capacity to improve**

### **Our areas of strength**

- As outlined, considerable progress has been made on the overall capacity to improve since the last APA in terms of ambition, planning and performance management and partnership working. The recent joint partnership of the PCT and the Council has further strengthened Herefordshire's position on partnership working, providing increased opportunities for exercising value for money, ensuring commissioning and provision of better services for local people and enhancing their experience of services. The newly formed Joint Management Team (JMT) has set out priorities and a vision, which is being developed with all staff

before public consultation later this year. Many new colleagues have joined JMT, bringing greater experience and knowledge of commissioning in particular. Improvements are being implemented across the Council and PCT on many aspects of joint working, such as infrastructure and governance.

- Each Outcome Group now has a work programme in place, drawn from the overall priorities in the Plan. These plans, in turn, are underpinned by a number of performance indicators. The Children's Trust Management Group is overseeing the quality of the delivery plans and has a programme of review and challenge in place to ensure delivery.
- The Directorate capacity and focus is being addressed through restructure of its functions to enable greater integration at all levels and a sharper focus on teams around children.

### **Our areas for improvement**

- Although substantial progress has been made, the Trust and all the partners are not complacent about what still needs to be done to achieve our ambition of delivering excellent outcomes for children and young people. Our areas for improvement, outlined below, are focused on refreshing and restructuring in a number of key areas to ensure that we remain fit for purpose for the future.
- An audit of the governance structures of the Children's Trust will be implemented in 2008/2009. This will review the effectiveness of the structures and ways of working to date. Changes will then be made based on the outcome of the review and the latest statutory guidance on Children's Trust implementation.
- The allocation and targeting of resources to areas of need will be facilitated through the move, within the CYPD, to locality teams, effective from January 2009. The model will be based on three localities and will support the implementation of the revised Herefordshire Common Assessment Framework. It will also enable earlier intervention strategies to be implemented which will significantly strengthen safeguarding arrangements in the county, particularly in relation to referrals.
- In terms of capacity, improving the links with the PCT, both corporately and through the Children's Trust, will strengthen service delivery within the context of the joint working with the PCT and the new JMT. Within the CYPD, recruitment of two interim Heads of Service and a new Workforce Strategy Manager in 2008/2009 has provided additional capacity to give the work on the strategies further momentum.
- The consultation on the Children and Young People's Plan has highlighted areas where systematic, statistically valid consultation requires development, specifically with younger children (under 11) and vulnerable groups. Coordinating with the existing Tellus and schools surveys, a strategic approach to consultation across all partners is agreed which will reduce the burden on schools and give a holistic picture of the needs and views of children and young people. It will primarily involve a survey for all children and young people to be undertaken every two years (starting in October 2008) and replacing the range of different small surveys that had previously been undertaken. The outcome of all interactions with users, whether qualitative or quantitative, will be incorporated into the quarterly Performance Digest, highlighting key themes and actions taken/proposed. This will form part of the broader participation strategy for the Children's Trust which will also pick up the particular needs of parents/carers.
- The Integrated Children's System is being taken forward, as part of the new social care system, Corelogic Frameworki, with implementation due in October 2008. Local arrangements to support eCAF will be implemented from April 2009. A multi-agency steering group is also in place to deliver ContactPoint, chaired by a Head of Service.
- Herefordshire's Fostering Service is a well-regarded and effective service which has grown in complexity in recent years, with a number of different schemes developed in response to specific areas of need. This has made the service complicated to administer, and some of the differences in payment rates, support levels and expectations placed upon foster carers are difficult to justify. In response to these issues, a fundamental review of the Fostering Service is underway and is due to report in October 2008, with a new fee structure in place from April 2009. Its four broad aims are to improve and widen the support provided to young people in foster care and their carers; rationalise the payment systems for foster carers; clarify the expectations and tasks of foster carers and consider how best to meet the needs of young people with challenging behaviour, currently placed in external placements.