

OFSTED APA OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2008

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

22 JANUARY 2009

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To update the Cabinet and formally report the outcome of the recent 2008 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) inspection of Children's Services.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation(s)

THAT

- (a) **Cabinet note the content of the report and commend staff and partners on the progress made this year.**
- (b) **Cabinet note the areas for improvement for the coming year - particularly safeguarding - in preparation for the forthcoming anticipated CAA inspection in 2009.**

Reasons

The performance of Children's Services is key to the overall performance of the wider Council.

Considerations

- 1 A copy of the APA letter from Ofsted is attached for reference as Appendix 1.
- 2 It is particularly pleasing to note the continued progress made in Children's Services with most outcomes having improved since the last APA and the specific improvements in grade awarded in 'capacity to improve' including the management of services for children and young people and Achieving Economic Well Being.
- 3 Overall the inspectors agreed with many of our own judgements and evaluation about our service delivery, which is positive.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
S Menghini Director of Children's Services on (01432) 260039

- 4 The partnership between the Council and the Primary Care Trust has been noted as a positive step.

Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications from this report.

Risk Management

- 5 The greatest risk is the area of safeguarding with an increased public awareness following the 'Haringey Baby P' case and the inevitable closer scrutiny to come, meaning that this will remain a national and a local high profile issue. To ensure all appropriate mitigation actions are in place, an external review of safeguarding within the Children and Young People's Directorate has been commissioned which includes a review of all cases where children are subject to a child protection plan. This review is now being extended to include the overall multi-agency child protection system. The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB) will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the action plans arising from these reviews. Performance monitoring of safeguarding key indicators remains a focus for the Directorate as well as the HSCB and the Children's Trust.
- 6 Recruitment and retention of social workers will remain a high profile issue for the Directorate and obviously impacts upon the overall performance of the area. A recruitment strategy is in place. Exception report and monthly reporting of KPIs takes place at Directorate Leadership Team. Quarterly reporting at Children's Trust and Safeguarding Board so that early indication of problems can be used to inform management response.

Alternative Options

There are no Alternative Options.

Consultees

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Ofsted APA letter 2008.

Background Papers

Ofsted APA letter 2007