

# COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT AND PERFORMANCE DIGEST – YEAR END 2008/2009

**Report By: Director of Children's Services**

## Wards Affected

County-wide

## Purpose

1. To summarise the final proposals for assessing Children's Services under the Comprehensive Area Assessment and to present the Performance Digest for Children's Services for 2008-2009. Key issues are highlighted, in particular performance in respect of the Local Area Agreement indicators.

## Financial Implications

2. Remedial action in respect of the directorate's performance may require reallocation of resources within existing budgets. This is being addressed by the Directorate Leadership Team.

## Background

3. From 1 April 2009, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will replace the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment. CAA will assess those outcomes delivered by councils working alone or in partnership. The starting point will be the locally agreed priorities in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. The CAA will assess the prospects for the future achievement of these priorities by the Council and its partners. Children and young people will be a key focus within the CAA particularly around safeguarding and will have a rigorous inspection regime, detailed below.
4. The CYPD Performance Digest is already produced quarterly and is the mechanism for monitoring key performance indicators, covering service delivery captured in the LAA, the Children and Young People's Directorate and the Children and Young People's Plan.

## Considerations

### Comprehensive Area Assessment

5. Ofsted has now published its final proposals for assessing children's services under CAA. In summary, they are:
  - An annual rating for Children's Services to comply with the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 – this was formerly produced through the Annual Performance Assessment. This will now be derived from a new 'performance profile', updated quarterly, based on inspections of settings and schools, new inspections of children in care and safeguarding and performance against indicators in the National Indicator Set.

- A new three yearly programme of inspections of services for children in care and safeguarding
- Annual, unannounced safeguarding visits to local authority contact, referral and assessment centres

These are new requirements, replacing the Annual Performance Assessment and the Joint Area Review. They will present a challenging framework of assessment, focusing on partnership working as well as the core business of service delivery by the Council and schools. An initial workshop with partners was held at the beginning of June to prepare for the new requirements, as the starting point for further work.

### **Local Area Agreement**

6. In addition to the statutory education targets, there are six children related indicators in the LAA. The year end outturns for these indicators are highlighted below with the 2010/2011 target shown in brackets:
  - NI 19: Rate of proven re-offending – outturn for the year not yet available (113)
  - NI 51: Effectiveness of CAMHS – outturn 15 (16)
  - NI 56: Obesity among primary school children in Year 6 – outturn 16.7% (15.3%)
  - NI 57: Children's participation in high quality PE and sport – outturn 95% (96%)
  - NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities – outturn 86.2% (94%)
  - NI 117: Percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training [NEET] – outturn 5.9% (4.7%)
7. As highlighted at the last Scrutiny Committee, the one area where there remains concern about meeting the LAA target is in relation to NI 117. This has been impacted upon by the recession and general downturn in the economy where the percentage of young people who are NEET is higher than last year.

### **Performance Digest**

8. Aside from the LAA indicators, other key areas in each of the outcome areas, to which the Committee's attention should be drawn, are set out below. The risks to the achievement of all the other indicators are identified by the responsible officer as part of their service planning and escalated to the directorate risk register, and corporate risk register, as appropriate. Day to day management of risk is undertaken by responsible officers in conjunction with their Heads of Service.

#### *Be Healthy*

91% of children in care had a dental check and an annual health assessment in 2008 (PAF CF/C19), slightly ahead of the target of 90% and ahead of the statistical neighbour average for 2007/2008 of 87%. Although year end data for Chlamydia screening is not yet available, it is anticipated to be below the very challenging target for the year although significant investment in the last quarter of the year will have had an impact. Provisional results from the local Every Child Matters survey show encouraging results for smoking rates and alcohol consumption, consistent results in relation to drug use and disappointing results for healthy eating.

#### *Staying Safe*

The new social care system, Frameworki, went live on 10 November 2008 and as previously advised, has impacted on performance during the year as social workers have become used to a new workflow system. The temporary Data Improvement Officers have had a positive impact on the quality of data now extracted from the system and are

providing 'hands-on' support to users. The number of referrals (CH141) has risen during the year, as expected, because of the change to Frameworki with each child in a sibling group having a separate referral. Herefordshire's rate of referrals still remains below that of statistical neighbours. Repeat referrals (CH142) fell to 19.6%, just above target of 18%.

The percentage of initial assessments carried out within 7 working days of referral (NI 59) is still an area for concern at 37.4% although the first two months of the current year show significant improvement. Ongoing recruitment and retention issues, coupled with the introduction of Frameworki, have impacted on performance during the year. A robust action plan is in place and sustaining performance in this area is a top priority for the new Assistant Director.

#### *Enjoy and Achieve*

Although 69.4% of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs, a rise of 7.4% on 2007 and 3.7% above the national average, Key Stage 1 and achievement in the Early Year Foundation Stage remain key areas of focus, as previously reported. Educational attainment of children in care in the 2008 examinations has maintained previous high standards. 11 out of a cohort of 14 sat at least one GCSE or equivalent examination (DIS 1406) and 4 of the cohort achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs including English and Maths (NI 101). Attendance of children in care has also improved in both primary and secondary schools (HCS 35b and c). The percentage of children missing a total of at least 25 days (HCS 35a) has significantly improved from 2007/2008's outturn of 15.4% to 7%.

#### *Make a Positive Contribution*

The outturn for final warnings, reprimands and convictions of children in care (PAF CF/18), which was highlighted in last year's Annual Performance Assessment, shows improvement on last year and reflects the work undertaken by the Youth Offending Service and the multi-agency Prevent and Deter Group. The percentage of young people gaining a recorded outcome (BV 221a) through the Youth Service was 47.% and reflects under performance earlier in the year. Significant improvement was made in the final quarter of the year which is a positive basis to build on for 2009/2010. The percentage of young people gaining an accredited outcome narrowly missed the target (29.3% against a target of 30%). Provisional results from the Every Child Matters survey show disappointing drops in the percentage of young children who feel they can influence decisions affecting local services and those who feel the Council does enough to give them the opportunity to influence decisions.

#### *Achieve Economic Wellbeing*

The limited post-16 NEET provision referred to above has also impacted on young offenders' engagement in education, training and employment (NI 45). Only one family was occupying bed and breakfast accommodation (CYP-AEW1) at the snapshot date of 31 March 2009. Herefordshire continues to show good performance in relation to the number of young people achieving Levels 2 and 3 qualifications at the age of 19 (NI 79 and 80), slightly ahead of national averages.

#### *Service Management*

Expenditure in relation to social care has matched the investment made in the budgets. Vacancy rates in children's social care remain a concern. The percentage of posts that were vacant at the year end was 15%, considerably higher than the 2007/2008 outturn of 7.4%. Recruitment and retention of social workers remains a key area of focus for the directorate. As at 31 March 2009, the social worker establishment was 45.6 FTE against a target of 57 FTE. This has now increased to 46.55 FTE. However, two Student Social Workers have been appointed and are awaiting their full GSCC

registration. As soon as their qualification is obtained, they will be practising (newly qualified) social workers, and therefore the numbers in post will increase to 48.55 FTE. The number of working days lost to sickness absence per FTE across the directorate stands at 11.27 days, above the target of 8 days (HR02).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Committee assess the levels of performance achieved for 2008/2009 and consider if further reports and/or action is judged to be necessary.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified