

MEETING:	CHILDREN SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	1 OCTOBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HEREFORDSHIRE TRAVELLER ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE IN SEPTEMBER 2009
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note continued good progress towards the establishment of effective, integrated Children and Young People's Service provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children and families.

Recommendations

THAT the Committee:

- (a) recognises the good progress of the Traveller Achievement Service;**
- (b) monitors the sustained year-on-year impact of the Children and Young Peoples' plan in relation to:**
 - (i) Benchmarking existing outcomes for GRT children;**
 - (ii) Setting targets that narrow achievement gaps for GRT children; and,**
 - (iii) The targeting of resources towards improving outcomes for GRT children**

Key Points Summary

Herefordshire is in a very strong position to ensure effective collaboration across Children and Young People's Services to improve outcomes for GRT communities. We have a framework in place to ensure that mainstream services and the new co-located teams offer appropriate and relevant provision and outreach work to the most deprived GRT children and families:

- There are very considerable and notable disparities in desired Every Child Matters outcomes between GRT children and young people and other pupil groups in Herefordshire.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Ben Straker and Advisory Teacher- Traveller Achievement Service on (01432) 261840

- These disparities are a significant issue for DfE and the renewed importance of addressing these longstanding issues collectively, across Children and Young People's Services, is reflected in the revised Ofsted inspection framework.
- National Strategies have noted wide achievement gaps in Herefordshire for GRT children compared with all other pupil groups in Herefordshire Schools.
- Colleagues across Improvement and Inclusion have made significant steps towards ensuring a collaborative approach towards tackling inequalities.
- This requires sustained input and specialist advice to schools, settings and professional organisations across Children's Services to ensure that addressing inequality becomes, and remains, a collective responsibility.

Alternative Options

- 1 There is not a rational alternative. The formation of a new Traveller Achievement Service, with a focus on School Improvement, is reflective of best practice nationally. Herefordshire is establishing an effective model of mainstreamed GRT provision that is impacting on service delivery across Children and Young People's Services. The Advisory Teacher has been involved in the development of best practice, at a national level, for several years.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 Herefordshire's largest, longest standing, ethnic minority group are Gypsies (legal definition) – many of whom prefer the term Romany. There are many other Traveller groups in Herefordshire. The collective acronym for these communities is GRT (Gypsy Roma Traveller) In terms of demonstrating an effective and positive impact upon race equality and social cohesion these groups remain a priority for schools and communities.
- 3 Herefordshire has a very good record of ensuring that the great majority of GRT children are on roll at school from 5-16.
- 4 The vast majority of Herefordshire Traveller children attend Key Stages 3 and 4. This is a notable success. Nationally, an estimated 80% of GRT children do not attend KS3 and 4.
- 5 Herefordshire Traveller children are disproportionately highly represented in exclusion statistics. Overall Traveller attendance figures are lower than the average for all other pupils. Traveller children are poorly represented both in Early Years uptake and in Post-16 education. This is reflective of national trends
- 6 A concerted effort between Children's Services, NHS Herefordshire, schools and families will begin to reverse these inequalities.
- 7 There is an expectation from Ofsted that professional organisations across Children and Young People's services should have in-depth knowledge of the different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic groups that form Herefordshire communities. There is a further expectation that addressing inequalities is integral to organisational planning.

Introduction and Background

- 8 In September 2008 Herefordshire Council gave notice to the West Midlands Consortium Service for Travelling Children (WMCSTC) to withdraw from the consortium with effect from September 2009.

- 9 This decision was due to two main issues:
- Herefordshire was part of the three year GRT National Strategies Programme, the central tenet of which was that the main responsibility for Traveller outcomes should be held by their schools and their LAs. In effect, Herefordshire was delegating responsibility to an external agency.
 - The consortium had become less efficient in terms of service delivered for the cost, which was around £154,000 per year.
- 10 A report outlining the case for withdrawal was submitted to the Directorate Leadership Team in May 2009. This report was called 'The Establishment of Traveller Education Service within Herefordshire Children and Young People's Directorate-, September 2009. (Devolving from West Midlands Consortium - Services for Travelling Children, Schools and Families)'.
- 11 Accordingly, the report outlined the considerations and proposals for the development of a Herefordshire Traveller Achievement Service, which would be located under the Head of Improvement and integrated into the National Strategies area of work. Subsequent consideration of the CYPD structure has resulted in the service being positioned within the Additional Needs Service, yet retaining strong links to the School Improvement Service. At the time the paper was written, it was proposed that there should be two advisory teachers plus a budget for arranging support for individual Traveller children as required. The proposed budget for the new service was projected at £125,000.
- 12 Presently, there is one Advisory teacher in post (TUPE'd from the previous consortium). The proposal within the new structure is to additionally appoint a community Cohesion Officer. The aim of this post is to build positive relationships between Traveller families, schools and services by offering direct practical support.

Key Considerations

- 13 This paper details ongoing progress stemming from the decision to form a new Herefordshire Traveller Achievement Service.
- 14 In recent months we have achieved:
- A commonly held data set of all identified GRT children in Herefordshire Schools for the purposes of tracking and targeting.
 - Effective collaboration with data team and English as an Additional Language team.
 - School Improvement Partner briefing on Ofsted/Self Evaluation Form developments and Narrowing the Gap.
 - Ofsted/SEF briefing circulated to all schools.
 - Production of SEF materials for vulnerable groups circulated to all schools.
 - Input into National Strategies GRT resources.
 - Target setting with Senior Leadership Teams in several schools.
 - Effective collaboration with National Strategies colleagues throughout Children and Young People's Services.

- Training for newly qualified teachers (NQTs), Early Years colleagues, Connexions, Education Liaison Support Service (ELSS), Children and Families Social Care.
- Collaboration with the museum service re. GRT history month and educational provision for Showmen Children at the May Fair.
- First Romany child to leave school with 5 GCSE A-C grades.
- More Year 11 students targeted for similar achievements.
- Organisation of Early Years Regional Forum for development of best professional practice with GRT families and settings.

Community Impact

15 Please see above for equalities and community impact - these underpin the entire report.

Population and accommodation

- 16 There has been a significant Romany/Gypsy population living in Herefordshire for five hundred years. Herefordshire has a long tradition of seasonal workers travelling through the county to provide essential labour on farms.
- 17 The vast majority of the Herefordshire Traveller population (approx. 1,000) currently live in conventional housing. It is important to note that accommodation status and nomadism do not determine the ethnic and legal status of Romany Gypsies and Travellers of Irish Heritage. These two groups have their own distinctive languages, cultures and histories. The term 'Traveller' is a non-descriptive, generally inoffensive, label.
- 18 Some Traveller families in Herefordshire live in privately owned caravan sites, 'tolerated' sites (such as lay-bys), and temporary farm sites during seasonal land work. There are a small number of Local Authority caravan sites with individual plots available for rental. These are based in Hereford – Watery Lane and Romany Close, Bromyard, Coddington, Luston and Pembridge. There is currently no transit site provision in Herefordshire for families that travel through the authority following traditional working patterns. Some New Travellers live on private farm sites. A number of Showmen families have permanent, privately owned 'Winter Quarters' in Ross on Wye.
- 19 There are notable populations of housed Travellers in Hereford (College Estate, Hinton, Redhill, Newton Farm, Hunderton), Leominster (Ridgemoor, Baron's Cross), Ledbury, Weobley (Burton Wood), Bosbury and Bromyard.
- 20 21st Century Herefordshire Travellers are predominantly Romany Gypsies, with smaller populations of Showmen, New Travellers and Travellers of Irish Heritage.
- 21 In recent times, the authority has an impressive record of children accessing education. Our collective challenge for the next generation is to ensure that Traveller children and young people enjoy the expected outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda.

Pupil population

- 22 Currently there are approximately 150 Traveller children, known to the LA, in Herefordshire schools. Ten children follow elective home education.
- 23 There are clearly identifiable Traveller pupil populations in John Masefield High School, The Minster College, Weobley High School, Kingstone High School, The Hereford Academy, John Kyrle High School and The Steiner Academy.
- 24 The primary school population is more dispersed, but there are concentrations of Traveller pupils in Bosbury, Brockhampton, Luston, Leominster Junior, Leominster Infants, Weobley, Thomas Cantilupe, Lord Scudamore and St Martin's.

Financial Implications – see reference to above report

- 25 As agreed previously.

Contribution to WMCSTC 08/09	Contribution to WMCSTC April - September 09	Interim budget - September 09 – March 2010	Proposed full year budget for new service 2010/11
£154,983	£70,000	£50,000	£125,000

Legal Implications

- 26 No legal implications have been identified.

Risk Management

- 27 Should the development of the Herefordshire Traveller Achievement Service be significantly revised, it is highly probable that ECM outcomes for many GRT children might not improve. Schools and Children's Services could be vulnerable to unfavourable Ofsted judgements. Many schools would be poorly equipped to demonstrate effective strategies towards their statutory duties of promoting race equality and community cohesion. In addition, there may well be an increase of children missing from education with attendant safeguarding issues.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

- The Establishment of Traveller Education Service within Herefordshire Children and Young People's Directorate, September 2009. (Devolving from West Midlands Consortium - Services for Travelling Children, Schools and Families) Written by: D Longmore and B Straker
- Generic Self Evaluation prompts for vulnerable Children. Written by Ben Straker – Advisory Teacher – Herefordshire Traveller Achievement Service