

Herefordshire
**Children's
Trust**

Consultation on the draft

Children and Young People's Plan for Herefordshire 2011-2014

Thank you for reading this third Children and Young People's Plan for Herefordshire. Your views and comments are welcomed to help inform the final plan which will be published in April 2011.

This plan is different to the previous two plans in that it no longer has to follow government guidance. It has been deliberately written in a way to make it understandable to anyone who reads it – whether that's the public; staff across public, private and third sectors or professionals within children's services.

The aim is for the final plan to look and feel very different from the previous two. What is presented here is just the main narrative so that a consensus can be agreed on the main priorities. It is important to remember that the priorities in this plan can only be achieved by partners working together; it is intended to capture the added value of partnership. This plan does not list all the services that all partners currently provide.

Your feedback is really important on these four main questions:

1. Are these the right priorities for children, young people and families and carers in Herefordshire?

2. Are there any priorities that are missing?

3. What are the key actions that will be needed to ensure the plan's aims are delivered and what organisations need to be involved?

4. Please add any other comments you would like to make

It would be helpful if you could add your details so we know how widely the draft plan has been discussed but this is not compulsory.

Name _____

Organisation _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete these questions.

Now email your answers by the 11 February 2011 to :

HerefordshireChildrensTrust@herefordshire.gov.uk

Or post to
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Consultation Copy

Introduction

This plan represents a new, exciting era for partnership working in Herefordshire. The changes in national government mean that local areas, like Herefordshire, now have much more freedom and ability to decide how local organisations can work together and what the important issues are that need to be addressed for the people of Herefordshire. We can set our own destiny without the direction being set for us.

In Herefordshire we are ahead of much of the country because our council and health services are already working very closely together as Herefordshire Public Services. We have a strategic Herefordshire Partnership which includes partners from other public sector organisations (such as the police), the private sector (such as local businesses) and the third sector (including voluntary and community groups).

This new plan has been written to show what we will do to improve the lives of families and their children and young people in Herefordshire. Across children's services and the wider Herefordshire Partnership we are organising services on a locality basis. For families it means that services will be more responsive and accessible in their local area and not be primarily based around Hereford City.

This plan covers the period April 2011 to March 2014; it is a strategic plan so much of the detail of the actions and how we know it is working will be in an annual delivery plan. Three years can be a long time and this plan will develop as events happen both locally and nationally. We will undertake an annual review of this strategic plan and make any necessary changes in the annual delivery plan.

Vision

Our vision in Herefordshire is for children and young people to grow up healthy, happy and safe, with supportive families and carers, and make sure they have the best education and opportunities locally to achieve what they want.

For many children this can be fairly easy, but for some it is more difficult. Some may have health problems, some don't have families that can look after them as well as they want, and some have difficulty with learning. Sometimes children need help just for a short time, perhaps settling into a new school.

As partners our aim is to provide support where it is needed so that children and families can take responsibility for their own health and well-being. Our approach is not just to help children and young people but their families and carers as they bring up their children and have the greatest influence on them. Across Herefordshire Partnership there is a new energy to enable

communities to work together and support individuals and families within it. A community means a grouping of people with a common interest whether that's the neighbourhood where you live, work, go to school or a club you belong to.

“It takes a village to raise a child”

African proverb

Sometimes our support will need to be more targeted and specialist to help those families who are finding situations much more difficult, particularly where children are not developing as they should or are at risk of harm. These children have the right to the same chances and opportunities as the vast majority of children in Herefordshire and we will work together to ensure the needs of these children are met.

Who are we?

We are a children and young people's partnership (Children's Trust) which is a partnership of different organisations that work together to make things better for children and young people. We are:

Herefordshire Council, including schools
Herefordshire Primary Care Trust, including GPs
West Midlands Strategic Health Authority
Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust
Colleges
Worcestershire and Herefordshire Youth Offending Service
Jobcentre Plus
West Mercia Probation Service
West Mercia Police Service
The Alliance (third sector representatives)

This plan does not include all the services that each partner needs to provide. This plan is about what can only be done by partners working together on a particular issue by combining their expertise and resources.

A very important part of this partnership is the **Shadow Board**. This is a group of young people aged 11 to 19 from across secondary schools and colleges in Herefordshire. They act as a consultative group commenting on various strategies and projects of our partnership. The Shadow Board link with school councils of both primary and secondary schools, and the youth council, to give children and young people a voice about the issues that affect them. The Shadow Board can directly influence the decisions and actions of leaders of our partnership so it is a powerful group of young people.

What's happening nationally?

In the UK and across many other countries there has been an economic recession. This means that for many families, businesses and public sector organisations, money has become much scarcer. For all of us it is more and

more important to spend our money on the things that really matter to us and make a positive difference. In the case of the public sector we must make sure that money is spent effectively on the right things that people in our local area need.

There are many changes happening that the new coalition government are still deciding upon as this plan is being written. This includes changes in policy and legislation that will have a bearing on what the public sector and other partners will need to provide. We do know that the government wants local areas to be able to decide for themselves what is important to them and that agencies should work together to provide services if it makes sense to do so.

What's happening in Herefordshire?

Herefordshire is mainly a rural county, with beautiful unspoilt countryside, distinctive heritage, remote valleys and rivers. The city of Hereford is the county's centre. The other main locations are the five market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington. The county is sparsely populated. Over half of its 179,300 residents live in rural areas.

The number of children is decreasing, although there were more births than expected in the last two years. This decrease is expected to continue until stabilising from 2016 at about 29,000 children aged less than 16 years.

The latest population estimates from Office of National Statistics (ONS) indicate that there are 40,200 children aged 0 to 19 years of age in Herefordshire. Overall, the percentage of children and young people is 22.4% of the total Herefordshire population

This is analysed further as:

Age range (in years)	Numbers (% of total population)
Under 1	1,900 (1.1%)
1-4	7,100 (4%)
5-9	9,300 (5.2%)
10-14	10,700 (6%)
15- 19	11,200 (6.2%)

The biggest concentrations of children and young people under 15 are in St Martins and Hinton ward and Belmont ward.

The number of households with dependent children is 20,619 (2001 Census).

Herefordshire Public Services are already working together to provide services in local communities. This means that services are organised to be delivered in areas where they are needed. Over the period of the last Children and Young People's Plan, the Children's Trust, worked to develop locality teams through a project called No Wrong Door. By the beginning of April 2011 these teams will be in place. They will be able to work with both individual children and families, and groups of children who require some additional help. The teams will include staff from Children's Centres, youth workers, educational welfare and Connexions staff. There are some organisations that although not directly in the teams are working very closely with them; these include local schools and doctors surgeries as they see children and young people all the time.

Herefordshire Public Services are developing locality services for communities and families and the work undertaken through No Wrong Door will form part of this.

Our Priorities

Our priorities are the top issues or problems that we will concentrate on over the next three years. They are listed below with a short description of what we will aim to achieve over the next three years. There will be more detailed actions of what we will do in the annual delivery plan.

These priorities have been agreed using a variety of different information and documents:

- "Have your say" events in September and October 2010 which allowed children, young people and parents and carers the opportunity to tell us what is important to them. Children from nurseries, primary and secondary schools and young people from college and various youth groups were involved. Parents also gave their views.
- Children's Trust events with people who deliver and manage services for children, young people and their families
- Data and information from surveys and performance indicators
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Child Poverty Needs Assessment and State of Herefordshire report, which provide more figures and data than is included in this plan
- Inspections and audits from national agencies like Ofsted.
- Impacts of expected changes in emerging government policy
- Feedback and comments from the consultation on the draft version of this plan

The priorities have been grouped into two sections. The first section includes the **people priorities** which are those priorities that children, young people and their families have said are important to them now and in the future. It includes particular issues that we need to address and specific groups of children and young people who have greater needs.

The second section includes **partnership priorities** which are for our partners to work better at "behind the scenes" but which will make services for children and young people even better over time.

People priorities

1. Helping parents and families to help themselves

Being a parent is not always easy and the needs of our children change as they grow. Children tell us one of the most important things for them is their families, and that they can live in happy homes with parents or carers who support them.

We want to help families and communities to be able to support their children and young people. We can do this by providing general information, advice and guidance which is available to everyone. This can include everything from advice about healthy eating, where to find your nearest nursery and what fun activities there are available in Herefordshire. It can also include more specialist advice for children who have specific needs or problems, for example those children with a disability.

We also want to put in place services that can help and support families at the earliest opportunity before problems become too big to handle; this is known as early intervention. This will be done through our locality teams who will get to know the problems that arise in areas and can arrange the necessary support to those children and families needing more help.

With the ongoing economic downturn there will be families that will suffer from lack of jobs, increasing housing affordability and household expenses meaning more children could fall into poverty. We will work with our partners in the wider Herefordshire Partnership to support these families so their children are not unfairly disadvantaged by the situation their families are faced with. We need to improve the lives of these families and the experiences and opportunities provided to their children and young people. Research suggests that children in poverty will face poverty in later life so it becomes a continuing cycle in some families.

2. Reducing Obesity

Childhood obesity is a problem nationally and is increasing in Herefordshire. We measure children as they start and finish primary school and this shows that nearly 25% of reception age children and nearly 33% of year 6 children are either obese or overweight. This is likely to cause health problems later in life so we are keen to educate and support children both at home and in school to lead more healthy lifestyles. This includes encouraging mothers to breast feed as this provides the best start in life for their babies.

3. Better health for teenagers

There are high rates in Herefordshire of young people who smoke and drink alcohol and get drunk regularly. Whilst this appears to be reducing there are a small minority, particularly amongst girls who drink alcohol to excess and then make up around half of all alcohol based hospital admissions for under 18s.

The number of teenage pregnancies is relatively low but has risen. There has been a sharp rise in sexually transmitted diseases although this could be down to better screening.

Young people tell us they need better information and education around relationships and sexual health. They also want information about drugs and alcohol and the affects. We will ensure there is the information available to educate young people and provide the support and treatment for those who need it. Alcohol was identified by the Shadow Board as being a top concern for young people in Herefordshire and the Board have worked to raise awareness of the dangers of drinking too much.

4. Respecting and valuing each other

Children and young people tell us that they want to have the chances to give their opinions and want to be respected by other children and adults. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child makes it clear that children have rights which are the things that every child should have or be able to do. And all children have the same rights. We need to help ensure those rights are protected.

We want our services to support children, young people and their families and carers but we can only do that if we know what it is they need. So we highly value what children, young people and their families and carers have to say, and will take this into account when we make decisions.

Bullying still remains an issue for children and this, according to the latest local survey, is now more of a problem in primary schools. We want children and young people to respect each other regardless of their differences, background or beliefs. Children want to feel safe and most do in their communities, homes and schools as Herefordshire is generally a safe place to live. Safety when using technology eg mobile phones and the internet is an area where we can do more to make children feel safe by helping to reduce cyberbullying.

With the development of our locality teams we want to work with local communities to develop safe, happy environments in which children and young people can grow and thrive. Raising the confidence and aspirations of children and young people is vital in helping them to achieve at school, college and in work. Children and young people say they want to help in developing their communities whether that's where they live, play or go to school so there should be opportunities to volunteer and understand what being a good Herefordshire citizen means. Everyone has a contribution to make regardless of their culture, background or ability and this should be valued by everyone.

5. Protecting children from harm

Generally children and young people in Herefordshire say they feel safe and supported, according to the 2009 Tellus Survey undertaken in schools. However there are times when children can be at risk of harm and we need to ensure they are protected and supported outside of their families. We will

work together to make sure these children are identified and helped quickly. If children cannot remain with their families we will ensure they are looked after and supported well. We want to make sure that children can stay in Herefordshire wherever possible so will look to increase the number of places where children can stay and reduce our reliance on long term care arrangements.

6. Raising education standards

Generally Herefordshire children and young people do well in their education. This however hides the fact that there are certain groups of children that don't do as well.

Achievement of 0-5 year olds in Herefordshire is measured by the proportion gaining a certain number of points in a scoring system; 46.2% achieved this level in 2009/10 which was below the target of 53%.

There is a clear link between children living in areas of deprivation and gaining poorer achievement results at GCSE levels. The number of young people gaining 5 or more GCSE's at Grades A*-C (including English and maths) varies across the county. During 2008 in St Martins and Hinton ward 26% achieved this level compared to 80% in Hampton Court ward.

All children and young people have the right to a good quality of education and we need to make sure this happens as our role is to prepare children for their future lives. We will monitor the performance of different wards, schools and groups of children and then target action to ensure the gap between the best and worst performing is reduced. We will also make sure that children attend school regularly and will help schools and parents to make sure this happens.

7. Opportunities after leaving school

After school young people need to know the options that are available to them, whether that is further training, education or finding a job. This will support them in giving them the skills to take into adult life.

We will work with partners in the Herefordshire Partnership to encourage local employers to invest in Herefordshire and its workforce, including its young people. Part of this approach will be to encourage employers to provide apprenticeships for young people so they can learn while earning. In Herefordshire we already achieve a high number of apprenticeships but want to increase the number and range further.

There are several changes expected nationally, the details of which are not fully known at the time of writing. This includes the setting up of an all age careers service, potential increases in university fees and changes to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) that young people receive under certain circumstances. In Herefordshire we will ensure that our young people have sufficient opportunities so they are either in education, employment or training.

8. Looked after children

Looked after children are those children who are no longer living with their families but are looked after, often by foster carers and sometimes by care homes. We are “corporate parents” meaning that all our staff support these children as if they were their own. Because of the difficulties these children have had to face they often don’t do as well as the majority of children and need additional support. However in Herefordshire our looked after children generally do well in terms of their attendance and achievement at school.

9. Children with disabilities and special educational needs

We believe that children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs are valued members of their communities and, as they grow into adulthood, should be able to realise their full potential in personal and social terms. We will provide support to enable children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs to be successful in all the activities they wish to take part in. We will work to ensure the needs of these children and young people are considered carefully and that support is properly co-ordinated and provided. For more specialist education and support we will develop our local services so that families can make the most of what Herefordshire has to offer other than relying on services and schools outside of Herefordshire.

10. Minority groups

Across Herefordshire there are groups of children and young people who have specific needs relating to race, ethnicity, and language which they and their families sometimes need more support than the rest of the population. We want to ensure all these children have the same chances as other children. In Herefordshire these groups include traveller children, those who care for others, and children whose first language may not be English.

Partnership priorities

These are the processes and arrangements which will help our partnership to work better in Herefordshire. There are many services and groups that support families and children in many different ways so we need to enable all these partners, including schools and doctors surgeries, to play their part.

1. Commissioning

Commissioning means having the right services in the right place at the right time. To do this it means we will listen and understand what services children, young people and their families need, and plan to deliver those within the resources that are available.

In Herefordshire we already have an agreed framework as to how partners will commission together. Because there will be less money in future we need to plan together so that we avoid any duplication and that we make the most effective use of these resources. We can do this now across services for women, children and families and want to be able to join our money and staff

together in a single agreement for children's services across council and health services.

The total available resources for children and young people in Herefordshire are shown below:

TO BE ADDED

Our framework has already identified these initial key areas of focus for 2011-2013 and these will be added to over the period of the plan

- Looked after children
- Children with complex needs including disabilities
- Edge of care
- Safeguarding
- Young People not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
- Extended Services
- Early Years and Children's Centres
- Schools e.g. Transport, disadvantage subsidy, educational attainment
- Locality services
- Positive activities and targeted youth support
- Information provision

We need to use the data that we gather so it gives us a picture of the needs of different areas and groups of children in Herefordshire. We know that overall outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire are good but this hides the fact that there are issues in specific wards, areas and cohorts of children and young people. The voice of children, young people, parents / carers and families is key to this, as is the knowledge of providers who work directly with families. As our work in localities develops so will our knowledge of needs in different areas across Herefordshire. All this improved intelligence will help us to better plan services that are needed in particular areas or by particular groups of children so we can target our resources appropriately.

2. Developing the workforce

We already have an agreed plan for developing the children's workforce, which includes all those people who work face to face with children, young people and their families. It also includes people who provide support to those front line staff e.g. people who train teachers or cleaners in youth centres.

Our aim is to have one team of people who can work together although they may be employed by different partners eg police, nurses, youth workers, social workers and teachers. Many staff will now be based in the locality teams so will need to work together using the same processes and frameworks, for example, being able to share information and using the common assessment framework to assess the needs of children and young people.

3. Developing localities and communities

In Herefordshire we are working towards better and more engagement and involvement of communities in tackling together their local issues.

Communities can be a village, a school, or a local group like scouts and cubs. Through our locality teams we will be supporting families, individual children and groups of children.

Across the Herefordshire Partnership we need to build communities to be self-reliant and to support each other and we have a role to ensure we protect more vulnerable members of our communities e.g. the elderly or children.

What we will do

ACTION PLANS TO BE ADDED

How will we know we are achieving this plan

We will monitor regularly the annual delivery plan to ensure the actions and targets are achieved. At the time of writing this plan the Children's Trust Board and its subgroups are based around five outcome areas of:

- being healthy,
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving,
- making a positive contribution and
- achieving economic well-being

The Children's Trust Board are keen to make its structure simpler and more focused on delivery. Therefore as this plan is agreed it is likely new arrangements will be put in place considering the locality work that is in place and developing and the priorities that have been identified above.

We will produce an annual review of this plan which will show exactly what we have done, what hasn't been achieved and why. We will also highlight any new priorities which have arisen either through improved locality commissioning, the views of children, young people and their families / carers or inspections and audits.