

Contents

Introduction	3
Reviewing the Year	4
How effective are our local Safeguarding arrangements?	5
The context of safeguarding children in Herefordshire	6
How we are performing all our statutory functions?	13
a) Developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.	13
b) Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so.	15
c) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the local authority and Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve.	17
e) Participate in the local planning and commissioning of children’s services to ensure that they take safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into account	21
f) Collecting and analysing information about the deaths of all children in their area.	22
g) Putting in place procedures for ensuring that there is a co-ordinated response by the authority, their Board partners and other relevant persons to an unexpected death of a child.....	23
h) Undertaking reviews of cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected, a child has died or a child has been seriously harmed, and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the authority, their Board partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.	24
2011/12 Strategic Priorities	25
Appendix 1: HSCB Membership	28
Appendix 2: HSCB Budget.....	29



Reviewing the Year

As the recently appointed Chair of HSCB, I would like to thank my predecessor, Maggie Blythe, for the tireless work that she did as Independent Chair in overseeing the excellent work that has been achieved over the last year.

The last year has seen a challenging environment in which to maintain and develop how services to safeguard and protect children and young people in Herefordshire make a real and positive difference to their lives. The tough financial realities that organisations are facing are causing them to review how they do business internally and many are re-structuring significantly. I do not doubt the commitment of all local organisations to fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding the welfare of children. The change processes provide valuable opportunities to review and develop how we work together but the risk of disruption to the co-ordination of organisations in how they collaborate in delivering an effective safeguarding service for children and young people is ever present. There have been a number of recent changes in key personnel across a number of organisations. This presents opportunities in terms of fresh new approaches but the lack of continuity brings a challenge that will need careful management.

There have been notable improvements in safeguarding services achieved in the last year. The Common Assessment Framework has continued to be embedded locally with good engagement across organisations in using it effectively as a tool to address the welfare needs of children by ensuring they receive the services that they need. The use of the multi-agency referral form has improved the quality of referrals being made and, as is documented below, there has been excellent work done in areas such as reducing youth homelessness and raising awareness of the scourge of sexual exploitation of children and young people. This year will see the opening of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre for West Mercia, which will hugely improve the quality of service offered to the victims of such crimes. In addition, the management of child protection conferences has seen considerable development to ensure that children in need of on-going protection and their families receive a high quality service.

It must be recognised that our safeguarding services are still on an improvement journey from a relatively low base and there is unquestionably much to do to reach the standard to which we aspire. We must get better at knowing how effective our services are and what needs to change in order to make the necessary improvements. Everyone who works with children and their families in Herefordshire must be aware of what their safeguarding duties are and how to respond when they have concerns about the welfare of a child. The 'Levels of Need' document which sets out these thresholds must become well understood and all employers must take responsibility for ensuring that awareness levels in their organisations are as they need to be. HSCB needs to improve links with The Health and Well-Being Board and Children and Young people's Partnership Forum to ensure that services being delivered for the benefit of children and families meet their needs and are appropriately prioritised. Finally, we must develop better ways of seeking the views of children and young people themselves on how we work together to develop our practice.

This year has seen important foundations laid for positive development in our collective effectiveness in keeping children safe and providing early help for children for those who need it. Across Herefordshire, there is a clear commitment to maintain and accelerate our momentum in progressing this vital work and my sincere thanks go to all involved.

Dave McCallum, Independent Chair

How effective are our local Safeguarding arrangements?

This year's annual report evidences the fact that Herefordshire is a safe place for children and young people to live. The statistics provided in [The context of safeguarding children in Herefordshire](#) show that children in Herefordshire are generally supported well across their development and where Herefordshire has not performed as well in the past, we are now improving faster than the England average to narrow the gap.

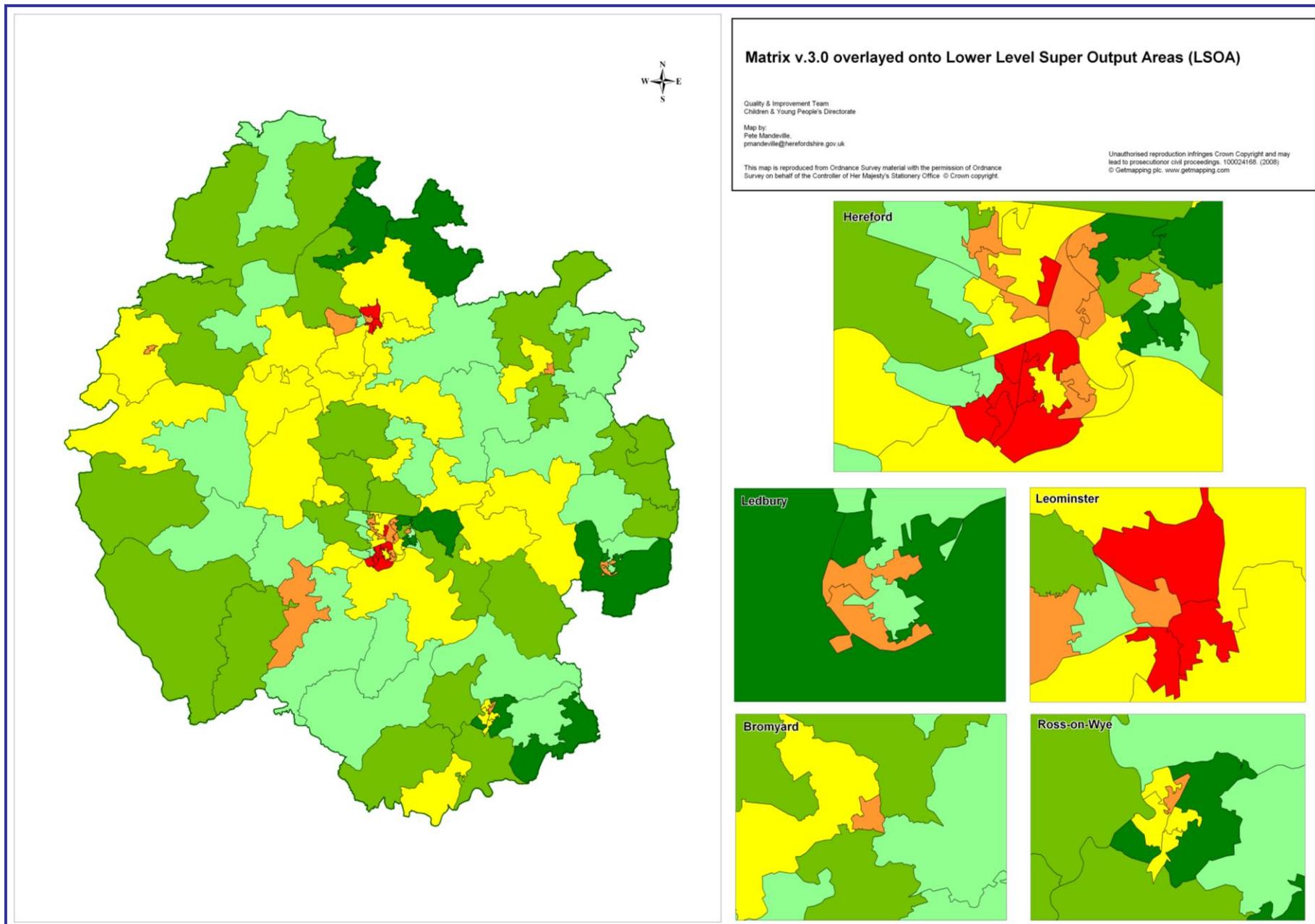
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board structures its work to ensure that it meets its statutory responsibilities, therefore ensuring that the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across its partners continues to increase. The improvement of practice through the development and implementation of policy, effective training and communication and the monitoring of safeguarding work by partners have all contributed to a reduction in the number of children and families supported by Child Protection Plans and Child in Need Plans during the year.

The Board has also been through a time of transition during 2011-12 as there have been significant developments in our joint work with Herefordshire Safeguarding Adult Board. The Board's Business Unit is taking on responsibility for supporting the work of the Adult Board and during the year, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board appointed a new independent chair person with additional responsibility for the Adult Board. At the end of the year, the Business Manager for the Boards moved to a new role outside Herefordshire and therefore a new Business Manager was also appointed to start during 2012-13. During 2012-13 the focus of the new Independent Chair and new Business Manager will be to drive necessary identified improvements within the work of the Children's Board, while ensuring there is adequate resource to support the development of the Adult Board.

A key area for improvement for Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board will be within our quality assurance and performance management structures. It is acknowledged that this area of work has been developed significantly during the past year and the intelligence gained from these structures is summarised within [section c of How we are performing all our statutory functions?](#) However, working with The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO), the Board will be developing its performance management structures during the coming year to ensure it understands the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its partners. It is vital that the Board moves away from relying mainly on statistical information about how much work is being done, toward an understanding of the quality of the work being done and the effect that has on Herefordshire's children. The new performance management framework will include a greater emphasis on intelligence attainable through regular case audit.



Figure 1



Ethnicity

This ethnicity data is taken from the school census and therefore includes information for 4-16 year olds attending school in Herefordshire. It provides a reasonably accurate indication of ethnicity rates for Herefordshire's children.

White - British	20,845	91.7%
White Eastern European	447	2.0%
White European	200	0.9%
Traveller of Irish Heritage/Gypsy/Roma	98	0.4%
Other	1,141	5.0%
Not obtained	107	0.5%
	22,740	100%

Compared to statistics published by the ONS³ the proportion of

Herefordshire's population who consider themselves to be White British is significantly higher than the national average (83.3%).

The second and third highest ethnic groups within our population of children and young people are White Eastern European and White European who account for almost 3%.

Deprivation

It would be easy to assume that there is little deprivation in a rural county like Herefordshire; however this is not the case. A broad definition of deprivation across multiple measures is made by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, highlighting the most deprived areas (Lower Super Output Areas or LSOAs) nationally. In Herefordshire there is one LSOA in the top 10% most deprived nationally (Golden Post-Newton Farm) while a further seven are in the 25% most deprived⁴.

Child poverty

- ✎ The rate of child poverty in Herefordshire is 14.4%; approximately 5,000 children.
- ✎ This figure varies widely across our LSOAs with a range of 1.3% - 48.6%.
- ✎ The highest levels of child poverty are in Hereford city and the market towns.
- ✎ However, poverty can be particularly prevalent in rural areas where it may be harder or more costly for families to access services and opportunities. For example, as a result, people in the lowest income group in rural areas spend, on average, almost 50 per cent more than urban equivalents on transport.
- ✎ The rate of unemployment for 16-19 years, those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), is historically high at 7.0%, reflecting the national economic situation, but is below the regional and national averages.
- ✎ Median gross weekly pay in Herefordshire (£426.80) is 23% lower than nationally (£496.00), with the gap between increasing in recent years.
- ✎ There is demand in Herefordshire for seasonal agricultural workers, an opportunity that is often filled by seasonal migrant workers from Eastern European states of the EU. The number of new National Insurance registrations is nearly ten times the national average in Herefordshire, with a 5,400 seasonal workers projected to work over the summer months.

Education

Educational Attainment in Herefordshire is generally in line with the national averages.

³ Office of National Statistics (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/peeg/population-estimates-by-ethnic-group--experimental--current-estimates/population-estimates-by-ethnic-group-mid-2009--experimental-.zip)

⁴ Office of National Statistics (www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/deprivation.aspx)

Government Target	Year	Herefordshire	English Average	
Early Years Foundation Stage (assessments at 4-5 years)	2009	46%	52%	Concern over Herefordshire's low attainment in 2009 resulted in greater monitoring of the EYFS; results are now comparable to nation averages.
	2010	45%	56%	
	2011	56%	59%	
Key Stage 2 (assessments at 10 years)	2009	70%	72%	Herefordshire's results are broadly in line with the national average and increasing over time.
	2010	72%	74%	
	2011	72%	74%	
GCSE (assessments at 16 years)	2009	52%	50%	Herefordshire's results are broadly in line with the national average and increasing over time.
	2010	56%	55%	
	2011	57%	58%	

During the year 11 Herefordshire schools converted to academies bringing the number of academies in Herefordshire to 16. As the local authority has no means to directly influence these schools, it is important that Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board develop its processes for assuring itself that these academies, as with all schools, are appropriately prioritising the safeguarding of their children.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire are generally good compared to national statistics. However Understanding Herefordshire highlights the following areas of concern:

- 🔗 *Weight:* Figures for children aged 4-5 fluctuate year on year but appear to be increasing overall which differs from England data which has a decreasing prevalence of obesity.
- 🔗 *Immunisation rates:* England and West Midlands data shows that rates have improved in our region and nationally. However, they have not improved in Herefordshire.
- 🔗 *Dental health:* Two in every five children have some experience of tooth decay by the age of 5 years and more than two in every five have experienced decay in at least one of their permanent teeth by the age of 12.

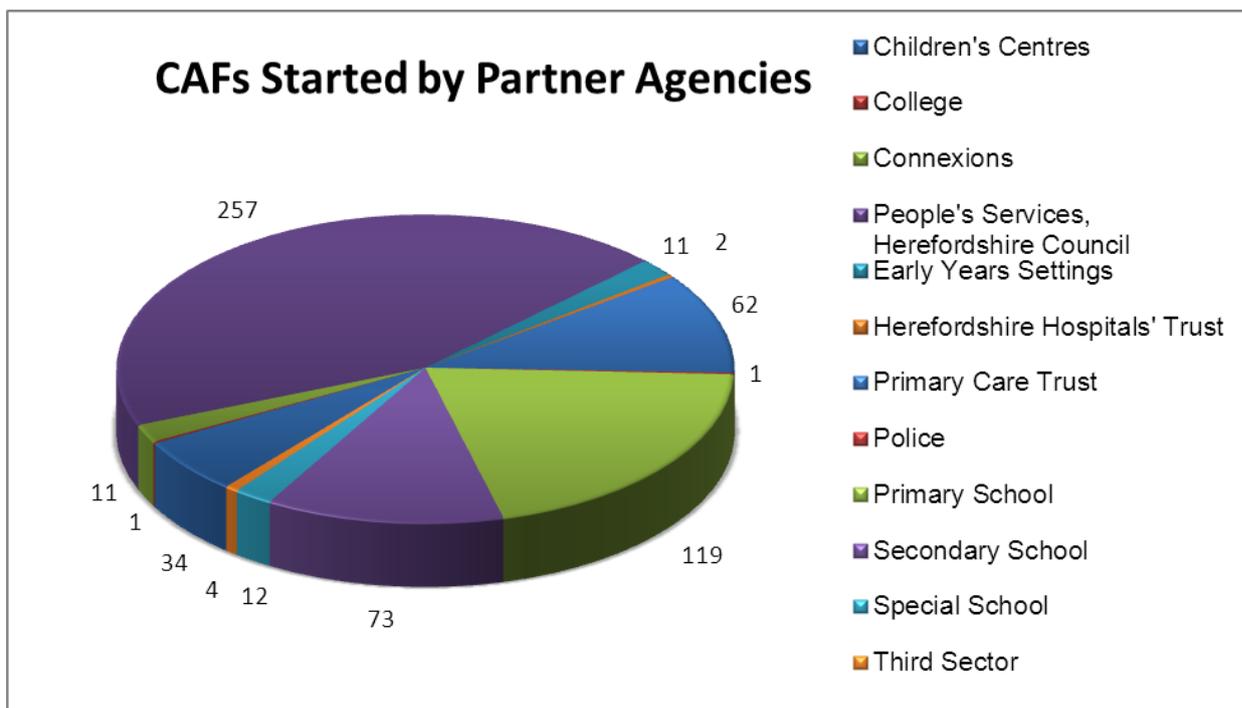
Housing and Access

No other English county-level authority has a greater proportion of its population living in "very sparse" Output Areas than Herefordshire. The Safeguarding Board is mindful of the effects this can have on the children living in these areas including:

- 🔗 Access to services provided for children and young people can be difficult.
- 🔗 Regular public transport can be limited.
- 🔗 A large proportion of housing is both old and poorly equipped, with housing being poorly insulated or expensive to maintain leading to higher levels of fuel poverty.

Providing services to children and young people which are designed to meet their additional rural needs can be costly to providers in Herefordshire and must be balance against the needs of the whole population. HSCB is mindful of this additional dynamic of need in our county.

Crime and Disorder



Children, young people and families whose needs cannot be met through the CAF process will move to level four through the social care system, either because their needs are:

- ✎ too complex and a multi-agency CAF response has not been successful, or
- ✎ are urgent and they are at risk of significant harm.

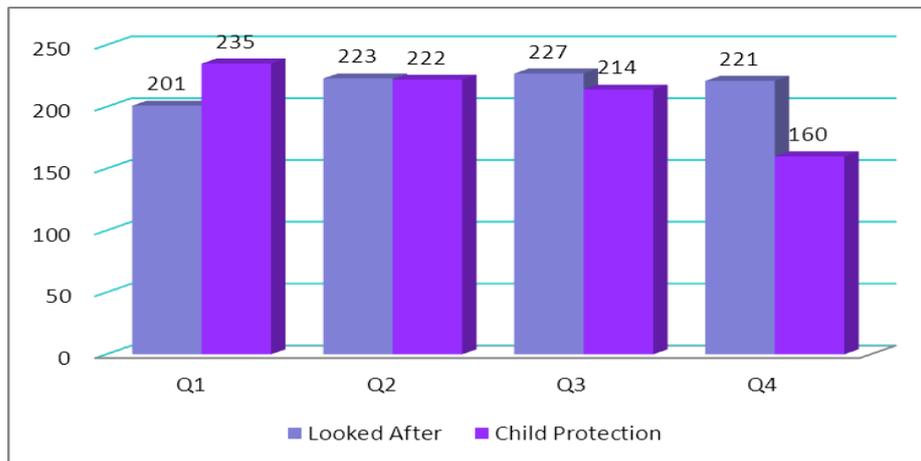
During 2011-12 the number of referrals to children's social care which were carried through to initial assessment has in general remained constant at an average of around 90 a month, while the total number of referrals made to social services dropped by around 25%. This suggests that the publication and embedding of the Herefordshire Levels of Needs Guidance has been successful in ensuring a higher proportion of children, young people and families referred to social care are actually best supported with that level of support. It is important that Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board continue to monitor and understand this trend in case other factors are affecting this.

Children or young people who have been assessed as needing the specialist and intensive involvement of children's social care have three overall types of support provided to them known as Children in Need, Child Protection and Looked After.

Figures for children and young people supported as Children in Need are only produced once a year through the annual CIN census and the number in that category of support at the end of 2011-12 was 1,133. This is comparatively slightly higher than other local authorities similar to Herefordshire.

The graph below shows the numbers of children supported by children's social care as Looked After or with a Child Protection Plan.

Looked after children in Herefordshire generally have stable placements, compared to national data, which means they are more able to build a successful and supportive circle of people around them and are able to access services more effectively. As a result,



and due to the care and attention given by schools to this group, Herefordshire's Looked After Children are usually more likely to achieve more in their education compared to the national and regional averages.

In Herefordshire, the cohort of young people who are Looked After who take GCSEs each year is very small and therefore results fluctuate from year to year. However, the figures below show the results for GCSEs taken in 2011 by our Looked After Children and confirm that this year's cohort achieved more in Herefordshire than the regional and national averages.

	Herefordshire	West Midlands Average	English Average
5 GCSEs at A-C grade	40.0%	35.4%	31.2%
5 GCSEs at A-C grade including English and Maths	26.7%	13.5%	12.8%

How we are performing all our statutory functions?

a) **Developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.**

During 2011-12 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board developed new policies and procedures to guide its partners across Herefordshire in specific areas of safeguarding and to help increase consistency in practice. These included:

- ✎ E-Safety Policy
- ✎ The establishment of the 16+ team and a dedicated joint working approach in preventing youth homelessness
- ✎ Practice Guidance for Working with Resistant, Violent and Aggressive Families
- ✎ Multi-agency Referral Form and Guidance to support its use⁶
- ✎ Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Delivery Plan

Studies have not been completed as yet to assess the effectiveness of these pieces of work in providing improved outcomes for children in Herefordshire. Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board has acknowledged that assessing the impact of its work on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people over the past few years is something it hasn't consistently done. In future the Board will plan to measure effectiveness as it develops more pieces of work.

All schools are required to have an e-safety policy to safeguard their students when accessing the internet when in school. While a number of schools in Herefordshire have already developed their own policies, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board felt that it could support schools by working with them to produce a single policy which could be adopted by schools if they wanted to. Representatives from a range of schools and partner organisations worked with the Board to develop the policy and ensure that it addressed the reality that being safe online is not just a matter of technology but that a wider, more comprehensive, approach to e-safety was necessary. During the process of developing its e-safety policy, the Board recognised the fact that that the policy had a wider application than just to schools and work was done to make the policy applicable to a range of Board partners as well as organisations providing services to adults.

Following HSCB's audit into Youth Homelessness undertaken in spring 2011, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board supported the refinement and further development of the Joint Protocol for Homeless 16 and 17 year olds between Herefordshire Council's Strategic Housing department and children's social care. It was decided that these two partners needed to work more closely together to enable children's social care to successfully meet their duties to this client group. The development of the Joint Protocol resulted in the creation of the 16+ Team with a member of the Housing Solutions Service situated within that team and ensured on-going joint monitoring of that client group. The outcomes of these developments have been assessed and they have been very successful in reducing the numbers of young people facing homelessness.

When working with resistant or hostile families there can be a significant breakdown in the relationship between services provided to children and their families and the families

⁶ All are available for download from the [Policies and Procedures page](http://www.herefordshiresafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk) at www.herefordshiresafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk.

b) Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so.

Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board communicates with organisations across Herefordshire through it's:

- ✂ Members from partner organisations
- ✂ Business Plan
- ✂ Training
- ✂ Events
- ✂ Website

Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board progresses the County's joined-up approach to safeguarding in Herefordshire by bringing together directors and strategic leaders across organisations working with children. Organisations represented include:

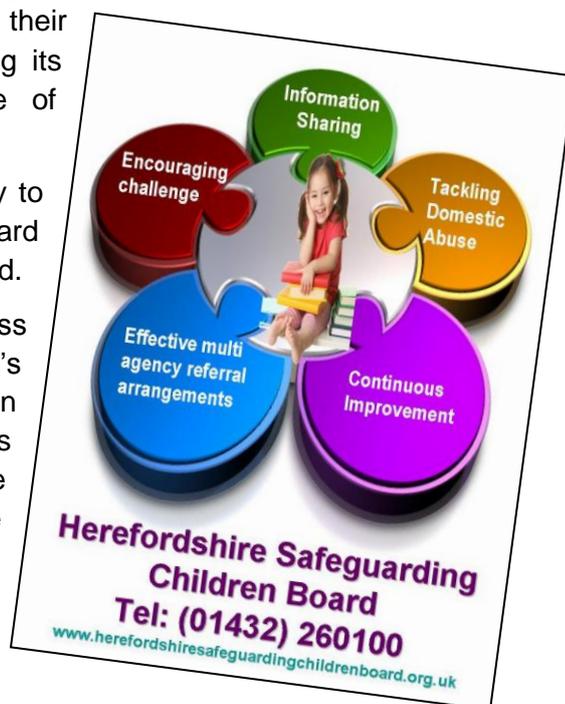
- ✂ Herefordshire Council, incorporating Children's Social Care, Education Services, Housing and the Community Safety Partnership
- ✂ Herefordshire and Worcestershire Youth Offending Service
- ✂ Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service
- ✂ Hoople
- ✂ Wye Valley Trust
- ✂ 2gether NHS Trust
- ✂ Education establishments
- ✂ West Mercia Police
- ✂ West Mercia Probation
- ✂ CAFCASS
- ✂ Strategic Health Authority

Further third sector organisations are represented as appropriate within the Board's sub groups. Members of the Board and its sub groups have a range of responsibilities as laid out in its Constitution⁷ including representing the HSCB within their organisation; ensuring that the organisation is meeting its obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Therefore, members of the Board have a responsibility to ensure that their organisations understand what the Board is doing and is working towards the priorities of the Board.

The development and publishing of the Board's Business Plan also supports members in ensuring the Board's priorities are promoted among partner agencies. In 2011-12 the Board produced its first poster of priorities for practitioners working in Herefordshire as an aide memoir to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Through meeting its statutory responsibility to ensure the availability of inter-agency safeguarding training,



⁷ All are available for download from the [Policies and Procedures page](http://www.herefordshiresafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk) at www.herefordshiresafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk.

- ✎ The rate of Initial Assessments that were completed within timescale increased from 60% to 71%.
- ✎ The rate of Initial Child Protection Conferences which went ahead within timescale increased from 42% to 89%.
- ✎ Only 8% of children became subject to a plan for a second or subsequent time, which suggests that outcomes for children are improving.

Independent Reviewing Officer (Planning and Review Service, Herefordshire Council)

The annual report of the IRO's is a useful guide for HSCB. Their report gives a point of view of children's social care which is independent from that provided by Herefordshire Council's Children's Services. Statutory guidance published by the government in 2010 outlined this role as being one of quality assurance for children's services and the role has been described as the eyes and ears of the service. While the IROs have a very specific role in quality assurance, their report is a useful piece of intelligence for the Safeguarding Board.

Having reviewed the effectiveness of child protection conferencing and planning in 2011-12, the service is looking to develop a new model of conferences which will become more interactive, encouraging parents and children to take more ownership of their plans. Furthermore, the service also plans to move its reviews to a single, conference hub to enable better attendance from multi-agency partners which will coincide with a new Contract of Expectations for partners attending conference.

Such developments will be very useful for the Board to help it drive through improvements in the Child Protection and Looked After Children services as the Planning and Review reports its on-going findings on a quarterly basis.

LADO (managing allegations against professionals)

During 2011-12 the role of the LADO within Herefordshire Council was incorporated into the job description of the new Planning and Review Service Manager. At the same time, the LADO functionality of children's services case management computer system was developed to ensure the management of allegations is more robust.

The report made by LADO to Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board identified the fact that further work is needed to highlight the role of LADO to partner agencies and there have been incidents where appropriate referrals were not made.

The largest two areas for referrals to LADO in Herefordshire are the independent accommodation provider sector and the statutory school sector. This is in line with our understanding of LADO and of Herefordshire. Nationally there are a significant number of allegations made against teachers and Herefordshire has a proportionally high number of accommodation providers for Looked After Children, mainly housing children from other parts of the country.

The report highlighted a concern to the Board around the lack of independent advocacy being provided to these young people by their care providers or placing authority. Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board plans to work with accommodation providers during 2012-13 to rectify this.

Missing Children

Herefordshire Council's work on missing children is in conjunction with West Mercia Police and other regional partners. Children who go missing from children's homes are of particular



Section 11 Audit

Working Together to Safeguard Children recommends that the local Safeguarding Children Boards recommends that its partners undertake regular audits of their safeguarding work in a co-ordinated way. This process is known as our annual Section 11 Audit. The Section 11 Audit highlights areas for improvement across our partners which Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Boards can use to advise its partners on improvements.

In 2011-12 the Section 11 Audit provided evidence that safeguarding systems within our partner agencies were meeting the agreed standard while highlighting the need for developing the Board's Quality Assurance systems. In response, the Board engaged the services of the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) to assist in this process. This development work is on-going into 2012-13.

It was also noted, that while the audit tool used was helpful in assessing the current situation, it was not sufficiently useful in highlighting specific areas for development and it was recommended that in 2012-13, a new tool should be used. The Quality Assurance Sub Group will look at available tools to decide upon one to use before the next audit.



e) Participate in the local planning and commissioning of children's services to ensure that they take safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into account

Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board participates in the planning and commissioning of services in Herefordshire through recommendations made to partners at Board meetings and on-going work between its meetings. However, it is acknowledged that the Board should be more proactive in its responsibilities around the planning and commissioning of services.

In November 2012, a new state of the art Sexual Assault Resource Centre will open to serve the needs of victims of sexual assault in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. However, during 2011-12, the Board identified concerns that the interim arrangements for sexual assault examinations were not robust enough to ensure appropriate arrangements in place for Herefordshire residents. The Board escalated their concerns and asked for assurances from Health that interim arrangements would be in place to ensure continuity of service. Appropriate services were commissioned and will continue until the new SARC is open to children.

During the year, the Office of the Children's Commissioner launched a national research project into Child Sexual Exploitation and Gangs. On reviewing the input Herefordshire was being asked to make into this, the Board realised that it was in a similar place to most other Safeguarding Children Boards in not having a good understanding of the situation. West Mercia Police agreed to take a lead on developing and providing this.

The Board, understanding that there was a need for development in Herefordshire, launched its own Working Group on Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking to help develop our understanding of the issues in Herefordshire and co-ordinate the work of partners. In-so-doing, the Board also engaged the support of local third sector groups who are already preparing to work in this area. Through this engagement the Board can understand our service needs and ensure services are commissioned with support the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children.

Also in 2011-12, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board was informed that a significant number of referrals made into children's social care were not in line with the thresholds laid out in the Herefordshire Levels of Need guidance. In exploring the options to improve this, the Board looked at the possibility of developing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where Police, Children's Services, Health and representatives from other services would be collocated to receive referrals about children at significant risk. The development of this structure was agreed and a project manager was commissioned as a first step to the development of the MASH.



g) Putting in place procedures for ensuring that there is a co-ordinated response by the authority, their Board partners and other relevant persons to an unexpected death of a child.

In Herefordshire the West Mercia *Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants and Children (SUDIC) Protocol*⁹ is in place to ensure a co-ordinated response across partners in response to an unexpected child death.

During 2011-12, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board identified no cases in which the protocol was not effectively used and therefore our co-ordinated response in such cases worked effectively.

The SUDIC Protocol is due for review later in 2012, and Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board will be participating in that review along with our regional consortium partners.

⁹ The SUDIC protocol is available within section 9.1 of the West Mercia Consortium Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children at <http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com>.



h) Undertaking reviews of cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected, a child has died or a child has been seriously harmed, and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the authority, their Board partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

During 2011-12 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board undertook no Serious Case Reviews as no cases met the necessary criteria.

The Board's Serious Case Review sub group comprises of members of a range of agencies who meet monthly to discuss cases of concern and to make a decision as to whether a Serious Case Review or other type of review is necessary.

Serious Case Reviews look closely at the interaction of the partners of the Board with each other, and wider agencies involved, to ensure that they have followed multi-agency procedures relevant to the case and, if they haven't, whether that prevented the child from being adequately safeguarded. They involve all agencies who have worked with the child and take a considerable amount of time to develop and write.

The Serious Case Review sub group can ask the Board to recommend that a partner agency does an internal review and present it to the Board if they have concerns about a single agency's involvement in a case they have reviewed.

In 2011-12, the group discussed a number of cases and recommended three of those provided significant concern and therefore a single agency review or a practitioner lead peer review should be undertaken. These were completed as expected and learning was implemented within those agencies to prevent similar cases occurring in future.

During the year, the Board's Serious Case Review sub group also took on the responsibility for reviewing cases of vulnerable adults who are put at significant risk and for Domestic Homicide reviews. The work of the group will continue to develop during 2012-13.



2011/12 Strategic Priorities

The HSCB Business Plan 2011/12 set out the Board's strategic aims and specific objectives. The strategic priorities were based on the Board's analysis of priority areas for development and improvement. This section describes the progress made against these specific priorities.

Priority Improvement Area 1

We said we would improve multi-agency referral arrangements and ensure the right response.

How we said we would achieve this:

- Ensuring Levels of Need and Service Response Guidance is consistently disseminated, understood and applied
- Improving the quality of multi-agency referrals to enhance the timeliness and quality of decision making

What did we do?

- Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board developed, launched and promoted the Levels of Need Guidance and used its annual conference to ensure practitioners were aware of the Guidance and were trained to use it.
- The Multi-Agency Referral Form was created and implemented.
- The processes of the Referral and Assessment Team were fully reviewed and appropriately revised and the team was relaunched as the Family Assessment and Safeguarding Team (FAST). An improvement board was established to oversee the on-going development of FAST.

What difference has this made?

- Referrals to social care are more appropriate than previously with the proportion of referrals from agencies being carried through into the social care system increasing during the year.
- An increasing number of referrals are being made on the Multi-Agency Referral Form enabling us to compare the quality of referrals and help us target training more appropriately.
- The outstanding workload of FAST reduced by 60% after its launch through to the end of the year.

Priority Improvement Area 2:

We said we would improve data quality, assurance and analysis.

How we said we would achieve this:

- Embedding the performance reporting framework
- Developing effective analysis of performance reports

🔗 Improving quality assurance arrangements

What did we do?

- 🔗 The performance framework was created for use in 2011-12 and developed further for use in 2012-12
- 🔗 The Board used its meetings to ensure that it considered the necessary challenges to bring to partners and the Independent Chair was supported to provide this.
- 🔗 A range of Quality Assurance audits were built into the performance framework and undertaken throughout the year by the Quality Assurance sub group.

What difference has this made?

- 🔗 The QA sub group receives a large amount of data through the quarterly reports provided by partners and used this to identify issues throughout the safeguarding system throughout the year, some of which are explained in section c.
- 🔗 A number of single agency and multi-agency challenges have been brought by the Board and have effected change to improve safeguarding in Herefordshire.
- 🔗 By developing the QA sub groups ability to monitor the safeguarding performance of the Board's partners, we have identified a need for a larger, more robust Performance Framework which will include regularly headline reporting for the Board so that strategic leaders have an improved understanding of safeguarding in Herefordshire. This is work that will be on-going into 2012-13.

Priority Improvement Area 3:

We said we would improve joint safeguarding arrangements with Herefordshire Safeguarding Adult Board

How we said we would achieve this:

- 🔗 Improving policy and practice around key transition points, particularly to adulthood and between school phases
- 🔗 Develop joint safeguarding board arrangements with adults
- 🔗 Assess and understand the local position in relation to incidents of domestic abuse

What did we do?

- 🔗 The development of a 16+ service, specifically to address the 16/17 year old homeless through the findings of the Board's audit into homeless young people.
- 🔗 The development of a clear transition pathway through a commissioning review to how agencies worked together to support children with disabilities moving into adulthood.
- 🔗 The development and implementation of a clear transition pathway for children between school phases.
- 🔗 Ensured that services for children and young people who self-harm are in line with NICE guidance by auditing services and developing transition protocols between Wye Valley Trust and 2gether Mental Health Trust.
- 🔗 Appointed a Joint Independent Chair for both Boards for the first time.

Appendix 1: HSCB Membership

JOB TITLE	AGENCY
Director of Quality & Performance	2gether NHS Foundation Trust
Head teacher, Representing Special Schools	Blackmarston School
Head teacher, Representing High Schools	Fairfield High School
General Practitioner	Health
Education Liaison Officer	Hereford and Worcester Fire Service
Director of Personnel, Representing FE Colleges	Herefordshire College of Technology
Head of Quality & Safety (Adults)	Herefordshire Wye Valley Trust
Head teacher, Representing Primary Schools	Marlbrook Primary and Little Dewchurch Primary
Head of Safeguarding	NHS Herefordshire
Designated Doctor, Child Protection	NHS Herefordshire
Director of Clinical Leadership & Quality	NHS Herefordshire
Director of Public Health	NHS Herefordshire
Head of Additional Needs	People's Services, Herefordshire Council
Director of People's Services	People's Services, Herefordshire Council
Head of Planning and Review	People's Services, Herefordshire Council
Assistant Director, Children and Young People Provider Services	People's Services, Herefordshire Council
Head of Locality Services	People's Services, Herefordshire Council
Head of Fieldwork	People's Services, Herefordshire Council
Secondary School Improvement Advisor	People's Services, Herefordshire Council
Programme Consultant – Children's Services	Strategic Health Authority
Assistant Director, Homes and Communities	Strategic Housing, Herefordshire Council
DI, Public Protection Unit	West Mercia Police
Head of Public Protection	West Mercia Police
Head of Service	West Mercia Probation Trust
Chief Executive, Representing 3rd sector	West Mercia Women's Aid
Regional Safeguarding Manager, Representing 3 rd sector	West Mercia Women's Aid
Head of Service	Youth Offending Service

Membership Key

Strategic Board
Steering Group

Appendix 2: HSCB Budget Summary

Agency contributions	2011/12
Herefordshire Council	£112,704
NHS Herefordshire	£45,203
West Mercia Police	£30,165
Youth Offending Service	£645
West Mercia Probation	£4,612
CAFCASS	£550
Total income	£193,879

Expenditure	2011/12
Independent Chair	£11,357
HSCB and ASB Manager	£72,884
HSCB/HSCB Development Officer	£20,796
Training and development	£61,551
Meeting expenses	£5,507
Publicity, information provision and participation (Incl Annual Report)	£9,099
Funding Carried Forward	£12,685
Total expenditure	£193,879
