



# **Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board**

## **Business Plan 2012-2013**

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## Foreword by the Independent Chair

A key recent focus of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board has been developing our ability to accurately identify and distinguish children and young people whose welfare is compromised and those who are at risk of or suffering neglect or abuse and then respond most appropriately and effectively to address the needs of each. There has been a drive to appropriately use the Common Assessment Framework to enhance the welfare of children who are in need of services and the child protection processes for children at risk of significant harm. This emphasis will continue through this year.

Policies don't keep children safe. Only the awareness, vigilance and actions of all of those in contact with children and young people can achieve this. Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board has a vital role in monitoring and constantly improving how effectively we really work together to safeguard children. Our success depends on our ability to collect, share, analyse and interpret accurate information and use it to learn and develop across services within a mature inter-agency culture that is positive, inclusive, realistic, hard edged and challenging. Further developing our ability to do this well will be a priority this year.

It has long been recognised that there are many factors that adversely affect the welfare and safety of both children and adults, such as domestic abuse, mental ill health and drug and alcohol abuse. To address these issues effectively, there must be co-ordination between services for both children and adults. One part of bringing this work together in Herefordshire is my appointment as chair of both Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards. We are now looking to maximise the opportunities to work cohesively across children and adults services to protect those most vulnerable in our communities.

Finally, we live in very challenging times, with considerable change of staff and structures and some contraction being managed across services. Such change and associated uncertainty can bring opportunities but also risks adversely influencing our collective ability to work positively together in collaboration. Throughout the flux, there must remain a consistent golden thread of focused commitment across all agencies and organisations to prioritise the protection of children in our communities.

### **David McCallum, Independent Chair**

Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Endorsed by Jo Davidson, Director of People's Services

## Introduction

Both the HSAB and the HSCB strive to ensure that all Herefordshire citizens are safe and well and that all agencies responsible for promoting the welfare of vulnerable children, young people and adults are supported to do so in accordance with statutory and local guidance.

2011-2012 has been a year of continued consolidation for Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board building on the changes and learning made in the previous year and commencing with a new Independent Chair.

In developing its business plan for 2012, 2013, the Board will be driving a change and development agenda forward. This developmental work will progress alongside other agreed priority action areas.

The outcome the Board is seeking to achieve is to increase the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements in Herefordshire.

The priority action areas therefore are:

- Improve multi-agency working
- Developing data quality
- Joint arrangements for the boards

Additionally the actions areas will be further developed through the year as the developmental agenda unfolds.

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                                    |  West Mercia Police         |
|  Wye Valley Trust   |  West Mercia Probation      |
|  2gether NHS Trust  |  CAFCASS                    |
|  Education establishments                                 |  Strategic Health Authority |
|  Hoople   |  |
|  Herefordshire and Worcestershire Youth Offending Service |  |
|  Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service    |  |

## Context

### National

The Munro review recommended moving to a localised system that values and develops professional expertise and is centred on children and young people. Its view is that the current system has become overly bureaucratic with a focus on compliance. The role of independently chaired LSCBs is supported and the report states that *Working Together to Safeguard Children* should be amended to state that LSCBs should assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families (including early years provision) and the effectiveness of multi-agency training to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The Government has broadly accepted the recommendations of the report and implementation of the recommendations will take place throughout 2012-2013. The revised *Working Together to Safeguard Children* is due to be published in July 2012 and a new set of safeguarding performance information has been subject to consultation ending in April 2012.

Nationally driven developments of local structures provide new opportunities for the improvement of strategic links between HSCB, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Clinical Commissioning Group. It will be important for HSCB to deepen its relationships with these two groups during the year as well developing further interaction with Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Partnership Forum.

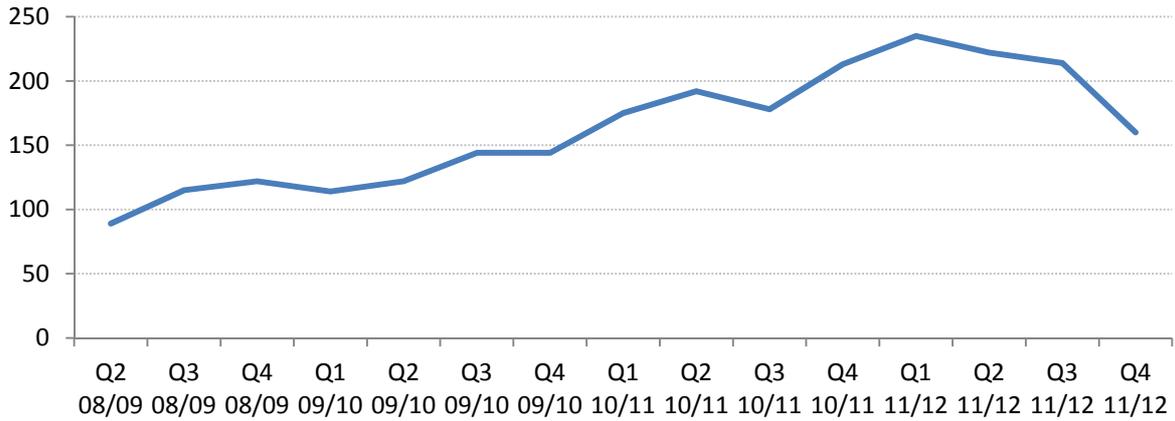
### Regionally

Some elements of Children's Social Care procedures are being developed through a regional consortium.

### Local

Following a steady rise in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Herefordshire from 2008 to 2011, reaching a peak of 235, in the first quarter of 2011-12 there was a significant drop with the figure now standing at 160 children. This represents a decrease of 31.9%.

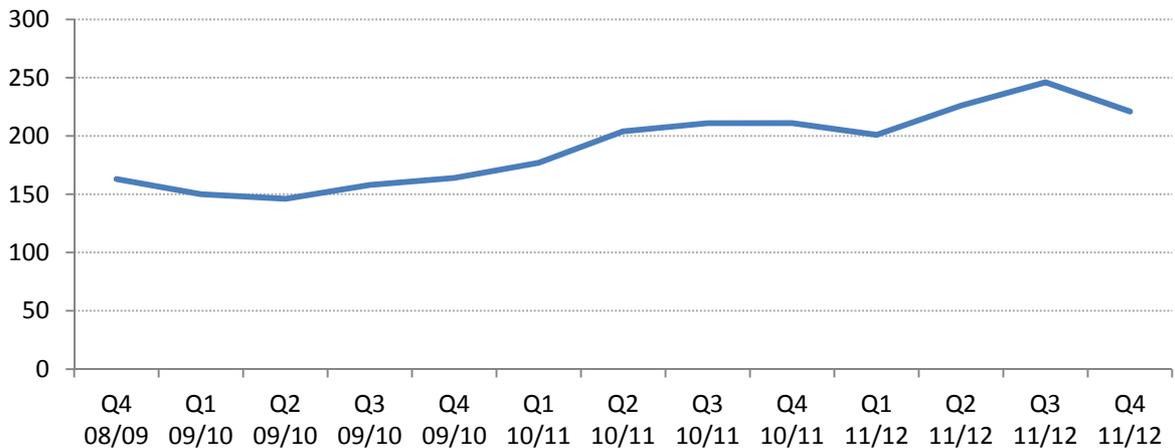
Children on Child Protection Plans



The year end 2010/11 comparator data showed that Herefordshire’s rate of Child Protection Plans was 50% higher than our statistical neighbours and the national rate, with a rate of nearly 60 per 10,000. The current rate of 45.5 per 10,000 is in line with national rates.

The number of LAC has shown a steady increase over the past few years, with the rate of LAC in Herefordshire increasing at a much higher rate than both our statistical neighbours and nationally. Currently the number of LAC in Herefordshire is broadly stable, in contrast to the national picture which is increasing.

Looked After Children trend



## Achievements and Challenges

### What did we do well last year?

- Carried out a detailed analysis of the reasons behind the increases in the numbers of local children subject to child protection plans and in the numbers of children looked after
- Commissioned external consultancy to support improvements in critical thinking and assessment skills and professionals' ability to describe needs rather than services
- Improved the timeliness of both initial assessments and core assessments through increased oversight by the FAST improvement board.
- Introduced a new multi-agency referral form which has led to improved quality of referrals
- Developed a local strategy and delivery plan to tackle of the issue of child sexual exploitation and trafficking in Herefordshire
- Delivered all requirements of the performance management framework, including agency performance reporting and single and multi-agency audits
- Held a successful event with national speakers focusing on domestic violence. A particularly valued part of the conference was the engagement of a group of young people relating their experiences of domestic violence affecting them.
- Developed key policies in relation to hostile and resistant families, anti-bullying and E-Safety.

## **Structural Arrangements**

In 2011-12 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board reviewed its operations and put in a place a joint business unit supporting both the adults and children safeguarding boards. Options for more joint work between the Boards have been agreed and will be implemented through 2012-2013. The procedure is now in place for the joint adults and children's serious case review and domestic homicide sub group setting out how this will work and accountability and reporting lines.

The structure of the Board in Herefordshire is as follows:

### **Strategic Board**

The Strategic Board, with an independent chair, sets the performance, policy and strategic priorities for Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board and is responsible for ensuring that statutory requirements are met and resources are in place to meet these. Its membership comprises Directors and senior managers with strategic and resource oversight of relevant agencies in Herefordshire.

### **Steering Group**

This group is the operational arm of the Board and critical in providing a steer and advice to strategic partners. It is responsible for ensuring that the business plan for the Board is delivered. It tasks individual lead officers with responsibility for delivering key tasks/activities, in line with the overall aims of the Business Plan, and holds them to account for effective delivery of agreed actions.

### **Quality Assurance and Evaluation Sub-Group**

This group is responsible for providing assurance to the Strategic Board that all agencies, individually and collectively, are meeting their requirements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It has oversight of all multi-agency and single agency audits, section 11 audits and analysis of performance data about safeguarding within relevant agencies in Herefordshire. It also tracks implementation of serious case review action plans. It is critical to the Board in assisting with its scrutiny and challenge role.

### **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**

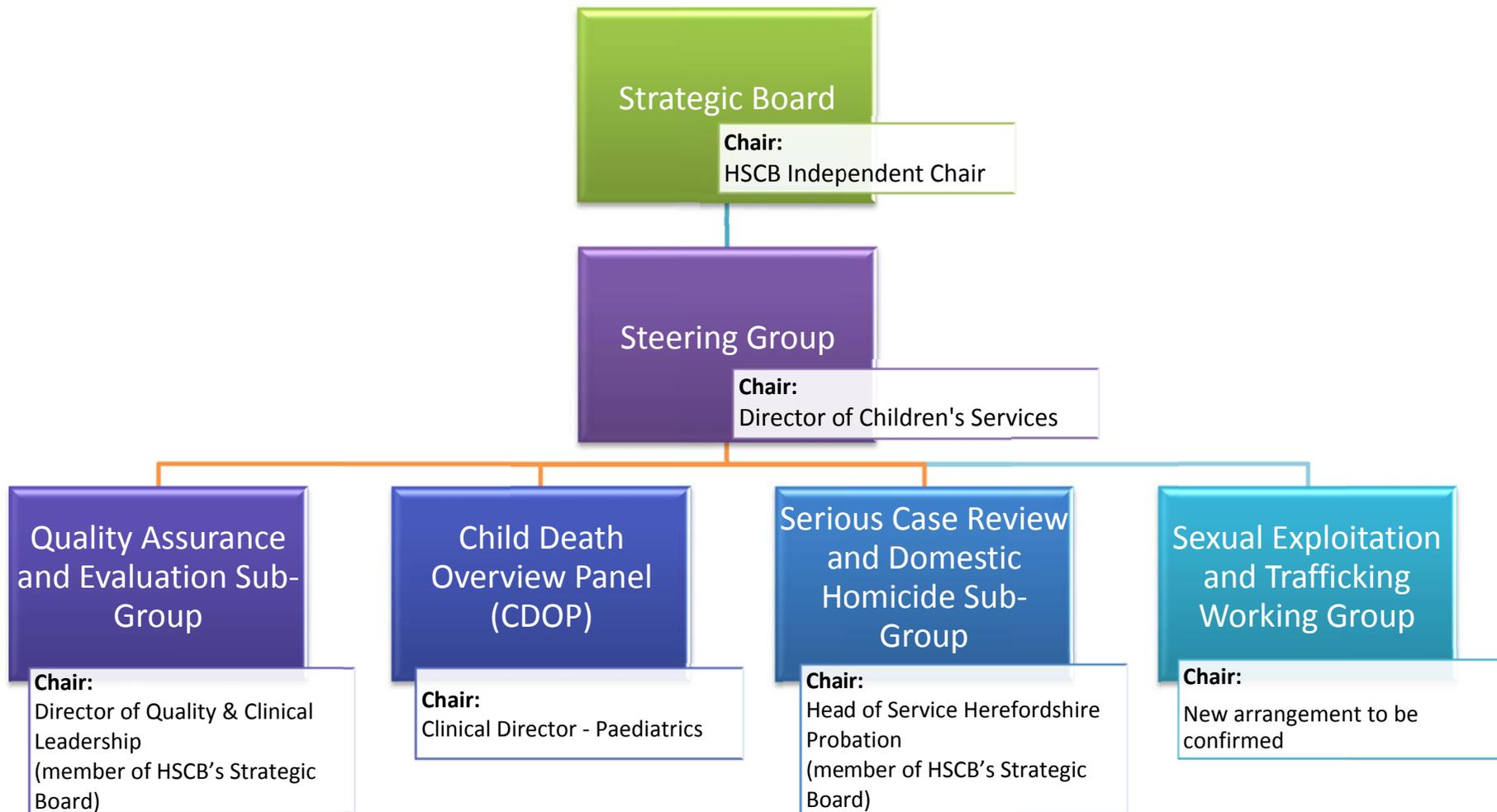
The purpose of the CDOP is to undertake an overview of all child deaths within the locality and to disseminate the learning to all agencies. It is recognised, however, that Herefordshire is too small an area for this analysis to be statistically significant and it is likely that during 2012-2013, Herefordshire will be part of a sub-regional Child Death Overview Panel with neighbouring authorities.

### **Serious Case Review and Domestic Homicide Sub-Group**

This group is responsible for recommending to the Independent Chair whether cases, both children's and adults, should be subject to a Serious Case Review.

### **Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Working Group**

Responsible for the development and implementation of HSCB's Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Delivery Plan.



## HSCB Priorities 2012-2013

In developing its business plan for 2012-2013, the Strategic Board has agreed to continue with its one key outcome area but has moved the focus of the priority improvement areas in the light of the progress made in the previous year.

The core business of the Board including training, policies and procedures and serious case reviews continues with individual officers being the leads for these areas and held to account at the Steering Group.

<b>Key outcome area:</b>	<b>Increased effectiveness of multi-agency child protection arrangements in Herefordshire</b>		
<b>Priority improvement areas:</b>	Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements	Improving data quality, assurance and analysis	Joint safeguarding arrangements
<b>Action areas:</b>	<p>Improve the quality of assessment of need</p> <p>Improve multi-agency decision making</p> <p>Improve multi-agency child protection planning and practice</p> <p>Deliver effective arrangements for sexual assault examinations</p>	<p>Improve interrogation of performance information at the Strategic Board</p> <p>Listen to the voice of the child and staff as part of the quality assurance arrangements</p> <p>Develop the use of <i>Understanding Herefordshire</i> to identify needs and strengthen service planning across agencies</p>	<p>Implement joint priorities with the Safeguarding Adults Board to tackle domestic abuse</p> <p>Develop coordinated support for adults and children in families affected by mental health wellbeing issues and adults and children in families affected by substance misuse issues.</p>
<b>Core business:</b>	<p>Policy and professional development</p> <p>Levels of Need</p> <p>Information sharing</p> <p>Serious case reviews</p> <p>Quality assurance and learning from audit</p> <p>Joint Safeguarding Board arrangements</p>		

<b>PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREA 1: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements</b>			
<b>Lead officer</b>	<b>Monitored by</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
<b>Action area: Improve the quality of assessment of need</b>			
Debbie McMillan	QA Sub Group	🔗 Agencies routinely undertaking CAF in a timely way and most children will have received a CAF before a referral is made to social care.	Dec 2012
Lisa Green and Hazel Blankley	QA Sub Group	🔗 Analysis of Liz Brown's audit is undertaken and recommendations implemented.	January 2013
<b>Action area: Improve multi-agency decision making</b>			
Tina McGrath	Steering Group	🔗 Model for Herefordshire MASH agreed. 🔗 All agencies have identified the resources needed to implement the MASH.	November 2012 February 2013
<b>Action area: Improve multi-agency child protection planning and practice</b>			
Paul Meredith	QA Sub Group	🔗 Implement the Child Protection Conference Hub. 🔗 All agencies submitting reports to conference as appropriate.	July 2012 December 2012
Andy Churcher	QA Sub Group	🔗 Develop the profile of Safeguarding across residential care providers in Herefordshire to achieve 80% of Herefordshire's providers signing up to agreed Safeguarding standards.	January 2013
Les Knight	QA Sub Group	🔗 100% of schools return their Safeguarding Checklist	November 2012
	Steering Group	🔗 100% of schools have at least one member of staff trained to Group 5.	February 2013
Kathy O'Mahony	QA Sub Group	🔗 All appropriate agencies committed to the development of the Keeping Children Safe Strategy.	July 2012
<b>Action area: Deliver effective arrangements for sexual assault examinations</b>			
Lynne Renton	Strategic Board	🔗 Commission to interim arrangements for SAEs 🔗 Complete tender process for permanent arrangements 🔗 SARC implemented	July 2012 July 2012 January 2013

## PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREA 2: Improving data quality, assurance and analysis

Lead officer	Monitored by	Key milestones	Timescales
<b>Action area:</b> Improve interrogation of performance information at the Strategic Board			
Andy Churcher	QA Sub Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Develop an HSCB dataset of indicators relevant to the business and priorities of the Safeguarding Children Board.</li> </ul>	September 2012
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> 100% of quarterly reports to the Board presented as a data dashboard which is an agreed subset of the HSCB dataset supported by a clear exception report.</li> </ul>	December 2012
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Deliver training to strategic board on what data to expect and how to interrogate it.</li> </ul>	November 2012
<b>Action area:</b> Listen to the voice of the child and staff as part of the quality assurance arrangements			
Andy Churcher	QA Sub Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Business Unit to explore existing arrangements for consulting children and young people and make recommendations to the QA Sub-Group.</li> </ul>	September 2012
John Roughton	Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Include the voice of the child in agency audit work.</li> </ul>	October 2012
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Include the voice of the staff in agency audit work.</li> </ul>	October 2012
<b>Action Area:</b> Develop the use of <i>Understanding Herefordshire</i> to identify needs and strengthen service planning across agencies			
Andy Churcher	Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Assure the Board that agencies have access to and understand <i>Understanding Herefordshire</i> which incorporates the Integrated Needs Assessment.</li> </ul>	September 2012
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Identify gaps in service planning in response to <i>Understanding Herefordshire</i>.</li> </ul>	October 2012
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #00a0e3;">✎</span> Assess the impact current safeguarding measures are having on children's outcomes in Herefordshire.</li> </ul>	December 2012

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREA 3: Joint safeguarding arrangements			
Lead officer	Monitored by	Key milestones	Timescales
<b>Action area:</b> Implement joint priorities with the Safeguarding Adults Board to tackle domestic abuse			
Lynne Renton	Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop appropriate strategic links between the Board and the three partner groups with responsibilities around Domestic Abuse: Herefordshire Partnership Executive Group, Sustainable Communities within Herefordshire Council and the Health and Well Being Board.</li> </ul>	November 2012
	HSCB QA Sub Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligence about levels of exposure to domestic abuse in Herefordshire from multi-agency audit focussing on the needs of Children reporting to both Boards.</li> </ul>	December 2012
<b>Action area:</b> Develop coordinated support for adults and children in families affected by mental health wellbeing issues and adults and children in families affected by substance misuse issues.			
Sarah Cox	HSAB PQA Sub Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiagency audit on mental health in Herefordshire with additional regard to the needs of Children reporting to both Boards.</li> </ul>	February 2013
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action plans developed for both HSCB and HSAB on the development of work with families affected by mental health issues.</li> </ul>	March 2013
Lynne Renton	HSAB PQA Sub Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of recommendations from Hidden Harm work stream in 2011 implemented and embedded in practice across agencies.</li> </ul>	December 2012