

# **Readiness to Implement Children and Families Act 2014**



## **Children with SEN and Disabilities**

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# Key Elements of C+F Act

- Wellbeing Duty
- Local Offer
- Information, Advice and Support
- SEN Support (Best Endeavours Duty)
- Transitional Arrangements Planning
- EHC Assessment and Planning
- Personal Budgets
- Mediation
- Joint Commissioning



## Wellbeing Duty

- Duty to work with children, young people and parents to improve outcomes
- Ongoing process to deliver cultural and procedural change



## Local Offer

- New statutory duty to publish LA Local Offer
- Initial Local Offer in place  
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/local-offer>
- Will require development and improvement over time



## Information, Advice and Support

- Independent IAG including independent supporters
- Parent Partnership now SENDIASS (SEN and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service)



# **SEN Support (Best Endeavours Duty)**

- Duty on early years settings, schools and FE
- LA responsibility to reassure themselves that settings are aware of their duty



# **Transitional Arrangements Planning**

- Plan re. conversion to be published by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014



# **EHC Assessment and Planning**

- EHC Plan template in place
- Impact of young person 'owning' EHC Plan from 16 unclear



# **Personal Budgets**

- Separated in Code of Practice into
  - Education
  - Social Care
  - Health
- Education approach in place, Social Care and Health in development



# Mediation

- New compulsory requirement for mediation including Social Care and Health (LA to fund education and care).
- West Midlands tender with Herefordshire leading.
- Increase in appeals to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal (SENDIST) predicted with extension to include FE/19-25 and appeals against 2010 Equality Act.



# Joint Commissioning

- Requirement for LA and CCG to work together at a strategic level
- Includes requirement for internal dispute resolution
- In development



# Adoption

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## Key Elements

- A duty on local authorities looking after a child to consider placing the child in a 'Fostering for Adoption' placement where they are considering adoption.
- 26 week limit on care proceedings to prevent 'drift' for children.
- Removal of the requirement to give due consideration to a child's ethnicity when choosing an adoption placement.
- Personal budgets to enable adoptive families to secure adoption support themselves. Duty to provide information about such services in the area.
- Direct access to the national Adoption Register for approved prospective adopters to enable them to identify a child to adopt.



# Current Position in Herefordshire

- Fostering to adopt discussed in information and preparation training for prospective adopters.
- 26 week limit in care proceedings met in the majority of cases
- Child's ethnicity is considered as part of a child's holistic needs.
- Personal budgets for adoption support not yet being considered; pilots underway in 10 local authorities
- Direct access to Adoption Register yet to be piloted nationally.



# Aims moving forwards

- Raise awareness regarding fostering for adoption and recruit and prepare adopters willing to undertake this role.
- Achieve 26 week completion of care proceedings in all cases with exceptional circumstances.
- To recruit prospective adopters from the widest possible range of backgrounds to meet the holistic needs of children needing adoptive placements.
- To provide access to a range of evidence based adoption support services.





# Challenges around this being Achieved

- Marketing and recruitment and training and support required to promote Fostering to Adopt with prospective adopters, birth families and their representatives and the courts.
- Social worker capacity to complete required processes and care proceedings within 26 weeks.
- Seriously complex cases where on exceptional circumstances we have to enlist expert assessment which can knock the 26 week target out.
- Capacity to market, recruit, train and assess prospective adopters
- Access to effective therapeutic interventions for adopted children, particularly in their adolescence.