

**Written Submissions to the Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 in consideration of the Herefordshire Children's Services Improvement Plan.**

Primary Head comments on the Improvement Plan

**Comments from a (Primary) Head Teacher**

1.3 There is a disconnect where, if families may already have had Vennture, Early Help, CIN, CP, they are then not able to access a 'lesser' degree of support. There is a risk of families falling into/not being able to be supported by any category if they have already been involved in a different one.

3.00/3.6 Ann Marie Kemp leaving MASH leaves a hole for schools. She was respected and trusted and understood education. Schools are concerned about who will replace her when the Education lead, whilst good, is based far away so doesn't have local knowledge. How can this be mitigated?

4.3/5.4 Voice of the child not of the parent. When social care are supporting parents sometimes children's voices are not prioritised. This remains a concern amongst heads.

7.3 One family has waited over 2 years for this support (life story work) to be organised and implemented effectively. This means the child is constantly re-traumatised having to tell her story to, so far, 9 social workers. This concern has been shared at every PEP/LAC meeting we have attended since 2020.

10 There is a lack of confidence amongst head teachers with regard to SEND. We are concerned about capacity, lack of availability of places in specialist settings and lack of flexibility within the graduated approach where a child does not fit that system. There are huge pressures on staffing at all levels within the team which means that excellent staff are overloaded and we will lose them eg one social inclusion officer for the whole of Herefordshire.

10.1-10.6 are about paperwork and planning. Do the strategies that sit within them include increasing staffing? Provision for increased ASD places in Herefordshire? Provision for increased SEMH places? We are at a critical point now where there are no primary SEMH places in this county. The measures noted in this area don't mention these concerns. Perhaps they sit within the plans? If not I think they have to be. Timelines only work if there are options in order to meet children's needs at the end of them.

There is huge resource being put into social care which I understand. However, we are walking into a crisis with SEND. What additional resources have been given in order to meet our rapidly changing landscape? Crisis is a strong word but all heads I talk to about this would agree.