

**Appendix 1**

**Herefordshire Council**

**Children and Young People's Services  
Performance Management Report  
April - August 2006**

## **Introduction and Background**

The overall improvement process and action for children's services is monitored and reviewed through the Joint Area Review Performance Improvement Action Plan Management group, which meets fortnightly. Actions and detailed milestones for all the JAR recommendations are covered through this process. In addition the Children and Young People's Forward Delivery Plan contains further performance requirement and target information.

The GOWM Project Board is a key reporting and review mechanism, which will meet monthly to consider challenge and support progress in delivering the JAR PIAP and the development of Performance and Project Management processes and culture.

The Director of Children's Services is regularly reviewing all performance information and this will inform her reporting to the GOWM Board. Since May 2006, she has been meeting weekly with the Service Managers for Safeguarding and Assessment. She chairs a bi-monthly Performance Clinic to review and advise corrective action on performance against the performance indicators and against budgetary provision.

As far as the future senior management arrangements for the Safeguarding and Assessment Division are concerned, the new Head of Service, Shaun McLurg, will be taking up his post on September 18th. He has already visited the authority on several occasions and is scoping out his priorities for leading the service.

The Children and Young People's Services Performance and Improvement Manager will be recruited in mid September 2006 and it is hoped they will be in post by November. Meanwhile, Amy Weir is working with the Head of Service for Commissioning and Improvement and the Institute for Public Care to develop the new performance team including integrating existing roles, creating some additional ones and setting up a work plan. The growing team is meeting weekly. A half day is planned in the next few weeks to establish a develop reporting timetable both for the Council's own performance management system but also for the GOWM Board and the regular DfEs and CSCI reporting which is required. There is also close working with the internal auditors on these developments. This work will also learn from and benefit from the Audit Commission review / inspection of performance management in the Council and in Children & Young People's Services at the end of September. IPC will be producing an initial findings and recommendations report on 22nd September and presenting it to key managers in a workshop on that day.

## **General Overview of Action and Performance Improvement Measures and Management**

The **Referral and Assessment processes** and performance in Herefordshire have required review and updating to improve performance. The Joint Area Review and local analysis of the performance in Herefordshire in comparison with the benchmarking family of authorities has necessitated a re-evaluation of

business processes and structures for the "front end" of children's social care (now Safeguarding & Assessment Services).

**Issues to address identified by the JAR and locally subsequently:**

- the child concern model's threshold for social care engagement was set too high to meet statutory requirements in relation to the Children Act 1989
- Referral rates for assessment of need were, as a result, low in relation to comparator authorities
- Other agencies expressed concerns about the lack of prompt involvement by social care and indicated that perhaps all contacts were not being recorded
- Issues about the social work capacity and high vacancy rates
- The structure for handling work through the service with a sharp division between the work of the duty and long term teams with the burden of almost all new work falling on to the duty team.
- The need to make appropriate progress on and linkage to the introduction of common assessment processes CAF

Work to deal with these issues was immediately instigated early in 2006 with much of it completed by March as detailed in the JAR PIAP – review and updating of threshold criteria, new guidelines published and issued across agencies, developmental and training work across agencies involving the child concern model consultants, cover of every vacant social work post by agency staffing and a draft of the workforce strategy for social care.

**Further detailed action so far has included:**

**On Staffing**

- Identification of the number of social work vacancies in children's social care (Safeguarding & Assessment Services) with immediate action to advertise nationally – adverts placed in April, May and June 2006 with good results - 9 permanent social workers have been recruited since April 2006 (3 of which are yet to start) and there has only been one SW leaver.
- A further 4 social work candidates are being interviewed in September 2006. And a further round of national advertising starts in early September 2006.
- Engagement of Tribal to advise on how to improve recruitment and retention to social work posts and the production of a social care workforce strategy
- Confirmation of existing social work establishment and use of comparator data to reset and increase the number of social work posts – additional funding being sought for increase in establishment from April 2007. (See Managing Workflows Report July 2006)
- Agency staff continue to be used to make up short falls in permanent staffing.
- Target is to recruit as many permanent social workers as quickly as possible up to the service establishment and if there are suitable candidates to make further appointments.

- Weekly / fortnightly reporting to the Assessment and Safeguarding Business meeting on current staffing position.
- New Head of Service to review and update the social care workforce strategy including consideration of a proposal to recruit staff from the USA through UK Pro.

### **Current Staffing (Fieldwork Teams)**

**(as at 4th September 2006)**

	Social Workers Permanent	Social Workers Agency	Total Social Workers	Vacant Social Work Posts	Family Support Workers	Admin / Customer Service Officers
Duty Team	7.5 (0.5 sabbatical)	3	10.5	1	1	2.5
East/South Team	9.6 (1 mat leave)	0	9.6	1	1.8	3
North Team	9.3	0.6	9.9	0	1.7	1.6
Children w Disabilities	3.2	0.6	3.8	1	3.6	1
CAMHS	0.8	0	0.8	1.2	0	0
Totals	30.4	4.2	34.6	4.2	8.1	8.1

### **Referrals and Assessments**

- Targets to raise the number of referral and to improve the timeliness of assessments – both initial and core have been set in line with comparator authorities – have been set and are monitored monthly and progress is shared with CSCI.
- Staffing levels in duty are being maintained and increased and, in addition, some referrals are being taken through immediately to the other children’s teams – as a forerunner of the planned changes to the configuration and responsibilities of the duty / initial assessment and the other children in need teams. This action has also been required to enable the significant rise in referrals to be managed.
- Weekly Performance Improvement Group meetings oversee allocation and progress on performance improvement is chaired by the Operational service Manager
- QA, audit and review of practice continues and is now supplemented by the activities of the new Independent Review and Planning Manager

### **Children in Need and Looked After**

By comparison, the performance and outcomes for children with whom the Council is engaged are very positive as indicated by the PAF dataset with all except two of those PAF being banded within level 4 or 5 on the first CSCI cut for the 2005/06 outturn. (PAF First Cut – attached) The two exceptions - Cost of services for children looked after (BVPI 51) Final warnings/reprimands and convictions of children looked after – are

both comfortably within band 3. The PAF banding sheet for Herefordshire is attached. The participation of children in their reviews has since been corrected and is now accepted as being in excess of 93%.

Performance is being regularly monitored at regular service meetings and within the Key Managers Meeting, which involves managers across Safeguarding and Assessment, which meets monthly. (See Performance and Business meetings Documents attached)