

HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday 28th May 2008
2.00 pm – 4.15 pm at Blackfriars

PRESENT:

Sharon Menghini, Director of Children's Services, Herefordshire Council
Sharon Gray, Executive Director, Learning & Skills Council
Sue Mead, Non-Executive Director for Children's Services, Herefordshire Primary Care Trust
Ivan Powell, Chief Inspector, West Mercia Constabulary (representing Mark Turner)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Philippa Granthier, Business Manager, Children's Trust, Herefordshire Council
Dave Scott, Principal Education Psychologist, Herefordshire Council (agenda item 7)
Hilary Hall, Improvement Manager, Herefordshire Council (agenda item 4 & 8)
Notes taken by Julie Teague, PA to the Children's Trust, Herefordshire Council

Sue Mead Chaired the meeting.

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES:

Cllr Jenny Hyde, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People,
Herefordshire Council (Chair)
Chris Bull, Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council/PCT
Mark Turner, Divisional Commander, West Mercia Constabulary
Helen Horton, Chief Executive, Voluntary Sector Alliance

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

Children and Young People's Plan

The plan had now been through the political approval processes and has also been designed and in the process of printing. Philippa circulated the proofs particularly highlighting the Children's version. The launch of the plan was on 3rd June at the Left Bank; Graham Turner, Hereford United's Manager is presenting the prizes. Photographs with the Board would help raise the Children's Trust profile.

The Board thanked Philippa and Julie for their work on the plan and the launch.

Children & Young People's Directorate structure

Sharon Menghini informed the Board that she is recruiting 2 new members of her Management Team with interviews next week. Sharon is meeting with key managers and staff to talk about the new structure and has concerns that there are a lot of changes and mindful that this will cause anxiety, but they were important improvements to improve outcomes for young people.

The Board would like to see a final structure diagram of the directorate and were interested to revisit the commissioning aspects at a future meeting.

Action:

Final structure diagram for Children and Young People's Directorate to be circulated with the minutes. PG/JT

Action:

Board to consider the commissioning aspects of the new Children and Young People's Directorate Restructure at a future meeting.

ALL/PG

3. ITEMS FOR AOB

Information on Primary Strategy for Change.

4. REVIEW OF THE 07/08 DELIVERY PLAN, APA SELF ASSESSMENT AND 07/08 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

(Delivery Plan circulated with the minutes and the APA Self Assessment was distributed during the meeting)

Philippa informed the Board that the outcome groups had been tasked with completing the review of the 07/08 Delivery Plan. The information in the success measures highlighted in red was still to be received. Philippa had been working with Hilary in terms of completing the APA.

The Board discussed each area:

Be Healthy

Philippa explained that this was the area with the most gaps but was confident of getting the information from Marcia Perry following Frances Howie leaving the PCT. From April 2008 Performance data from the PCT would be going direct to Hilary. Clarity over the links between the LAA/LPSA with the APA was needed and whether the red indicators have an impact on the Award Grant.

Hilary explained that the main area was around attendance and it would achieve the reward grant. She was not aware of any red areas within the LAA but would check and give an overview.

Actions:

Hilary Hall to check the links between LAA/LPSA which would support the APA document and inspection.

HH

Philippa Granthier to contact Marcia Perry re the be healthy section.

PG

Stay Safe

Stay Safe is the biggest risk area. Recruitment and retention was still an issue and a successful overseas recruitment of social workers from the USA took place earlier this year with a further recruitment campaign planned for July 2008.

The Board also discussed the risks around CRB checks to foreign workers; the issue needs to be raised at HSCB.

The Board expressed concerns about the allocation of child protection cases to social workers and agreed that the state of play for this high level indicator should be reported at every meeting.

Ivan Powell informed the Board that he had sent the Child Death Policy to Shaun for the HSCB to amend the process for Herefordshire. Sharon Menghini raised her concerns about the process of notifying everybody who needed to know and that she had requested Shaun to write a document to address this.

Actions:

HSCB chair to provide re-assurance to the Board at every meeting regarding the allocation of cases to social workers.

SMcL

Philippa to raise with HSCB the concern over CRB checks on foreign nationals joining the children's service workforce.

PG

Enjoy and Achieve

Sharon explained that there was a positive view in most areas. Education Welfare Service was the most vulnerable part but there was a new Interim Head of Service who is looking at re-shaping the service and a proposal has gone to Children and Young People's Directorate Management Team meeting on how to move forward.

Positive Contribution

Hilary explained that this judgement was a 2 because the Outcome Lead, Keith Barham had felt that although there had been an improvement there was no time to show how areas had been embedded.

Economic Well-Being

Areas for improvement were around housing and 14-19. Sharon Gray explained that this was an issue with the lack of success in the 14-19 diploma process but there had been good progress in some areas.

The council's children's services and capacity to improve

Judged as a 2 as although have infrastructure in place it still feels very fragile but need to be positive about future as now have priorities and Children and Young People's Plan in place. We have improved from last year but not there yet.

The Board was happy to support the APA assessment to go to Cabinet and Hilary was happy to receive any further comments.

The Board discussed how to conduct the business of the Trust and define high level priorities; also now need to look at governance, accountability and line management arrangements. Agreed to scope some of this at the next meeting.

Action:

Governance arrangements, procedures and cross-cutting areas for PG Children's Trust to be discussed at the next meeting.

5. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

(item 8, report circulated with the agenda)

Hilary outlined the purpose of the report. After discussion the Board agreed to the proposal for a strategic approach to consulting with children and young people on a biennial basis and with the arrangements with respect to the schools survey.

6. CAF ACTION/IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(item 7 on agenda, report and documents circulated with agenda)

Dave Scott highlighted the progress of the CAF and the issues or risks noted in his report and recommended the Children's Trust Board approve the Herefordshire CAF & CAFTAC Procedures and CAF Implementation Plan.

Sharon Menghini thanked Dave for the work done so far and the Board discussed the main issue of resources for the Vanguard Team who will supply the mentoring support to new practitioners. Research in other authorities has shown this element to be crucial.

A bid has been made to PCT Partnership Fund for resources to implement this vital support, without which the CAF may not succeed. There is also work being undertaken to see how previous Children's Fund money can be directed to this area. Sharon Gray suggested that the Reward Grant money which is an investment into areas that need a priority could possibly be used through Herefordshire Partnership. She was attending a Herefordshire Partnership Board meeting on Friday where, if fully briefed, she could present a case to

them.

The Board agreed and signed-off both documents.

Action:

Dave Scott and Philippa to meet after the meeting and prepare bullet point briefing for Sharon Gray to take to the Herefordshire Partnership Board. DS/PG

7. 2008/09 DELIVERY PLAN

(item 5 on agenda, plan circulated with agenda)

Philippa explained that the Outcome Groups had been tasked with completing the plan which now included the LAA Indicators and all new National Indicators. There were gaps and Philippa was concerned about the Be Healthy section as Frances Howie had left the PCT. Service Management section had been improved; Chris Baird was developing an Accountability Framework for the next meeting. The Board discussed the plan and had concerns around some areas, particularly Stay Safe. Some actions were not expressed in SMART terms. Further work was needed by Outcome Leads.

The Board agreed Sharon Menghini will have delegation to approve the plan; this needs to be completed by the end of June. Sharon to meet with Philippa and Hilary Hall to consider amendments to the plan. Performance against the plan will be brought to every Board meeting.

Actions:

Column headings on the table to be continued on every page of the document. PG/JT

Stay Safe should include PI on children on the child protection register having a named social worker. PG/SW

Philippa to take plan back to outcome groups to review and strengthen. PG

Sharon Menghini, Philippa and Hilary Hall to meet to consider amendments to plan. Sharon to approve plan on behalf of the Board by the end of June. SM/PG/
HH

8. AREA BASED GRANT (ABG)

(item 6 on agenda, report and document circulated with agenda)

Philippa updated the Board on the management of the ABG for 2008/09 and the process of reporting and reviewing the activities supported by ABG. Review workshops will be undertaken during June which will be carried out by the Outcome Groups and the Management Group. A Challenge Panel will support the outcome groups in this work. Philippa highlighted the attached spreadsheet and wanted the Board to note that the areas highlighted in blue were new grants where a business case will be submitted to the Management Group in the first instance prior to agreeing funding, although the grant had been earmarked for now. Following the workshops in June, firm proposals will be brought to the Board in July as to Commissioning proposals from April 2009. The Board discussed that any underspends should be directed towards CAF as a main priority.

An offer letter for the ABG for 2008/09 had been received from the Herefordshire Partnership. Sue Mead, as Vice Chair signed the letter.

9. UPDATE ON STRATEGIES

(item 10 on agenda, reports were circulated before the meeting)

Sharon Menghini presented the reports previously circulated. Progress was noted. There were concerns with cross-cutting strategies. There had been some progress and she had asked Margaret Dennison, Interim Head of Community Operations to look at the strategies. The Board agreed they needed a fuller discussion around each strategy.

Actions:

Detailed reports and project plans on each area of work to be brought back to future meetings. SM/PG

Additional meeting to be arranged in order to discuss the above; 15th July meeting to be reinstated. PG/JT

10. HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (HSCB)

(item 9 on agenda, report and documents circulated with agenda)

Shaun McLurg updated the Board on progress in relation to HSCB. The Business Plan was signed off by HSCB and Shaun would be happy to receive comments on this. The budget is now finalised with sufficient funding to recruit an Independent Chair. Discussions are taking place with David Powell, Head of Financial Services in order to establish a robust budget mechanism process that will allow any underspends to be carried forward although the underspend of £96,700 from this year has been agreed on this occasion to be carried forward. Progress has been made with CAF and the reduction of amber and reds in the Section 11 Audit represents good progress by agencies.

The Board requested Shaun to develop high level issues and priorities probably from the Business Plan that he can report on every time including a financial framework. Shaun agreed to develop in partnership with the Independent Chair an outcomes framework which monitors the success of the HSCB. The Chair could use this as a means of updating the Children's Trust. Shaun would bring the framework to the Board for approval.

Actions:

Board members to send any comments on the HSCB business plan to Shaun McLurg. ALL

The proposed outcomes framework to be developed to incorporate HSCB business infrastructure e.g. financial information and bring back to future meeting for consideration and approval. SMcL

Sharon Menghini left the meeting.

11. DCSF LATEST GUIDANCE/CHILDREN'S PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Philippa informed the Board about the latest DCSF guidance and that she is responding to the consultation.

Actions:

Paper copies of the paper to be sent out to Board members PG/JT

Board members to provide a response to Philippa by 16th June. ALL

12. MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT RE LSC

(report circulated with the agenda)

Sharon Gray advised Board Members of the consultation on the 'Raising Expectations' White Paper. This will have huge implications for the Local Authority and Children's Trust in future.

Action:

Board members to respond to the consultation on the DCSF website by ALL the 9 June

13. AOB

Philippa Granthier on behalf of Sharon Menghini informed the Board about the Primary Strategy for Change. Partners should feed their comments into the process.

Action:

Primary Strategy for Change. Board members to respond to the ALL consultation document previously circulated by email.

14. Date of Future Meetings – Room 3 at Blackfriars

15 July 2008	2.00 pm – 4.00 pm
28 th July 2008	9.30 am – 11.30 am
31 st October 2008	2.00 pm – 4.00 pm
30 th January 2009	2.00 pm – 4.00 pm
29 th April 2009	2.00 pm – 4.00 pm