

“Yes We Can”

- *the plan to support children, young people and families*

Our vision in Herefordshire is for children and young people to grow up healthy, happy and safe, with supportive families and carers, and to make sure they have the best education and opportunities.

Who are we?

We are a children and young people’s partnership which is a partnership of different organisations that work together to make things better for children, young people and their parents and carers. We include:

- Herefordshire Council
- Herefordshire Primary Care Trust, including GPs
- Wye Valley NHS Trust
- Schools
- Colleges
- Worcestershire and Herefordshire Youth Offending Service
- Jobcentre Plus
- West Mercia Probation Trust
- West Mercia Police Service
- The Alliance (third sector representatives)
- Other private, voluntary and community sector groups
- Children, young people and parents / carers

A very important part of this partnership is the [Shadow Board](#). This is a group of young people aged 11 to 19 from across secondary schools and colleges in Herefordshire. They act as a consultative group commenting on various strategies and projects of our partnership. The Shadow Board link with school councils of both primary and secondary schools, and the youth council, to give children and young people a voice about the issues that affect them. The Shadow Board can directly influence the decisions and actions of leaders of our partnership so it is a powerful group of young people.

Why do we need a plan?

This new plan has been written to show what we will do to improve the lives of families and their children and young people in Herefordshire. It covers children from 0 to 19 years of age and up to 25 years for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. This plan is a county-wide, partnership plan; it is not a plan that lists what each of the partners do on an every day basis. It does include our collective aims of what our partnership wants to

achieve by working closely together. Each partner has pledged what their individual contribution will be to help achieve our partnership aims.

For many children growing up in Herefordshire can be fairly easy, but for some it is more difficult. Some may have health problems, some don't have families that can look after them as well as they want, and some have difficulty with learning. Sometimes children need help just for a short time, perhaps settling into a new school.

As partners, our aim is to provide support where it is needed so that children and families can take responsibility for their own health and well-being. Our approach is not just to help children and young people, but their families and carers as well, as they bring up their children and have the greatest influence on them. We can also help nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges, plus community and voluntary groups as these all work directly with children and young people.

Sometimes our support will need to be more targeted and specialist to help those families who are finding situations much more difficult, particularly where children are not developing as they should or are at risk of harm. These children have the right to the same chances and opportunities as the vast majority of children in Herefordshire and we will work together to ensure the needs of these children are met.

This plan covers the period April 2011 to March 2014; it is a strategic plan so it doesn't contain every detail of what must happen but we will monitor partners pledges and that actions are taking place and publish this in an annual review. Three years can be a long time and this plan will develop as changes happen in the needs of our local communities and nationally.

There are other versions of this plan available – a shorter poster summary and a version for younger children.

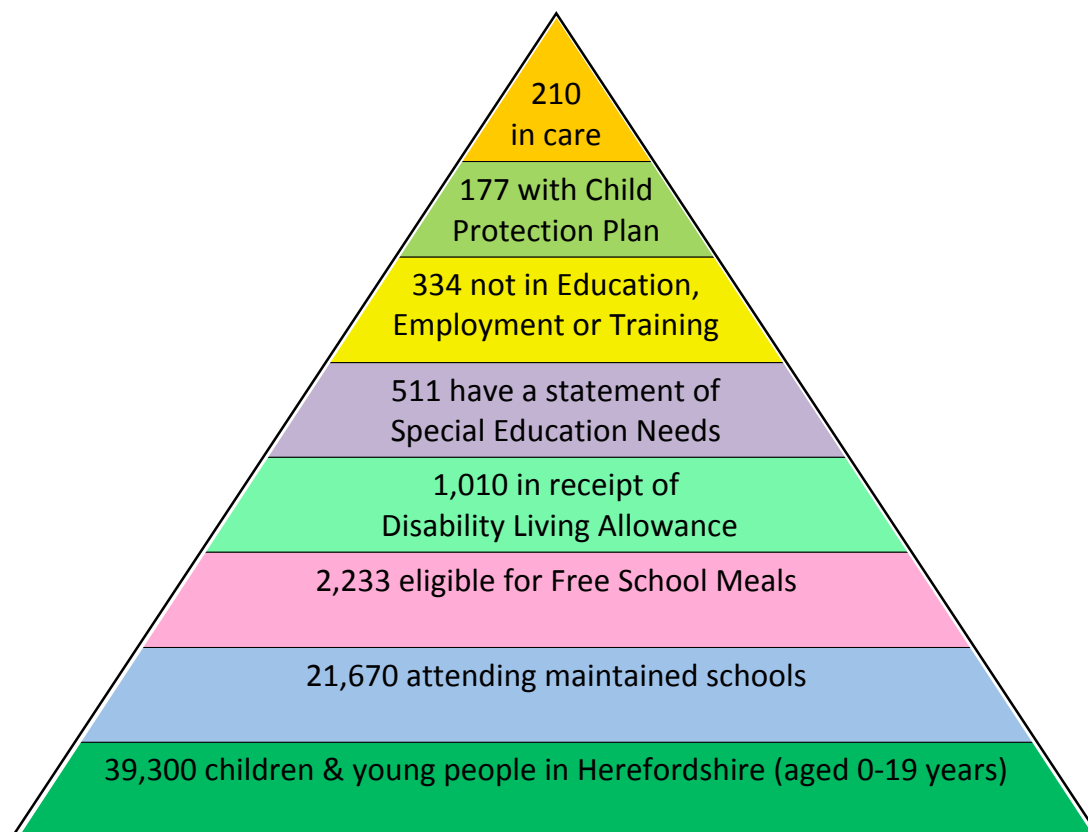
Some information about Herefordshire families and their children

Herefordshire is mainly a rural county, with beautiful unspoilt countryside, distinctive heritage, remote valleys and rivers. The city of Hereford is the county's centre. The other main locations are the five market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington. The county is sparsely populated. Over half of its 179,300 residents live in rural areas.

The number of children is decreasing, although there were more births than expected in the last two years. This decrease is expected to continue until stabilising from 2016 at about 29,000 children aged 16 years and under.

The number of households with dependent children is 20,619 (2001 Census).

Triangle of Need: Details of Herefordshire Children and Young People



Population data taken from ONS mid year estimates 2009
Disability living allowance information correct at 2009
Other data correct at January 2011

Currently services across the public sector in Herefordshire are being organised so that they work on a geographical, locality basis. For families it means that services will be more responsive and accessible in their local area and not just be based around Hereford city. Staff will work in local areas which will include children's services like children's centres, youth workers, educational welfare and Connexions staff, plus many others. Services aimed directly at adults are also involved like housing and mental health services. There are some organisations that although not directly in the locality teams are working very closely with them; these include police officers, local schools and doctors' surgeries as they see children and young people all the time.

What are we going to do?

Our aims are to prioritise the top issues or problems that are identified in Herefordshire and we will concentrate on improving those over the next three years. These priorities are listed below with a short description of what we will aim to achieve over the next three years.

We have used a variety of different information and documents to help identify what issues we should be tackling in Herefordshire:

- “Have your say” events in September and October 2010 which allowed children, young people and parents and carers the opportunity to tell us what is important to them. Children from nurseries, primary and secondary schools and young people from college and various youth groups were involved. Parents also gave their views.
- Partnership events with people who deliver and manage services for children, young people and their families
- Data and information from surveys and performance indicators
- The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#), [Child Poverty Needs Assessment](#) and the [State of Herefordshire Report](#) which provide more detailed figures and data than is included in this plan
- Inspections and audits from national agencies like [Ofsted](#)
- Impacts of expected changes in new and emerging government policy
- [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) which sets out 54 articles that government and individuals are obliged to work to. There is also a [Children's version](#).
- Feedback and comments from the consultation on the draft version of this plan

We use the data that we gather so it gives us a picture of the needs of different communities and groups of children in Herefordshire. We know that overall outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire are good but this hides the fact that there are issues in specific wards and for particular groups of children and young people. The voice of children, young people, parents / carers and families is key to understanding this, as is the knowledge of service providers who work directly with families. As our work in localities develops so will our knowledge of needs across Herefordshire. All this improved intelligence will help us to better plan services that are needed in particular areas or by particular groups of children so we can target our resources appropriately.

In the draft plan we identified some specific groups of children that needed more support. Our Shadow Board told us that children don't want to be labelled and that we should have the same hopes and aspirations for all children and young people. So in this plan each partner has identified specific pledges and actions to groups of children and young people that need more support. There are many groups of vulnerable children and they include children with disabilities and learning difficulties, children who are looked after, young carers, ethnic minority groups and teenage parents.

What are you going to do?

This plan provides the information so that local communities, local partnerships and individual organisations can all pledge what they will do to help achieve the four priorities below.

Please use this plan to commit your organisation or group to supporting our children, young people and their families. You can help us achieve more together by letting us know what you decide to do. Please get in touch with us at yeswecan@herefordshire.gov.uk sending in your pledges for action. We can then help you co-ordinate your actions with others that want to improve the lives of our children and young people.

How do we know we are achieving this plan?

We will monitor regularly the pledges that partners make to ensure the actions and targets are achieved. The arrangements around our partnership will be organised in line with changes locally and the priorities identified in this plan. This plan helps to provide the links with the Herefordshire Public Services' [Joint Corporate Plan](#).

We will produce an annual review of this plan which will show exactly what we have done, what hasn't been achieved and why. We will also highlight any new priorities which have arisen either through improved locality information, the views of children, young people and their families / carers or inspections of services.

Our Priorities

Helping families, parents and carers to help themselves, particularly in the early years of their children's lives

Why is this important?

- Early child development lays the foundation for the rest of children's lives
- Being a parent is an important role in our society and it is not always easy
- Happy parents and families are important to children and young people and help their development
- Children growing up in poverty are more likely to face poverty in later life
- In Herefordshire we are not achieving the levels expected for children in early years settings

What are we aiming to achieve?

- To improve outcomes at the early years foundation stages
- To educate multi-agency partners in the importance of the early years stages in child development
- To increase the number of babies being breastfed at 6-8 weeks from 46% to 60%
- To increase the numbers of parents receiving family support by 10% per year
- 100% of families accessing one to one family support through their Children's Centre are offered a common assessment
- To reduce the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest from 33% to 30%
- To reduce the proportion of children in poverty from 14.4% to 12% by 2014
- By 2012, 100% of young people have an agreed transition plan by the age of 18

Targets are all 2012 unless otherwise stated

What we will do:

- Promote Start4life programme across Herefordshire
- Provide multi-agency ante-natal parenting programmes delivered through children's centres

- Provide breastfeeding support to new mums
- Co-ordinate a specific offer of support to parents which will include providing positive parenting programmes to develop strong parenting skills
- Use our children centres to co-ordinate services in their community
- Understand the needs of 0-5 year olds, and their parents and families, so that we can develop co-ordinated services, including Health Visiting services, to ensure children develop and are ready to start school
- Implement and evaluate a countywide, graduated programme of early language support and intervention for children under five years of age.
- Provide free 2 year old nursery education for all children in poverty, linked with working with parents to raise ambitions.
- Work with early years providers and primary schools to raise standards in teaching and learning
- Engage with professionals, and deliver co-ordinated services, through multi-agency locality teams (building on the No Wrong Door project)
- Understand the issues and needs of children with additional needs and the support their families need
- Develop care pathways and services for children with disabilities and their families including transition arrangements to adult life
- Provide general information, advice and guidance to young people, parents and professionals through the Family Information Service Directory on the council website and linked to partners websites
- Train our staff and offer opportunities for others to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to provide consistent support to parents / carers and families
- Pledge support to families, and undertake actions to help reduce the impact of child poverty including support with housing issues and providing training for adults

What will you do?

Promoting health and well-being

Why is this important?

- There are high rates in Herefordshire of young people who smoke and drink alcohol, and these patterns continue into adult life
- Good mental health and well-being helps children feel confident and happy which means they are more likely to do well at school and college
- Childhood obesity is increasing and causes health problems later in life
- Young people say they need better information and education about healthy lifestyles, relationships and sexual health
- The number of Herefordshire teenagers getting pregnant has risen
- Children and young people say they want to have the chances to give their opinions, to contribute to their communities / society and want to be respected by other children and adults

What are we aiming to achieve?

- To educate young people on the risks to their health if they start smoking
- To reduce the number of under 18 year olds who binge-drink
- To meet the emotional well being needs of children and young people earlier so preventing the need for more specialist support e.g. mental health services
- To reduce childhood obesity in reception year pupils from 9% to 8.4% and in year 6 pupils from 19% to 15.4%

Targets are all 2012 unless otherwise stated

What we will do:

- Encourage parents to stop smoking, especially women, before and during pregnancy, and within their homes
- Provide 8 to 13 year olds with information, advice and guidance on how to maintain healthy lifestyles, with particular emphasis on smoking and drinking alcohol

- Develop a clear plan for child health services and develop our multi-agency approach to improve these services
- Understand the issues and needs of children and young people in respect of their mental health and well-being and then improve the services we provide
- Understand the issues and needs of young people around sexual health and substance misuse (including tobacco and alcohol) and then improve the services we provide
- Provide the opportunities and entitlement for children looked after by the local authority to have good health, advice and well-being
- Ensure children placed for adoption and those adopted receive the support they need to have good health and well-being
- Provide opportunities for active play, sport and exercise
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to engage in local decision making and designing our services

What will you do?

Achieving success in life, learning and future employment

Why is this important?

- The academic achievement of Herefordshire children of primary school age is not as good as it should be
- The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training is rising in Herefordshire
- Children and young people learn differently so need different learning routes to ensure success in what they do
- There is a clear link in Herefordshire between children living in areas of deprivation and gaining poorer achievement results at GCSE levels.
- Young people will become part of an economy that is global and is looking for flexibility, innovation, wide experience and core skills
- There is a gap in achievement levels between more vulnerable groups of young people and their peers
- Ambitions in families enables success in children and young people
- Educational attainment is everyone's business

What are we aiming to achieve?

- To improve the achievements of Herefordshire children of primary school age
- To reduce the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers
- To reduce the achievement gap between children who have special educational needs and their peers.
- To increase the percentage of young people who are in education, employment or training from 93% to 95%
- To increase the percentage of 16-19 year olds in vulnerable groups (e.g. teenage parents, looked after children) who are in education, employment and training

Targets are all 2012 unless otherwise stated

What we will do:

- Work with local employers to increase the number of work experience opportunities and apprenticeships available in the county
- Work with employers, local businesses and schools/colleges to provide and promote new learning opportunities and developments so that young people's skills meet the needs of local businesses

- Support young people to stay in employment, education or training through the provision of careers guidance in the community as well as in schools, academies and colleges which helps them in the transition to adult life
- Support schools, academies, colleges and training providers to create a vibrant range of opportunities that ensure there is sufficient choice for young people and to address the challenges of raising the participation age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.
- Identify vulnerable children who are at risk of not making progress in line with their peers
- Support nurture groups in schools with the highest level of need
- Provide vibrant cultural opportunities for children and young people
- Provide opportunities and support for children and young people to volunteer and develop community action

What will you do?

Protecting children from harm

Why is this important?

- In Herefordshire we have seen a significant increase in the number of children requiring child protection plans or needing the care of the local authority.
- Children and young people have a right to protection from harm and abuse and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life
- Providing early effective help to children who are at risk of abuse or neglect has both immediate and long term benefits on their health and wellbeing
- Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is everyone's business
- Young people are vulnerable though misuse of technology (cyberbullying)

What are we aiming to achieve?

- To appropriately reduce the number of children coming into the council's care, to comparator with statistical neighbours averages, by meeting their needs earlier
- To increase the percentage of professionals who are confident about sharing information
- To support 25 families during 2011 through the edge of care service
- To increase the number of high quality and timely referrals and common assessments resulting in help for families which is co-ordinated across partners
- 80% of families report that things have improved for them / their child as a result of a common assessment intervention

Targets are all 2012 unless otherwise stated

What we will do:

- Implement the Herefordshire approach to Levels of Need and Service Response for children and young people across all agencies
- Develop an "edge of care" service to prevent, where possible, the need for children and young people to be looked after by the local authority
- Provide high quality and timely referrals to child protection services
- Put in place clear routes for help and support across locality teams and specialist social care services (building on the No Wrong Door project)

- Provide the support and services needed for vulnerable young people (e.g. 16 and 17 year olds, teenage parents, looked after children) who are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Ensure that children and young people who become looked after are well supported, have clear plans and the best opportunities to develop as their peers
- Continue awareness campaigns for staff to enable them to share information with other agencies where their actions will protect children from harm
- Provide our staff with the skills to understand and look for the exploitation of children and young people; whether sexual, drugs, religion, radicalisation, violent extremism
- Develop robust arrangements in relation to children placed in Herefordshire by other local authorities
- Continue to roll out the anti-bullying strategy and e-safety campaign

What will you do?