

Children & Young People's Directorate

Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children Service

Annual Report 2009-2010

The aim of this report is to reflect on and capture the achievements of the past year. In the summer of 2009, a key priorities document was produced which set out the priorities that the Service wanted to achieve by March 2010. A separate document – Key Priorities 2010-2011 – sets out what we aim to achieve in 2010-2011.

Overall headlines

- 2009-2010 saw the appointment of a new senior management team for the Service. Experienced professionals have joined the directorate and have been enthusiastic and committed to improving the Service, thus improving outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire.
- The new management team has been characterised by a willingness to work across the directorate and open the Service up to scrutiny and challenge.
- External partners have commented positively on the openness of the Service and the willingness to work in a positive way with agencies, including at MARAC/MAPPA.
- As a result, the culture of the Service has started to change. Team managers have become more solution focused and understanding of the impact of performance on the business and the reputation of the Service.
- Multi-agency working at both strategic and operational levels has moved forward significantly in the past year. New policies have been developed and been ratified through the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board. Work has been undertaken with schools to build relationships and understanding of their responsibilities, with positive feedback from headteachers. Specifically around the LADO process, schools now recognise the need to make early referrals and take decisive action.
- The improvements and changes made in the past year have also been positively endorsed by the recent Improvement and Development Agency Safeguarding Peer Review.

- A new Corporate Parenting Strategy was launched in 2009-2010 and the Children in Care Council was refreshed.
- The development and implementation of a comprehensive audit programme across the Service has started to identify key areas of practice where change is needed which will form the basis of the training programme for 2010-2011. Although uncomfortable with the audit programme at the beginning, social workers were now seeing the process as something positive.
- The pace of change has been great over the year but overall the staff have been positive and responded well.

Progress against the Key Priorities for 2009-2010

The following table sets out the key priorities identified for 2009-2010, the progress made during the year and the further developments in those areas that will be taken forward in 2010-2011

Key priority	Progress in 2009-2010	Further developments for 2010-2011
<i>An improved and embedded Frameworki providing an effective primary operating system for casework recording and performance management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Records Management policy agreed and launched in November 2009 – recording with care policy to be developed in 2010-2011 ▪ New ICS forms for child protection developed in Frameworki and launched in June 2010 ▪ Some performance reports from Frameworki 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recording with care policy to be developed ▪ New ICS forms for looked after children to be developed and launched ▪ Further work to refine performance reports to be undertaken
<i>A completed Service Review ensuring high quality and effective services to the most vulnerable children and young people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being implemented in line with overall timetable agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New structure to be operational from October 2010
<i>An implemented Corporate Parenting Strategy for Herefordshire ensuring that children and young people in care achieve the best possible outcomes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Strategy agreed and launched in December 2009 ▪ Children in Care Council refreshed and new Corporate Parenting Panel in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key priorities and actions in the Strategy to be achieved
<i>Children with Disabilities services are fully reviewed to ensure safe, supportive and integrated services are delivered to these children and their families</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of service launched in March 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch of Disability Register in July 2010 ▪ Review, with recommendations to conclude in September 2010 ▪ Robust implementation of Aiming High for Disabled Children
<i>A comprehensive set of policies, procedures and guidance are in place for all staff working with vulnerable children and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handbook updated ▪ New Children in Need and LADO policies developed and agreed through Herefordshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handbook to be launched in July 2010 and published on the website ▪ Partnership event to be

Key priority	Progress in 2009-2010	Further developments for 2010-2011
<i>young people and their families</i>	Safeguarding Children Board	held to launch new policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future mechanisms for updating to be developed and agreed
<i>Threshold criteria for Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children's Service is clearly agreed and published in alignment with a whole children's service document</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of Need and Service Response Guidance developed with Community Operations incorporating threshold criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance to be agreed by DLT and HSCB and then launched and published
<i>A shared and agreed vision for SGVC service to create a one team approach and clarity for partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be launched with partners
<i>A clear workforce strategy for the service for 2010-11 ensuring a highly trained and competent workforce focussed on agreed priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill mixing to inform the service review completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaunch staff appraisals Training programme to be rolled out
<i>Stabilised and improving performance profile ensuring minimum standards are met and understood against NIs/PIs and benchmarked against national and regional data</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First set of reports received from CIPFA in March 2010 Benchmarking information from statistical neighbours included in Digest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of CIPFA benchmarking information to identify value for money Building qualitative information to support the quantitative data
<i>SGVC budget is stabilised and areas of pressure agreed and focussed on to achieve accurate baseline budget</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tighter commissioning of placements through the Placement Panel process Some commissioning of services through the Contracts Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tighter and more comprehensive commissioning framework required Clarity around court costs
<i>Ensuring that SGVC services are aligned safely to locality service developments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIN teams aligned to Locality Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ways of working to be developed between the CIN teams and Locality Teams
<i>Ensuring comprehensive system of QA and learning within SGVC services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit programme developed and implemented Lessons from audits identified and fed back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding lessons learnt from audits Creating learning organisation model across the service

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	<p>to teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action learning sets through CWDC ▪ New Safeguarding Unit designed ▪ Advanced Practitioner roles agreed in teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop role of advanced practitioner