

# Worcestershire's Children and Young People's Plan

2014 to 2017



WORCESTERSHIRE  
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Children's Trust

# Introduction

Welcome to the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for Worcestershire. This plan is the single plan for all children and young people in Worcestershire aged from 0-19 years, and some groups of vulnerable young people up to the age of 25 years old. It has been led by the Worcestershire Children's Trust Executive Board, a sub group of Worcestershire's Health and Well Being Board which approved the plan.

The Children's Trust in Worcestershire recognises and embodies the importance of partnership working and co-operation between agencies working with children, young people and families in improving their life chances. This plan covers 2014 to 2017 and builds on the substantial work previously undertaken and recognises the important role that the emerging Local Children's Trusts will have in the future, working closely with early help providers and partners at a locality level.

The period of the last CYPP was one of significant change and challenge, particularly given the level of financial reductions faced by all partners. The scale of this challenge is likely to remain throughout the period of this new plan. One of the major changes in response to this has been, and will continue to be, the commissioning of the right services for children and young people so that they are provided at the right place, at the right time and at the right price. Our successes in commissioning early help services in all six district areas and the continued development of joint commissioning arrangements between the local authority and NHS Worcestershire demonstrate how Children's Trust partners have come together to improve outcomes for children and young people despite budget reductions. This new Children and Young People's Plan, therefore, comes at a time when Children's Trust partners are moving into a new phase of planning, commissioning and delivery of services to children, young people and their families.

In this plan we have refreshed our visions, values and priorities. To help decide on the priorities for this Children and Young People's Plan there has been widespread consultation with children, young people, their parents and carers and those that work with them. The voice of children and young people is vital to all that we do going forward. The recently established Local Children's Trusts have been a significant part of consultation and will have a lead role in turning the ambitions and priorities outlined in the plan into reality. As a result, the plan articulates a commitment to participation, co-operation and collaboration by Children's Trust agencies. However, the challenge is how we channel our energy and increasingly limited resources into what makes most difference for children and young people.

We recognise that every child and young person is an individual. We have high aspirations for every one of them and want every one of them to grow up with the opportunity to realise their full potential. The Children's Trust will now do its best to make this a reality.

Publication of this plan would not have been possible without the support of all those who contributed to consultation. The Children's Trust would like to thank all those who have taken part, especially the children, young people, parents and carers whose input has been invaluable in shaping the plan.



Councillor Liz Eyre  
Chair of Worcestershire  
Children's Trust



Gail Quinton  
Director of Children's Services

# What is a Children and Young People's Plan?

A Children and Young People's Plan is a joint, strategic overarching plan for all agencies that work with children and young people. It outlines how Children's Trust partners will work together to improve outcomes for children and young people in the county, setting out the vision for improving those outcomes through to 2017. The plan outlines the Children's Trust's values and ways of working as well as the strategic priorities. The plan is important as it demonstrates how partners will work together, what actions and activities will take place and how we will know we have made a difference. The plan covers all services for children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old and some groups of vulnerable young people up to the age of 25 years old.



The Children and Young People's Plan and its priorities have been informed by and are aligned with the priorities of Worcestershire's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Health and Well-being Strategy. A variety of strategies and operational plans developed by individual Children's Trust agencies sit underneath the Children and Young People's Plan.

There are two main parts to this plan. The first is a look at how well we delivered our priorities for 2011 to 2014. The second part outlines our vision, values and priorities for the future and how these will be delivered.

## Worcestershire's Children's Trust

The Children's Trust is a partnership of organisations that work with children and young people, along with representatives of children, young people and parents/carers. Its main purpose is to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Worcestershire through planning services as well as promoting and enabling joint commissioning. The Trust is a sub-group of the Health and Well-being Board and works closely with Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board and the Corporate Parenting Board. The Children and Young People's Plan is aligned to the plans and strategies of these boards.

Local Children's Trusts are an important part of our Children's Trust arrangements and we are currently working to establish Local Children's Trust in each of the six district areas. The main purposes of a Local Children's Trust are:

- to make sure that there is local plan which demonstrates how the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan and any other local priorities are going to be delivered in the local area
- to ensure that planning of services at a local level helps to improve outcomes for children and young people, including through local commissioning arrangements.

Children, young people, parents and carers are also an important part of the Children's Trust. They provide advice to the Children's Trust Executive Board, tell the Board about what matters to them and how well they think we are doing on key issues. We actively encourage the participation of children, young people, parents and carers in the planning services.

# How well have we done 2011-2014?

The Children and Young People's Plan for 2011 – 2014 set out five priorities and what we would do to achieve them. This section outlines the progress made.

## We said...

### **Children and young people will be protected from harm and neglect**

## We achieved...

- There has been a small increase over the life time of the plan in children with a Child Protection Plan and those with a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time, but Worcestershire remains better than the national average.
- Over the same time period, there has been a decrease of 15.4% in Child Protection Plans where domestic abuse was identified. This means that we are doing better than the target we set ourselves.
- We have improved safeguarding services which were rated 'adequate' by Ofsted in 2012. Significant service redesign has taken place and two peer reviews in 2013 have helped us to improve services further. No child was found to be at immediate risk of significant harm.
- There continues to be pro-active and effective work being undertaken to protect children when required and also to ensure families are enabled to care for their own children safely where this is possible. Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board has worked to raise the understanding of all partners of the thresholds for a child needing a Child Protection Plan and there is robust oversight of Child Protection Plans.
- An Early Help Strategy is in place and Early Help services have been commissioned in all six district areas, informed by local priorities and need so that services are locally responsive. The Early Help Hub has been operational since April 2013 acting as a single point of contact to raise and notify any concerns about a child, young person or family where there is perceived to be no risk of significant harm. CAF was re-launched in Autumn 2013 as the Early Help Assessment (EHA) that assesses a family's needs and identifies the required outcomes.
- The Stronger Families initiative has been proactive in identifying supporting, intensive and challenging work with families who meet the criteria for the project. As of January 2014, we have worked with/are working with 583 Stronger Families, and have claimed payment by results for 191 families.
- There has been a decrease in the percentage of children and young people who say they have experienced bullying or aggressive behaviour from 70% in 2009 to just less than 50% in 2013.

## We said...

# Educational outcomes will be outstanding for all children and young

## We achieved...

- 84% of pupils are now educated in good or outstanding schools and almost 86% of early years providers are good or outstanding. 71.7% of Looked After Children are educated in good or outstanding schools.
- In 2009 the local authority was ranked 90th out of 153 for GCSE performance. It is now ranked 50th. There has been an improvement of 8% over the course of the plan in the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C including English and Maths with 62.9% of pupils achieving this in 2012/13. This means that we are doing better than the target we set ourselves as well as the national and statistical neighbours' averages.
- An improvement in the percentage of early years pupils achieving an overall level of good level of development to 64% in 2012, but the government introduced a new method of assessment which meant that there was a decline to 49% in 2013. The Early Years and Childcare Service and the School Improvement Service challenge and support settings and schools to ensure that provision is appropriate to enable all children to make at least expected progress.
- An improvement in the percentage of year six pupils attaining age related expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 to 77% in 2012 but the government then introduced a new measure of attainment which meant there was a decline to 72% in 2013.
- An improvement in inequalities in educational outcomes for some vulnerable groups of pupils, including Key Stage 2 pupils eligible for Free School Meals, although the improvement is not as good as the improvements made nationally and by our statistical neighbours.
- 15.4% of Looked After Children attained 5 A\*-C, including English and Maths at GCSE in 2013, and increased from 9.5% (4 children) in 2013. 33% of Looked After Children attained Level 4+ Reading, Writing and Maths at end of Key Stage Two in 2013. A tracking system is in place to chart progress of Looked After Children in their educational outcomes.
- The local authority has continued to support schools and other settings to improve the quality of teaching and learning and has also provided targeted intervention in schools in challenging circumstances, ensuring the curriculum is appropriate to the needs of pupils.



## **We said...**

# **Young people will move successfully into adulthood**

## **We achieved...**

- An improvement over the life of the plan in the percentage of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), such that 5.2% of young people were NEET in March 2013. This is a 0.3% improvement despite the economic recession. This means that our target was met as Worcestershire's performance was better than the national average. Looked After Children and care leavers are a priority for 'Open for Business' addressing Entry to Employment. As a Corporate Parent, Worcestershire County Council is prioritising those schools with high numbers of Looked After Children to support work experience and progression to apprenticeships.
- More Care Leavers live in suitable accommodation and more are in education, employment or training in 2013/14 than at the start of the plan. We are performing better than our target. There is now a specialist team which is supporting care leavers in their transition to adulthood, including supporting them in finding education, employment and training, promoting their health and well-being and supporting them to find somewhere safe and secure to live. A Protocol and provision for 16/17 year old Homeless Young People has been developed with District Housing Officers, including Safe Base accommodation.
- Drop-in venues for Care Leavers have been developed and implemented across the county, providing welfare and health advice.
- There has been some improvement in educational outcomes for 19 year olds, although there is still some improvement to make so that we meet our targets. We have been strengthening links between post-16 providers to enable challenge, support and identification of good practice.
- A Young Adults' Team for young people aged 16 to 24 with complex disabilities and health needs has been in place since 2012 to improve transitions between children's and adults' services.

## We said...

# Children and young people will have the opportunity to grow up in stable and secure families

## We achieved...

- There has been a rise in the social care referral rate over the life time of the plan meaning our target for reduction has not been reached. Children's Social Care is continuing to work to reduce referrals through identification of help at an earlier stage in partnership with the Early Help Hub.
- Following the completion of an in depth needs assessment, the Looked After Children (LAC) Strategy has been developed to prevent children from needing to be looked after; to enable children to return to their birth family where possible and where this is not possible, to identify a secure and stable alternative home.
- Numbers of Looked After Children are managed through the LAC Action Plan and work has been undertaken to address the increase in numbers through the social care service redesign and the support offered through the Early Help Strategy.
- There has been an increase of 5 per 10,000 in the number of Looked After Children in Worcestershire from 50 per 10,000 to 55 per 10,000 in 2012/13 throughout the life time of the plan. Worcestershire has a lower figure than the national average. A pilot inspection of services for Looked After Children undertaken by OFSTED in November 2012 did not find any child who should not have been looked after.



## We said...

# Children and young people will grow up healthily

## We achieved...

- Speech, Language and Communication Needs have been re-commissioned and there has been a significant decrease in waiting times for these services. The talking walk-in service has provided early intervention to children under 5 years with approximately 100 unique children and their parents visiting the drop-ins within each quarter, with positive feedback from parents. The service has also trained professionals such as health visitors, early years settings staff and school staff to be able to identify speech, language and communication difficulties and support strategies to address those.
- Re-commissioned a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services with a single point of access and out of hours assessment and support, as well as a specialist service for LAC. There has been a significant decrease in waiting times.
- Services for children and young people with disabilities have been redesigned, including the development of both community and specialist short breaks services that better meet need. This gives families more choice and control over the services they could buy to meet their assessed needs through direct payments and the development of an integrated equipment resource service that allows professionals and the families they work with to access equipment more readily.
- Work has been commissioned in Areas of Highest Need to address health inequalities and improve health outcomes, including additional play schemes, after school clubs, breakfast clubs, projects to reduce risky behaviour (e.g. alcohol, drugs), healthy cooking sessions and community food workers.
- A healthy weight service has been put in place for pregnant and new mothers as well as a breastfeeding support service and healthy lifestyle community programmes have been piloted.



# Our Vision, Values and Approach

In shaping our vision for 2104-2017, we have considered what it is like for children and young people in Worcestershire today. To do this, we have depicted Worcestershire as a village with 100 children and young people and used this as a baseline from which to help identify what outcomes we need to improve.

## If Worcestershire was a village with 100 children and young people in 2014:



## Our vision is:

We will work together to make Worcestershire a place where children and young people from all communities and backgrounds are healthy, feel safe and have opportunities to enjoy their lives and reach their full potential.

### If Worcestershire was a village with 100 children and young people in 2017:

Our vision for Worcestershire in 2017 is that children, young people and families achieve their potential in a safe environment so that they lead successful lives. So if Worcestershire was a village with 100 children and young people in 2017 we would expect to see more children and young people:

having a  
healthy  
lifestyle

reaching  
their full  
potential in  
education

protected from  
abuse and  
neglect

being  
helped  
at an early  
stage

having  
the life skills  
they need for  
adult life

knowing  
where to go  
for information  
about services  
and support

growing up  
in secure  
and stable  
families



# Values

The Children's Trust wishes families to be at the centre of all it does or strives to do. Our values take account of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child and are:

- all children and young people matter;
- to listen to, hear, respect and value children and young people;
- to celebrate diversity, whilst acknowledging individual rights and responsibilities;
- to stretch the most able, support those who need it, and protect and nurture the most vulnerable;
- that families will be encouraged and empowered to help themselves;
- where possible, to prevent problems from happening;
- to provide the right support at the right time and at the right place;
- to involve children and young people in decision-making, particularly those decisions that affect their family life;
- for agencies and professionals to work in partnership with each other and with families;
- for services to be of high quality, no matter who delivers them.

## Approach

The priorities contained in this plan:

- are based on evidence of need;
- incorporate recommendations from external assessment of the performance of some services in Worcestershire by Ofsted and peer reviews;
- reflect local views, wishes and aspirations of children, young people and their parents and carers, as well as local community leaders such as elected members;
- draw upon the knowledge and experience of operational staff and managers.

Our approach will be to:

- remain focused on outcomes so that we can demonstrate not how much we do, but what impact it has had;
- focus actions on those children, young people and families living on a low income as well as those children, young people and families who are vulnerable, including those in rural areas ;
- encourage local solutions to local problems/issues;
- provide services that deliver value for money;
- promote personalisation;
- work in partnership whenever and wherever possible;
- do what we know has been proven to work.





## Being Outcomes Focused

The Children's Trust wishes to become more outcome-focused in its approach and has agreed a terminology that will be used to ensure that the work of the Children's Trust remains focused on outcomes and so that we can demonstrate impact. For this purpose, an outcome is defined as 'an end result,' for example, Looked After Children are healthy. It is not what activity has taken place, but the consequences of that activity.

For the purposes of this plan, an indicator is a measure which permits us to quantify the extent to which outcomes are being achieved, or to tell what difference we have made or what impact we had. Using the example of Looked After Children being healthy, the percentage of Looked After Children who are obese could be used as an indicator to measure success.

Whilst our vision extends through the life of the Children and Young People's Plan to 2017, the rest of this plan outlines what we will do in the coming twelve months to progress the priorities that we have identified.

# Our Priorities

## Children and young people have a healthy lifestyle

### Our areas of focus are:

- to improve the emotional health of children and young people, including access to mental health support;
- to encourage children and young people to eat healthily and participate in physical activity and sport;
- to reduce the harm caused by, and improve young people's awareness of, smoking, drugs and alcohol.



## Children and young people reach their full potential in education

### Our areas of focus are:

- to increase the diversity and further improve the quality of learning opportunities and access to them for all children and young people;
- to reduce educational attainment gaps between vulnerable learners and their peers;
- to match learning opportunities to the child or young person;
- to help parents and carers to be involved in their child's learning (with a focus on parents with poor literacy skills).

## Children and young people are helped at an early stage

- Our areas of focus are as identified in the Early Help Strategy.

## Children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect

### Our areas of focus are:

- to improve services that help to keep children safe;
- to reduce the impact on children and young people of domestic abuse, parental mental health issues and substance misuse;
- to protect children and young people who go missing and from child sexual exploitation;
- to help children and young people feel safe wherever they are.

## Children and young people grow up in secure and stable families

- Our areas of focus are as identified in Corporate Parenting Strategy.



## Young people have the life skills they need so they feel ready for adult life

### Our areas of focus are:

- to work with businesses and other organisations to improve the range of work experience, jobs, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities for young people, especially for those who are not currently in education, training or employment or those who are in care;
- to help all young people to gain the information and skills that will help them to live independently, especially those young people who are about to leave care;
- to improve transition arrangements between children's and adults' services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## Children, young people and their parents/carers know where to go for information about services and support

### Our areas of focus are:

- to continue to develop the internet as a point of access for children, young people and their parents/carers requiring information, advice and guidance on all aspects of a child's life;
- to continue to develop and promote existing information on services for children, young people and their parents/carers, the support they offer and how to access them;
- to improve accessibility of information on what to do when there are concerns about the welfare and safety of a child or young person.



## Outcome:

# children and young people have a healthy lifestyle



### Our areas of focus are:

- to improve the emotional health and well-being of children and young people, including access to mental health support;
- to encourage children and young people to eat healthily and participate in physical activity and sport;
- to reduce the harm caused by, and improving young people's awareness of, smoking, drugs and alcohol.

### Why is this important?

- Mental health and well-being, obesity and alcohol are priorities in Worcestershire's Health and Well-being Strategy. There are approximately 9,500 children with mental health problems in Worcestershire. Good emotional and mental health is just as important as good physical health and can affect all other areas of a child's life, including attainment at school.
- Consultation indicates that more needs to be done to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people and to improve referral and access to mental health support. It was ranked within the top ten issues identified in the Make Your Mark Survey undertaken by Worcestershire Youth Cabinet.
- There is an increased risk and rate of poorer mental health in children and young people living in families with low incomes compared to those in better-off households.
- The needs assessment indicates that in 2011/12 almost a quarter of children in reception and a third of children in year six were either over weight or very over weight. The prevalence is significantly higher for boys than girls. Obesity can lead to a range of health problems later in life, including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke and cancers.
- Very over-weight children in both reception and year 6 are more likely to live in areas that are more deprived and children growing up in poverty are less likely to have a healthy diet, access to fresh fruit and vegetables and take regular exercise.
- Levels of alcohol-specific hospital stays amongst those under 18 are worse than the English average. Excess alcohol consumption leads to social problems including crime, antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse and family breakdown. It can also lead to a range of health problems later in life including high blood pressure, stroke, cancers and depression.
- The percentage of women who smoke in pregnancy are higher than the English average. Smoking in pregnancy can cause serious pregnancy-related health problems. These include complications during labour and an increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth, still birth and sudden unexpected death in infancy.

### What will be done?

- More services and support will be planned and commissioned jointly across agencies to reduce duplication and increase the quality and efficiency of local services in order to reduce health inequalities, particularly in areas of deprivation.

- Drug and alcohol services will be re-commissioned taking account of the spectrum of need from children to adults.
- The Worcestershire Mental Well-being and Suicide Prevention Plan will be implemented focusing on early intervention and promotion of mental well-being across all settings and all ages.
- The Worcestershire Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives Strategy and action plan, including the Infant Feeding Plan will be implemented. This will include work to empower families to take responsibility for their diet and physical activity.
- A comprehensive county-wide response to the prevention of self-harm and suicide in children and young people, to include self-help information for children and young people, training and awareness raising in schools and other settings around self-harm and information will be developed.
- Information from children and young people on their experience of healthcare services will be captured to ensure that services meet needs, including the development of mechanisms for capturing young people's feedback on the support for emotional well-being that has been accessed from early intervention services provided by schools, early help providers and school nurses.
- Continue the redesign of unit based residential short breaks provision as well as work to create integrated health and social care teams for services that children with disabilities need.
- Commission school nurses to work in partnership with schools and the community to improve health outcomes for children and young people. This will include improving the awareness of the harm caused by smoking, drugs and alcohol, the promotion of healthy weight and emotional health and well-being.

## What will success look like?

- Children and young people will access appropriate, high quality mental health support and services that meet their needs in a timely manner.
- More children and young people eating healthily and participating in sport regularly.
- Redesigned school nursing services and drug and alcohol services in place, focusing on areas of highest need.
- A decrease in health inequalities for children and young people across the county.
- More young people are aware of the harm caused by smoking, drugs and alcohol.

## How will success be measured?

- A reduction in hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10-24 years) from 416 per 10,000 in 2012/13 to 377.5 per 10,000 in 2014/15.
- 33% or fewer year 6 pupils with excess weight in 2013/14 (academic year).
- Reduce the gap between the percentage of year 6 pupils from disadvantaged communities with excess weight from 8% in 2012/13 to 7.5% in 2013/14 (academic year).
- A reduction in alcohol-specific hospital admissions amongst those under 18 from 57.2 per 100,000 in 2012/13 to 47.1 per 100,000 in 2014/15.
- 14% or fewer of mothers smoking at the time of delivery in 2014/15.
- An increase in the percentage of mothers breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks so that Worcestershire is not significantly different from the England average.



## Outcome:

# children and young people reach their full potential in education

## Our areas of focus are:

- to increase the diversity and further improve the quality of learning opportunities and access to them for all children and young people;
- to reduce educational attainment gaps between vulnerable learners and their peers;
- to match learning opportunities to the child or young person;
- to help parents and carers to be involved in their child's learning (with a focus on parents with poor literacy skills).

## Why is this important?

- Giving children and young people access to high quality education is crucial to enable them to reach their full potential and fulfil their aspirations. Even high performing schools, further education colleges, early years and other settings can continue to improve so that they become amongst the best nationally. High quality leaders, including governors, are essential to such improvement.
- The needs assessment indicates that educational outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage Two and Key Stage Five in Worcestershire are just below national averages in 2013.
- Inequalities exist in the educational outcomes for specific groups of children and young people compared to the outcomes for the wider range of children and young people of which the groups form a part. This is particularly apparent for pupils eligible for Free School Meals, Looked After Children and some black and minority ethnic groups. Such vulnerable children and young people often require additional support to enable them to achieve as well as their peers.
- Children from lower socio-economic groups are at much greater disadvantage at every stage in their education than those from higher socio-economic groups particularly if they form a small proportion of a school's population. However, educational attainment determines outcomes in later life and is a route out of living in poverty. The national Child Poverty Strategy prioritises preventing poor children becoming poor adults through raising their educational attainment.
- Three quarters of respondents to the View Point Survey said that learning opportunities should be matched to the child or young person and two thirds said that improving the range and quality of learning opportunities was important.
- National research shows that parental involvement in their child's learning is an important in improving a child's academic attainment and achievements, as well as their overall behaviour and attendance. The role of parents during a child's earliest years is the single biggest influence on their development.

## What will be done?

- Schools and other settings will work in collaboration, particularly through local partnerships, school-to-school support and through the involvement of teaching schools, National and Local Leaders in Education
- Services will be commissioned to enable schools and other providers to improve their quality of provision and specific initiatives will be implemented to address identified areas of weakness.
- The Special Education Needs and Disability review will be implemented.
- Every school or setting will provide a learning environment (including the curriculum) that is appropriate for its learners.

- Schools and other settings that are not yet rated good by Ofsted will be challenged and supported, and their progress will be monitored regularly, including intervention where appropriate.
- Targeted support for schools and settings with vulnerable children, including identifying children and young people whose prior attainment and progress indicate that they are at risk of underachieving when compared to their peers.
- The progress of pupils from vulnerable groups will be tracked and monitored. An appropriate curriculum, adequate resources and targeted support will be provided so that provision meets the full range of pupils' needs.
- Schools and other settings will enable the active involvement of parents and carers in the education of their children.

## What will success look like?

- Fewer schools and other settings in Ofsted categories of concern and fewer schools below floor standards, and more rated by Ofsted as outstanding.
- An improvement in educational outcomes for children and young people of all ages
- An improvement in the educational outcomes of children and young people from vulnerable groups at all key stages and a reduction in gap in educational outcomes for vulnerable groups of children and young people and the cohort of which the group is a part, particularly for those eligible for Free School Meals, Looked After Children, those with special educational needs and those from some black and minority ethnic groups.
- Better engagement at school and other educational settings by children and young people from vulnerable groups and families, including improved attendance and exclusions.

## How will success be measured?

- An increase in the percentage of pupils who achieved a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage from 49% in 2012/13 to 53.5% in 13/14 (academic year).
- The attainment gap at foundation stage to be 37% or lower in 2013/14 (academic year)
- An increase in the percentage of pupils that achieve at level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2 from 72% in 2012/13 to 74% in 13/14 (academic year).
- An increase in the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths from 62.9% in 2012/13 to 64% in 13/14 (academic year).
- A decrease in the percentage gap in achievement between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stage 2 from 26.2% in 2012/13 to 24% in 13/14 (academic year).
- A decrease in the percentage gap in achievement between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stage 4 from 30% in 2012/13 to 28% in 13/14 (academic year).
- A decrease in the achievement gap between LAC obtaining 5 GCSEs A\* - C or equivalent from 38.6% in 2012/13 to 36% in 13/14 (academic year).
- A decrease in SEN/Non SEN attainment gap at Level 4+ at Key Stage Two Reading, Writing and Maths from 56.3% in 2012/13 to 54% in 13/14 (academic year).
- A decrease in the SEN/Non SEN attainment gap for 5 or more A\*-C at GCSE including English and Maths from 50% in 2012/13 to 48% in 13/14 (academic year).

Please also refer to the priority on young people having the life skills they need, so they feel ready for adult life.



## Outcome:

### children and young people are helped at an early stage

- Our areas of focus are as identified in the Early Help Strategy

#### Why is this important?

- difficulties arise for approximately 30% of families nationally which, if nipped in the bud early enough, can be prevented from escalating to needing specialist services such as Social Care. Effective prevention and early intervention from universal and targeted services can bring about savings as specialist services are more costly to provide.
- 70% of respondents to the View Point Survey thought that preventing problems from happening and helping early on when they do should be an area of focus in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- The need to make the journey of the child and their family as seamless as possible through assessment and intervention as well as focusing support on the areas and families with highest need was a central theme that came from consultation.
- Over the last twelve months, we have commissioned early help services across Worcestershire, including Children's Centres. An Early Help Hub acts as a single point of contact for families and practitioners to raise any concerns about a child, young person or family who may have needs that cannot be met by universal provision and where there is perceived to be no risk of significant harm. This is supported by Early Help Assessment and Support Plans. These services and new ways of working need to be embedded.
- The needs assessment indicates that 2470 Early Help Notifications have been generated and 859 Early Help Assessments have been initiated since 1st April 2013.
- The government estimates that 900 families in Worcestershire meet the national Troubled Families criteria of having an adult on out of work benefits; children not being in school and/or family members being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. The Stronger Families Programme has worked with 600 families across Worcestershire since April 2012 to achieve the outcomes of getting parents back to work, improving school attendance and anti-social behaviour.



#### What will be done?

- Further integrate services across the 0 to 19 age range including mapping of current provision, developing and implementing coherent pathways and ensuring a streamlined approach to assessing and meeting need.
- Integrate services for children aged 0 to 5 years with a particular focus on the future role of health visitors, family nurse partnerships and early years practitioners, including those based within Children's Centres.
- Re-define Worcestershire's approach to parenting support.
- Strengthen the approach for monitoring the quality and performance of all early help services across Worcestershire to demonstrate the impact on outcomes.
- Implement Phase 2 of the national Troubled Families agenda ensuring an effective interface with the broader early help provision.

## What will success look like?

- Commissioned early help services for children, young people and their families will prevent issues from escalating further meaning fewer families require support from specialist services.
- Early Help services, including Children's Centres and parenting programmes, are integrated, accessible and responsive to local needs.
- More children and young people attend school and fewer are excluded.
- Better co-ordination and information sharing between service providers.
- Fewer children and young people requiring social care services.

## How will success be measured?

- A decrease in referrals to children's social care from 308 per 10,000 in 2012/13 to 261.8 per 10,000 in 2014/15.
- A decrease in those who became subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time from 20.5% in 2012/13 to 15.8% in 2014/15.
- A decrease in permanent exclusions to 0.065% in 2013/14.
- A decrease in persistent absence from 4.3% in 2012/13 to 4.28% in 13/14 (academic year).
- A decrease in the percentage of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment and training from 4.7% in 2012/13 to 4.5% in 2014/15.



## Outcome:

# children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect

### Our areas of focus are:

- to reduce the impact on children and young people of domestic abuse, parental mental health issues and substance misuse;
- to protect children and young people who go missing and from child sexual exploitation;
- to help children and young people feel safe wherever they are

### Why is this important?

- Protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect is the joint responsibility of all partners involved in Worcestershire's Children's Trust and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).
- The areas of focus are key themes within the Worcestershire Safeguarding Board Strategic Plan.
- Ensuring that children and young people are safe and protected was rated as the top priority during consultation with all stakeholders.
- National research indicates that the experience of watching, hearing or otherwise being aware of domestic abuse can impact on children and young people's physical, emotional and social development. This is a priority in Worcestershire's Community Safety Strategy and WSCB's Strategic Plan.
- Children with Child Protection Plans are often from families where there is a high incidence of domestic abuse, parental alcohol and drug misuse, parental mental health issues and parental offending history.
- Being bullied can seriously affect a child's physical and mental health, lead to feelings of isolation and worthlessness and affect longer term life chances. The WSCB Bullying Survey indicated that 47% of children and young people responding to the survey said they had been bullied and 37% had experienced bullying in the last year. Many knew how to report bullying to their school or an adult, but felt that they did not receive enough support once they had reported it. The Worcestershire Youth Cabinet Make Your Mark Survey ranked bullying as the top issue for children and young people.
- It is estimated that nationally 100,000 children under the age of 16 run away from home or care every year. Running away can be symptomatic of wider problems in a child's life and those who run away are at greater risk of harm. There are longer term implications: half of all sentenced prisoners ran away as a child and adults who present as homeless often ran away as a child.



### What will be done?

- The key activities set out in the WSCB Strategic Plan for 2014-2017 will be delivered.
- The effectiveness of arrangements for responding to missing children will be monitored and in particular the number of Looked After Children who go missing.
- Awareness of links to child trafficking and child sexual abuse will be raised and procedures and

guidance for working with, and identification of, those at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) will be embedded.

- Procedures will be put in place to prevent forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Safeguarding services will be improved through continued implementation and embedding of service redesign and recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced social workers.
- Think Family approaches will be developed to identify and support families where there is domestic abuse, parental mental health issues and substance misuse.
- Awareness of bullying issues for specific groups (including black and ethnic minority groups, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those on low incomes and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender young people) will be raised and peer support approaches for those who have been bullied will be promoted through Worcestershire's Health and Well-being Strategy.

## What will success look like?

- Children are safer from the risk and effects of domestic abuse through a greater awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people amongst practitioners.
- More support is given to children and young people affected by domestic abuse particularly those regularly exposed to this.
- Children and young people who require support receive timely and consistently high quality services.
- Fewer children and young people requiring social care or repeated social care support as a result of early intervention.
- Consistent application of thresholds and processes for access to services by all agencies involved in safeguarding children and young people.
- All agencies involved in safeguarding children and young people work co-operatively and share information in a timely and appropriate way.
- Children and young people say they feel safe wherever they are.
- Children and young people say that their school and other agencies deal with bullying well and are responsive when it occurs.



## How will success be measured?

- A decrease in the number of children with a child protection plan from 33 per 10,000 in March 2014 to 31 per 10,000 in 2014/15.
- A decrease in those who became subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time from 20.5% in 2012/13 to 15.8% in 2014/15.
- A reduction in the proportion of Child Protection Plans where domestic abuse is identified as a factor (baseline and target to be set).
- A reduction in the number of children and young people who go missing to below 29 per month.

## Outcome:

# children and young people grow up in secure and stable families

- Our areas of focus are as identified in Corporate Parenting Strategy.

## Why is this important?

- Looked After Children are amongst the most vulnerable children and young people in society and local authorities and their partner agencies have a corporate parenting responsibility to improve the life chances for the children and young people who are in their care.
- Our vision for Looked After Children is to enable them to live in a safe home, with people who care, support and encourage them into recognising and reaching their personal aspirations for their future. Our aspirations and goals as Corporate Parents are the same as any good parent. We will require the best for them not just 'good enough'.
- There has been an increase in the number of Looked After Children in Worcestershire such that there are around 650 Looked After Children in our care. Our Looked After Children Strategy aims to ensure that all children are looked after by the right people in the right place at the right time.
- Nationally, children living in poverty are 700 times more likely to become Looked After.
- A Looked After Children Needs Assessment has been undertaken in Worcestershire which is being used as a basis for commissioning services and support for Looked After Children and those on the edge of care.

## What will be done?

- Implement the Looked After Children Commissioning Strategy, including commissioning of high quality provision and services for Looked After Children and prevent children and young people coming into care.
- Implement the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the Healthy Care Action Plan.

## What will success look like?

- More children safely and securely cared for at home, and thus fewer who are looked after.
- Looked After Children achieving good outcomes in all areas of their life, including education, health and employment.
- The right children come into care and are looked after by the right people in the right place at the right time.

## How will success be measured?

- The Looked After Children rate to be 58 per 10,000 by the end of 2014/15.
- 70 children are adopted in 2014/15.



## Outcome:

**young people have the life skills they need so they feel ready for adult life**

### Our areas of focus are:

- to work with businesses and other organisations to improve the range of work experience, jobs, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities for young people, especially for those who are not currently in education, training or employment or those who are in care;
- to help all young people to gain the information and skills that will help them to live independently, especially those young people who are about to leave care;
- to improve transition arrangements between children's and adults' services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

### Why is this important?

- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) are at risk of not achieving their potential, economically or socially. National research suggests that there is a reasonable expectation that 1 in 6 of young people who are NEET will never secure long term employment. Supporting families into work and increasing their earnings is one of the priorities of the national Child Poverty Strategy.
- Whilst there has been an improvement in the percentage of young people who are NEET in Worcestershire, there are variations across the county. Many of these young people are from some of the most vulnerable groups, including care leavers and young people from families already living in poverty. Low aspirations, poor educational achievement and economic circumstances mean that many are then subject to lifelong unemployment, benefit dependency or low paid employment.
- The Worcestershire Youth Cabinet Make Your Mark Survey indicates that children and young people thought there should be a better range of work experience opportunities and apprenticeships. Three quarters of respondents to the View Point Survey felt this should be a priority within the Children and Young People's Plan. Their 'Ready for Work' Survey also indicated that 66% of respondents had not undertaken work experience. Of the 33% that had accessed work experience, 25% felt it had not been useful in preparing them for the world of work.
- Transition between children's and adult's services and agencies is a key point in a young person's life, but can be a time of change, anxiety and uncertainty for the young person and their parents or carers. Successful transitions need to be planned well in advance to ensure that there is continuity in service provision or support.
- Many young people, including children leaving care, say that they feel unprepared for adulthood. Health care pathways for those leaving care are also insufficiently defined and young people have limited advice and information at this transitional stage. Consultation indicates that there is a lack of available good quality housing for young people, particularly care leavers and/or young parents. Young people feel that they need more training for independent living and skills for adult life, including money management skills.

### What will be done?

- Businesses, schools and colleges and other organisations will work together to improve the range of work experience, jobs, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities for young people, especially for those who are not currently in education, training or employment or those who are in care.

- Support will be provided for young people who are currently NEET to enable them to re-engage in education, employment and training.
- An appropriate mix and balance of flexible high quality education, training and employment opportunities for all young people will be developed.
- The pathways (and future commissioning intentions) for young people and families who are at risk of and/or become homeless will be clarified.
- Local Children's Partnerships will advocate volunteering as activity in which children and young people can engage.
- Transparent, consistent and personalised pathways for transition between a range of children's and adult's services and agencies will be implemented and inter-linkages with the SEND review and Well-Connected will be identified.
- The Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Review will ensure that 16 to 25 year olds with SEND will be supported in further education.

## What will success look like?

- More young people, including those from vulnerable groups, engaged in a diverse range of high quality education, employment and training opportunities, including apprenticeships.
- Improved educational outcomes for young people between the ages of 16 and 19.
- More young people with special education needs and disabilities receive appropriate support to ensure a smooth transition between children and adult services and agencies.
- Young people who are living independently have appropriate life skills and are living in suitable accommodation.

## How will success be measured?

- A decrease in the percentage of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment and training from 4.7% in 2012/13 to 4.5% in 2013/14.
- The proportion of young people attaining the level 2 threshold at age 19 to be in line with statistical neighbours' average
- The proportion of young people attaining the level 3 threshold at age 19 to be in line with statistical neighbours' average
- An increase in the percentage of care leavers in employment, education and training from 47% in 2013/14 to 52% in 2014/15.
- An increase in the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation at from 85.3% in 2012/13 to 90% in 2014/15.



## **Outcome:**

# **children, young people and their parents/carers know where to go for information about services and support**

## **Our areas of focus are:**

- to continue to develop and promote existing information on services for children, young people and their parents/carers, the support they offer and how to access them;
- to continue to develop the internet as a point of access for children, young people and their parents/carers requiring information, advice and guidance on all aspects of a child's life;
- to improve accessibility of information on what to do when there are concerns about the welfare and safety of a child or young person.

## **Why is this important?**

- Availability and accessibility of information about services and support was a key theme in consultation with parents, carers and young people. 80% of those responding to the View Point Survey felt it should be a key priority.
- Access to information and advice is essential for families who need, or may need services or support. It can empower families to help themselves when issues arise and reduce the need for more costly interventions, advice or support later on.
- Families living in poverty tend to be least pro-active in seeking the information, advice, guidance and support that will enable them to access universal and targeted services such as childcare, benefits and tax credits, training, transport and employment.

## **What will be done?**

- Consultation will take place with parent carers on what information they require and how they would like it provided.
- Implement Worcestershire County Council's Digital Strategy so that information, advice and guidance is provided through digital channels and to enable on-line referral to/assessment for services such as the Early Help Hub, Social Care Access Centre and for pupils with special education needs.
- Develop the Early Help Hub as a single point of access for information on commissioned providers of services and activities for children with disabilities
- Better coordinate the provision of information and advice relating to the SEND Reform local offer, Early Help and Future.
- Partners will ensure that information on what to do when there are concerns about the welfare and safety of a child or young person are visible on their website.

## **What will success look like?**

- Information on services and support available is more accessible to families and meets local needs.
- Parents, carers, children and young people from vulnerable groups are able to access information, advice and guidance on universal and targeted services when and where they need it.

## How will success be measured?

- A decrease in referrals to children's social care from 308 per 10,000 in 2012/13 to 261.8 per 10,000 in 2014/15.

## What else is needed to support the achievement of the priorities?

In order to achieve what this plan sets out to do, we will have to:

- put effective arrangements in place for reporting progress on this plan and managing performance.
- build effective partnerships locally and strategically, including Local Children's Trusts with local plans outlining how the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan will be delivered in their area;
- commission services using joint and pooled budgets from a range of providers. This includes the development of pooled budgets and the commissioning of a range of local services that meet local needs;
- target resources on areas and communities of highest need and support communities to find local solutions to local problems;
- develop and train the workforce to ensure that it has the skills required to deliver universal, targeted and specialist services and better outcomes for children, young people and their families;
- continue to listen to the voice of children, young people and their parents/carers, and engage them in the development of services.





Worcestershire Council for  
Voluntary Youth Services



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