

Joint Area Review (JAR) of Services for Children and Young People in Worcestershire

JAR newsletter | April 2008

There is now just over a month to go until the JAR inspectors visit Worcestershire for the first on-site visit. Our new Children and Young People's Plan will be submitted to Ofsted on the 13th May, and the inspectors will use the last few weeks of May to read the new Plan, the documents they have requested, and also work on the case file tracking. Inspections give us the chance to 'take stock' of how well we are performing. It is important that during the JAR, we acknowledge our many and varied strengths, as well as areas in need of improvement. We have countless positive stories to tell about how we are making a difference to the lives of children and young people in Worcestershire – and now is the time to share them.

Richard Hubbard

Director of Children's Services



Priorities for the new Children and Young People's Plan

Following extensive consultation, the priorities for the new Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 have been agreed. These will be the overarching priorities for everyone working with or for children and young people in Worcestershire for the next three years. They are as follows:

Be Healthy

1. Support all children, young people and their families to choose healthy lifestyles
2. Ensure all children have a healthy start to life

Stay Safe

3. Identify and deal effectively with bullying and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it
4. Ensure that all children and young people are safe, and protected and support those who are at risk of harm and neglect

Enjoy and Achieve

5. Raise the achievement of all children and young people
6. Ensure that all children, young people and their families have access to positive things to do and enjoy in their communities

Positive Contribution

7. Enable all children and young people to be responsible citizens and recognise the contribution they can make

Economic Well-being

8. Ensure that all young people are able to access appropriate education, employment and training opportunities and make progress
9. Ensure all young people are equipped with essential life skills and have support to move successfully into adulthood
10. Enable children and young people to grow up in prosperous communities

The new Plan will be launched at an event on 14th May 2008 and all partners are invited.

Please contact Gail Kemp on gkemp@worcestershire.gov.uk for more information.



Children & Young People's
Strategic Partnership

Narrowing the Gap

You may have heard of 'narrowing the gap' – it is one of the key themes in our new Plan, which will run across each of the priorities. It is also the name of a specific national project which Worcestershire is participating in.

So what's it all about?

'Narrowing the gap' is about improving outcomes for children and young people in Worcestershire compared with all children and young people in similar authorities and across England. Whilst outcomes for most children and young people in Worcestershire are good, we know that inequalities in outcomes exist for certain groups of children and young people, and in certain areas of the county.

Where is the gap?

The term 'gap' means the difference between the outcomes for a specific group of children and the outcomes for the whole population of children of which the group forms a part. There are different types of gaps:

Geographical – outcomes for children are not the same across Worcestershire. Some parts of the County need greater improvement. For example, outcomes for children and young people need greater improvement in areas of the county that are most deprived and the English Indices of Deprivation indicate that these are mainly concentrated in Redditch, Wyre Forest and Worcester City.

Rural / urban – outcomes for children living in rural areas are not always as good as those living elsewhere. Sometimes there are not enough services in the areas, and sometimes services that exist are not accessible (e.g. via transport).

Specific groups - Outcomes for certain groups of children and young people are not always as good as outcomes for the population of children and young people as a whole. These specific groups are often vulnerable groups of children and young people, for example, looked after children.

How are we going to do it?

The new Children and Young People's Plan will guide services for children and young people in the County to 'narrow the gap'. By doing this we can make life as good as it can be for all groups of children and young people, no matter who they are and where they live in the county.

For more information on narrowing the gap, please visit the JAR homepage

Partnership Focus: Youth Offending Service (YOS)

We spoke to Phil Kendrick, Deputy Head of Service about how YOS are preparing for the JAR and their linked YOS inspection...

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a full-time statutory partnership comprising of Children's Services, Health, Police and Probation. Our purpose is to prevent offending and re-offending. We do this through the provision of services to those at risk of entering the Youth Justice System via our prevention work (YISP) and through the assessment and supervision of those in the Youth Justice System.

As a partner within the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, we are part of the JAR process. To prepare for the JAR we have:

- Ensured that YOS staff have received JAR briefings through monthly team meetings and also the circulation of the JAR newsletters to all staff.
- Commissioned a Safeguarding Audit that was completed in mid March. The audit has reviewed the safeguarding policies and procedures of the YOS, as well as reviewing case files and interviewing staff.
- Been involved in the selection of the case files, which are to be submitted to the inspectors.

YOS will be subject to a one day HMI Probation Follow-up Inspection in June.

Key JAR contacts

If you have a question about the JAR or the Children and Young People's Plan, please email

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Looking ahead to 2009...

ContactPoint, a DCSF initiative to create a national database of all children and young people's records (aged 0-18) in England is due to go live in Worcestershire this time next year. If you have any questions about ContactPoint, please contact the Children's Services System Support Desk on chs.system@worcestershire.gov.uk

A full YOS inspection was carried out in 2005. The inspector will be interviewing the Head of Service and a Police representative. The outcome of the Follow-up Inspection will feed into the Worcestershire JAR.

Key YOS Contact Details:

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