

STRATEGIC AREA 5

Providing for the needs of vulnerable children

We will identify, assess and provide advice and support for vulnerable children, including those who may be at risk in respect of their health, emotional well-being, safety, educational and social development. This includes children who are victims of discrimination, racial harassment and bullying.

PRIORITIES

There are six priorities in this Strategic Area:

- 5.1 To secure a safe environment for every child including those who are vulnerable**
- 5.2 To work with schools and other agencies on national and local initiatives designed to tackle issues facing children, including the provision of support to specific vulnerable groups**
- 5.3 To recruit, retain and provide support to foster carers and adopters, in order to enhance the service they offer to children**
- 5.4 To support schools in identifying vulnerable groups and developing responses, including programmes which enhance the achievement of children in public care**
- 5.5 To enable children who enter public care to develop emotionally, socially and educationally**
- 5.6 To enable children who leave public care to make a smooth transition to adulthood**

The above have been identified as the main priorities for the next five years because:

- There is a constant need to be vigilant and further develop services that safeguard the well being of children in Hertfordshire
- The Government requires local authorities to develop a programme of transforming children's services in respect of vulnerable groups, particularly children at risk of harm and children in public care
- Inter-agency work to protect children's safety and welfare has to be a key focus of activity. As we learn more about child abuse we need to develop strategies, policies and working practice to keep children safe. New areas of work that require further development include issues such as child prostitution, child pornography, use of the internet etc

- Hertfordshire performed notably well on child protection targets as outlined in the Performance Assessment Framework. However, because of the number of social work vacancies we have not achieved our target of ensuring that 100% of children on the Child Protection Register have an allocated social worker. This is a key priority for operational action
- Strategic planning, policy development and training on new areas identified through research and national inquiries (e.g. Victoria Climbié) need to be put in place through the Area Child Protection Committee
- There are a number of national initiatives supported by funding which tackle a range of issues facing children and young people such as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, youth crime and mental health problems that require an inter-agency response. The Government requires local authorities, in partnership with other agencies, to develop such strategies. It is important for the children of Hertfordshire to gain the full benefit of such opportunities
- There is an increasing demand for foster carers and adopters given the rising numbers of children in public care (4% rise in 2000/01) and an increase in the complexity and difficulties facing these children and young people
- The targets for recruiting, approving and supporting carers and adopters were met in 2001, but the increasing demand and the level of support required for this demanding and important task means we must continue to improve our performance in order to ensure that all children in public care have an opportunity to live in a family environment. Research demonstrates that the provision of appropriate support (both post-placement and post-adoption) reduces the number of placement breakdowns
- In 2001 the Government issued national standards for fostering and adoption which must be met. In Hertfordshire much of this work is already in place but improvements can be made. The Government has issued guidance, to be followed by legislation, on adoption. Local authorities will be required to develop a comprehensive post-adoption service. Work is needed to meet this requirement
- It is recognised that children in public care have not achieved as well as their peers educationally or socially and that their standard of health is not as good. Children in public care are over represented in mental health institutions and in the criminal justice system. Detailed action is needed to improve the life chances of young people for whom we are the corporate parent. Specifically, we need to improve our performance relating to:
 - the education of children in public care; the percentage of children in public care in Hertfordshire who achieved five A-C GCSEs in 2001 was 8.5% compared with 55% for other children in the county
 - training and employment; 38% of Hertfordshire children who left care and are aged 19 are known to be in education training or employment. Our initial target is to raise this to 75%
 - health of children in public care; 73.8% of children in Hertfordshire who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months had their routine immunisations up to date, have been to the dentist and have had an annual health assessment in the last twelve months. The target is 100%

- cautions and convictions of children in public care; in Hertfordshire 8.9% of the children in care aged over ten received a final warning, caution or conviction as compared to 2.4% of the general population over ten. The target is to significantly reduce the ratio of children looked after compared to the total population
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which was implemented in October 2001, places duties on the local authority to ensure that care leavers are supported in education, training or employment and are living in appropriate housing. Further developments are needed to ensure that all these young people have a smooth transition to adulthood

ACTIONS

Each year we take action to achieve the priorities and targets we have set ourselves. The actions and associated tasks for 2002-2003 are set out below.

5.1 To secure a safe environment for every child including those who are vulnerable

5.1.1 To identify family circumstances in which children are at particular risk of harm, and develop further our child protection arrangements with other agencies to reduce the risks.

Lead Officer: Carol Taylor – Head of Child Protection
01992 556 937

- a) Develop methodologies and processes for analysing child protection data to target awareness and training for professionals appropriate to their role
- b) Analyse factors that pre-dispose adults to abuse and develop specific links with agencies/professions that work in these areas:
 - domestic violence
 - drug abuse
 - mental health
 - offending behaviour
- c) Develop protocols in partnership with other agencies to monitor dangerous adults
- d) Work through the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) to develop systems to feedback to constituent agencies and to ensure learning from the inter-agency management reviews where concerns are raised about poor practice
- e) Produce protocols for working alongside other agencies on subjects such as child abuse images, sexual exploitation of children, unexplained child deaths and factitious illness
- f) Further develop the work of the NSPCC with young people who have sexually abusing behaviour
- g) Review policies for child protection which reflect the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and anti-discriminatory practice (ADP), especially in the use of interpreters in case conferences and access for those with disabilities to child protection conferences
- h) Increase awareness of the particular vulnerability of disabled children to abuse, and ensure the staff involved with protecting children have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with these children
- i) Work with health colleagues to develop the necessary infrastructure for effective child protection work within the re-organised Health Service, particularly with Primary Care Trusts

5.1.2 To develop further the new National Assessment Framework in the context of the integrated nature of CSF services and our work with health and other agencies.

Lead Officer: Helen Nys – Head of Child Care Practice
01992 588 582

- a) Audit and evaluate the existing use of the National Assessment Framework focusing on the problem of practitioners not integrating their working practice when operating the assessment framework
- b) Establish a working group of different agencies to analyse the findings of the evaluation and draw up a programme for development. This will include:
 - a re-write of the procedures
 - a re-launch of the procedures
 - cross-agency training on the procedures
- c) Review the revised policy and procedures
- d) Recruit 4 additional social workers for the referral and assessment teams, and 4.5 social workers for the long-term casework teams

5.2 To work with schools and other agencies on national and local initiatives designed to tackle issues facing children, including the provision of support to specific vulnerable groups

5.2.1 To develop and implement the Young People's Substance Misuse Plan.

Lead Officer: Lindsay Ross – Youth Programmes Adviser
01438 219 067

- a) Pilot across the county the draft framework for inter-agency response to young people reporting/involved in drug and alcohol related situations
- b) Roll out a programme of training for staff delivering Tier 1 and Tier 2 services (out-patient and community based services)
- c) Continue provision of direct support to schools, Education Support Centres (ESCs), alternative education providers and youth projects to ensure that all have effective policies for drug education, specifically referring to the procedures for drug-related incidents and needs assessment
- d) Implement arrangements and systems in CSF for the collection of data to meet the Drug Action Team reporting requirements
- e) Secure resources to implement an accredited training programme for staff in Tier 1 and Tier 2
- f) Implement the Drug Action Team (DAT) recommendations on accredited training courses for young people

- g) Provide the 'Little Red Book' (a reference booklet for young people, detailing information on drugs, the law, helplines and drug services) to all young people in receipt of services from CSF and voluntary youth projects
- h) Disseminate information on interim referral arrangements, and formal protocols when developed, for referring young people to Tier 3 and Tier 4 drug treatment services (in-patient and hospital based services)

5.2.2 To implement the Teenage Pregnancy and Fatherhood Strategy.

Lead Officer: Brenda Loveday – Adviser Hospitals and Home Education
01992 588 787

- a) Develop a general health directory for young people and update the existing booklet for young people on contraceptive and sexual health services
- b) Promote the availability of appropriate health leaflets to children and young people in children's homes and foster care
- c) Support the implementation of the 'Herts Sex and Relationships Education' (SRE) guidance document for all children
- d) Work with alternative education providers to develop alternative education programmes for pregnant teenagers or teenage mothers
- e) Identify and develop SRE and sexual health programmes for those at greatest risk and hard to reach
- f) Implement the SRE and Sexual Health Policy for children in residential care and foster care
- g) Develop a working protocol with schools which will enable young parents to access the appropriate curriculum
- h) Work with providers of suitable accommodation and support services to develop a local strategy to meet the housing needs of young parents

5.2.3 To develop and implement a Young Carers Strategy.

Lead Officer: Gill Webster – Client Development Manager
01992 556 981

- a) Continue to work to identify young carers
- b) Identify gaps in professional support networks and support from agencies for young carers
- c) Produce and implement an action plan to address these gaps

- d) Support young carers to produce an information pack, for young carers, about available services and distribute through schools
- e) Issue practice guidance to quadrants
- f) Issue guidance re: 'Carers Breaks' to quadrants and ACS
- g) Launch further 'Quality Protects' (QP) participation events for young carers
- h) Provide consultation, advice and training to professionals who have responsibilities for meeting the needs of young carers

5.2.4 To implement the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) strategy.

Lead Officer: Miriam Muga – Joint Commissioning Manager
01707 280 756

- a) Implement CAMHS strategy (completed March 2002)
- b) Increase consultation, advice and training to professionals who have primary care responsibilities for children and young people
- c) Develop inter-agency practices to reduce waiting lists and non-attending rates at CAMHS by clarifying referral criteria for different services and making the services fit the needs of the clients
- d) Improve services for hard to reach families
- e) Develop advice, consultation and support programmes for schools
- f) Build into casework process the opportunity for users to be involved in the development of services

5.2.5 To develop initiatives that will divert young people from offending behaviour and further support the Community Safety Strategy (CSS)

Lead Officer: Tom Rees – Assistant Director Youth Justice Service
01992 556 337

- a) Complete the arrangements for a Restorative Justice pilot in children's Residential Care
- b) Establish protocols to ensure that all children in public care who receive reprimands from the Police are referred to the Young Citizens Programme (YCP)
- c) Train Young Offender Team (YOT) workers to undertake a basic skills assessment
- d) Develop a protocol for speeding up referrals of young offenders with additional educational needs into quadrant services

- e) Establish Referral Panels
- f) Develop and implement protocols to work with education services to ensure that all young offenders in detention and training, who are eligible, receive a full time education on release
- g) In partnership with Hertfordshire Young Homeless Group (HYHG), provide support for homeless young offenders in the community
- h) Develop arrangements for referrals into CAMHS which accord with Youth Justice Board performance measures

5.2.6 To continue to monitor and plan responses to children out of school for reasons of exclusion, non-attendance, ill health, bereavement etc.

Lead Officer: Lesley Hewitt – Head of Education Welfare Practice
01992 588 580

- a) Provide support to pupils who are returning to school after a long absence by developing individual re-integration programmes with pupil, parent and school
- b) Work with alternative education providers to identify and provide suitable education for children who are out of school and unable to return to school in the immediate future
- c) With schools, pupils and parents continue to develop preventative strategies to promote good attendance and provide early intervention and support for poor attenders
- d) Ensure continuity of educational provision to pupils who are out of school for long period by establishing and maintaining links between pupil and school

5.2.7 To ensure that 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless receive accommodation and support.

Lead Officer: David Gibson – Planning Officer
01992 556 721

- a) Ensure that Hertfordshire Young Homeless Group (HYHG) offers service throughout the county
- b) With quadrant teams, review protocols with housing authorities across the county
- c) Commission an external evaluation of the process for homeless young people in the north of the county

- d) Disseminate good practice and learning from the above
- e) Review contracts with HYHG and housing providers

5.2.8 To increase awareness of racial harassment as a child protection issue.

Lead Officer: Carol Taylor – Head of Child Protection
01992 556 937

- a) Evaluate the level of current reporting via Call Centre/Client Services data
- b) Develop methodologies to collect data to measure success
- c) Include this issue in all core CSF and multi-agency child protection training
- d) Work with district councils and housing associations to ensure awareness of this issue
- e) Work with the Police to ensure awareness by uniformed front-line officers
- f) Develop preventative strategies within communities via primary healthcare professionals, family centres and voluntary agencies

5.3 To recruit, retain and provide support to foster carers and adopters in order to enhance the service they offer to children

5.3.1 To recruit, retain and provide support to foster carers and to enhance the support they offer to children.

Lead Officer: Maureen Phillips – Head of Family Placement
01992 556 931

- a) Target recruitment of foster carers, with a particular focus on teenage placements
- b) Provide enhanced support to foster carers including the following:
 - support to foster carers undertaking contact, emergency transport arrangements, emergency or planned child care arrangements
 - National Foster Care Association membership for all foster carers
 - out of hours telephone support service for all foster carers
 - improve and develop the training strategy for the Fostering Service
 - maximise the use of funding extensions to carers' property to provide additional placements
 - increase social work support to Fostering Project
- c) Meet the requirements for registration by National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) of Fostering Services

5.3.2 To develop the adoption and post-adoption service in line with National Adoption Standards.

Lead Officer: Maureen Phillips – Head of Family Placement
01992 556 931

- a) Increase the capacity of the Adoption Teams to undertake an increased number of assessments and to support approved adopters
- b) Complete assessments of adopters within the timescale prescribed within National Standards, except where factors relating to the applicants' circumstances prevent this
- c) Improve the quality of preparation for placement and placement support work, with specific children with identified high levels of need, to maximise the chance of placement stability
- d) Improve timescales for achieving adoption by minimising avoidable delays
- e) In accordance with best practice and National Standards, increase capacity and improve the quality of post-adoption in Hertfordshire, whether or not Hertfordshire adoptions, by proactively advertising the service
- f) Develop the post adoption service to provide greater levels of counselling and support to birth parents
- g) Support adoptions with an adoption allowance in accordance with statutory guidance and review the current adoption allowance scheme in relation to new guidance anticipated in 2002/03

5.4 To support schools in identifying vulnerable groups and developing responses, including programmes which enhance the achievement of children in public care

5.4.1 To provide information and training to staff about the identification and needs of vulnerable groups.

Lead Officer: Pauline Allison – Area SEN Adviser
01582 830 270

- a) Establish a training component incorporating good practice as well as latest research and CSF guidelines on identification of needs
- b) Incorporate the training component into the existing training programmes to schools organised by Schools Standards and Curriculum (SSC) Division
- c) Ensure that newly recruited staff receive an awareness raising session on good practice in working with vulnerable groups as part of their induction

- d) Review lesson and case planning to determine the effectiveness of training/induction programmes

5.4.2 To provide staff with information about successful programmes of action for vulnerable children and identify and disseminate good practice in schools.

Lead Officer: Nick Powley - Education Access Manager
01992 555 933

- a) Establish a multi-disciplinary working group (to include Connexions personal advisers) to establish indicators of good practice in working with vulnerable groups
- b) Circulate this information to CSF staff in order that they use these indicators to identify schools which have developed good practice in working with vulnerable groups
- c) Develop a newsletter and web page to promote and disseminate good practice
- d) Run regular seminars at which schools will disseminate information on their good practice

5.4.3 To continue to develop transition programmes for children in public care who are transferring from primary to secondary schools.

Lead Officer: Felicity Evans – Corporate Parenting Officer
01992 55 926

- a) Use the Autumn package evaluation material to audit projected achievement for children in public care
- b) Identify children in public care at Key Stage 2 who should and could be doing better at school
- c) Develop a policy on supporting children in public care at Key Stage 2 which will:
 - encourage out of school hours learning
 - support children in public care in their studies for Standard Assessment Tests (SATs)
 - develop educational mentors from within schools for children at Key Stage 2
- d) Organise a conference for designated teachers and schools to encourage the development of educational mentors from within the school for children at Key Stage 2
- e) Provide training and support for mentors

5.4.4 To implement a study support programme for children in public care which will ensure that they achieve their full potential at Key Stage 4.

Lead Officer: Felicity Evans – Corporate Parenting Officer
01992 555 926

- a) Use the Autumn package evaluation material to audit projected achievement for children in public care
- b) Identify children in public care at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 who should and could be doing better at school
- c) Develop a policy on supporting children in public care at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 which will:
 - encourage out of school hours learning
 - support children in public care in their studies for GCSE's by the provision of additional subject tuition in conjunction with schools and carers.
 - develop educational mentors from within schools for children at Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4
- d) Organise a conference for designated teachers and schools to encourage the development of educational mentors from within the school for children at Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4
- e) Provide training and support for mentors

5.5 To enable children who enter public care to develop emotionally, socially and educationally

5.5.1 To develop and implement arrangements that will ensure children in public care enjoy the same standard of health as the whole population.

Lead Officer: Charlie MacNally – Head of LAC Services
01992 556 938

- a) Establish a base-line of how many children in public care receive an annual health assessment and attend dental and ophthalmology services regularly, and ensure year on year improvement
- b) Provide training for workers and managers on assessment and care planning
- c) Ensure assessments are undertaken by monitoring the care plan at every review
- d) Develop and implement with health colleagues and other organisations a policy to promote healthy living for children in care and their carers
- e) Ensure that training for CSF staff on care planning with children in care emphasises the importance of this area

- f) Monitor with health colleagues the impact of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) rapid response team for children in care
- g) Increase the number of consultations, offered by CAMHS, to foster carers and residential units, as part of the service specification for CAMHS

5.5.2 To develop and implement arrangements that will reduce the number of children in public care who receive a 'final warning' or who are convicted of a criminal offence.

Lead Officer – Tom Rees – Assistant Director Youth Justice Service
01992 556 337

- a) Evaluate the effectiveness of the preventative programmes set up during 2001/02
- b) Identify a member of staff in each children's home and a member of staff in the Young Citizen's Programme (YCP) who, together, will implement an established programme to divert young people from crime
- c) Ensure that each child in public care who receives a reprimand from the Police, is referred to YCP for assessment and intervention
- d) Implement a mediation service for children and young people who are having difficulty in their local community

5.5.3 To reduce the number of children in public care who are permanently excluded, or who miss twenty five days schooling or more in one academic year.

Lead Officer: Felicity Evans – Corporate Parenting Officer
01992 555 926

- a) Implement a weekly reporting process for the absence from school of children in public care
- b) Develop a rapid first day response to children missing school through the designated teacher contacting the carer
- c) Continue to raise awareness of the disruptive effect of exclusion on the life chances of children in public care to schools, designated teachers and school governors and develop the use of Standards Fund monies by advisory teachers for children in public care to provide an immediate solution to disruption in educational placement
- d) Provide specific training to school governors on issues concerning truancy and school exclusion

5.5.4 To continue to implement the policy and strategic plan for raising levels of educational attainment of children in public care.

Lead Officer: Felicity Evans – Corporate Parenting Officer
01992 555 926

- a) Include within the statutory care planning and review forms, the production of a personal education plan for each child
- b) Provide training to help social workers, designated teachers and carers produce a plan that will support each child's achievements. Identify cases where success occurs and disseminate as examples of good practice
- c) Implement in consultation with young peoples advisory group a range of support which will help children to succeed, e.g.
 - pay a personal allowance plus bonus for post 16 study
 - recognise milestones of achievement
 - develop summer schools
 - corporate parent incentives e.g. driving lessons
- d) Develop with out-county providers of education a set of contractual arrangements which will mirror the support given by CSF to children attending school in Hertfordshire
- e) Engage the University of Luton to evaluate the implementation of the policy for the education of children in public care. The evaluation to focus on the effectiveness of the personal education plans process and the view of young people on the support they receive

5.5.5 To develop our children's homes and the Herts Residential Family Assessment Unit in line with National Standards.

Lead Officer: Charlie MacNally – Head of LAC Services
01992 556 938

- a) Identify an officer within CSF who will be the 'Registered Provider' accountable for ensuring the service implements the mandatory requirements made following an inspection. Put in place arrangements that will allow the officer to be assessed by NCSC as a 'fit person'
- b) Ensure the Statement of Purpose and Function for each home is authorised by Members
- c) Put in place arrangements that will allow each children's home manager to be assessed by NCSC as a 'fit person'
- d) Develop and implement a training strategy to meet requirements of NCSC
- e) Develop and implement a repair and maintenance strategy to meet requirements of NCSC

- f) Develop and implement a rolling programme to recruit additional staff to meet the requirements
- g) Develop a mechanism to enable HCC to meet the reporting requirements of 'notifiable events' to NCSC and to keep records as required by NCSC

5.5.6 To develop our services to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Lead Officer: Andrew Wellington – Senior Development Manager – Young People and Transition
01992 556 980

- a) Establish a baseline of the range of services that asylum seeking children have access to
- b) Develop and implement a CSF policy for working with asylum seeking children
- c) Ensure that all training for CSF staff on working with children in public care includes this group of children
- d) Recruit and support staff who will work directly with this specific group of children

5.5.7 To increase the numbers and achievement of children in public care participating in the sports, art, leisure, culture and consultation projects.

Lead Officer: Martin Bailey – Children's Participation Project Officer
01992 556 971

- a) Manage targeted projects for LAC, and ensure young people participate as described in the CSF participation strategy
- b) Organise sports, arts, leisure, culture and consultation events for children in public care and care leavers
- c) Seek outside funding opportunities for these projects
- d) Monitor outcomes and ensure there are exit plans into community projects for participants

5.5.8 To develop a team of Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to carry out reviews of children in public care.

Lead Officer: Helen Nys – Head of Child Care Practice
01992 588 582

- a) Establish a job description and specification for the service in consultation with group managers, team managers and looked after children

- b) Recruit and appoint staff to the post of IROs
- c) Provide a training programme for IROs, which will involve some looked after children
- d) Circulate information for children, staff and carers about the role of IROs

5.5.9 To pilot a contact service for children in public care in two parts of the county.

Lead Officer: Lesley Carr – Group Manager Integrated Referral and Initial Assessment
01923 274 141

- a) Decide which two Family Support Centres will pilot the service (one in North Quadrant, one in South Quadrant)
- b) Recruit peripatetic contact service workers, and service co-ordinator
- c) Monitor and evaluate the impact of the pilot projects
- d) Plan to roll-out the service county-wide

5.6 To enable children who leave public care to make a smooth transition to adulthood

5.6.1 To implement arrangements that will provide a Pathway Plan for every care leaver.

Lead Officer: David Gibson – Planning Officer
01992 556 721

- a) Develop and implement Pathway Plans in consultation with individual care leavers at the first statutory review after the child's fifteenth birthday
- b) Identify the Personal Adviser in the Pathway Plan
- c) Establish how many Personal Advisers are required and recruit to that number
- d) Identify, as part of the Pathway Plan, what support care leavers who have moved on to independence require, including housing, finance, education, training and employment
- e) Audit the needs of care leavers placed out-county and develop reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities and voluntary organisations to help meet their needs

5.6.2 To develop support programmes that enable every care leaver to access and sustain appropriate education, training and employment.

Lead Officer: Felicity Evans – Corporate Parenting Officer
01992 555 926

- a) Carry out a survey of the involvement in education, training and employment of care leavers to include reasons why, and why they are not, involved
- b) Develop responses which will increase the involvement of care leavers in education, training and employment. This to include:
 - use of 16-19 collaboration planning groups
 - career mentoring and support
 - job and education clubs
 - focused support from the age of fourteen and points of transfer at sixteen and nineteen
 - development of pilot scheme for post-16 education and sustainability in employment
- c) Draw up and implement a schedule for monitoring care leavers achievements in sustaining education, training and employment opportunities
- d) Develop a ‘Teenagers to Work’ scheme. This to include:
 - one day holiday placements
 - substitute year 10/11 school work experience placements
 - summer jobs
 - ongoing part-time placements
 - young people trained to work regularly to help training/interviewing

5.6.3 To commission NCH to provide ‘holistic’ services for all care leavers referred to them.

Lead Officer: David Gibson – Planning Officer
01992 556 721

- a) Commission NCH to establish outreach and follow-up support mechanisms for care leavers living independently or with other carers/agencies
- b) Assess the current level of NCH provision of personal advisers and their ability to meet future need
- c) Ensure a link between Personal Advisers and Connexions
- d) Commission NCH to establish drop-in facilities across the county
- e) Ensure NCH establish and co-ordinate peer group support networks for care leavers across the county

- f) Commission NCH to implement and maintain a database to track all HCC care leavers

5.6.4 To develop and implement appropriate Pathway Plans for disabled care leavers.

Lead Officer: Ken Harvey – Principal Officer Disabled Children
01992 556 982

- a) Identify all disabled care leavers eligible for the service
- b) Make projections and draw up joint plans with ACS to ensure that disabled care leavers have appropriate accommodation, support and education, training and employment opportunities into adulthood
- c) Draw up a protocol to ensure all disabled care leavers have a Pathway Plan to aid seamless transition to adult services
- d) Draw up and implement a process which combines person centred planning for disabled care leavers and SEN/Disability Codes for children
- e) Develop a protocol with Connexions to prioritise Personal Advisers for disabled care leavers

5.6.5 To develop and implement initiatives with Health and other partner agencies that will improve and sustain the physical and mental health of care leavers.

Lead Officer: David Gibson – Planning Officer
01992 556 721

- a) Carry out an audit of health needs of care leavers and identify priority areas of need
- b) Monitor the numbers of care leavers using dental practices, general practices and ophthalmology services
- c) Develop with care leavers, NCH and health, policies and practices to promote healthy living for care leavers
- d) Arrange with NCH, health and other agencies health training on appropriate issues for care leavers
- e) Enhance the physical and mental health of care leavers by making sports, arts, leisure and cultural activities available to them

5.6.6 To develop a range of suitable accommodation with varying levels of support that will meet the assessed needs of every care leaver.

Lead Officer: David Gibson – Planning Officer
01992 556 721

- a) Carry out an audit of present and future accommodation needs of care leavers by location and type and level of support

- b) Commission NCH to provide accommodation services indicated by the audit, including a second high support hostel if that is needed
- c) Assess the need for same night accommodation, and how this might best be provided
- d) Specify future requirements and funding of other housing providers and commission identified services
- e) Review joint housing protocols and joint commissioning arrangements for independent and supported housing with housing authorities

STRATEGIC AREA 5

| CSF Performance Measures | Actual 2001 | Target 2002 | Target 2003 | Target 2004 | Target 2005 | Target 2006 |
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| Priority 5.1 | | | | | | |
| Reduce the percentage of re-registrations on the Child Protection Register | 14.0 | 12.0 | 11.0 | 10.5 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Reduce the percentage of children who have been on the Child Protection Register for 2 or more years | 6.8 | 6.7 | 6.5 | 6.0 | 5.5 | 5.5 |
| All children on the Child Protection Register to have a key worker | 98.9% | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| All child protection reviews heard within the prescribed time-scale | 96.0% | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| All initial child protection conferences held within the prescribed time-scale | n/a | 75 | 85 | 100 | - | - |
| Priority 5.2 | | | | | | |
| Reduce the number of young people arrested for using Class A drugs by 25% by 2005 | 100 | 95 | 85 | 80 | 75 | 70 |
| Reduce the rate of teenage conceptions among the under 18s per 1000 conceptions | 33.0 | 30.5 | 30.0 | 27.0 | 26.0 | 25.0 |
| Reduce the number of young people involved in vehicle crime | 199 | 179 | 159 | 139 | 130 | 125 |
| Reduce the number of young people involved in domestic burglaries | 96 | 90 | 88 | 71 | 68 | 65 |
| Priority 5.3 | | | | | | |
| Increase the number of children in public care adopted during the year | 60 | 63 | 66 | 70 | 75 | 80 |
| The percentage of children who have three or more placements in one year | 7.8 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 8.0 |
| Increase the percentage of children in public care who were in foster places or placed for adoption | 79.0 | 80.0 | 80.5 | 81.0 | 81.0 | 81.0 |
| Increase the percentage of children looked after continuously for at least 4 years, who have been in their foster placement for at least 2 years | 51.0 | 51.5 | 52.0 | 52.5 | 53.0 | 53.5 |

STRATEGIC AREA 5

| CSF Performance Measures | Actual 2001 | Target 2002 | Target 2003 | Target 2004 | Target 2005 | Target 2006 |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Priority 5.4 | | | | | | |
| Increase the number of children in public care for at least a year achieving 5 or more GCSE A*-C grades | 20.9 | 29.6 | 38.3 | 47.0 | 55.8 | 64.5 |
| Increase the number of children leaving public care with 5 or more GCSE A*-C grades | 8.3 | 11.5 | 13.5 | 15.6 | 16.7 | 17.7 |
| Increase the percentage of children leaving care with at least one GCSE grade A*-G (including English or Maths or equivalent) | 43.4 | 53.0 | 62.6 | 74.2 | 81.9 | 91.6 |
| Increase the percentage of Newly Qualified Teachers provided with information and training in identification and needs of vulnerable groups | n/a | 85.0 | 100.0 | - | - | - |
| Priority 5.5 | | | | | | |
| Increase percentage of children in public care who have had an annual health assessment | 73.0 | 90.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Reduce the number of children in public care who are Reprimanded, given a Final Warning or Convicted, as a proportion of all children receiving similar outcomes | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.5 | 2.0 |
| Reduce the percentage of children in public care who have missed 25 days schooling or more | 3.3 | 7.5 | 6.5 | 5.5 | 5.0 | 4.5 |
| Reduce the percentage of children in public care who were permanently excluded from school at any time during the previous school year | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Priority 5.6 | | | | | | |
| Increase the percentage of young people in public care on 1 April in their 17 th year, who were engaged in education, training or employment at age 19 | 55 | 70 | 75 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Increase the percentage of children in public care aged 16 who at the age of 19 are known to have suitable accommodation | 70 | 70 | 75 | 90 | 90 | 90 |

STRATEGIC AREA 6

Exploiting Information and Communication Technology to support learning and improve services

We will use Information and Communication Technology to transform and enrich learning opportunities and services for children.

PRIORITIES

There are four priorities in this Strategic Area:

- 6.1 To enhance management information systems which support the continuous improvement of all CSF services**
- 6.2 To ensure that ICT systems support the raising of achievement by helping children and adults to learn in school and elsewhere**
- 6.3 To work with schools and other agencies to connect their ICT systems to those within CSF to improve working practices and communications**
- 6.4 To develop ICT systems which engage with service users and help them to obtain information and services which meet their requirements**

The above have been identified as the main priorities for the next five years because:

- Hertfordshire County Council and CSF are committed to improving access to, and information about services. Feedback from staff, service users and other agencies tells us that we need a consistent approach that is speedy, user friendly and focused on information sharing. The access and information should be available at times and in ways that meet the communities needs. The use of ICT and the extension of its use to as many of our children, schools and families as possible is not an end in itself, but a modern and inclusive way of improving delivery, responsiveness and quality of our services. It is a means of reducing bureaucracy and linking services together. Our use of ICT will allow users to have information on the performance of the service and extend our accountability by published audit trails of our activity, outputs and outcomes for children
- The use of ICT as an integral part of improving teaching and learning in school, home and the community enables staff, pupils and parents/carers to support achievement. All schools in Hertfordshire are connected to Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (HGfL). All secondary and middle schools have Broadband connection and all schools have e-mail accounts. The NOF funding to improve teachers' competence in using ICT as a tool is helping us to reach our targets. Through the ICT strand of the Key Stage 3 strategy (see Strategic Area 1) and the targeted use of ICT consultants in schools with the greatest need, we will raise achievement

- ICT offers 24 hour access to information and transactions, allowing services to meet user needs at times that fit the lifestyle and needs of the individual. We are committed to being a responsive and efficient organisation and the use of ICT maximises our potential to be so. The increasing use of our website and the growth of internet use shows the developing demand for access outside traditional office hours
- Data on performance and evidence about best practice are key components of learning and of an ever-improving organisation. We are committed to the speedy and open use of data and evaluation to improve performance. This is best done by use of electronic media to transact, share and make use of data and evidence across a wide group of staff and service users. The sharing of data between organisations reduces questioning of service users, assists more accurate assessment and sharing with repeat users of services creates a more partnership focus for work
- We are committed to the active involvement of the user in the design and evaluation of new services and to their feedback on the quality and content of existing services. The use of electronic media and ICT to improve the responsiveness and active participation of service users is an efficient and modern way of developing best services

ACTIONS

Each year we take action to achieve the priorities and targets we have set ourselves. The actions and associated tasks for 2002-2003 are set out below.

6.1 To enhance management information systems which support the continuous improvement of all CSF services

6.1.1 To develop the schools' management information profile system together with a guide that enables effective use.

Lead Officer: Malcolm Purvis – Head of Application and Information
01992 585 901

- a) Establish a project group of CSF staff
- b) Agree the data that should be part of the profile
- c) Build the database and delivery system
- d) Design the guide (working closely with schools group)
- e) Pilot the system and agree subsequent fine tuning
- f) Launch the system/service including training and support
- g) Monitor effectiveness and use leading to development of programme of improvements
- h) Develop, implement and review e-based assessment tools which measure progress against specified targets

6.1.2 To support schools to have and make use of achievement data from their management information systems.

Lead Officer: Janine Bryant – Business Manager / Consultant IT
01582 830 262

- a) Identify a group of schools to join and
 - evaluate current data and use
 - recommend improvements
- b) Follow improved data and process from pilots, set up phased implementation of new process
- c) Develop software for analysis of data and 'expert system' to pose questions to schools
- d) Develop training course for 'one-off software'
- e) Roll out training course

- f) Review effectiveness of
 - implementation
 - impact on target setting

6.1.3 To develop a CSF management information profile system together with a guide that enables effective use.

Lead Officer: Russell Knight – Lead Research Officer
01992 556 414

- a) Agree the information that needs to form the database/profile system
- b) Build the database
- c) Establish the processes to collect and maintain the data from a variety of sources
- d) Build specific reports to meet the needs of managers of different parts of the service
- e) Provide guidance, train and support staff in the use of the system
- f) Monitor consistent use and application of the system and the information that it provides
- g) Use the database so that service performance can be tested with stakeholders to establish priorities for review work

6.1.4 To audit all CSF performance indicators to verify that they are underpinned by relevant data processes and systems, and promote best practice within CSF.

Lead Officer: Russell Knight – Lead Research Officer
01992 556 414

- a) Agree all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and ensure data collection for each KPI has robust processes underpinning it
- b) Inform/train and support all staff in effective processing and management of KPIs
- c) Audit data processes underpinning selected KPIs
- d) Establish a quality assurance system to assure these processes continue into the future
- e) Share KPIs best practice with schools

6.1.5 To further develop the Oracle information and data management system.

Lead Officer: Alan Sapsford – Assistant Director of Operations
01992 588 500

- a) Consolidate Phase 2 development through continued training and further system development
- b) Develop management reports using the Oracle 'discoverer' software package
- c) Implement Phase 3 developments as agreed in contract specification. This to include commitment recording, migration of existing systems and integration of Adult Care Services into the system
- d) Test and further develop workflow and other user support arrangements
- e) Evaluate the prospects of introducing electronic files in subsequent years

6.2 To ensure that ICT systems support the raising of achievement by helping children and adults to learn in school and elsewhere

6.2.1 To build upon the targeted ICT intervention strategy in schools by deploying ICT consultants to work with schools in greatest need.

Lead Officer: Stuart Powell – Principal Adviser Teaching and Learning
01582 830 348

- a) Identify with schools those whose use of ICT across the curriculum needs improvement
- b) Agree with schools priority action for deploying ICT consultants to schools
- c) Identify key issues and work plan with each school
- d) Work with identified schools on targets
- e) Offer twenty training opportunities per term to identified schools on effective use of ICT
- f) Monitor progress via School Development Advisers (SDAs), Ofsted and self-evaluations

6.2.2 To provide high quality content on the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning (HGfL) appropriate to learners of all ages.

Lead Officer: Stuart Powell – Principal Adviser Teaching and Learning
01582 830 348

- a) Continue to publish web-based material to enrich the curriculum, ensuring that guidance is available in all areas. Develop new materials

b) Diversify current provision to ensure that it meets the needs of all age groups

c) Publish web-based material which informs improvement strategies in schools

6.2.3 To provide distance learning and supported self study packages enabling teachers and appropriate CSF staff (e.g. residential staff and foster carers) to gain European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) accreditation.

Lead Officer: Stuart Powell – Principal Adviser Teaching and Learning
01582 830 348

a) Provide published materials which enable staff to complete course tasks

b) Assess and accredit staff

c) Provide web-based support for staff who require guidance

d) Provide introductory face-to-face tutored sessions for each module

6.2.4 To broaden the infrastructure of the HGfL in order to integrate home learning materials from schools, libraries and other community based institutions.

Lead Officer: Stuart Powell – Principal Adviser Teaching and Learning
01582 830 348

a) Survey possible sites for access points to the Hertfordshire Grid

b) Devise a business plan for sites coming on line, publicity and access support

c) Roll out to sites, ensure link up and PR

d) Monitor take-up and access

6.2.5 To create more online learning opportunities in local communities by using schools and other local accommodation.

Lead Officer: Marianne Stevenson – Community Development Manager
01992 555 915

a) Assess the impact of laptop learning initiatives to date and make recommendations for further developments

b) Identify new groups of learners who can benefit from access to laptops e.g. housebound adults and those working to create sustainable communities

c) Purchase laptops and draw up training programmes

d) Identify and secure mixed funding for new online learning initiatives

- e) Implement pilot programmes as part of county basic skills strategy
- f) Identify other innovative use of systems e.g. Cyber café and plan for implementation

6.2.6 To provide a range of ICT based materials aimed at raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups, travellers and those studying foreign languages.

Lead Officer: Stuart Powell – Principal Adviser Teaching and Learning
01582 830 348

- a) With schools and representatives of minority and target groups, devise a plan to meet each groups need and set targets for improvement
- b) Set up steering groups for each topic to oversee implementation plan
- c) Roll out plan by:
 - a resource bank of equipment to be maintained by MECSS and located at appropriate centres
 - resources in at least five community languages are to be developed
 - train appropriate workers to use equipment via the Internet with pupils from minority ethnic communities and pupils from traveller families
 - develop, host and revise materials specific to the needs of non-specialist language teachers so that they may better support pupils

6.2.7 To provide children in the public care at Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4 with access to ICT equipment, the Internet and educational software over two years.

Lead Officer: Charlie MacNally – Head of LAC Services
01992 556 938

- a) Develop a project plan to determine specification and roll out plan of ICT equipment
- b) Develop an Internet Access policy for children in public care
- c) Recruit a project manager to deliver project plan
- d) Develop a support programme for ICT equipment and design of training programmes for foster carers, residential social workers and children in public care on ICT and Internet use to promote educational achievement
- e) Develop CSF web pages for children in public care and their carers linking them to the HGfL and NGfL and other appropriate sites

6.3 To work with schools and other agencies to connect their ICT systems to those within CSF to improve working practices and communications

6.3.1 To extend the use of e-technology (email and web) to improve communication between all CSF services.

Lead Officer: Malcolm Purvis – Head of Application and Information
01992 585 901

- a) Extend email to cover all schools:
 - revise email protocols in the experience of the pilot
 - establish rolling implementation programme
 - include guidance booklet, training, support and communication
- b) Develop system and supporting procedures for a fully web enabled schools bulletin (to replace the paper version) including support and training for schools
- c) Develop the website (Grid/HertsDirect) such that all CSF documents are available electronically to schools
- d) Increase use of ICT to support/simplify exchange of data with schools to underpin the work of the Data Exchange Committee

6.3.2 To develop and implement common information and communication systems to underpin partnership working, especially with health, police and the voluntary sector.

Lead Officer: Russell Knight – Lead Research Officer
01992 556 414

- a) Establish group of key partners to scope the information sharing opportunities and plan future joint activities
- b) Agree protocols to underpin data sharing
- c) Agree pilot information sharing areas and determine how pilots will be evaluated
- d) Run pilot projects (includes data collection and distribution)
- e) Review pilots
- f) Implement an operational practice

6.4 To develop ICT systems which engage with service users and help them to obtain information and services which meet their requirements

6.4.1 To extend the use of new technology to provide more accessible and up to date information and to develop services available through the Hertfordshire website and via the Customer Service Centre (CSC).

Lead Officer: Michael Francis – CSF Recruitment Project Team
01992 555 872

- a) Promote the use of new technologies capabilities to CSF and a wider public audience
- b) Encourage and contribute towards wide public access to e-communications through libraries and other outlets

- c) Develop service delivery via the Customer Service Centre (CSC) and website to maximise transactions with public
- d) Review and update three year plan of transactional services to be delivered via the CSC and website as services develop
- e) Develop publishing protocols for all units including quality assurance processes, ensuring materials are published in the medium most suited to the audience; ongoing maintenance of protocols once established
- f) Draw up detailed implementation plan for each unit undertaking significant publishing and transactional work
- g) Develop and promote intranet materials to support CSF staff

6.4.2 To use new technologies to improve information for, and consultation with, young people.

Lead Officer: Robin Dillaway – Deputy Head of Youth Service
01438 219 065

- a) Map current provision to record what information is available for all age ranges
- b) Consult with young people to evaluate current information provision and potential areas of development
- c) Continue to develop new content, particularly in areas highlighted as that of need and relevance to young people
- d) Deliver interactive services and information, including consultation methods
- e) Monitor and evaluate progress and content to inform future information provision

STRATEGIC AREA 6

| CSF Performance Measures | Actual 2001 | Target 2002 | Target 2003 | Target 2004 | Target 2005 | Target 2006 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Priority 6.1 | | | | | | |
| Increase the percentage of schools accessing the management information profile system on a regular basis | 0 | 6 | 27 | 52 | 77 | 98 |
| Priority 6.2 | | | | | | |
| Increase the percentage of Key Stage 3 pupils achieving above Level 5 in ICT | Priority 1.3 | | | | | |
| Increase the percentage of schools using the Best Practice materials available on the HGfL | Priority 4.1 | | | | | |
| Increase the number of school and CSF staff gaining ECDL accreditation | 0 | 1000 | 2000 | 3000 | 4000 | 5000 |
| Increase the number of on-line learning opportunities for adults provided for local communities | 17 | 357 | 586 | 771 | 848 | 890 |
| Raise achievement for under-performing groups so that they meet national expectations | Priority 1.2.3 | | | | | |
| Priority 6.3 | | | | | | |
| Increase the percentage of major data returns by schools which are made electronically | 48 | 58 | 76 | 84 | 90 | 100 |
| Increase the percentage of data exchanges with voluntary organisations and other statutory agencies which are made electronically | 56 | 64 | 69 | 78 | 86 | 100 |
| Priority 6.4 | | | | | | |
| Increase the percentage of interactions with the public, which are capable of electronic service delivery, and which are being delivered using internet protocols or other paperless methods | 20 | 40 | 70 | 100 | - | - |
| Increase the number of times the Hertfordshire CSF Website is visited | 585,000 | 628,900 | 676,000 | 726,750 | 781,250 | 839,850 |
| Increase the percentage of contacts with the Customer Service Centre "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the final outcome of their enquiry to services delivered by CSF | 64.2% | 83.0% | 84.0% | 85.0% | 86.0% | 87.0% |
| Increase the number of times information on the Young Persons Channel of the Hertfordshire Website is visited | 47,145 | 69,000 | 79,350 | 91,253 | 104,940 | 120,681 |

STRATEGIC AREA 7

Involving users and stakeholders in the development of the Service

We will work in partnership with service users, children, parents/carers and stakeholders to improve services to meet the needs of all children and families. We will develop our involvement with all communities and stakeholders, including hard to reach groups, in our consultation and participation strategy.

PRIORITIES

There are four priorities in this Strategic Area:

- 7.1 To offer service users and stakeholders easily accessible ways by which they can provide feedback on standards of service delivery and influence service development**
- 7.2 To ensure that all interaction between CSF and its service users and stakeholders uses plain and appropriate language**
- 7.3. To ensure that children and families are able to participate in CSF services**
- 7.4. To ensure that CSF services align with the county and district community strategies via our partnership arrangements and other community based activities**

The above have been identified as the main priorities for the next five years because:

- The County Council has a commitment to place service users at the heart of what it does. The child is at the centre of CSF. It is essential that he or she is listened to and this applies equally to parents/carers and other stakeholders
- CSF is committed to the active participation of service users in the planning, design, development and feedback on service delivery
- Feedback is valued because it enables services to improve continuously
- There is evidence that the Service's written communication is not always fully accessible by all users
- The County Council works in partnership with many other statutory and voluntary organisations. However, the strategies of CSF could be aligned better with those of our principal partners

ACTIONS

Each year we take action to achieve the priorities and targets we have set ourselves. The actions and associated tasks for 2002-2003 are set out below.

7.1 To offer service users and stakeholders easily accessible ways by which they can provide feedback on standards of service delivery and influence service development

7.1.1 To develop a range of ways by which service users and stakeholders are able to provide feedback about the services they receive from CSF services in order to improve service delivery.

Lead Officer: Roger de Ste Croix – Service Quality Manager
01992 556 985

- a) Create a variety of accessible ways for individuals to express views: through evaluation forms, questionnaires, the web and surveys
- b) Extend the use of quality improvement groups to provide feedback
- c) Create representative focus groups to ascertain views about selected services
- d) Analyse County Council surveys for perceptions about service quality
- e) Extend the use of Viewpoint and other arms-length organisations to help users articulate views

7.1.2 To ensure that services commissioned by CSF include arrangements for receiving feedback from service users and stakeholders.

Lead Officer: Julian Edwards – Service Planning Manager
01992 555 941

- a) Review current contracts to establish whether the requirement to listen to users and stakeholders is in place
- b) Introduce this requirement for all new contracts
- c) Where the requirement does not exist for current contracts, negotiate an addendum until end of contract
- d) Report six-monthly on extent to which users' and stakeholders' views are influencing service development and provide feedback to young people
- e) Liaise with service users and ascertain their assessment of the extent they are listened to

- 7.1.3 To develop the involvement of service users and stakeholders in the production of CSF service standards and service delivery procedures.

Lead Officer: Roger de Ste Croix – Service Quality Manager
01992 556 985

- a) Set out a clear process for drafting and publishing service standards
- b) Ensure that authors and managers know which users and stakeholders to consult when drafting standards and procedures
- c) Prepare a programme of involvement by the partnership groups
- d) Establish criteria to enable users and stakeholders to provide feedback on standards and procedures
- e) Involve existing quality improvement groups to improve standards and procedures and form new groups where needed
- f) Ensure that feedback from users and stakeholders is available when existing standards and procedures are being reviewed
- g) Produce a six-monthly report outlining users' and stakeholders' feedback about standards and procedures
- h) Set up an annual audit of service standards

- 7.1.4 To ensure that CSF service development takes full account of feedback from service users and stakeholders.

Lead Officer: Roger de Ste Croix – Service Quality Manager
01992 556 985

- a) Provide guidance for service managers on CSF's expectations and good practice in taking account of the views of service users and stakeholders at the formative stage of service development
- b) Provide training for CSF managers in listening to service users and stakeholders when developing services
- c) Audit and review the extent of user and stakeholder involvement in a sample of service developments and apply the lessons learnt across CSF

- 7.1.5 To develop arrangements with schools which will ensure they are able to provide feedback on policy and other developments to the County Council in ways which are simple, effective and are not time consuming.

Lead Officer: Julian Edwards – Service Planning Manager
01992 555 941

- a) Publish an annual programme of anticipated developmental work and issues for consultation with schools

- b) Develop a template to promote a consistent way to seek feedback from school management and school councils, and consult schools over this
- c) Agree with schools a standard range of ways in which views can be transmitted e.g. the web, questionnaires, e-mail and helplines
- d) Train managers to apply these processes
- e) Use these arrangements for all consultations
- f) Review the effectiveness of these arrangements with schools

7.2 To ensure that all interaction between CSF and its service users and stakeholders uses plain and appropriate language

7.2.1 To develop a range of ways by which service users and stakeholders are involved in the preparation of public documents to ensure they are easily understood, and are sensitive to cultural and linguistic needs.

Lead Officer: Roger de Ste Croix – Service Quality Manager
01992 556 985

- a) Consult representative groups about strengths and weaknesses of existing publications
- b) Set up a readers group and clear criteria to enable them to assess and provide feedback on publications
- c) Develop guidelines for staff on producing documents in appropriate languages, braille, large print etc
- d) Ensure a selection of key documents receive the Plain English Kitemark
- e) Produce a six-monthly report outlining key points emerging from users' and stakeholders' feedback and distribute to authors and managers
- f) Provide training for document authors on effective communication
- g) Consult users and readers group about the effectiveness of feedback process

7.2.2 To develop a range of ways by which minority ethnic groups are involved in the preparation of CSF public documents in order to ensure that they meet their cultural and linguistic needs.

Lead Officer: Janet Biscoe – Head of Communications
01992 588 532

- a) Review the range of languages used in Hertfordshire to take account of new communities including refugees and asylum seekers, and identify interpreters

- b) Liaise with community leaders to explain CSF's intention to involve them
- c) Identify 'editors' from the minority ethnic groups to comment on documents in draft
- d) Form readers' groups to appraise draft documents
- e) Provide training and feedback to document authors on minority ethnic groups' needs and comments
- f) Increase the number of interpreters and translators in response to the language needs of Hertfordshire residents
- g) Develop the Hertfordshire web so that it better meets the needs of the county's minority ethnic communities

7.3 To ensure that children and families are able to participate in CSF services

7.3.1 To develop ways in which children and families are directly and actively involved in the planning and development of services in CSF.

Lead Officer: Martin Bailey – Children's Participation Project Officer
01992 556 971

- a) In consultation with service providers, draw up good practice guidelines and, where appropriate, proposals for extending:
 - Youth Councils
 - Youth Forums
 - School Councils
 - user groups including children and families
- b) Provide training for CSF staff in involving children and families in service development and on providing feedback on decisions taken following consultation
- c) Develop an advocacy service to enable the views of black and minority ethnic parents/carers to be taken into account in the development of policies and the planning and delivery of services
- d) Work with Connexions in the development of their ways of taking young people's views into account

7.3.2 To develop ways in which children and families are able to give immediate feedback on the quality of the services they receive.

Lead Officer: Roger de Ste Croix – Service Quality Manager
01992 556 985

- a) Develop the use throughout CSF of feedback through evaluation forms, e-mail, the web, questionnaires and surveys
- b) Extend the use of Viewpoint to reviews of children in public care, School Councils, and anti-bullying strategies

- c) Promote Parentline and ensure that the views that are expressed are taken into account by service managers

7.3.3 To develop ways in which children and families are directly and actively involved with decisions taken by CSF which affect their lives.

Lead Officer: Martin Bailey – Children’s Participation Project Officer
01992 556 971

- a) Extend current work with disabled children, children in public care and children with special educational needs to take their views into account in the assessment and management of their needs
- b) Ensure that children who will be affected are fully involved in decisions about care planning, individual direct work, service development and complaints and advocacy
- c) Form a working group from service providers, parents/carers and children to identify new ways of involving a broader range of children and families in the decisions taken by CSF

7.4 To ensure that CSF services align with the county and district community strategies via our partnership arrangements and other community based activities

7.4.1 To develop arrangements which will enable CSF to work in partnership with voluntary organisations at local and county levels.

Lead Officer: Tammy Swailes – Strategic Partnership Manager
01992 556 966

- a) Send out a newsletter with CSF updates; schedule meetings on a county/ quadrant wide basis as a forum to share good practice and agree joint plans, in line with implementation of the Hertfordshire Compact
- b) Draw up standard agreements specifying purpose, terms and expected outputs for all grants
- c) Review existing grants against published CSF criteria and priorities and introduce longer term funding agreements where appropriate. Follow same processes in relation to ‘in kind’ support
- d) Identify where single agreements can be introduced with voluntary organisations which operate across the county
- e) Publish updated details of CSF's timetable for processing grant making, with details of decision making and monitoring systems, as part of Best Value Review implementation
- f) Publish details of all CSF funding to voluntary sector on HCC database
- g) Agree priority activities with voluntary organisations for the development of community based preventative services to support young people and parents at risk

- h) Involve identified voluntary organisations in multi-agency community initiatives in at least one local community in each district council area
- i) Identify CSF, government and other external sources of funding to support existing and new local preventative services

7.4.2 To develop arrangements which will ensure that CSF planning and development takes account of the Hertfordshire Community Strategy.

Lead Officer: Andrew Wellington – Senior Development Manager – Young People and Transition
01992 556 980

- a) Establish arrangements to ensure appropriate involvement of CSF officers and stakeholders in Community Empowerment Network
- b) Ensure that the membership of each of the district based Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) includes a senior manager from CSF quadrant teams
- c) Set local priorities and identify projects, working through the LSP
- d) Support, and where appropriate, manage the local projects identified above
- e) Establish at least one project in each district that encompasses a CSF priority

7.4.3 To develop ways in which community based developments in CSF involve local people and communities.

Lead Officer: John Clay – MECSS Adviser
01582 830 342

- a) Draw up guidelines for community planners on the involvement of local people and communities in community based initiatives
- b) Facilitate the involvement of minority ethnic communities in community based activities through MECSS and other fora for consultation and participation
- c) Carry out an audit of community activities to ascertain the degree to which the needs of minority ethnic communities have been taken into account

7.4.4 To review the arrangements for funding the community use of schools in order to promote their use by community groups.

Lead Officer: John Procter – Senior Planning Manager
01992 555 740

- a) Consult with schools and voluntary organisations about how the system can be improved and simplified
- b) Draft and consult on priorities for community use of schools that incorporate agreed priorities for preventative/community intervention

- c) Draw up and consult on a new system that takes into account feedback from the above consultation
- d) Implement the new system for 2003-04 funding round

STRATEGIC AREA 7

| CSF Performance Measures | Actual 2001 | Target 2002 | Target 2003 | Target 2004 | Target 2005 | Target 2006 |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Priority 7.1, 7.3 | | | | | | |
| Reduce the number of formal complaints (having increased the number of stage 1 complaints resolved informally) | 70 | 67 | 64 | 61 | 60 | 60 |
| All enquiries receive a substantive answer within 5 working days in accordance with our new service standard | n/a | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Increase the percentage of schools that have provided feedback on policy developments | n/a | 55 | 65 | 75 | 80 | 80 |
| Increase the percentage of major planning processes informed by the views of the CSF young persons reference group | 20 | 50 | 80 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Increase the number of times the Hertfordshire CSF Website is visited | Priority 6.4 | | | | | |
| Increase use of the Customer Service Centre for CSF | 172,500 | 173,000 | 173,500 | 174,000 | 174,500 | 175,000 |
| Priority 7.2 | | | | | | |
| All stakeholder groups have been consulted on public documents available on the Hertfordshire Website which affect them | n/a | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Priority 7.4 | | | | | | |
| Increase the percentage of funding agreements with voluntary organisations that clearly require active service user participation | 81 | 86 | 92 | 97 | 100 | 100 |

STRATEGIC AREA 8

Maximising user satisfaction and securing best value from all services

We will review constantly the management of resources, and the views of service users to secure continuous improvement in all services. In addition, we will take advantage of external resources which can support service improvement.

PRIORITIES

There are five priorities in this Strategic Area:

- 8.1. To implement legislation and to use Government initiatives and funding in ways which will improve CSF services, including using opportunities for working with the private sector and other parts of the public sector to deliver services more effectively**
- 8.2 To secure continuous improvement through a rolling programme of Best Value Reviews, identify efficiency savings and re-invest them whenever possible in preventative work**
- 8.3 To develop contract and commissioning arrangements to secure best value**
- 8.4 To procure and maintain sufficient suitable buildings and equipment which are value for money**
- 8.5 To ensure that admission arrangements and the planning of school places meets the reasonable expectations of parents/carers, operate cost effectively and support the raising of school standards**

The above have been identified as the main priorities for the next five years because:

- Whilst recognising the benefits of local financial management to schools, and having increased our delegation percentage significantly in recent years (currently 86.0% in 2001/02), we have had positive feedback about the Value For Money (VFM) guidance we can provide to schools and need to extend this support
- Comparative data with other local authorities tells us that we have some way to go in terms of reducing surplus places, particularly within the secondary sector. Our latest figures are 15.1% of secondary schools have more than 25% surplus places. The importance of reducing surplus places is recognised, both in terms of efficiency implications across the Authority and in terms of raising standards in those schools
- Whilst our central admin expenditure remains significantly below the national average (latest figures £34 per pupil compared to £40 per pupil nationally), we should review our processes to see if there is any further expenditure that can be invested in working directly with children and families, or to support preventative work

- The available research supports the principle that good quality learning environments within schools are an important factor in raising pupil achievement. Consequently, we should be supporting schools in ensuring that effective use is made of available capital resources (whether centrally held or devolved to schools) in a way that supports raising achievement. Equally, good quality facilities across the CSF service can underpin service improvement

ACTIONS

Each year we take action to achieve the priorities and targets we have set ourselves. The actions and associated tasks for 2002-2003 are set out below.

8.1 To implement legislation and to use Government initiatives and funding in ways which will improve CSF services, including using opportunities for working with the private sector and other parts of the public sector to deliver services more effectively

8.1.1 To make arrangements so that Hertfordshire is in a position to utilise effectively the additional resources signposted by the Government.

Lead Officer: Mike Robinson – Head of Central Finance Unit
01992 555 737

- a) Produce a schedule outlining the resources potentially available to Hertfordshire, and communicate this to schools
- b) Construct action plans for each area of potential funding, outlining how Hertfordshire could participate
- c) Devise a monitoring schedule and produce regular quarterly monitoring reports for partnership groups
- d) Produce an update, in booklet format, for all schools, of the potential sources of funding including for example, Schools Access Initiative and Specialist Schools

8.1.2 To use private finance initiatives (pfi) to support the raising of standards in Hertfordshire schools.

Lead Officer: Martin Surtees – Assistant Director of Resources
01992 555 710

- a) Review the bidding criteria taking into account feedback on the Autumn 2000 bid
- b) Develop criteria to establish the most appropriate Hertfordshire bid for Autumn 2002, and to test the cost/benefit to the authority of submitting a bid
- c) Consult with stakeholders on the criteria developed in (b) above
- d) Prepare and submit initial bid to DfES
- e) If the bid is initially approved by the DfES, generate an outline business case for submission to Central Government Project Reference Group
- f) If the outline business case is accepted, prepare detailed documentation for projects, including tendering arrangements

- 8.1.3 To review, across a range of CSF services, the scope to generate service improvements through alternative modes of delivery, e.g. working with external partners and other local authorities.

Lead Officer: Claire Cook – Head of School Resources
01992 555 736

- a) Develop a set of criteria, in consultation with stakeholders, for which services would potentially benefit from alternative modes of delivery
- b) Produce a research paper on the outcomes of similar approaches in other authorities
- c) Develop a programme of reviews in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, that complements the Best Value Review activity (see 8.2.1)
- d) Review with stakeholders the benefits and drawbacks of alternative ways of delivering services
- e) Devise a methodology for testing alternative ways of delivering services
- f) Produce a service specification for the first service to be reviewed
- g) Conduct the first review
- h) Report recommendations to relevant Partnership Group

8.2 To secure continuous improvement through a rolling programme of Best Value Reviews, identify efficiency savings and re-invest them whenever possible in preventative work

- 8.2.1 To conduct a series of Best Value Reviews over a three year period to generate service improvements.

Lead Officer: Martin Surtees – Assistant Director of Resources
01992 555 710

- a) Develop a performance review database detailing all key performance indicators for services
- b) Collect information from reviews in other authorities
- c) Standardise the consultative arrangements used in each review, to ensure that effective output is achieved from limited time input
- d) Test the scope for different ‘invest to save’ options to generate service improvements
- e) Undertake reviews in accordance with the authority’s Best Value framework

- f) Publish updates for schools and users on the outcomes of the reviews

8.2.2 To review three key CSF services to establish the scope for generating quality improvements and/or efficiency savings through revising business processes.

Lead Officer: Claire Cook – Head of School Resources
01992 555 736

- a) Produce a detailed checklist of criteria for current business processes that could benefit from review e.g. access to services for users and use of technology
- b) Test which business processes would benefit from review e.g. generate quality improvements and/or efficiency savings
- c) Construct a standard review methodology
- d) Test the review programme and review methodology with stakeholders
- e) Undertake first review
- f) Test the outcomes of the first review with stakeholders

8.2.3 To continue to roll out the three-year programme of value for money reviews for school based contracts and services.

Lead Officer: Claire Cook – Head of School Resources
01992 555 736

- a) Analyse existing good practice Value For Money (VFM) guides produced for schools by external bodies and test relevance to Hertfordshire schools
- b) Review the VFM programme with stakeholders, taking account of (a) above and testing the potential benefit to schools
- c) Research, commission, edit, consult and publish three guidance documents

8.3 To develop, contract and commissioning arrangements to secure Best Value

8.3.1 To review the quality of all non-property services provided to schools by third parties to generate improvements.

Lead Officer: Mike Robinson – Head of Central Finance Unit
01992 555 737

- a) In consultation with stakeholders, produce a programme of review work to cover third party services provided to schools e.g. payroll and insurance
- b) Identify quality standards for all services provided by third parties
- c) Collect monitoring data regarding the performance of services, and report to stakeholders
- d) Produce guidance document for schools, setting out key issues regarding quality monitoring and VFM
- e) As appropriate, produce action plans for individual services and a monitoring framework in consultation with stakeholders

8.3.2 To plan for the new HCC property contracts to deliver enhancements to the maintenance service provided to schools and better value for money.

Lead Officer: Jim Dalton – Assistant Director of Planning
01992 555 862

- a) Convene working group of heads, governors and other CSF property users
- b) Clarify service needs from the new contract
- c) Assist in preparation of contract documents
- d) Participate in evaluation of tenders
- e) Appoint consultants/strategic contractors
- f) Propose, consult and agree on new client-side arrangements
- g) Complete final negotiations on new processes
- h) Ensure that shadow arrangements in place
- i) Ensure that new contract starts

8.3.3 To review within a three year rolling programme all major contracts and purchased services operated by non-school based services to test whether alternative procurement arrangements or models of delivery could secure service improvement.

Lead Officer: Jim Dalton – Assistant Director of Planning
01992 555 862

- a) Establish criteria for effective quality service delivery
- b) Construct a programme for reviewing all major contract provision including NGfL and NCH

- c) Review service provision with stakeholders twice in year
- d) Report findings to Review Panel and partnership groups
- e) Amend, change, cease contracts for year 2003

8.4 To procure and maintain sufficient suitable buildings and equipment which are value for money

8.4.1 To develop and implement a process to ensure that the capital strategy from 2003/04 onwards reflects all the elements of the Asset Management Plan i.e. condition, suitability and sufficiency.

Lead Officer: Paul Wray – Area Planning Manager North West
01992 555 860

- a) Agree process with members and Partnership Group to establish an integrated approach to ensure value for money across all capital related spend
- b) Consult stakeholders on potential priorities based upon asset management plan data
- c) Quantify resources required to stop any accommodation from having to be taken out of use
- d) Quantify resources required to meet legislative requirements
- e) Quantify resources required to meet improvement targets for condition, suitability and sufficiency
- f) Secure resources for property programmes through political process
- g) Identify for property users the programme priorities, the sums available for each element, and the schemes to be undertaken in a published document

8.4.2 To make arrangements so that all the data needed for the Asset Management Plan (AMP) from 2003/04 onwards is in place by July 2002.

Lead Officer: Keith Hutt – Planning Officer AMP and Projects
01992 555 743

- a) Survey the condition of all CSF properties, inform users and respond to queries
- b) Collate suitability data on all CSF properties
- c) Produce sufficiency information through computerised plans for all schools

- d) Consult schools and other property users on Local Policy Statement, Statement of Priorities and improvement targets; submit this to DfES
- e) Prepare draft repairs and maintenance and capital building programmes for consultation
- f) Circulate repair and maintenance, and building programmes to schools

8.5. To ensure that admission arrangements and the planning of school places meets the reasonable expectations of parents/carers, operate cost effectively and support the raising of school standards

8.5.1 To conduct an annual review of nursery, primary and secondary admission arrangements in Hertfordshire schools.

Lead Officer: Nick Powley – Education Access Manager
01992 555 933

- a) Devise a questionnaire for parents/carers, pupils and headteachers using the following criteria:
 - clarity of information
 - clarity of admission criteria
 - helpfulness of staff when responding to queries
 - satisfaction with process
 - satisfaction with outcome
- b) Draw up list of parents/carers, pupils and headteachers with whom to pilot the questionnaire, for purpose of confirming that it is user-friendly
- c) Send questionnaire to parents/carers and to schools and take steps to ensure a good return rate
- d) Analyse the results/responses and evaluate whether changes are necessary

8.5.2 To develop a single integrated admissions process for maintained and private sector nursery schools and classes for September 2002.

Lead Officer: Sarah Vize – Schools Admissions and Transport Development Manager 01992 555 910

- a) Undertake initial discussions with nursery providers including schools to inform the development of a proposed scheme
- b) Construct plan to develop software in line with other co-ordinated processes
- c) Develop information for nursery providers to support co-ordinated scheme

- d) Consult on arrangements for a co-ordinated scheme with all providers and adjust in the light of comments
- e) Develop information for parents/carers, including web applications
- f) Publish details of new co-ordinated scheme, including Nursery Alert Sessions as part of the launch

8.5.3 To plan through the School Organisation Committee the appropriate provision of school places.

Lead Officer: Jim Dalton – Assistant Director of Planning
01992 555 862

- a) Using output from new forecasting methodology, identify areas where there is a need for action. Areas relate to the twenty three planning areas across the country
- b) Agree scope for action in specific cases identified in (a) above, for example specifying the number of additional school places required in the primary section in a particular area
- c) Establish time-frame for action and need for resources, including capital investment

STRATEGIC AREA 8

| CSF Performance Measures | Actual 2001 | Target 2002 | Target 2003 | Target 2004 | Target 2005 | Target 2006 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <p>Priority 8.1</p> <p>Increase the percentage of comparable CSF Strategic Plan targets which are in the upper quartile compared to our statistical neighbours</p> | 32% | 37% | 42% | 47% | 53% | 58% |
| <p>Priority 8.2, 8.3</p> <p>Percentage of efficiency savings to be identified over the full range of non-delegated budgets (both cashable and non-cashable)</p> | n/a | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| <p>Priority 8.4</p> <p>Meet the improvement targets set within the Asset Management Plan for:</p> <p>Condition</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Decrease the percentage of building elements of CSF schools properties in 'poor' or 'bad' condition</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Decrease the percentage of building elements of all other CSF properties in 'poor' or 'bad' condition</p> <p>Suitability</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Decrease the percentage of rooms/spaces identified as key problems in the delivery of the curriculum</p> | 11.0 | n/a | 5.0 | n/a | n/a | 0.0 |
| | n/a | n/a | 5.0 | n/a | n/a | 0.0 |
| | 2.4 | n/a | 1.8 | n/a | n/a | 0.0 |

STRATEGIC AREA 8

| CSF Performance Measures | Actual 2001 | Target 2002 | Target 2003 | Target 2004 | Target 2005 | Target 2006 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Priority 8.5 | | | | | | |
| Reduce the percentage of unfilled places in: | | | | | | |
| Primary Schools | 10.3 | 9.5 | 9.3 | 9.2 | 9.1 | 8.9 |
| Secondary Schools | 11.6 | 10.0 | 9.5 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 8.3 |
| Reduce the percentage of schools with 25% or more of their places unfilled and at least 30 surplus places in: | | | | | | |
| Primary Schools | 10.1 | 9.6 | 9.0 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 7.8 |
| Secondary Schools | 15.1 | 10.0 | 8.4 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 6.0 |
| Increase the percentage of parents who received a place for their child in a school they ranked in: | | | | | | |
| Primary Schools | 96.7 | 95.2 | 95.4 | 95.6 | 95.7 | 95.8 |
| Secondary Schools | 91.7 | 91.9 | 92.1 | 92.2 | 92.3 | 92.4 |