

17 December 2008

Mr Philip Hygate
Director of Children's Services
Council of the Isles of Scilly
Town Hall
St. Mary's
Isles of Scilly
TR21 0LW

Dear Mr Hygate

Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the Council of the Isles of Scilly 2008

This letter summarises the findings of the 2008 annual performance assessment (APA) for your council. The evaluations and judgements in the letter draw on a range of data and information which covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. As you know, the APA is not based on an inspection of your services and, therefore, can only provide a snapshot based on the evidence considered. As such, I am grateful to you for assuring the quality of the data provided.

Performance is judged on a four point scale as detailed in the handbook. I should emphasise that the grades awarded are based on an overall 'best fit' model. For instance, an outstanding judgement of Grade 4 reflects that overall most aspects, but not necessarily all, of the services in the area are working very well. We know that one of the features of outstanding provision is the drive for greater improvement and no council would suggest, and nor would Ofsted, that a judgement of outstanding indicates that everything is perfect. Similarly within a judgement of inadequate overall, Grade 1, there could be some aspects of the overall service that are adequate or even good. Judgements are made in a rounded way, balancing all of the evidence and giving due consideration to outcomes, local and national contexts, priorities and decision-making.

The following table sets out the grades awarded for performance in 2008.

Assessment judgement area	APA grade
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3
Being healthy	3
Staying safe	2
Enjoying and achieving	3
Making a positive contribution	3
Achieving economic well-being	3
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	3

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale
4: outstanding/excellent; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate*

Overall effectiveness of children's services

Grade 3

The Council of the Isles of Scilly makes a good contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people. It delivers services which are improving and are now good across four of the five Every Child Matters areas. Good progress has been made in responding to the majority of areas identified in the 2007 JAR. Good opportunities exist for children and young people to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles and make a positive contribution. Robust and effective action has been taken to improve safeguarding and this aspect of the service is now at least adequate. The appointment of two qualified social workers and the implementation of clear thresholds for access to children's social care services have resulted in more timely and appropriate assessments. Social care support for families is good and increased collaborative working with other agencies is helping to develop and deliver improved preventative services. No children on the Islands are subject to a child protection plan and there are no looked after children. Effective monitoring and support for the school have led to continued progress and have ensured that the standards young people achieve at 16 are well above average. Good quality information, advice and guidance are provided by a range of agencies. There is strong support for pupils, particularly at critical moments when they transfer from primary or secondary school, and this adds to their levels of enjoyment and achievement. Newly appointed youth workers have increased opportunities for young people to attend activities outside school and have provided additional support to young people transferring to educational settings on the mainland. The council's capacity to improve, including its management of services, is good. Improving children's services is a key priority for the council, its elected members, chief officer and partners. This has been reflected in increased financial investment in the service.

Being healthy

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good sexual health services; no teenage pregnancies on the Islands for more than 10 years. ▪ Healthy eating and safe play are well promoted through subsidised access to childminding, day-care and nursery provision. ▪ Information, advice and guidance provided to schools and youth settings to promote and develop healthy lifestyles.
Important weaknesses and areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The revised child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) strategy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is not yet fully implemented.

Staying safe

Grade 2

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is adequate. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area underestimates a number of important weaknesses and overvalues the areas where progress has been made. The table below sets out the evidence for the grade awarded.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of children's care services has improved significantly since early 2007 and is now at least adequate with some good aspects. ▪ Increased capacity to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to children in need and child protection referrals. ▪ Good collaboration with partner agencies results in delivery of effective preventative services. ▪ Robust vetting and checking systems enhance safe recruitment practices. ▪ Comprehensive and well coordinated domestic violence services.
Important weaknesses and areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The common assessment framework is not yet established. ▪ Lack of identification of, and services for, young carers. ▪ Joint commissioning arrangements for services for children with disabilities not yet formally established. ▪ Insufficient respite care provision and insufficient promotion of direct payments for families of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. ▪ Raising awareness and identification of private fostering. ▪ Integration of work between children's and adult social care services is insufficient.

Enjoying and achieving

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective monitoring and support of educational provision have helped to ensure that it is of increasingly good quality. ▪ Standards at Key Stage 4. ▪ A strong commitment to the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage has helped all 3- and 4-year-olds access high quality provision.

Important weaknesses and areas for development

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low proportion of children attaining Level 4 at Key Stage 2. |
|--|

Making a positive contribution

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

Major strengths

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very low levels of antisocial behaviour. ▪ The role of the Youth Hub in combining information, guidance and advice sessions with a range of positive activities provides support and adds to young people's enjoyment. ▪ Young people post-16 are helped to continue their education on the mainland with effective support from a youth worker. |
|--|

Important weaknesses and areas for development

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of a recorded long-term strategy for youth support services to meet the needs of all young people. |
|---|

Achieving economic well-being

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

Major strengths

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people are provided with informed and impartial advice and guidance at key transition points, preparing them well for working life. ▪ Good range of professional support and opportunities for vulnerable young people. ▪ Very high proportion of young people in education, training and employment. |
|---|

Important weaknesses and areas for development

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress towards collective delivery of the new 14–19 curriculum is hindered by the current barriers of transport links, lack of agreed and shared protocols and lack of a planned strategy of workforce development. |
|---|

Capacity to improve, including the management of children's services

Grade 3

The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people is good and its management of these services is good. Improvement is evident in services which have been inadequate in the past, specifically in children's social care services. These are now at least adequate. There is a clear vision and ambition, shared across partner agencies that reflects local needs and community aspirations and is based on significant consultation with children and young people. Elected members provide good leadership and show a good understanding of the issues and challenges within children's services. Governance arrangements are effective, and lines of responsibility and accountability have been clarified and strengthened. Clear priorities are highlighted in the CYPP 2008-11 and are well reflected in the Islands' first Local Area Agreement. The priorities give adequate attention to equality and diversity issues faced by the island community. Partnership working, increased resources and inward investment have increased capacity, leading to better support for children and young people. Weaknesses remain in the management of children's services: in the use of information to improve performance, financial and asset management and value for money. The Council's unique island geography also restricts the development and pace of some initiatives. Some of the improvement has been the result of external funding and support and the council's resources remain stretched. The council's self-assessment is adequate, although it does not demonstrate its impact sufficiently or evaluate sufficiently the progress it has made in meeting some of the recommendations arising from the JAR in 2007.

Major strengths

- Ambition is supported by a number of clear priorities highlighted in the CYPP 2008-11 and these address issues of equality and diversity faced by the island community.
- Good engagement with children and young people, with effective action to improve access to services for hard to reach groups.
- Enhanced capacity through partnership working and inward investment.
- Rapid improvements in developing children's social care services so they are now fit for purpose.

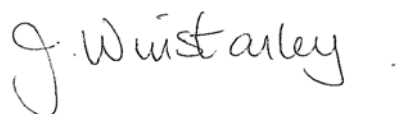
Important weaknesses and areas for development

- Financial and performance information is not aligned to demonstrate value for money.
- There is insufficient clarity about and agreement on responsibilities and accountability for the provision of children's services between the council and external contractors.
- Lack of a well planned and resourced strategy for the development of the workforce.

The children's services grade is the performance rating for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It will also provide the score for the children and young people service block in the comprehensive performance assessment to be published by the Audit Commission.

We are grateful for the information you provided to support this process and for the time given by you and your colleagues during the assessment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager
Local Services Inspection