

9 December 2010

Mr David Goddard  
Director of Children's Services  
Council of the Isles of Scilly  
Town Hall  
St Marys TR21 0LY

Dear Mr Goddard

## **Annual children's services assessment**

Ofsted guidance published in July 2010 explains that the annual assessment of children's services is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This performance profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the local authority has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant indicators in the National Indicator Set (NIS).

In reaching the assessment of children's services, Ofsted has taken account of all inspected and regulated services for children and young people, arrangements for making sure children are safe and stay safe and performance against national measures. More weight has been given to the outcomes of Ofsted's inspections and regulatory visits (Blocks A and B in the performance profile).

The annual assessment derives from a four point scale:

4	Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3	Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2	Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1	Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

Within each level there will be differing standards of provision. For example, an assessment of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, an assessment of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects. As in 2009, while the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's assessment, meeting or not meeting the minimum requirements alone does not define the grade. The assessment has involved the application of inspector judgement.

## Council of the Isles of Scilly children's services assessment 2010

<b>Children's services assessment</b>	<b>Performs well (3)</b>
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Children's services in the Council of the Isles of Scilly perform well. In 2009, a transitional year, they were assessed as performing adequately. However, in 2010 there is enough good provision to meet the minimum requirements for the higher grade.

Overall, the very large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better. The overall quality of early years provision is outstanding and the one local school, which now caters for pupils up to the age of 16, is good.

The local authority's front-line child protection services have both strengths and areas for development. However, there are considerably more aspects where provision is satisfactory or better than where development is needed.

Performance measures show that a large majority of outcomes for children and young people are broadly average or better. This includes a very large majority of the main measures of educational attainment. The great majority of young people have to travel to the mainland for education and training post-16 and concerns have been raised locally about the number not completing their courses. Poor progress has been made in developing comprehensive services for those with emotional and mental health difficulties.

### Key areas for further development

- Take forward the development of comprehensive child and adolescent mental health services
- Reduce the drop out rate for young people involved in education and training post-16.

## Outcomes for children and young people

All services give good encouragement and support to children and young people to lead healthy lives. However, in a recent survey, a much lower proportion of children and young people than nationally report having one good friend at least, together with two or more people they can speak to if they're worried. Also, poor progress has been made in developing comprehensive services for those with emotional and mental health difficulties. The proportion of children and young people who regularly take part in sport in school is well below average.

The very large majority of individual services like the school make a good contribution to helping children and young people stay safe. The local authority's front-line child protection services have both strengths and areas for development. However, there are considerably more aspects where provision is satisfactory or better than where development is needed. Partnership working between the main

services involved is good and there is also a good range of support to deal with problems before they become too serious. There are currently no children with a child protection plan or who are in care. The number of children and young people who say they have been bullied is very much lower than average.

The overall quality of education and day care provision for very young children is outstanding and much better than the national average. The one local school is good. Pupil attainment at the age of five last year was well below the average in similar areas. However, this is a figure which has changed very substantially from year to year and almost certainly reflects the very small numbers in a year group, rather than changes in the quality of provision. The same issue can clearly affect measures of educational attainment at other ages, but the local figures for 11- and 16-year-olds in recent years have usually been well above the average in similar areas.

All young people participate in organised group activities outside school, which is much higher than the national average. The number saying they have taken drugs or have been drunk recently is broadly average. Work aimed at preventing anti-social and offending behaviour by young people is impressive. Good arrangements are in place within the very large majority of services to seek young people's views and involve them in decision making.

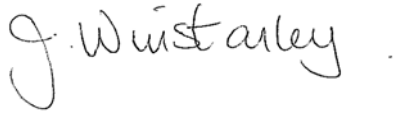
All services give good support to young people to help them do well in later life. The majority of young people leave the islands at the age of 16 to attend further education colleges elsewhere, usually in Cornwall. It is a local priority to ensure that the need to live away from home in an unfamiliar, mainland environment does not have a detrimental effect on young people's education and emotional well-being. Concerns have been raised about the number of young people not completing their courses and it is a local priority to reduce the drop out rate.

### **Prospects for improvement**

The local authority is able to deliver key improvements when required. Front-line child protection services are much better than they were in 2007 when safeguarding provision overall was judged to be inadequate. The local authority and its partners have a good grasp of local needs and collaborative working generally is good. Appropriate priorities are set for improving services and good use is made where necessary of specialist support from elsewhere to supplement local expertise. The local authority has been successful in obtaining grant funding to improve local provision, for example to increase support within the local school and children's centre for children's mental health needs.

This children's services assessment is provided in accordance with section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment