

# Joint area review

**Isles of Scilly Children's Services Authority Area**

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## Review of services for children and young people

Adult Learning Inspectorate  
Audit Commission  
Commission for Social Care Inspection  
Healthcare Commission  
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate  
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
Ofsted

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# Introduction

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of six inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), the Healthcare Commission (CHAI) and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the inspection of children's services*.

2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and its findings are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.

3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in the Isles of Scilly area and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being.

4. The review evaluates the collective contribution made to each outcome for children and young people by relevant services in the area. It also judges the contributions made by the council's services overall and, specifically, its education and children's social care services. Particular attention is given to joint action by local services on behalf of those groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes, including children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

5. The review took place in two stages consisting in total of two weeks over a four-week period. Inspectors reviewed all existing evidence including:

- a self-assessment undertaken by local public service providers
- performance data
- information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day-care provision
- evidence gathered from a two-day review of the youth offending service
- briefings from staff within inspectorates, commissions and other public bodies in contact with local providers.

6. In addition, the review also included gathering evidence on four key judgements, selected because of their critical importance to improving outcomes for children and young people in the local area. This included discussions with elected members of the local authority and their equivalents in other public agencies, officers from these agencies, service users and community representatives. A review of case files for children and young people receiving support from a number of local agencies including those on the

mainland was also conducted. The review was enhanced to incorporate the findings from the youth service inspection fieldwork.

## Context

7. The Isles of Scilly, a very small unitary authority, is located on the edge of the Atlantic, some 28 miles south west of mainland Britain. It is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a conservation area. The heritage coast and the waters around the islands have been established as a non-statutory marine park.

8. Access to the islands is by ship or helicopter from Penzance, or plane from Lands End and other regional airports. In the winter months there is no passenger access by sea, however a supply ship sails, weather permitting, three times a week to St Mary's, the largest of the islands. Apart from a small proportion of freehold land in the built-up areas of St Mary's, the islands are owned entirely by the Duchy of Cornwall. The special nature of Scilly is reflected in its unique constitutional position. It has its own 'Isles of Scilly Clause', the aim of which is to try and ensure that all legislation applied to the islands is appropriate to its size and needs.

9. Approximately 420 children and young people under the age of 19 live on the Isles of Scilly. There are no looked after children. Three children are on the child protection register. Very few children and young people have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and only a very small number of children and young people belong to black or minority ethnic groups.

10. The population of the islands at the last census in 2001 was 2,153. Only five of the islands are populated. St Mary's has a population of 1,607 and there are small, though significant, communities on the four islands of St Agnes, Bryher, Tresco and St Martin's, referred to as the 'off islands'. During the last two decades, the islands have experienced notable demographic change, with an increase in retired and elderly people and a decline in the number of young people with families. Between 1981 and 1996, the number of retired people increased by 7%, while the number of under 16s fell by 6%.

11. Various factors have contributed to the islands being designated an area for funding from the European Union under the Objective One priority programme and its successor the Convergence Fund. Incomes are significantly lower than national and regional averages and much employment is low paid, often part-time or seasonal. Few real career opportunities are available on the islands. Tourism is the main source of employment and accounts for more than 85% of the local economy, although the traditional pursuits of fishing and farming are still important. The cost of living is high, with property and transport prices significantly above those experienced in most of the rest of the United Kingdom. Over the past few years, the cost of travel to and from the Isles has continued to increase.

12. The Council of the Isles of Scilly is unique in that it has all the responsibilities of an English unitary authority, as well as those of a parish council, and a range of responsibilities not normally undertaken by councils. It is the only remaining public water and sewerage authority left in England and Wales and operates St Mary's Airport, which is the 10th busiest regional airport in the United Kingdom and central to the local economy.

13. In 2005, to meet the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and the Every Child Matters agenda, a Change for Children multi-agency Advisory Group and Children's Services Directorate were established. These in turn, in January 2006, led to the formation of the Children and Young People and the Community Services committees. Previously failing services in education and social care identified from inspections in 2004 resulted in voluntary interventions being put in place. As a result, the work of the council is assisted by two significant external arrangements: a contract with Cambridge Education to manage school improvement; the other, a partnership agreement with Dorset County Council to support the improvement of children's social care provision and includes the management of complex child protection cases. A proposed service agreement with Cornwall County Council to provide fostering and adoption services is not yet fully in place. The council is now developing its services in line with the Children's Trust model.

14. The Chief Executive was appointed as the Director of Children's Services in 2005. He also has responsibility for all central services, tourism and maritime services, lifelong learning, Objective One and emergency planning. The project manager for the education contract has recently been appointed as Deputy Director of Children's Services.

15. There is one school, The Five Islands School, which has operated as a single federated establishment since 2002. There are four primary bases for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years; Carn Gwaval on St Mary's is the largest with 136 pupils on roll. The base at Tresco has 19 pupils and those on St Martin's and St Agnes have nine and five pupils on roll respectively. At age 11, pupils transfer to the Carn Thomas secondary base situated on St Mary's, which has 97 pupils aged 11–16. Pupils from the off islands stay at a school-managed boarding house from Monday to Thursday.

16. At 16, almost all young people move to the mainland to progress to further education or training, which is supported by Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council. Entry to Employment provision is also based on the mainland, although to date no young people from the Isles have ever participated in it. Adult and community learning and vocational training, including family learning, are provided by the council on the islands.

17. Primary care services for children on the Isles of Scilly are the responsibility of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust (PCT) following mergers of three separate PCTs in 2006. The PCT is also responsible for commissioning secondary care and more specialist services. There is a small

hospital on St Mary's which has provision for short in-patient stays for children and young people. The Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, with hospitals at Truro and Penzance, is the main provider of acute health services; maternity provision is also provided, although many expectant mothers have their children at St Mary's Hospital. Children's mental health services are provided by the Cornwall Partnership NHS Trust, which also provides services to the rest of Cornwall and Devon. South West Ambulance Service NHS Trust serves the whole of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and several other areas in the peninsula. The ambulance service provides the islands with an emergency response boat, the 'Star of Life'. The South West Strategic Health Authority (formerly South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority) is responsible for all of these trusts and several others.

18. There are no secure children's homes or young offender institutions in the area.

## Summary Report

### Outcomes for children and young people

19. Outcomes for children and young people on the Isles of Scilly are good overall. Children and young people appear generally safe, with few placed on the child protection register; all of these are allocated a qualified social worker. Children and young people are mostly in very good health. Low levels of smoking in pregnancy and high breastfeeding rates contribute to their good start in life. They have good diets and active lifestyles that result in low levels of obesity; immunisation rates are high, drug and alcohol misuse is not a significant problem and teenage pregnancy is rare. Children and young people achieve very well. From the age of three, outcomes are well above those nationally, and they continue to make good progress throughout the primary and secondary phases of their education. For the last three years, the percentage achieving five or more GCSEs has been the highest in England.

20. Children and young people make a good and positive contribution to society and enjoy good economic well-being. All those aged 16–19 years are in employment, education or training.

### The impact of local services

21. **The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people is adequate.** The council and its partners make a good contribution to the education and health outcomes for children. The work of individual agencies to help children and young people stay safe is good and there are positive examples of collaboration at a local level involving, for example, the school, health services, Connexions, the emergency services and community and voluntary providers. However, the council's social care service, while improving, is inadequate overall; children and their families have difficulty in accessing consistently high quality preventative and child protection services.

The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate.

## Being healthy

**22. The impact of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** The health services understand well the particular needs of children and young people on the Isles of Scilly and build effectively on the high motivation of parents and carers to promote and protect their health. The potential adverse impact of social isolation on mental health is recognised and high quality childcare and early years provision is making a significant contribution to tackling this. There is good commitment to the Healthy Schools programme and to promoting healthy lifestyles through sport and other physical activity. Education on drug and alcohol issues and sexual health and relationships is provided effectively in the school and in youth settings. Young people transferring to education and training on the mainland at age 16 receive appropriate help in accessing advice on health issues. Good access is available to the general practitioner services and there is prompt and early referral for health and developmental problems. Regular outpatient clinics on St Mary's provide access to specialist paediatric services which work well with the local health staff in the shared care of children and young people with long-term illness and disabilities. A minor injuries unit provides rapid response for trauma and is well supported by medical staff and the ambulance service when emergency transfer of children and young people to the mainland is needed. Access to NHS dentistry, based on St Mary's, is good. The promotion of positive mental health and emotional well-being is recognised as important by the health services and the council. An agreed joint commissioning strategy for child and adolescent mental health services led by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly PCT is in place and is helping to secure improved services to support inter-agency work with more vulnerable children and young people.

## Staying safe

**23. The impact of local services in keeping children and young people safe is inadequate overall.** The work of individual agencies to help children and young people stay safe is good, there are effective examples of collaboration at local level, and the few children currently on the child protection register appear safe.

24. Positive progress has been made in establishing a children's social care service since new contractual arrangements were agreed in August 2006. However, progress has been from a low base with a lack of coordination between the work of the different contract holders and the new arrangements are not sufficiently embedded. Constructive steps are taken to promote awareness among children and their families about risk and danger.

25. Historically, preventative services have been provided effectively through agencies other than children's social care services and local people express confidence in health and education services as sources of support. Good



individual relationships exist between professionals from different agencies. A referral and tracking system for cases, regular casework supervision and quality assurance processes are now in place but not fully established. A system for instituting initial and core assessments and monitoring timescales has now been established.

26. Systems to identify the incidence of child abuse and neglect are underdeveloped. There are no written eligibility criteria for access to social care services, and no multi-agency agreed threshold criteria are in place for child protection. No system for tracking children missing from school and no missing children's protocol are in place. The collection and analysis of data are weak. The council has no agreed strategy for supporting potential care leavers.

27. A number of other policies and procedures are also not in place, in particular those for children in need, children and young people who are looked after and care leavers. Roles and responsibilities between the council and its contractors are not sufficiently clear. Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are in place, as part of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly MAPPA procedures. Criminal Records Bureau arrangements are appropriate, although elected members are not routinely screened.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

28. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people enjoy their education and recreation and achieve well is good.** Children and young people enjoy going to school and achieve very well. The council's support for the school has improved in recent years and is now good. The contractor's contribution to this has been significant. Support is well targeted and effective. Provision and support for early years education are good. Although the number of young people not attending school is small, there is no agreed strategy covering their entitlement to tuition. Many young people enjoy a good range of school enrichment and youth and community-based activities. Facilities, however, for older children and those on the off islands during the winter months are more limited. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are mostly well supported, but the council's strategic planning in this area is weak. Support for parents is good; the information provided for them is clear and targeting of support ensures that off-island families can access their full entitlement.

### **Making a positive contribution**

29. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** Good opportunities exist for children and young people to develop socially and emotionally through the school curriculum and a range of activities provided by the council and community and voluntary groups. Mentoring programmes benefit vulnerable young people and those new to Scilly. The youth service works well with the school and other groups to support enrichment activities and extended school provision. Children and young people, including those who are vulnerable, are

generally well supported in managing changes and responding to challenges in their lives. There is effective help for transition between school phases and for those transferring to the mainland at age 16. Volunteering enables young people to make a positive contribution but opportunities are limited.

30. Good consultation takes place but young people do not always feel that their views are considered sufficiently. The council and its partners have made the participation and involvement of young people a priority in the Children and Young People's Plan. Not enough attention is given to seeking the views of young people aged 16–19 and they have few opportunities to be involved in decision making. Effective action is taken to maintain the already low levels of antisocial behaviour and lack of youth crime. No children's complaints procedures or independent advocacy arrangements are in place.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

31. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** The quality and range of childcare, play and youth activities are good and subsidised transport ensures provision is affordable and accessible. Family learning programmes are well organised and attended. Participation in adult and community learning is high. Young people are provided with very good support preparing them well for working life and independent living that includes opportunities for work experience and visits to post-16 providers on the mainland. Connexions, in partnership with the school, provides good careers information, advice and guidance at key points of transition.

32. Arrangements for 14–19 education and training are satisfactory and the communication and collaboration between key partners is improving. The 14–16 curriculum offers increasing breadth and choice in vocational and applied subjects. Opportunities for vocational training for the small number of 16–19 year olds on the islands are difficult to provide and are currently underdeveloped. Most vulnerable young people are well supported. A number of good initiatives are increasing the stock of low cost housing. However, with the high cost of living, insufficient affordable accommodation is available to meet the needs of all young people who want to live independently. A part-time youth support worker helps young people find accommodation and offers valuable ongoing support on the mainland.

### **Service management**

33. **The management of services for children and young people and the capacity to improve further are adequate.** A clear vision for children's services is in place which reflects local needs, community aspirations and significant consultation with children and young people. The vision is supported by a number of clear priorities highlighted in the Children and Young People's Plan and these address specific equality and diversity challenges faced by the island community. However, gaps remain in some strategic plans and ambitions and priorities are not consistently supported by targets.

34. The council's capacity has been supported well by innovative approaches to delivering education on the islands and through effectively accessing significant external funds and support. The capacity of members is strong, there is good partnership working and human resource planning is improving. However, weak performance management and underdeveloped financial monitoring undermine the effectiveness of these arrangements.

35. Members provide strong leadership and demonstrate a good understanding of the issues and challenges within children's services. This is supported by a commitment to and strong track record of resourcing. Communication with partners is developing well and there is commitment to the vision for children's services. However, clarity on how this commitment contributes to objectives including the sharing of resources is underdeveloped.

36. Although the council's capacity to sustain improvement remains insufficiently robust, there is a good track record in improving outcomes in key services, such as education, youth services and lifelong learning. In addition, capacity is being increased in areas of high risk and poor performance, for example in social care. Much of the improvement to date has been as a result of external funding, and council resources remain stretched.

37. Plans are being developed to manage the end of the current contractual arrangements for education and social care. However, the task remains challenging and there is insufficient progress in strategic and project management in some key areas, such as safeguarding, to support this important work.

## Grades

Grades awarded:

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

|   | Local Services<br>Overall | Council<br>services | Health<br>services |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Being healthy                               | 3                         |                     |                    |
| Staying safe                                | 1                         |                     |                    |
| Enjoying and<br>achieving                   | 3                         |                     |                    |
| Making a<br>positive<br>contribution        | 3                         |                     |                    |
| Achieving<br>economic well-<br>being        | 3                         |                     |                    |
| Service<br>management                       | 2                         |                     |                    |
| Capacity to<br>improve                      | 2                         | 2                   |                    |
| Children's<br>services                      |                           | 2                   |                    |
| The education<br>service                    |                           | 3                   |                    |
| The social care<br>services for<br>children |                           | 1                   |                    |
| The health<br>service for<br>children       |                           |                     | 3                  |

## Recommendations

### For immediate action

The council and its partners should establish an effective safeguarding system to:

- ensure robust systems are in place to identify and respond to child protection issues
- ensure that roles and responsibilities for the management and provision of children's services, within the council and amongst contracted services, are clear and formally agreed
- establish a children's complaints service
- provide an independent advocacy service for children and young people
- establish, and implement as needed, a strategy for the support of young people leaving care
- develop a protocol for missing children
- agree processes and procedures to identify eligibility criteria to services, thresholds for access to children's social care and child protection thresholds.

The council and its partners should agree policies to support children and young people:

- educated other than at school
- with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **For action over the next six months**

The council should improve its children's social care policies and procedures, including:

- updating and refining its children in need procedures
- establishing comprehensive procedures for looked after children.

The council and its partners should:

- improve the range of vocational opportunities at age 16 for those who want them
- strengthen the council's plans for children's services by establishing clear performance management frameworks which contain outcome-based targets, both within the council's own plans and those to be delivered in partnership.

## For action in the longer term

The council and its partners should:

- improve the availability of leisure and recreational provision for use during the winter by older children and those on the off islands
- seek to develop opportunities to increase the stock of affordable accommodation to meet the needs of young people and families.

## Main Report

### Outcomes for children and young people

38. **Outcomes for children and young people on the Isles of Scilly are good overall.** Children and young people appear generally safe, with few placed on the child protection register; all of these are allocated a qualified social worker. Children and young people are mostly in very good health. Low levels of smoking in pregnancy and high breastfeeding rates contribute to their good start in life. They have good diets and active lifestyles that result in low levels of obesity; immunisation rates are high, drug and alcohol misuse is not a significant problem and teenage pregnancy is rare. Children and young people achieve very well. From the age of three, outcomes are well above those nationally, and they continue to make good progress throughout the primary and secondary phases of their education. For the last three years, the percentage achieving five or more GCSEs has been the highest in England.

39. Children and young people make a good and positive contribution to society and enjoy good economic well-being. All those aged 16–19 years are in employment, education or training.

40. **Children and young people are very healthy.** Low levels of smoking in pregnancy and high breastfeeding rates contribute to their good start in life. The number of babies with a low birth weight is consistently below comparable areas and there have been no perinatal or early infant deaths in recent years. Good diet and active lifestyles result in low levels of obesity. High immunisation rates contribute to low incidence of infectious diseases. Serious acute illness requiring hospital admission is infrequent. Drug and alcohol misuse by young people is not a significant problem. Teenage pregnancy is rare. Children and young people are confident and have a positive outlook on life. Most children and young people with a physical disability and other long term conditions are able to participate fully in school and the wider community.

41. **Children and young people appear generally safe.** The majority of young people feel safe, including those who attend the school boarding house from the off islands at age 11 and older young people attending programmes on the mainland. There have been no serious injuries or deaths on the roads of children or young people for several years. Children and young people have

good awareness of road and water/sea safety issues. Few children are on the child protection register and all of these are allocated to a qualified social worker. No children are looked after and no children are placed for adoption. However, clear and appropriate responses to child protection issues are not well evidenced.

**42. Children and young people achieve very well.** From the age of three, outcomes are well above those nationally. Young people make good progress in the primary phase and particularly good progress during the secondary phase, and for the last three years the percentage achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\*–C has been the highest in England. Young people enjoy going to school and support each other well. Most are highly motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities mostly make good progress. Unauthorised absence from school is very low and there have been no permanent exclusions for five years. Many young people enjoy taking part in school enrichment, youth and community-based leisure and recreation. Through their involvement in youth work, they achieve high standards and display confidence and maturity in their relationships. They develop useful practical skills and gain nationally recognised qualifications and awards, for example in sport and outdoor activities.

**43. Children and young people have a good range of opportunities to make decisions and take personal responsibility and many make a positive contribution to their communities.** All children and young people, including the more vulnerable, are supported well in their personal, social and emotional development. They develop many positive personal qualities through activities provided by the school and youth service as well as by voluntary and community groups. Children and young people are well equipped to manage major challenges in their lives, especially at key transition points. Pupils new to the islands are well mentored and supported by 'buddies'.

**44.** Children and young people's views are sought regularly on key issues, including the Children and Young People's Plan, although this does not extend sufficiently to engaging young people effectively in decision making. The recently re-formed school council, with representatives from all five islands, provides children and young people with good opportunities to discuss matters of interest to them. Young people have been actively involved in the allocation of grants as part of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital funds. Other opportunities to be involved in significant decision making are available to young people who engage with local community groups. Fewer opportunities exist, however, for young people attending further education on the mainland to remain involved in contributing to and shaping services on Scilly.

**45.** A high proportion of young people benefit from their involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh's award which provides volunteering opportunities on the Isles and the mainland. There is very little antisocial behaviour by children and young people and no reported youth crime.

46. **Children and young people are able to achieve economic well-being and are prepared well for working life.** All young people aged 16 to 19 years are in employment, education or training. Almost all progress into full-time education or training on the mainland. The vast majority attend colleges of further education, and retention and success rates are well above the national average. Similarly, from a limited range of provision, outcomes for the small number of young people in work-based learning are good.

47. Vulnerable young people are mostly well supported, although their needs are not always identified sufficiently far in advance and information is not always passed to post-16 providers in a timely way. By age 19, the proportion of young people achieving at least a Level 2 or equivalent qualification is well above the national average. Young people have high aspirations and many progress into higher education.

48. Most families are well informed about childcare, play schemes and post-16 provision and have good access to affordable leisure and recreation. Parents and carers benefit from their involvement in family learning and vocational training programmes. Affordable housing is insufficient to meet the needs of young people who want to live independently and, as a consequence, almost all have to leave Scilly to find permanent full-time employment and a home of their own.

## **The impact of local services**

49. **The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people is adequate.** The council and its partners make a good contribution to the education and health outcomes for children. The work of individual agencies to help children and young people stay safe is good and there are positive examples of collaboration at local level involving, for example, the school, health services, Connexions, the emergency services and community and voluntary providers. However, the council's social care service, while improving, is inadequate overall; children and their families have difficulty in accessing consistently high quality preventative and child protection services. The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate.

## **Being healthy**

50. **The work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** The health services have a very good understanding of the needs of parents and carers living in the small communities of the Isles of Scilly. There is a good balance of support at an individual level, preserving confidentiality and privacy, and encouragement of group work and networking to reduce isolation for parents and young children. There is good access to health services for those living on the off islands. The midwives, health visitors and general practitioners provide safe and responsive services throughout pregnancy and childbirth. Effective liaison with maternity



services on the mainland ensures that appointments take account of travel difficulties and costs.

51. Smoking rates in pregnancy are very low. Breastfeeding rates are very high. The services demonstrate excellent commitment to maintaining these rates. Early years funding is used to enhance access to childminding, day-care and nursery provision where healthy food and safe play are well promoted. The family support worker, funded by the council, very effectively and creatively works with health service staff in baby and toddler groups and in outreach to the off islands. These are having a very positive impact on the mental health and well-being of women who are relatively isolated from extended family support.

52. Children and young people are supported well in achieving healthy lifestyles. Healthy eating is promoted through nutritious school meals and in the boarding house for off-island children, although regular access to drinking water at school is limited. While many opportunities exist to support sport and active lifestyles, young women reported they would like a greater choice of activities, especially in physical education at school. The Healthy Schools Standard provides an improved framework for health education and promotion and encourages effective partnership work between health and education staff. The need for young people to have access to sexual health information and advice from trained external agencies has been recognised, although a young people's clinic at the health centre was closed through low usage. The Brook Advisory Service has provided various sessions for the islands' school. Young people are very aware of the constraints on their privacy in such small communities but report that they trust health professionals and systems to maintain confidentiality and are able to consult the local services if needed. Education on drug and alcohol issues is provided effectively in the school and youth settings and there are good links to the Cornwall Drug and Alcohol Team. Young people transferring to the mainland for post-16 education and training are well supported with information and guidance in accessing appropriate health advice and services.

53. The physical health of children and young people is well promoted and protected. Drop-in clinics at the health centre on St Mary's and outreach work from medical and nursing staff ensure all children have regular health monitoring and good access to primary care advice and treatment. Immunisation is effectively delivered and high coverage rates are attained. There is prompt and early referral for health and developmental problems. There is regular input of speech therapy and paediatric physiotherapy. The health visitors have additional training in audiology and provide some vision screening so that timely referrals can be made to orthoptic and optician services which have been difficult to access consistently. Children are well supported in managing asthma and recent training of teaching staff is giving confidence in the use of medication at school and so reducing unnecessary absence.

54. Regular access to specialist paediatric services is provided by staff from the mainland working with the local health staff in the shared care of children and young people with long-term illness and disabilities. A minor injuries unit on St Mary's provides rapid response for trauma and is well supported by medical staff and the ambulance service when emergency transfer of children and young people to the mainland is needed. Children and young people can be admitted for overnight stay to the small local hospital but, rightly, this is avoided where possible. There is good access to an NHS dentist, based on St Mary's, for all children and young people.

55. Early years settings and the school are effectively supporting positive mental health and emotional well-being. The times of increased vulnerability for children and young people, such as transition at ages 11 and 16, are anticipated well and additional support is available. Health services are well placed to support the physical health needs of looked after children as they arise. The health needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well met. These children and young people are fully involved in school life and are integrated successfully within the wider community. The negative impact of domestic violence on children's mental health is being managed by better multi-agency work to support victims in seeking early help and intervention.

### Staying safe

56. **The work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is inadequate.** The work of individual agencies to help children and young people stay safe is good and there are positive examples of collaboration at local level involving, for example, the school, health services, Connexions, the emergency services and community and voluntary providers. Good steps are taken to promote awareness among children and their families about risk and danger, particularly in relation to the sea and road safety and not being complacent about safety issues. Positive progress has been made in establishing a children's social care service since new contractual arrangements were agreed in August 2006. However, progress has been from a low base with a lack of coordination between the work of the different contract holders, and the new arrangements are not sufficiently embedded. The arrangements lack clear lines of responsibility for services to the most at risk children and young people. There is a lack of clear and comprehensive procedures and strategies.

57. Improvements are being made with the appointment of one part time qualified social worker and one part-time supervising social worker based on the islands. Previously, social work intervention was delivered by means of spot-purchasing of independent social work time from the mainland. Systems to manage the incidence of child abuse and neglect overall are underdeveloped. Case file reading showed inconsistencies in practice, and a lack of clear care planning. A number of policies and procedures are not in place, in particular those for children in need, children and young people who are looked after, care leavers, and children who are missing. Coordination with services on the

mainland for young people attending further education and training is underdeveloped. There are no written eligibility criteria for access to social care services, and no multi-agency agreed threshold criteria are in place for child protection. Roles and responsibilities are not sufficiently clear: local people and staff from other agencies lack confidence in accessing child protection and preventative services. This lack of clarity in terms of boundaries may result in specific child protection concerns for individual children and families not receiving a speedy response.

58. The council is a member of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), but board meetings have not been attended regularly. The LSCB is working to update the child protection procedures with a discrete section to cover the particular needs of the Isles. An out of hours protocol is in place but the responsibilities of the council and its contractors are unclear. An appropriate programme of child protection training is provided for health and education staff as well as for community and voluntary organisations.

59. The police refer all domestic abuse issues appropriately to children's social care and the contractor has initiated an appropriate protocol to respond to them. MAPPA are in place, as part of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly MAPPA procedures. The small geographical nature of Scilly and its close-knit community provide good informal information as to the whereabouts of resident children and young people under the age of 16. Children and young people benefit from good support by health and education agencies. The boarding house, which received a very positive inspection report in 2005, offers good individual work with children provided by experienced and knowledgeable house-parents, with good support from the headteacher. Criminal Records Bureau arrangements are appropriate.

60. No system for tracking children missing from school and no missing children's protocol are in place. This leads to an unacceptable risk to children who are not part of the informal knowledge of agencies, particularly children and young people who arrive on the islands as tourists, and those young people who move to the mainland for education at age 16. There is no multi-agency coordinated approach which includes social care services and there are no multi-agency agreed children in need processes. No written procedures exist for the prevention of children becoming looked after, nor decision-making processes to determine whether a child should become accommodated. Data collection and analysis are weak overall.

61. Although there are currently no looked after children, support services to children who may become looked after are provided through an agreement with an external contractor. However, roles and responsibilities for social work support of looked after children are unclear, although the contractor provides independent reviewing officer time to chair reviews. No children's complaints procedure or independent advocacy arrangements are in place. The council has

no agreed strategy to support young people leaving care and does not meet the full statutory requirements of its corporate parenting role.

## Enjoying and achieving

62. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good.** The council's support for the school has improved in recent years and is now good. The contractor's contribution to this has been significant in helping the school to flourish. When inspected in 2005, the school was found to be very good with many strong features, having improved considerably so that it no longer required special measures. The council's effective monitoring and challenging of the school have helped to ensure that progress has been maintained. Support is well targeted and has good impact, as shown, for example, in the recent improvement in pupils' writing standards. Good use is made of the national strategies.

63. Planning to ensure sufficient school places are available and access to the curriculum are good. Children on the off islands have full access to the primary curriculum, supported by common usage of information technology throughout the primary bases. Support for young people making the transition from the off islands to secondary education on St Mary's is good. Secondary-age students receive good support in the boarding house, through effective induction and strong support networks. Although attendance at school is good generally, there are many instances of parents taking children away for term-time holidays. The council and the school are taking firm action to address this, while consideration is also being given to re-shaping the school year. The council has been successful in tackling the problem of 'key worker' housing for teachers. Staff retention is not a current concern, but it remains an underlying issue for the longer term.

64. The overall quality of provision and support for early years education is good. Significant growth in the number of childcare places has helped to ensure all three and four-year-olds take up the core offer entitlement of integrated care and learning provision. The Sure Start programme effectively brings providers together to share expertise. Strong links between pre-school providers and the school ensure that children receive consistent support regardless of where they are learning. Good support is now available to ensure consistency in assessing children's progress.

65. Although the number of young people not attending school is small, there is no agreed strategy covering their entitlement to tuition. The latest draft policy provides a way forward, but has insufficient detail on extended absence through illness and lacks ambition regarding home education. For older young people, no links are made with work-based learning and there is no procedure for informing the youth offending team when young people refuse to attend school or are excluded. Although there has only been one case in recent years

of a young person not attending school for a long period, this has highlighted weaknesses in the council's current arrangements.

66. Children and young people, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have a good range of opportunities to engage in leisure and recreation activities, including many outdoor pursuits. However, during the winter months and especially for older children and those on the off islands, facilities and opportunities are more limited. A new play-park on St Mary's has helped to address the lack of a play area for younger children. The school enrichment programme is having a positive effect in promoting the acquisition of key skills. Take-up of the Duke of Edinburgh award at the school is good. Voluntary and community groups provide a good range of clubs and the annual community sports festival promotes healthy lifestyles and competition. Increasing opportunities for sport and culture is a key priority area in the Children and Young People's Plan. Plans are also in place to replace the outdated and cramped library.

67. The youth service provides good opportunities for young people to develop self-confidence and new skills while taking part in interesting activities and mixing with a good cross-section of the community. A variety of educational, sporting and cultural visits to the mainland gives young people the opportunity to experience different environments and new challenges. A number of high quality creative arts projects, including drama, music and dance, take place throughout the year, but the service does not have the capacity to sustain them on a regular basis. Good support and some financial assistance are provided to community and voluntary groups to help them develop programmes. Many volunteers are appropriately qualified within their specialist fields, such as sailing, judo and football, and are highly committed to the young people with whom they work; however, they are working without the benefit of sufficient youth work training.

68. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are mostly well supported. Particular needs are identified at an early stage, so that the children can be successfully included in mainstream education. The council mostly meets its statutory obligations and support commissioned for individual pupils is of good quality and effective. However, strategic planning for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is weak and the council still does not have an agreed policy on supporting these young people. The latest draft policy has a good focus on inclusion and the removal of barriers to achievement, but it does not set out responsibilities clearly enough and has no cross-referencing to the policy of the school. It also makes no reference to how the council will respond to occasional instances where young people arrive on the Scilly Isles with weak knowledge of English. The facilities at the secondary school base are fully accessible for young people with physical disability.

69. The Sure Start service supports a wide range of childcare options, including registered childminders and day-care, thereby making an important contribution to increasing opportunities for working parents. The Parent and

Toddler group supports early learning and development well. Information for parents on childcare options, return to work schemes and retraining are good. Significant levels of financial assistance are provided to ensure off-island families are able to access their entitlement of free childcare. Extended school developments are at an early stage of implementation but good attention has been given to consultation and planning. The extended schools delivery plan has a good focus on benefits for young people, families and communities. A parent partnership service has recently been commissioned to advise parents of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Making a positive contribution**

**70. The work of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** Children and young people are well supported in their social and emotional development. Through the partnership activity between the school, youth service, and voluntary and community sector providers, children and young people develop positive and strong relationships. Intergenerational activities are a significant strength and benefit everybody. The early years service, in particular, provides good support to children and their families. Where mentoring takes place it is effective, for example, to support those who are new to the islands as well as for more vulnerable children. Young people act as 'buddies' to their peers and an accredited peer mentoring is being developed. However, there is not a planned approach to mentoring to ensure it is available to all those who would benefit from it.

**71.** The majority of children and young people who face change and challenge are provided with good support to cope with difficult periods in their lives. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriately supported to engage positively in the community. They are well integrated into the school and receive good support to engage in the full range of activities. However, not all transition planning at age 14 is completed in good time for all individuals who require it. At age 11, young people from the off islands are very well supported in their transition to the secondary school on St Mary's where they stay at the boarding house. School programmes provide good preparation and bring together guidance and advice from other agencies including health professionals and the police to appropriately support young people who transfer to the mainland at age 16 to continue their education and training. The youth support worker maintains contact with young people on the mainland and provides valuable continuity and a point of reference.

**72.** Children and young people are encouraged to contribute their views through the school's two councils, primary and secondary, and through the newly elected Youth MP and deputy. The school councils, with representatives on each from all the off-islands, contribute well to young people's knowledge, understanding and practical skills of citizenship. Significant consultation with children and young people took place prior to the council producing the Children and Young People's Plan, and a similar consultation is taking place as

the council prepares its plans for a new school. There are good examples of young people influencing decisions, such as the provision of new school footpaths, and through their involvement with voluntary and community groups such as the sailing and canoe club. However, children and young people's involvement in the planning and management of services and activities is not sufficiently developed to ensure they have a real and consistent impact on service delivery. This is particularly the case for young people aged 16–19. Other than through the Duke of Edinburgh award, opportunities for young people to engage in volunteering are limited and the council has identified this as an area for development.

73. The youth service enables young people to take responsibility as junior helpers and to act as positive role models for younger groups. Active steps are taken to ensure activities are accessible and to seek young people's views, including the more vulnerable, about what is needed and how to improve what the service offers. Young people have played an active part in establishing the Youth Opportunity/Youth Capital Fund schemes enabling other young people to acquire grants for projects and activities. A strategy to engage young people who are less inclined to participate in the more structured activities has been developed very recently. This work is partly funded by community safety, but has not yet been established on a regular basis.

74. The council and its partners take effective action to maintain the already very low levels of antisocial behaviour. The threshold for antisocial behaviour on Scilly is much lower than on the mainland and partners manage well the difficulty in balancing the demands and expectations of the community. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership gives good attention to preventative measures and, for example, has helped to provide a skate park. There are good examples of the local police engaging positively with young people through football and the school's personal, social and health education programme. Although there are no restorative justice projects in place, the principles are well established in the school, in particular, in mediating between children and young people when problems arise. The school, in consultation with young people, has recently updated its anti-bullying policy.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

75. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** The family support service provides good information and advice and, through its outreach programme, is responsive to the particular needs of new parents and the off island communities. The quantity and range of childcare play schemes and youth activities are good and have increased substantially in the last few years. Provision on the smaller islands is more limited, but the council has taken effective steps to reduce isolation and improve access to the activities by providing free transport. In agreed circumstances, funding is also available to support educational trips and visits to post-16 providers on the mainland. The

council helps families to access specialist benefits advice as these services are no longer available locally.

76. Family learning programmes are well organised and well attended. The work of the early years and youth service is well regarded by service users. Participation in adult and community learning is high. The range of vocational courses and work-based learning opportunities has expanded significantly in recent years enabling more parents to continue in learning and to increase their skills and employability. The council has made good use of external funding to enhance this provision and has already exceeded its 2008 targets for the number of adults achieving a qualification equivalent to at least five good GCSEs.

77. The council and its partners provide very good support in preparing young people for working life and independent living on the mainland. A transition strategy sets out proposals for further improvement including the development of a peer mentoring scheme. Opportunities for work experience and work related learning are good. Prior to enrolment, all young people are encouraged to visit further education and training providers on the mainland. The school's enrichment and personal, social and health education programmes, together with the work of the youth service, help young people develop self-confidence, team work and communication skills which equip them well for transition and independence.

78. Good impartial careers information, advice and guidance are provided by the Connexions service in partnership with the school, enabling young people to make informed choices at key points in their education. An annual careers convention and parents' evenings promote effectively the range of post-16 options. An excellent student handbook also provides very useful information. The Connexions service supports more vulnerable young people well and monitors the destinations of all school leavers. A youth support worker post has been created to help young people find suitable accommodation on the mainland and to provide valuable ongoing pastoral support during their stay. The council encourages parents to request Criminal Records Bureau checks of landlords or host families, but most prefer to rely on 'word of mouth' recommendations as they have done for many years.

79. Arrangements for 14–19 education and training are satisfactory and improving them is a key priority in the Children and Young People's Plan. Links between the education contractor and the lifelong learning service are at an early stage of development and opportunities for post-16 vocational training on the islands are limited. The small number of 16 to 19 year olds who choose to stay on the islands, however, are found appropriate and flexible training placements and supported well. To date, the council and its partners have made insufficient use of destination and achievement data to evaluate the impact and outcomes of their work.



80. The 14–16 curriculum has improved as part of the Increased Flexibility Programme and now offers a good breadth and choice in vocational and applied subjects linked to local employers and colleges on the mainland. The council plays an increasing role in the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Collegiate which is working towards ensuring access to the new specialist diplomas from 2008.

81. The most vulnerable young people, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported to achieve economic well-being. In the best examples, partners provide well-targeted advice, care, financial and personal support which enables young people to enjoy and complete their studies successfully. Lifelong learning staff make a good contribution to supporting individual young people who choose to stay on the islands.

82. There has been good consultation with children, young people and families in the development of the Children and Young People's Plan, the community strategy and economic regeneration initiatives. Substantial external funding has been secured to improve air and sea links and the safety of the off island quays. These developments are critical to the long-term sustainability of the island's economy and to improving, in a very practical way, the day-to-day lives of children and young people.

83. The council is leading a number of good initiatives to increase the stock of low-cost and social housing. However, with the high cost of housing on the islands, insufficient provision is available to meet the need of all young people who want to live independently. Within the limits of its role and responsibilities, the council has taken active steps to influence the approach of the Duchy of Cornwall. Development options are constrained by the designation of Scilly as an area of outstanding natural beauty and of special scientific interest. The council has, nevertheless, been successful in agreeing with central government appropriate island-specific planning criteria and a small number of new houses for key workers are under construction.

## Service management

84. **The management of services for children and young people and the capacity to improve further are adequate.** The council's ambitions for children's services are adequate. A clear vision is underpinned by a strong commitment from the council and its partners to improving the life chances of all young people on the Isles of Scilly. The council has a good track record of responding to community priorities and encompassing the needs of all sections of the islands' community, for example in the maintenance of school bases on the off islands.

85. The Children and Young People's Plan clearly links actions to local needs and effectively addresses the equality and diversity challenges of the Isles and many key areas for improvement such as social care. However, the plan lacks outcome-based and long-term targets and some recognised gaps are not addressed, for example the needs of 16 to 19 year olds. The Children and Young People's Plan is based on significant consultation with young people.

However, the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders and the resources required to deliver improvements are not well articulated. This limits the partnership's ability to measure its outcomes for children and young people.

86. Consultation with children and young people on new developments and initiatives is good. The school council represents a developing strategic approach to engagement but this is still in embryonic form and young people are not systematically involved in the planning of services. There are good examples of engaging with young people and acting on their requests, for example in the development of the Old Town skate park. Overall, ambitions address the needs of children and young people.

87. Prioritisation is adequate. The new Children and Young People Committee has established a number of clear priorities for children's services and resources are being allocated appropriately. Clear priorities are in place for improving the safety of children and for the continued improvement of education. Significant external funding has been accessed to address these priorities and this has allowed the council to commission a number of private and public sector arrangements to speed the progress of service improvement. Strong and improving performance is evident in many areas, including health, education, increased leisure opportunities and early years provision. But much remains to be done, particularly in terms of safeguarding children and young people, which is still inadequate.

88. The alignment of council and partners' priorities is incomplete. Although shared priorities are clear, and supported by partners, they are not always translated into measurable outcomes. The communication of priorities and responsibilities, although improving, lacks clarity particularly within social care. This is illustrated in the contractual arrangements the council has with two south west authorities for social care provision, which remain unclear. These factors weaken the effectiveness of partnership working.

89. Some key strategies are not in place or are at an early stage of implementation. These include those for learning difficulties and/or disabilities, education other than at school and 14–19 provision. In addition, high risk plans such as those to deal with missing children are absent. This weakens the council's ability to focus on its priorities.

90. The council's capacity to deliver children's services is adequate. The council has a clear understanding of its role as a commissioning authority and is aware of its limitations to effectively deliver children's services. The council has a good track record of supporting children's services within financial planning. The development of a federated school, and the securing of additional government funding for education through a needs grant settlement, represents an innovative response to the islands' context. Substantial additional funds have been secured for services that were underperforming. Additional resources have also been provided to address corporate areas of weakness,

which impact on children's services, such as information technology and performance management.

91. Local partnership working is strong. The islands' tight-knit community works well together to improve opportunities for young people, and agencies such as the police, fire service and health are integrated into the delivery of children's services. Strategic partnership working is improving but in a few important areas planning is at an early stage, for example with the PCT. The pooling of budgets and joint commissioning of services, important for maximising the limited resources allocated to small communities, is underdeveloped.

92. The council has a clear understanding of the gaps in its workforce capacity. Improvements have been made in recruitment and staff training to address these gaps but this has not been consistently applied and workforce planning is at an early stage. Capacity has been increased through external funding as part of the council's capacity building fund from the Communities and Local Government and through school improvement grants from the Department for Education and Skills. This is improving capacity in priority areas.

93. Financial monitoring is weak. Budgets are not effectively profiled or allocated over a three-year period linking to the council's medium-term financial plan. Financial information to members has been incomplete, complicated and not appropriate to enable clear decision making. Financial planning is included in a new service planning framework but the involvement of staff in this process has been inconsistent, missing opportunities for tailoring budgets to needs. Improvements are being made and, with additional support from the education contractor, are starting to provide better financial information on which to manage education resources.

94. Value for money in children's services is adequate. However, the management and improvement of value for money is inadequate. The Isles of Scilly is a high spending authority reflecting its unique position in providing services to a small dispersed island population with associated high transport and accommodation costs. Overall, outcomes for children and young people are good. However, information about costs in relation to quality is not used in strategic and service planning, nor is it integrated into commissioning to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local services. The council's approach to considering options is weak. For example, additional school improvement funding was allocated to the council's existing education contractor without a thorough assessment of other delivery options. This approach misses opportunities for gaining better value for money from council and external resources.

95. Performance management in children's services is inadequate. There is a developing corporate performance management framework and monitoring and reporting service performance is improving, particularly within the contractual arrangements for education. Scrutiny by elected members is good; however, it

is restricted by the consistency and appropriateness of performance information. Explicit links between the Children and Young People's Plan, service plans and individual staff appraisals are still underdeveloped and performance management is not well embedded. There are weaknesses in the data covering health, post-16 outcomes and the monitoring of children at risk, and performance management with partners is underdeveloped. There is insufficient pace in improvements in strategic and project management weakening the achievement of the council's aspirations for children and young people.

96. The capacity to improve further is adequate. Members provide strong leadership and demonstrate a good understanding of the issues and challenges within children's services. This is supported by a commitment and strong track record of resourcing improvements. The Children and Young People Committee is developing well and starting to challenge service performance and monitor improvements. Strong engagement with the small communities on the islands results in good identification of need. Communication with partners is developing well and at a local level is good and there is clear commitment by partners to the vision for children's services. However, there is insufficient clarity on how this commitment contributes to key objectives and improving outcomes for children and young people, including the sharing of resources.

97. Although the council's capacity to sustain improvement remains insufficiently robust there is a good track record in improving outcomes in key services, such as education, youth services and lifelong learning. In addition, capacity is being increased in areas of high risk and poor performance, for example in social care. Much of the improvement to date has been as a result of external funding, and council resources remain stretched. A lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities is exacerbated by a number of significant and ongoing changes to staff particularly within social care.

98. The council expects external funding to continue through the planned major development of the new school and the ongoing needs-led education funding. Emerging plans are in place to manage the end of the current contractual arrangements. As part of these agreements capacity within the council is being developed to assist in this process.

## **Annex 1: The children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report**

1. The outcomes for children and young people are generally good. A clear vision for children's services is in place but ambitions and priorities are not sufficiently underpinned by targets. Gaps remain in strategic plans. The education and health services make a good contribution but the council's social care service, while improving, is inadequate. The council has been effective in accessing significant external funding and employing contractors to help improve underperforming services. However, performance management and financial monitoring are weak.

2. The health services understand well the particular needs of the Isles of Scilly, including the off islands, and build on the high motivation of parents and carers to promote and protect the health of children and young people. There is good local access to specialist services, for example paediatrics, and the ambulance service provides effective emergency transfer to the mainland as needed. The promotion of positive mental health and emotional well-being is given high priority. An agreed joint commissioning strategy for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) is in place and helping to support vulnerable children and young people.

3. The work of individual agencies to help children and young people stay safe is good and there are good examples of collaboration at a local level. Good steps are taken to promote awareness among children and their families about risk and danger. Positive progress has been made in establishing a children's social care service. However, progress has been from a low base with a lack of coordination and fragmentation and the new arrangements are not sufficiently embedded. A number of key policies and procedures are absent. For example, no complaints procedures or independent advocacy arrangements are in place and there is no agreed strategy for supporting care leavers. Systems to coordinate the work of agencies to safeguard children are inadequate.

4. Children and young people enjoy going to school and achieve very well. The council's support for the school has improved in recent years and is now good. Support is well-targeted and effective. Provision and support for early years education is good. Many young people enjoy a good range of school enrichment and youth and community-based activities but facilities for older children and those on the off islands during the winter months are more limited. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are mostly well supported, but the council's strategic planning in this area is weak.

5. Good opportunities exist for children and young people to develop socially and emotionally. Mentoring programmes benefit vulnerable young people and those new to the Isles. The youth service works well with the school and other groups to support enrichment activities and extended school provision. Children and young people are generally well supported in managing changes and

responding to challenges in their lives. Good consultation takes place but young people do not always feel that their views are considered sufficiently. Effective action is taken to maintain the already low levels of antisocial behaviour and lack of youth crime.

6. Young people are well supported in preparing for working life and independent living. The quality of information, advice and guidance is good. Arrangements for 14–19 education and training are satisfactory. The 14–16 curriculum offers increased breadth and choice in vocational and applied subjects and good opportunities for work-related learning for all young people. A number of positive initiatives are increasing the stock of low cost housing. However, with the high cost of housing insufficient provision is available to meet the needs of all young people who want to live independently.

## **Annex 2: Youth work on the Isles of Scilly**

### **Context and background**

1. The Council of the Isles of Scilly provides youth work as part of its early years, youth service and extended schools provision. The head of service manages a full-time early years/youth officer and a part-time youth support worker. Youth work is provided mainly by voluntary organisations in various community venues on St Mary's, with a few activities on the other islands. Provision includes regular sport and outdoor activities, occasional arts-based projects and educational trips to the mainland. In 2006–07, the council's budget for youth work was £75,940. The Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds brought an additional £66,750.

2. The joint area review (JAR) was enhanced to enable coverage of the youth service. The service's self-assessment and key documentation were reviewed and meetings held with staff, partners and volunteers. A small sample of sessions was observed.

### **Overall effectiveness and value for money**

3. The council provides an adequate youth service in which there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The service is in contact with the majority of 13 to 19 year olds and its use of resources represents good value for money. Young people enjoy participating in youth work and achieve well, although opportunities to gain accreditation are underdeveloped. Although it has made evident progress in the past few years, there is a fragility about the service. Strategic plans do not articulate a long-term vision for youth work and maintaining some of the newer successful opportunities is difficult due to capacity. Much of the provision is heavily dependant upon the efforts of committed but untrained volunteers.

### **Commentary**

4. Young people achieve well and enjoy their involvement in youth work. They display confidence and maturity in their relationships and develop useful practical skills. They contribute enthusiastically to decision making and programme planning. The service recognises the need to develop more opportunities for accreditation. The quality of youth work practice is satisfactory with the better sessions well matched to young people's needs and interests. Relationships between young people and adults are consistently good. Much of the work is led by volunteers who, whilst committed and enthusiastic, have had little access to training or exposure to professional youth work practice. As a result, their potential to plan work which young people not only enjoy but from which they also learn is limited.

5. Young people have access to a diverse range of activities. The service provides good support and advice for those aged 16 to 19 who study on the mainland. Until more recently, much of the provision has developed opportunistically with no agreed curriculum framework to underpin it. There are insufficient staff and resources to sustain a good range of work throughout the year. Paid staff have a very good understanding of young people's lives and concerns. Productive links with a neighbouring council's youth service are helping to build expertise.

6. Strategic and operational leadership and management are adequate. The service makes a good contribution to council priorities and the Every Child Matters outcomes, particularly in respect of young people's participation. However, strategic plans do not articulate a long-term vision for youth work, nor the council's response to the Youth Matters agenda and the development of integrated youth support services. This is a significant weakness.

7. The council allocates a very low level of funding for youth work in contrast with the increasingly high profile of the service and the growing demands placed upon it. The head of service has a good understanding of national policy and is realistic about the significant challenges in translating them to the islands' context. Very good use is made of external funding. Productive partnership arrangements, for example with the school and voluntary groups, are enhancing provision and increasing opportunities. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that young people and youth workers have a safe and healthy environment and that Criminal Records Bureau checks are made.

8. Performance management and quality assurance are underdeveloped. The service has no formal means to ensure the quality of the work it funds, facilitates or provides directly and is unable to measure systematically the impact of its activities and the standards achieved by young people.

## **Strengths**

- Achievement is good and young people enjoy participating in activities.
- Young people are actively involved in developing provision.
- Good personal support is offered to young people who study on the mainland.
- Partnership work is productive.

## **Areas for development**

- Develop and implement a strategy which sets out the specific contribution of youth work to the Children and Young People's Plan and articulates the council's response to Youth Matters and the development of integrated youth support services.



- Ensure staff, resources and training are sufficient to meet agreed priorities and the development needs of the service.
- Develop and implement a curriculum framework for youth work.
- Improve performance management, data collection and quality assurance to enable the service to monitor the standards achieved by young people and to evaluate the impact of its work.

### Key aspect inspection grades

| Key Aspect |   | Grade |
|------------|---|-------|
| 1          | Standards of young people's achievement             | 3     |
|            | Quality of youth work practice                      | 2     |
| 2          | Quality of curriculum and resources                 | 2     |
| 3          | Strategic and operational leadership and management | 2     |

*The table above shows overall grades about provision. Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale:*

**Grade 4:** *Excellent/outstanding: a service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users:*

**Grade 3:** *Good: a service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users:*

**Grade 2:** *Adequate: a service that delivers only minimum requirements for users:*

**Grade 1:** *Inadequate: a service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.*