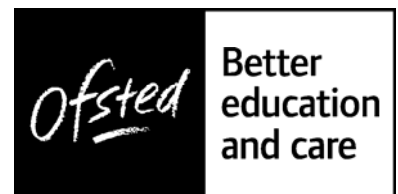


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Making Social Care  
Better for People



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

**1 November 2006**

Dear Mr Hygate

## **2006 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE ISLES OF SCILLY**

This letter summarises the findings of the 2006 annual performance assessment (APA) process for your local authority. We are grateful for the information which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by you and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

### **Summary**

<b>Areas for judgement</b>	<b>Grade awarded<sup>1</sup></b>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>2</b>
The council's overall <i>capacity to improve</i> its services for children and young people	<b>2</b>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people	<b>1</b>

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1

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Service descriptors</b>	<b>Capacity to improve descriptors</b>
4	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users	Excellent / outstanding
3	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users	Good
2	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users	Adequate
1	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users	Inadequate

The council for the Isles of Scilly is a small unitary council serving a unique island community. It delivers a wide range of services on a limited budget and with a small number of staff. The council delivers minimum requirements for children and young people. The majority of services are working towards improvement but, in many instances, initiatives are in the early stages of development and have yet to demonstrate impact fully. Most of the weaker areas identified in the last APA have been, or are in the process of being, tackled particularly education. However, outstanding issues remain in social care regarding the auditing of case files and safeguarding procedures and practice. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) has been published. It summarises actions and sets the priorities for 2006/07. The council has adequate capacity to improve its services further.

## **Being healthy**

The council makes an adequate contribution to improving the health of children and young people. However, the current approach to partnership working is not sufficiently formalised to map need and agree health priorities. The school and health visitors continue to be the main drivers for dealing with health needs. The current working relationships between health providers and other partners have yet to develop to a point where there are clear and agreed priorities for how best to maximise pooled local resources to achieve positive outcomes.

Due to the small cohorts, health professionals are able to promote health outcomes successfully, for example there are 100% breast feeding rates, low rates of obesity and comprehensive immunisation. There have been no teenage pregnancies over the past year. The health needs of looked after children are regularly monitored and responded to. The Healthy Schools programme, in conjunction with Cornwall's coordinator for the programme, started in September 2006. Although the islands' Children's Services provide financial assistance for some low income families for eye tests, currently these have to take place on the mainland.

A nurse based on the islands has reduced the need for paediatric referrals to the mainland; she is able to respond to more complex referrals. Strategies to deal with drug misuse have regular support from the Drugs Action Team (DAT), the island-based youth worker and community safety officer. There have been no recorded incidents of drug misuse in respect of children and young people who reside on the islands.

## **Staying safe**

Services to promote the safety and security of children and young people on the islands are currently inadequate.

Significant change since last year's APA of senior manager personnel within the council's children's services has resulted in a lack of strategic management to drive forward safeguarding issues.

The rate of re-referrals for children and families in need has increased, indicating poor resolution following initial contact. Lines of accountability and the decision-making processes in respect of child protection investigations lack clarity; this has resulted in health partners requesting urgent clarification. The council recognises the need to arrange a multi-agency meeting as soon as possible to agree working protocols. The current, temporary Director for Adult Social Care represents the council at the Local Safeguarding Board; his attendance has been insufficient in respect of discharging this function appropriately. A more detailed outline of protocols and individual agency responsibility specific to the islands is required in terms of updating multi-agency child protection procedures, which are currently shared with Cornwall.

Poor working relationships exist with health partners in respect of child protection investigations. Services have deteriorated since last year. Service level agreements (SLAs) with Cornwall's Social Care Services for fostering, adoption and cover for out-of-hours' arrangements have not yet been achieved, but are currently being negotiated. With the departure of the current Director for Adult Social Care in September 2006, who provides the only qualified social work cover for safeguarding decisions, there is a need to put in place an effective, qualified replacement. The council aims to achieve this through the appointment of a permanent, qualified social worker, although supervision and clarity around the scope of the decision making responsibilities will still need to be addressed.

There is no effective audit of current active cases and the approach to developing the service with other key agencies is insufficiently strategic. A partnership established between the islands and Dorset County Council plans to increase capacity urgently and develop the service to acceptable levels. This work will focus on agreeing clear actions and milestones for measuring and monitoring progress. A timetable for intervention and engagement is in place, which will provide qualified social work staff and senior management expertise from Dorset to work on the islands.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

The contribution the council makes to ensuring that children and young people achieve at school and enjoy their education and leisure activities is adequate. The pupils achieve well and the standard of education now provided by the school is very good. The external contractor continues to provide good support and fulfils the role which, in other circumstances, would be carried out by the council. However, the contract is time limited.

The overall quality of early years provision is good. Outcomes in 2005 were all above, or well, above national levels especially for language and children's mathematical development. The Sure Start programme is effective; a 'joined up' approach to early years provision brings providers together and shares expertise.

It is recognised that data at council level are for one school only, with small cohorts in each year group. This can distort and mislead comparisons to national data. Results at Key Stage 1 are well above national averages. However, trends are not traceable in so small a cohort. At Key Stage 2, results in mathematics are consistently high and in science results are in line with the national norm. In English results are less stable with only 20-33% of

boys achieving the expected level in writing over a five-year period. Despite small samples, this has been identified as a priority for improvement.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science are consistently high at all levels, often above all other councils. In English, however, there are fewer boys achieving the higher levels than the national expectation each year; this matches the Key Stage 2 issue in boys' writing. Information and communication technology results are now above the national average after weakness in previous years. The support from the contractor has raised the profile of the Isles of Scilly with the National Strategy personnel who are now providing enhanced support and training for teaching.

The school had the highest national percentage of five or more A\*-C results at GCSE for the third year running. The curriculum for 14-16 year olds is a priority in the school development plan as there is a need to improve the vocational offer. General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and vocational GCSEs will be available from September 2006.

The external contractor's support for education services has improved provision and supported the school in moving out of special measures. However, the contract lasts for only three more years. An exit strategy has yet to be put in place to guarantee the long-term vision for school improvement. The Five Islands, as a federated school, continues to develop, although it recognises that issues, such as access to the curriculum for 'off-island' pupils, will continue to require work. The number of young people who are not attending school is exceptionally small. However, a recognised strategy is not in place to provide the entitlement to tuition, or sufficient effective monitoring of individual cases. A good range of extra-curricular activities is available and after-school classes are to be extended from September 2006. The school acknowledges that a full integration of services for children and young people, still in the early stages of development, may be difficult to achieve.

## **Making a positive contribution**

Performance in this area is adequate. Children and young people's views are listened to and they are encouraged to voice their opinions through the school council and various forums. A number of proposals are being considered to extend their involvement in decision making. When it has been appropriate, as in appointing the youth support worker, young people have been part of the interviewing panel.

The need for young people to be educated on the mainland post-16 is unique to the Isles of Scilly. Since the last APA, the council has employed a youth support worker to oversee their welfare and help them make the transition to life on the mainland. A very useful booklet has been produced, which explains some of the fundamental things to young people, many of whom have little experience away from the islands.

A number of initiatives focus on preventing anti-social behaviour. However, data on offending and re-offending have not been disaggregated from the mainland data. This is not helpful to the council in making fully informed decisions. Although the Youth Justice Board and the youth offending team recognise the Isles of Scilly should be included in their plans, there is little or no mention within them of specific proposals for or work on

the islands. Once information has been disaggregated from mainland services, there is a clear need for health, education, social care and other services to develop a multi-agency strategy which is based on mapping need and then prioritising.

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

The council makes an adequate contribution to children and young people's economic well-being although, due to the islands' unique circumstances, it has yet to develop the required 14-19 strategy. There are no young people who are not in education, training or employment.

Post-16 education takes place on the mainland, mainly in Cornwall, but students have access to a wide range of provision, as funding from the local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC) enables them to attend any mainstream school or college in England and Wales. It would appear that achievement, retention and transition to higher education are at least good. However, post-16 data have not yet been disaggregated from those of Cornwall and so it is difficult to reach a conclusion. The council is working with the LLSC on this and on developing a 14-19 strategy. The Connexions service provides good support and a Connexions adviser spends the equivalent of one day per week working in the school. The vocational offer, including leisure and tourism and catering and hospitality, being developed by the school, effectively reflects the local community's employment needs.

### **The council's management of its services for children and young people, including its capacity to improve them further**

Due to its small size and unique situation, the Isles of Scilly Council acknowledges that it will always need to commission services from other agencies. It is now achieving this through improved strategic planning rather than as a reaction to circumstance. The self-assessment undertaken for the APA demonstrates that the council has a clearer understanding this year of its strengths and weaknesses, although there is still a need for greater emphasis on the impact of services.

Over the past twelve months, the council has made the safeguarding of, and security for, children and young people one of its key priorities. There have been significant changes in the management of children's services and, as a result, a restructuring has taken place. The recent appointments of a Director of Children's Services, who is also the Chief Executive, and a Deputy Director who leads the Cambridge Education intervention team have been made. These two officers lack social care experience. Together with the absence of a qualified social worker on the islands, this raises concerns in terms of the current post holders' ability to effectively discharge their statutory responsibility for safeguarding. They acknowledge that significant training will be required to achieve this. Already significant financial investment has been made in the training of middle managers with an emphasis on performance management; this has increased both their capability and the council's capacity to improve further.

The Audit Commission and Government Office South West report positive developments in the council's general capacity to improve services. Commitment for financial input from central government over the next three years has enabled the funding of the three-year

partnership package with Dorset County Council. This arrangement will provide direct input, at a senior management level, to establish clear strategic objectives and targets for social care along with qualified operational social work personnel. The appointment of a permanent qualified social worker to the islands has been agreed by the council, which should again help to increase capability and capacity. SLAs with Cornwall County Council for adoption, fostering and out-of-hours services may also help to increase capacity but to date have not been signed off. There is also the opportunity to increase capacity through the development of pooled resources between the key agencies which the council is keen to pursue.

Overall, the council has adequate capacity to make further improvements to its services for children and young people.

### Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths	Key areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent take up of health initiatives - breast feeding, low obesity, immunisation.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of pooled budgets and prioritisation of health needs.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• none.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• operational working protocols with health/education - decision making processes within children's services</li> <li>• SLA for off-island support for an out of hours' service and fostering and adoption service.</li> <li>• lack of qualified social workers</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good standards reached by pupils</li> <li>• early years provision.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long-term vision for the support of school improvement</li> <li>• strategy for the management of and support for children who do not attend school.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appointment of youth support worker</li> <li>• contribution of young people to decision making and appointments.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disaggregating of data.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all students post-16 in education, employment or training.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of 14-19 strategy</li> <li>• lack of data post-16.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>significant input from Dorset County Council over the next three years to assist in strategic and operational effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Management of children's services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>significant changes with senior personnel has delayed moving multi-agency work forward - lines of decision making remain unclear.</li> </ul>
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### Aspects for focus in a future joint area review or the next APA

- The development of pooled budgets and the prioritisation of health needs.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and practices.
- The long-term strategy for school improvement, support and challenge.
- The extent to which pupils who are not attending school are monitored and supported.
- The extent to which the islands have developed a 14-19 strategy which makes use of data disaggregated from that of the mainland.
- The stability, knowledge and strategic planning of senior personnel.

We confirm that the children's services grade will provide the score for the children and young people service block in the comprehensive performance assessment and will be published to the Audit Commission. The social care judgement is for CSCI information only.

Yours sincerely



**FLO HADLEY**

Divisional Manager  
Office for Standards in Education



**JONATHAN PHILLIPS**

Director – Quality, Performance and Methods  
Commission for Social Care Inspection