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Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr Philip Hygate
Head of Children's Services
Council of the Isles of Scilly
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Isles of Scilly TR21 OLW

1 December 2005

Dear Mr Hygate

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE ISLES OF SCILLY'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 4 July 2005 to assess the performance of the education and social care services within your authority. We are grateful for the information which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

Being healthy

Outcomes in this area are good, particularly the way that the health and well-being of children and young people are secured through common assessment and the strong multi-agency partnership between key services. Children and families are well known to services. Relations with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) are productive, although not formalised through strategic plans. All children are registered with general practitioners; there is full participation in the health visitor programme, full uptake of routine health screening and a very high uptake of programmes for immunisation. There are a number of health promotion initiatives, including renewed engagement with healthy eating through the National Healthy Schools standard.

Children and young people are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse and receive suitable sex and relationship education. Further programmes on drug and alcohol education are underway. There have been no teenage pregnancies in school children of 16 years and under. Community sport programmes, sports promotion activities and a range of well attended clubs actively promote and encourage leisure and sport opportunities across the Isles and with the mainland, well supported by the voluntary sector. Further improvement in leisure opportunities promoting fitness and enjoyment is recognised.

Action is taken to promote children and young people's mental health, including for looked after children. Referrals from health visitors and commissioning with the mainland provide children and young people access to an appropriate range of multi-disciplinary support and guidance, including counselling. Young people showing mental health difficulties are referred very promptly to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Staying safe

Children and young people are provided with a generally safe environment but outcomes overall are just adequate because of some important weaknesses. Child protection training is identified as a priority in the community strategy. There is a policy for the school, and staff are aware of child protection procedures; however, systematic multi-agency child protection training has not yet taken place. The council recognises the need for the provision of safer accommodation, arrangements to assure protection, and strengthened support for young people at 16 plus leaving the island for further education or training, particularly for the most vulnerable.

The small scale of the islands provides an excellent opportunity for the change for children working group to ensure multi-disciplinary arrangements and systems for safeguarding. Strong collaboration between agencies enables knowledge of all children resident on the islands and high awareness of the identity and whereabouts of children up to 16 years of age. This leaves the council well placed to identify children in need and engage in early preventive work. However, it is recognised that the school should give further attention to preventative work for children in need through differentiating its response to risk. Work with partners addresses community safety and anti-social behaviour, although a recent audit identified 'nuisance' issues as a concern to the islanders. The school operates an effective anti-bullying policy.

Access to a comprehensive range of specialist support services to meet needs is not yet in place. Responses to referrals are typically quick, although not provided by a qualified social worker. Qualified staff commute to the islands periodically to undertake independent reviewing officer roles and investigations. However, the council does not have a quality assurance framework for the systematic audit of case files from which to ensure consistency and quality, particularly in relation to assessment and case review. Adequate arrangements to co-ordinate police, health and other agencies for the detention, interview and medical examination of juveniles are not in place.

Work in early years' settings promotes secure arrangements for childcare, including support for children with special educational needs, and safe play areas for young children are prioritised by the council. Arrangements for the safety and protection of the small number of looked after children and those with special educational needs are closely monitored. All looked after children have a named social worker and stability of placements remains good. The safe house has closed. The council accept the need to develop a replacement.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are adequate, with a number of strengths in education services. Ongoing plans to develop the Five Islands School as a federation serving 4-16 year-olds from the islands' communities provide a suitable response to the islands' context. Education services have strengthened considerably following effective action from an external contactor. Ofsted removed the school from special measures in April 2005, judging it to have improved considerably and to have made good progress on all key issues. It is now a very good school with many strong features. Leadership and management are now very good and strategic planning is secure. Stable staffing and very good quality teaching have further raised standards, which are already well above national averages. Nearly all pupils make good progress. All young people leaving care at 16 plus obtain at least one GCSE or NVQ pass. Action is underway to extend the learning of able pupils and to develop a sustainable curriculum model for the school. Children and young people enjoy school. Pupils relate very well to each other, have positive attitudes, behave extremely well and show real enthusiasm for their learning. Attendance has remained relatively static in recent years, but is satisfactory overall. Targets for improving attendance are well within reach. Very few children do not attend school and there are no excluded pupils.

An effective Sure Start programme, sound quality early years' provision and generally good nursery education promotes children's development and well-being and helps them to meet early learning goals. Good multi-agency support and training is offered to providers, and health visitors work successfully with the early years' team to promote early literacy. A suitable range of recreational and voluntary learning opportunities is available for children and young people through schools and the community. Personal education plans and special planning for transition post-16 supports children and young people who are looked after to enjoy and achieve, with resources informally pooled between education and social services enabling participation in school trips and other residential activities. Attendance, attainment and exclusion are monitored. Educational provision for primary aged children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and educational and training provision for secondary-aged young people on the main island are broadly met. However, for primary-aged pupils on the off-islands, constraints from the availability of specialist staff pose challenges for inclusion. Here, the council has recognised the need for specialist training for teaching staff.

The council is investing in corporate management training. A need to address workforce planning issues remains, in particular a strategy and implementation plan to deal with succession planning and recruitment; staff housing accommodation, and staff development, appraisal and support.

Making a positive contribution

Overall, outcomes are adequate. Children and young people are consulted through an expanding range of forums and participate in decision-making affecting their lives. Their views are beginning to inform community priorities as well as services provided to young people in education and training at post 16. The need to more systematically and creatively engage with children and young people in the development of future strategies and plans is recognised. In particular, in the need for the council to act upon the recent review of Mundesley boarding arrangements, listen to the views of young people and key stakeholders, and to integrate decisions into the Change for Children working group's strategic planning.

Children and young people who are looked after are actively involved in statutory reviews. Children with special educational needs and their parents are involved in annual reviews and the council meets its statutory obligations to this group. The local authority realises further co-ordination of services and improved commissioning is necessary. This includes specialist mental health and behaviour support services for the small numbers of vulnerable children with high demands for social, health and educational care.

Rates of re-offending by young people are lower than national figures. The council and its partners are involved in a range of initiatives to help young people avoid offending and re-offending. These are particularly focused on anti-social behaviour and its link to alcohol and drugs. However, as part of its drive to prevent anti-social or nuisance behaviour, agencies should collectively review the nature and threshold of offences committed and the risks to individuals involved.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are adequate. The Isles of Scilly face challenges in providing incentives for young people to remain on the islands. Although there is no post-16 provision for education or training, the recent Adult Learning inspection identified effective guidance provided by the Connexions Service, a productive partnership with the local Learning and Skills Council and well established links with employers. Alongside individually funded accredited programmes for young people, opportunities for education and training post-16 have broadened to include vocational training through Modern Apprenticeships both on and off the islands. However, there is no systematic arrangement for the collection and analysis of data on the achievement and qualifications of young people who remain in education or training at post-16, and therefore no assurance that provision affords value for money. Work is underway to remodel the secondary curriculum and to provide more opportunities for vocational education and partnerships with other providers.

Children and young people who are looked after and those with special educational needs are supported by appropriate plans for their care and learning. Young people continuing in education and training post-16, live in accommodation on the mainland. The council

recognises that in recent years there have not been systematic arrangements to provide pastoral support and assure protection, particularly for the most vulnerable. This is a priority for the coming year.

Summary

| Strengths | Areas for Improvement |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the strong multi-agency partnership between key services. | <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalising the partnership with the PCT in strategic plans. |
| <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong collaboration between agencies quick responses to referrals work in early years' settings support for looked after children and those with special educational needs on the islands. | <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> systematic identification, assessment and response to risks a quality assurance framework for the audit of case files access to a comprehensive range of specialist support services assuring the safeguarding of young people leaving the island for further education or training at post-16 co-ordination of police, health and other agencies for the detention, interview and medical examination of juveniles. |
| <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision from the Five Islands School early years' provision. | <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formal mechanisms for pooling resources inclusion for primary aged pupils on the off-islands recruitment and retention of staff. |
| <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children and young people are increasingly consulted. | <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> more systematic engagement of children and young people action on the recent review of boarding arrangements. co-ordination of provision for the small numbers of vulnerable children with high demands on services. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • productive partnerships in education and training. | <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remodelling of the secondary curriculum • systematic arrangements to provide pastoral support and assure protection to young people at post 16 • data on the achievement and qualifications of young people who are in education or training post 16, and value for money of provision. |
|---|--|

Service management

The council faces particular challenges in developing appropriate and modern structures, systems and services within very tight resources, and is prepared to enter into external partnerships to do so. Considerable investment from government is strengthening strategic capacity and expertise, particularly in education services. Within social services, external support has led to some recent improvements in the delivery of performance management information, and an agreement with another authority will support children's services over the next three years. However, current dependency on external support is high.

Recognising the need to catch up with other authorities, progress has been made over recent months and the authority continues to move in the right direction. The Islands have moved quickly to appoint the chief executive as director of children and to put in place plans to reconfigure political structures suitable for the modernisation and Every Child Matters agendas. Good partnership working continues to address some of the limitations of scale in delivering services and is fundamental to the capacity of the council, although with a need to formalise some of these partnership arrangements. Ambitions and plans for future development are being steered through a recently established Change for Children multi-agency group. The authority's self assessment is an improvement on previous self evaluations; in the main, strengths and weaknesses are collaborated by data and other evidence. The Change for Children working group, arrangements for a new Children's Committee, and the key priorities for children's services for the coming year are all positive steps.

It is the responsibility of both the islands and of external agencies to ensure external support is well co-ordinated and integral to the work of the Change for Children's group and other priorities, so that contributions are maximised and value for money is assured. Key priorities for the council have been recently agreed. These are based on a shared understanding of local needs among partner organisations and with the community. There is a need now to ensure that priorities are matched to a comprehensive multi-agency children's strategy and developed into co-ordinated and resourced strategic and

operational plans to deliver these. The Community Strategy, currently subject to consultation, begins to map the framework for strategic action and its links to other plans. However, plans are weak on explicit outcomes for children and young people and detailed performance measures. They do not identify the cost of a full range of professionally qualified universal and specialist services. The council has put together an outline equality and diversity strategy. Work remains to develop this into a fully functioning and operational strategy.

The council has identified the need for performance management to underpin its vision. There is some way to go to establish a robust performance management culture and appropriate systems, including support for elected members in providing rigorous oversight of the direction and progress of the council's priorities. The council is currently engaged in negotiating a three-year external support contract for social care in regard to these matters. This arrangement will also provide regular access to a qualified, supervised and professionally supported child care social worker on the Isles. The council, with its partners, will need to ensure arrangements for sustaining improvement and systems after the exit of external support.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review:

Being healthy

Healthy lifestyles are promoted for children and young people:

- strategic plans to formalise the participation of the PCT in the local Change for Children agenda.

Staying safe

Agencies collaborate to safeguard children according to the requirements of current government guidance:

- the systematic identification, assessment and response to risks for individuals and within the community
- developing a quality assurance framework, to include systematic file audits to ensure consistency and quality
- access to a comprehensive range of specialist support services to meet needs
- assuring the safeguarding of young people leaving the island for further education or training at post-16
- co-ordination of police, health and other agencies for the detention, interview and medical examination of juveniles
- action from the inspection of the council's education functions in September 2003, on decisions taken on recommendations from the risk assessment of the security of all school sites.

Enjoying and achieving

Action is taken to ensure that educational provision 5-16 is of good quality:

- formal mechanisms for pooling resources to provide services
- inclusion for primary aged pupils on the off-islands
- action to recruit and retain staff in education and social services.

Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly:

- incorporate the behaviour support plan within the children and young people's plan.

Educational provision is made for children who do not attend school:

- secure provision of 25 hours of tuition for children educated other than at school
- include policy and inter-agency procedures detailing arrangements for children out of school for reasons of illness within the CYPP.

Action is taken to ensure that educational provision 5-16 is of good quality:

- review of costs in the provision of free boarding of secondary-age pupils from the off-islands in 2007.

Making a positive contribution

Children and young people, particularly those from vulnerable groups, are supported in managing changes and responding to challenges in their lives:

- action following the review of the Mundesley boarding arrangements
- co-ordination of provision for the small numbers of vulnerable children with high demands on services.

Achieving economic well-being

Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is planned and delivered in a coordinated way, and to ensure that education and training (16-19) is of good quality:

- the collection and analysis of data on the achievement and qualifications of young people who are in education or training post 16, and ensuring value for money of provision
- actions from the inspection of the council's education functions in September 2003 to:
 - negotiate with the Learning and Skills Council to contribute further to the high costs of transport to post-16 provision on the mainland
 - develop the strategy for 14-19 education and training.

Final judgements

Please see your final annual performance assessment judgements attached at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely



FLO HADLEY
Divisional Manager
Office for Standards in Education



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

APA final judgements 2005: Council of the Isles of Scilly

| Areas for judgement | Final judgements ¹ |
|---|-------------------------------|
| The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people | 2 |
| The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people. | 2 |
| The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people. | 2 |
| The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people | 1 |

1

| Grade | Service descriptors | Capacity to improve descriptors |
|-------|---|---------------------------------|
| 4 | A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users | Very good |
| 3 | A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users | Good/promising |
| 2 | A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users | Adequate |
| 1 | A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users | Inadequate |