

# AGENDA

**Meeting:** Children's Select Committee  
**Place:** Council Chamber - County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN  
**Date:** Thursday 6 June 2024  
**Time:** 10.30 am

---

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to [max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk) of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225718215 or email [max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225) 713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

---

**There will be no pre-meeting briefing for this meeting.**

## Membership:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman)	Cllr Kelvin Nash
Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Antonio Piazza
Cllr Helen Belcher OBE	Cllr Mike Sankey
Cllr Mary Champion	Cllr Jo Trigg
Cllr Caroline Corbin	Cllr Mark Verbinnen
Cllr Carole King	Cllr Bridget Wayman
Cllr Kathryn MacDermid	

---

## Substitutes:

Cllr Trevor Carbin	Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney
Cllr Daniel Cave	Cllr Ricky Rogers
Cllr Adrian Foster	Cllr Martin Smith
Cllr Johnny Kidney	Cllr Iain Wallis
Cllr Jack Oatley	

---

## Non-Elected Voting Members:

Dr Mike Thompson	Clifton Diocesan RC Representative
------------------	------------------------------------

---

## Non-Elected Non-Voting Members:

Nikki Barnett  
John Hawkins  
Maisy Humphrey  
Declan Kiely

Further Education Representative  
School Teacher Representative  
Children & Young People's Representative  
Children & Young People's Representative -  
Substitute

---

## **Recording and Broadcasting Information**

Wiltshire Council may record this meeting for live and/or subsequent broadcast. At the start of the meeting, the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. The images and sound recordings may also be used for training purposes within the Council.

By submitting a statement or question for a meeting you are consenting that you may be recorded presenting this and that in any case your name will be made available on the public record. The meeting may also be recorded by the press or members of the public.

Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the Council, its Cabinet or committees is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them so doing and by choosing to film, record or broadcast proceedings they accept that they are required to indemnify the Council, its members and officers in relation to any such claims or liabilities.

Details of the Council's Guidance on the Recording and Webcasting of Meetings is available on request. Our privacy policy can be found [here](#).

## **Parking**

To find car parks by area follow [this link](#). The three Wiltshire Council Hubs where most meetings will be held are as follows:

**County Hall, Trowbridge**  
**Bourne Hill, Salisbury**  
**Monkton Park, Chippenham**

County Hall and Monkton Park have some limited visitor parking. Please note for meetings at County Hall you will need to log your car's registration details upon your arrival in reception using the tablet provided. If you may be attending a meeting for more than 2 hours, please provide your registration details to the Democratic Services Officer, who will arrange for your stay to be extended.

## **Public Participation**

Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Part 4 of the council's constitution](#).

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#).

Our privacy policy is found [here](#).

For assistance on these and other matters please contact the officer named above for details

# AGENDA

## PART I

### Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

#### PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT *(Pages 9 - 10)*

Standard Scrutiny Questions for Councillor Reference.

1 **Election of Chairman**

To elect a Chairman for the 2024/25 municipal year.

2 **Election of Vice-Chairman**

To elect a Vice-Chairman for the 2024/25 municipal year.

3 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting *(Pages 11 - 18)***

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2024.

5 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

6 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chairman.

7 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

#### Statements

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item. Please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for any further clarification.

#### Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than

5pm on **Thursday 30 May** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Monday 3 June**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

8 **Childcare Sufficiency in Wiltshire** (*Pages 19 - 22*)

To receive a progress update from Lucy-Anne Bryant on childcare sufficiency in Wiltshire.

9 **Outcome of the Rapid Scrutiny on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy** (*Pages 23 - 26*)

To receive a report on the outcome of the rapid scrutiny on Wiltshire Council's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy.

10 **Children's Select Committee - areas of interest and work for 2024-25**

As this is the first meeting of this municipal year the committee is invited to consider the areas of interest and work it wishes to focus on for 2024-25.

The attached forward work programme contains items that have been agreed at previous meetings as well as requests for overview and scrutiny involvement received by the chair and vice-chair of the committee when they attended the annual meeting with the Executive on Tuesday 14 May.

In readiness for the new Council after May 2025, this committee will be expected to produce a "legacy report" which typically include recommendations on future work as well as a review of "ways of working".

Therefore, today this committee is invited to:

1. Challenge the proposed forward work programmes;
2. Propose additional areas of work and focus for 2024-25;
3. Make suggestions on changes that would improve the committee's current ways of working (including briefings, rapid scrutiny exercises and task groups).

11 **Regular updates**

Updates on information valuable for the committee, but unlikely to require a decision.

Members of the committee are therefore invited to indicate in advance of the meeting if they would like further information or have questions on these regular updates, so that relevant officers can be invited to attend the meeting.

11a **Safety Valve update** (*Pages 27 - 30*)

To receive regular updates from officers on the development of the Safety Valve project, as well as input from the overview and scrutiny representative.

**11b School Ofsted Judgements**

An update including information regarding the most recent Ofsted Inspection reports, presenting an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspection.

**11c DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education (Pages 31 - 38)**

An update on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education.

**11d Working together to improve school attendance (Pages 39 - 44)**

The DfE published new non-statutory guidance in May 2022 to help schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance. The guidance applies from September 2022.

This regular update is an opportunity for the committee to be aware of the latest requirements, as set out in the guidance.

**11e Schools Forum (Pages 45 - 46)**

To receive a very brief update highlighting key items from the last meeting of Schools Forum, to enable the Children's Select Committee to be informed in a timely manner of the work undertaken by the Schools Forum through the year.

Full agendas and minutes for the Schools Forum can be accessed here [Schools Forum | Wiltshire Council](#)

**11f Corporate Parenting Panel (Pages 47 - 48)**

To receive a very brief update highlighting key items from the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, to enable the Children's Select Committee members, as Corporate Parents, to be informed in a timely manner of the work undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Panel through the year.

**11g Directors' update**

To receive a verbal update from Directors highlighting any key issues (current or emerging), successes or milestones in their respective areas since the last meeting of the committee, which may not require a full agenda item and are not covered elsewhere on this agenda.

This is also an opportunity for matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

**11h Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holders' update**

To receive a verbal update from the Cabinet Member and / or Portfolio Holders highlighting any news, successes or milestones in their respective areas since the last meeting of the committee, which may not require a full agenda item and are not covered elsewhere on this agenda.

This is also an opportunity for matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

11i      **Chair's update**

To receive a verbal update from the chair on any work undertaken or news since the last meeting that would not require a full agenda item and would not be suitable under Chairman's Announcements (where no debate is allowed).

This is also an opportunity for matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

12      **Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates**

The committee will receive updates from active Task Groups, Rapid Scrutiny exercises and the committee's board representatives.

A report by the Senior Scrutiny Officers providing an update on Task Group activity since the last meeting is attached.

13      **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on 18 July 2024.

14      **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business which the Chairman agrees to consider as a matter of urgency.

15      **Glossary**

**PART II**

**Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed.**

This page is intentionally left blank



## Sample Scrutiny Questions

Below are some sample questions for scrutineers to use as a reference and adapt according to the issue or proposal under scrutiny.

Area of Enquiry	Sample Scrutiny Questions
<b>Customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will benefit? Is there a demographic breakdown of those eligible for the service?</li> <li>• Has the proposal's impact on different groups been considered?</li> <li>• How has customer experience informed the proposal?</li> <li>• How can service users give feedback or get involved in designing or reviewing the service?</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What evidence of need is there for the actions proposed?</li> <li>• How has the need been identified?</li> </ul>
<b>Link with wider objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the proposal support the delivery of the council's Business Plan or other relevant strategies?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What assurances can you give that the proposal can be delivered on time / within budget?</li> <li>• Is there a clear action plan for delivery?</li> <li>• What resources are in place to meet the identified need?</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What staff development will be needed and how will this be achieved?</li> <li>• How will the staff be recruited and retained?</li> </ul>
<b>Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What system is in place to monitor performance?</li> <li>• What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?</li> <li>• How will performance indicators be used to inform planning and decision-making?</li> </ul>

Area of Enquiry	Sample Scrutiny Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the service meeting the needs of Wiltshire residents?</li> <li>• Is performance improving or dipping?</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the expected outcomes of the proposal?</li> <li>• What would success look like?</li> <li>• What would failure look like?</li> <li>• How will you measure the difference the service/change will make?</li> </ul>
<b>Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a framework in place for risk management?</li> <li>• What are the key risks and what actions will mitigate/reduce these risks?</li> <li>• At what point would the risk be unmanageable? Is there an exit strategy?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will efficiency be measured?</li> <li>• How will processes be reviewed and improvements identified?</li> </ul>
<b>Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you ensure compliance with regulatory standards?</li> <li>• Do the service standards meet external standards?</li> </ul>
<b>Public awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you raise awareness of the service/changes proposed?</li> </ul>
<b>Benchmarking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does the council perform compared to comparator authorities?</li> <li>• How well do service users do in comparison to those in other areas?</li> </ul>

## Children's Select Committee

---

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2024 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.**

**Present:**

Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Helen Belcher OBE, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Mark Verbinnen, Cllr Suzanne Wickham, Cllr Kathryn McDermid, John Hawkins

**Also Present:**

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr Dominic Muns, Jen Salter, Kathryn Davis, Amanda Butler, Netty Lee, Ben Stevens, Lucy Townsend

---

22 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Mike Sankey  
Cllr Kelvin Nash  
Cllr Bridget Wayman  
Dr Mike Thompson  
Cllr Mary Champion

23 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**Resolved**

**To approve the minutes of previous meetings, held on 24 January 2024, as a true and correct record.**

24 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

25 **Chairman's Announcements**

The committee was informed that the pre meeting briefing originally taking place before this meeting would be rescheduled for an online meeting.

26 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

27 **Canon's House**

The committee considered the attached report on the findings of the full Ofsted inspection of Canons House Children's Home carried out in November 2023. The report was briefly introduced and outlined the progress made to improve services following the two previous Ofsted inspections in February 2022 and June 2023. The full report can be found in the agenda.

### Debate

The committee commended the report and the effort made between the inspections of Canon's House.

It was clarified that Councillors were still welcome to visit Canon's House, however inspections had been commissioned to a service provider who provide regular visits across the country and could compare Canon's House with similar providers.

### **Resolved:**

**To note the response to the Ofsted report.**

## 28 **Special Guardianship Orders**

The committee considered the attached report, which provided background information on Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). This was specifically requested by the committee at its meeting on 21 September 2023.

- A Special Guardianship Order has several potentially positive effects:
- It gives a child the security of a long-term home.
- The child's birth parents retain shared parental responsibility.
- It gives the Special Guardian day-to-day control (jointly if there are several Special Guardians)

Unlike adoption, a Special Guardianship Order will not remove parental responsibility from the child's birth parents. This means that the Special Guardian would have responsibility for the day-to-day decisions as well as all the important decisions about the child or young person but would need to consult the birth parents at times where key decisions are being made such as changing their name, moving overseas or agreeing adoption.

Netty Lee briefly introduced the report, highlighting statistics within the report, and then welcomed questions.

### Debate

As the debate opened, the following definitions were clarified for the committee:

Fostering – There are two different types of foster carers that can be approved, Local Authority and Family Members. Local Authority foster carers are approved and supported by the Council. Family members still require approval by the local authority, but it is recognised that they are relatives of the child.

Special Guardianship Orders – With SGOs, parental responsibility is given to the carer (without excluding birth parents), meaning assessments such as financial stability are carried out. There is a specific SGO support team to make assessments and support SGO carers.

Adoption – This is generally considered for children below the age of 8, where no family members have come forward that are considered suitable. It is considered a final step as children remaining within their families is preferred.

During the debate, it was clarified for the committee that private SGOs require 3 months' notice to be given to the Council before applying in court and are still subject to assessment by the Council.

Regarding adoption, it was highlighted as a last resort due to the complete severance of parental responsibility from the birth parents. SGOs are considered beforehand as it is recognised that birth parents, whilst unable to provide long term care, can still remain in contact with their children and their lives. SGOs do not legally remove parental responsibility from the birth parents but gives the Special Guardian “overriding” parental responsibility.

It was clarified that statistics available from adoption and fostering for scrutiny by the committee were not available from SGOs as the Council’s involvement in that child ends when they are approved. Support is still offered by the local authority however the reduction in oversight from the Council is chosen by the family, approved by the local authority and endorsed by the court order. It would be considered inappropriate to continue involvement in light of this and statistics wouldn’t provide any learning opportunity for the Council given the nature of SGOs providing private family life.

**Resolved:**

**To note the report**

## 29 **Education Performance Outcomes**

The committee considered the attached report which provided an overview of performance outcomes in assessments and/or examinations from ages 5 to 19 in the academic year 2022-2023.

Kathryn Davis and Amanda Butler introduced and read through the report.

Debate

The committee raised the issue that there was no “trend” data. It was clarified that this had been sorted and would be in reports going forward. A separate update was offered to update the committee on trend data.

It was made clear that efforts were being made to support the schools struggling with KS2 maths.

It was recognised that there are challenges with recruitment and retention nationally within education.

It was clarified that most primary schools were meeting expected standards in Year 6 and therefore secondary schools were not needing to “catch-up” students in Year 7.

It was clarified that the Wiltshire Learning Alliance does bring together schools to share learning and this does include Academies. There had been challenges with some schools both in standard and willingness to engage, however the WLA were fully aware of these schools.

The committee discussed what parents and local groups could do to engage children in subjects such as maths with the support of the Council.

**Resolved:**

**To note the report**

**To set up a rapid scrutiny to understand in more depth the Year 6 performance figures, trends and outliers**

**To receive a further report on trend details**

**To receive an update report on the Wiltshire Learning Alliance**

30 **Business Plan Update**

The committee considered the attached report outlining progress made between May 2023 and January 2024 on the activities for Families and Children and Education and Skills services as stated in the Council Business Plan.

Jen Salter and Kathryn Davis introduced and summarised the report.

**Debate**

It was clarified that the report was not an exhaustive list of everything being delivered by Families and Children and Education and Skills services but the main priorities.

It was clarified that the assessment tool for homeless 16 & 17-year-olds in Wiltshire had been refreshed, following feedback from external sources.

It was clarified that significant assessment on the skills and knowledge of commissioned organisations' workforces is carried out in the tendering process where bidders must provide evidence to demonstrate their suitability.

It was clarified that the Affordable Schools Strategy was already receiving strong and positive engagement from schools' leaders and families, even if it hasn't yet translated into performance outcomes.

It was clarified that 63 schools currently had accreditation as "Healthy Schools" as part of the programme and more in line to receive that accreditation in the near future.

**Resolved:**

**To note the update**

**To receive a briefing on the work of Family Health practitioners**

31 **Regular updates**

**31a Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative**

The committee commended the report and the progress made in participation and awareness of Wiltshire Youth Voice.

The written report was noted.

**31b School Ofsted Judgements**

There was no update on this item as there had been no further School Ofsted judgements since those presented to the committee on 24 January 2024.

**31c DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education**

An update on developments relating to children's services arising from the Department for Education.

The written report was noted.

32 **Working together to improve school attendance**

The DfE published new non-statutory guidance in May 2022 to help schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance. The guidance applied from September 2022.

This regular update was an opportunity for the committee to be aware of the latest requirements, as set out in the guidance.

The written report was noted.

33 **Schools Forum**

The committee received a very brief update highlighting key items from the last meeting of Schools Forum, to enable the Children's Select Committee to be informed in a timely manner of the work undertaken by the Schools Forum through the year.

Full agendas and minutes for the Schools Forum can be accessed here [Schools Forum | Wiltshire Council](#)

The written update was noted.

### **33a Corporate Parenting Panel**

The committee received a very brief update highlighting key items from the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, to enable the Children's Select Committee members, as Corporate Parents, to be informed in a timely manner of the work undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Panel through the year.

The written update was noted.

### **33b Safety Valve update**

As agreed by the committee at its extraordinary meeting on 7 December 2023, the committee received a regular update from officers on the development of the Safety Valve project, as well as input from the overview and scrutiny representative.

There was no significant update to be made due to current confidentiality, however it was made clear that progress had been made in line with what was expected.

The committee wanted to make clear its appreciation of all the hard work that had been put in so far by officers.

The written report was noted.

## **34 Directors' update**

The committee received a verbal update from Directors highlighting any key issues (current or emerging), successes or milestones in their respective areas since the last meeting of the committee, which did not require a full agenda item and was not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

Jen Salter, Director of Families and Children, stated that the Youth Justice inspection had been completed and its findings would be shared when the report was received. It was also noted that Wiltshire Council's application for Families First wave 2 funding had not been successful.

Kathryn Davis, Interim Director of Education and Skills, stated that there had been changes to the DfE attendance guidance, which would come into effect in August 2024. Work would be carried out within the team to prepare for these



changes and support schools. There was also news that Wiltshire Council had been successful in its application to open a new Alternative Provision Free School.

Lucy Townsend, Corporate Director of People, stated that Wiltshire Council will remain a partner of the DfE in SEND education.

35 **Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holders' update**

The committee received a verbal update from the Cabinet Member and / or Portfolio Holders highlighting any news, successes or milestones in their respective areas since the last meeting of the committee, which did not require a full agenda item and was not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

Cllr Laura Mayes updated that the Annual Social Care Conference had taken place in Devizes and was a success for all social workers. The DfE had also made a visit to understand Wiltshire Council's work as an outstanding authority.

Cllr Suzanne Wickham updated the committee on two new visits she had made to AP Schools and the success children were having during sessions.

36 **Chair's update**

The committee received a verbal update from the chair on any work undertaken or news since the last meeting that did not require a full agenda item and was not suitable under Chairman's Announcements (where no debate is allowed).

There was no significant update from the chair.

**36a Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates**

The committee received updates from active Task Groups, Rapid Scrutiny exercises and the committee's board representatives. A report by the Senior Scrutiny Officers which provided an update on Task Group activity since the last meeting is attached.

There has been no task group activity since the last committee meeting.

37 **Forward Work Programme**

The committee was asked to note the attached documents showing the relevant items from the overview and scrutiny forward work programme.

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

38 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Children's Select Committee is on 6 June 2024.

39 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

40 **Glossary**

(Duration of meeting: 11.00am – 13.30pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Max Hirst max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk of Democratic Services, direct line 01225718215, e-mail [max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email [communications@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@wiltshire.gov.uk)

(Duration of meeting: Times Not Specified)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Max Hirst max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk of Democratic Services, direct line 01225718215, e-mail [max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email [communications@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@wiltshire.gov.uk)

**Wiltshire Council**  
**Children's Select Committee**  
**Date: 06 June 2024**

---

## **Childcare Sufficiency Report update**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report is an update on the work undertaken to address the requirement to make available sufficient childcare in the local area, which is a statutory duty placed on the Local Authority.
2. The work includes and early years strategy and the development of the local childcare provider market.

### **Updates – Early Years**

3. Ofsted registered providers in Wiltshire:

<b>Type of childcare provider</b>	<b>Number registered</b>	
	<b>September 2023</b>	<b>March 2024</b>
Childminder	306	304
Day Nursery/Preschool/School nursery	260	256

4. Although a difference of four settings is shown six did close. One was due to low numbers, two were due to lack of suitably trained and skilled staff to manage the provision, two due to retirement of owner and the final one due to an unsuitable building.
5. To offset this, new provision opened in Trowbridge and Purton.
6. In March 2024 there were 8027 childcare places available in group settings and 912 places with childminders.
7. To facilitate the development of places across the county funding from the DfE has been used to recruit three new Assistant Commissioners with responsibility for sufficiency.
8. As part of the expanded childcare offer £885,466.40 capital funding has been provided to the Local Authority to develop sufficient provision. An invitation to apply for funding was sent out via the weekly newsletter to all settings. Funding is agreed based on four criteria:
  - Demand in the community area.
  - Number of new places for two year old and under.
  - Percentage of contributions from the provider.
  - Speed of delivery of places (planning permission etc).

9. 20 Providers expressed an interest in expanding their provision. To date £342,338 in funding has been agreed for seven settings and these settings will make contributions of £342,018 towards the cost of the agreed developments. Funding has been agreed to develop new places in existing provision in the following areas:

Community Area	no of places created under 2s	no of places created 2 yos	extra places 3&4	Total number of paces
Melksham	12	4	2	18
Calne	21	0	0	21
Westbury	7	8	0	15
South West Wiltshire	3	3	0	6
Chippenham	6	4	0	10
Westbury	9	5	0	14
South West Wiltshire	18	0	0	18
	76	24	2	102

10. In the autumn report we highlighted sufficiency concerns in Bradford-On-Avon, Melksham, Marlborough, Warminster and Westbury. The developments listed above address the need in Melksham and Westbury.
11. To address the sufficiency concerns in Bradford-On-Avon S106 funding will be used to develop provision in the town.
12. A new setting will open in Warminster in the Autumn to address the pressures there and further options will be considered.
13. The situation in Marlborough is being monitored and there is currently sufficient provision.
14. Currently there is an opportunity to tender for Canberra Children's Centre in Melksham for use as early years provision. This should be able to offer 42 early years places which should address the demand in the town.
15. The greatest issue facing the expansion of childcare is the lack of appropriately qualified and skilled staff available and willing to work in the early years sector.
16. To address this issue the DfE has developed a website [Working in early years and childcare - Early Years Careers](#) and launched a national advertising campaign.
17. To raise awareness of a career in childcare officers are attending Careers Fairs and working with the Job Centre and linking with Supporting Families Employment Advisers.

18. Wiltshire College is offering Step into Early Years as a starter course. Sector Based Workforce Programmes (SWAP) will be planned with Job Centre and Family and Community Learning.

### **Updates – Wraparound Childcare**

19. Current supply of wraparound provision has been reviewed.
20. A survey to understand the demand for wraparound childcare received 2269 responses. Of which 55% (n.1249) said that lack of childcare was preventing all parents/ carers in a household from working the hours that they would wish to work.
21. A development plan is being written to address the needs across the county and to prioritise areas for development.
22. There is DfE funding for capital work and support in staffing a provision to stimulate demand.
23. Over the next year officers will work with schools and independent providers to develop wraparound childcare in all schools so that an 8-6pm offer is available from September 2026 across the county.

### **Early Years Strategy**

24. The early years strategy has been written and will be published in the summer.

### **Conclusion**

25. The additional funding provided by the government to expand childcare places will help to develop sufficiency across the county.
26. The additional resource of three Assistant Commissioners allows a systematic approach to demand to be addressed and for timely responses to be implemented.
27. The support of schools is imperative to realise the ambition for full wraparound care from 8am – 6pm five days a week during termtime.
28. There is sufficient interest from providers in developing childcare places to reassure us that our targets can be met as long as sufficient trained, qualified staff are recruited.

**Lucy-Anne Bryant**

**Commissioning Manager**

This page is intentionally left blank

**Wiltshire Council**

**Children Select Committee**

**6 June 2024**

---

## **Mental Health Strategy Rapid Scrutiny – Interim Report**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To present the initial findings and recommendations of the rapid scrutiny undertaken on the draft Mental Health Strategy.

### **Background**

2. In September 2023, Children Select Committee (CSC) and Health Select Committee (HSC) each received a progress report from BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB) on the development of an all-age Mental Health Strategy.
3. Both committees endorsed carrying out a joint rapid scrutiny exercise with the intention of bringing together the specialist focus of each committee to support a cohesive response to the proposed strategy.

### **Terms of Reference**

4. The aim of the rapid scrutiny was:
  - a) To review the development of the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy.
  - b) To review how the strategy addresses issues raised at the Health Select Committee Inquiry into demands on urgent care, July 2023
    - Access to CAHMS service (examples given of year long waiting lists)
    - Support for people falling between the thresholds of mild and severe mental health conditions, leading to people presenting with complex mental health problems.
    - Availability of appropriate rehabilitation and housing for people with complex mental health problems.
    - Reduction in community services able to provide the level of support needed.
  - c) To review the role of preventative measures in the strategy – considering the recommendations of the task group into Children and Young People’s Mental Health Service in 2018 which placed a strong emphasis on the need for partnership working to provide access to preventative work.

## **Membership**

5. Cllr Jon Hubbard (Lead Member), Cllr Johnny Kidney, Cllr David Bowler, Cllr David Vigar, Cllr Anthony Pickernell (apologies sent)

## **Meeting**

6. There has been one meeting where Georgina Ruddle, Associate Director Mental Health, BSW ICB, presented an overview of the strategy.

## **Summary of findings to date**

### Current status

7. The strategy provides data on population need, the scale of the challenge that the strategy needs to address and current delivery status.
8. The total population across the area covered by the BSW ICB is 980,000 people, approximately 100,000 have been diagnosed with dementia, depression or serious mental illness. Approximately 3,500 have more than one of these conditions and they estimate there will be many more people who haven't had an official diagnosis or may need mental health support but don't fit diagnostic categories.
9. There are a range of partners delivering contracted mental health services in Wiltshire, predominantly Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP), but also Oxford Health, Alabare, FearFree, Alzheimer's Support and Rethink.
10. In the BSW area 40% of schools and colleges are covered by specialist mental health support teams. In December 2023 the number of young people accessing support services was 9,847 compared to the BSW target of 13,160 and the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) target of 14,115. The current focus is to target areas with the greatest health inequalities and to support children and young people staying in education and increase investment in CAMHS.
11. There have been problems with data collection and the strategy notes that work has started with partners to improve the quality of data in their reporting.
12. The diagnosis rate for dementia is 60.8%, below the national target of 66.7% and local target of 66.1%. (the rate is calculated by comparing the estimated prevalence of dementia with the actual number of people who have been diagnosed).
13. Another strand of the LDP is to ensure physical health checks for people with severe mental illness. Wiltshire is performing below the LTP target of 60%, with 47% of the eligible people receiving a health check.

### Priorities of the new strategy

14. The strategy puts strong emphasis on prevention which includes developing community assets and infrastructure and investing further in third sector services.
15. Having early access to help to avoid crisis was a priority for stakeholders and is reflected in the strategy.
16. Further integrating services is a key objective. The strategy aims to improve support around points of transition, for example from children to adult services, between services and by having clear pathways across organisational boundaries.



17. The strategy makes a commitment to personalised care, improving involvement of service users and carers in discharge planning and continuity of care, ensuring people see the same professionals where possible.
18. There is a shift in the funding model for services from high cost placements, inpatient and crisis services to community based provision.
19. To support community-based provision, there will be a change too in commissioning to enable the funding of a greater number of small, third sector service providers.

### **Interim Conclusions**

20. In its ambition the strategy seems to address issues highlighted in previous scrutiny that is early access to help, the need for more resources into preventative work and support beyond treatment.
21. Members had been concerned that the removal of 'Emotional Health' from the title of the strategy would translate as a reduced focus on preventative work and would be keen to see how the new model would be delivered in practice.
22. The group questioned whether in practice the resources would be in place to be able to deliver the strategy and requested sight of the delivery plan.
23. In particular, the group wanted further information on how the transition for young people into adult services would be managed, how dementia diagnosis would be increased and how access to mental health support would be increased in Wiltshire.
24. The focus on shifting expenditure to community-based provision was welcomed.
25. The changes in approach to preventative work and more flexible funding with third sector partners seemed significant and key to the success of the strategy yet perhaps did not have sufficient prominence in the draft strategy. It was suggested that the final strategy made this more prominent and possibly included an executive summary to highlight the new approach.
26. Members identified a need to understand in more detail how the strategy will inform future commissioning.

### **Recommendations**

**The Children Select Committee (CSC) is asked to approve:**

- I. That the rapid scrutiny group need to review the delivery plan to be able to draw meaningful conclusions and recommendations.**
- II. That the rapid scrutiny group meet again when the Delivery Plan has been drafted (possibly September) to review how the strategy will be implemented in Wiltshire.**
- III. That CSC will review how the overarching mental health strategy is aligned with existing strategies (e.g. carers support) and how the strategy informs commissioning of related services.**

---

**Cllr Jon Hubbard, lead member for the rapid scrutiny exercise – Mental Health Strategy**

Report author: Julie Bielby, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 718702,  
[Julie.bielby@Wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.bielby@Wiltshire.gov.uk)

**Appendices** None

**Background documents** None

## Wiltshire Council

### Children's Select Committee

6<sup>th</sup> June 2024

---

#### Safety Valve Update

---

##### Background

1. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is funding which local authorities in England receive to support schools. The DSG is split into four blocks which support different parts of the schools system.
2. One of these blocks is the High Needs Block which is used to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Since 2018/19 the High Needs Block has been under increasing pressure. This growth in expenditure has been seen in every council in England, and Wiltshire is no exception.
3. In Wiltshire from 2018/19 to 2022/23, this equated to a 51% growth in the number of children supported by an EHCP, and a 46% growth in the amount of money being spent from the High Needs Block. Over the same period, the money received into the High Needs Block from government only grew by 36%.
4. While High Needs Block income has not kept pace with the growth in demand, there are also changes that councils can make to respond to the changing strategic context.
5. The government introduced a statutory override which allows councils to hold their DSG deficit as a negative reserve on their balance sheet, separate from the rest of the council's finances. This statutory override, however, is due to expire 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and at that point the cumulative unmitigated deficit could be £117.0m while the current forecast total general fund and earmarked reserves are £90m.
6. Safety Valve is a DfE programme to support councils that have a financial challenge with their High Needs Block. The invitation to join Safety Valve was received in August 2023.
7. The High Needs Block Sustainability Plan for Wiltshire has been developed with stakeholders to identify improvements in our SEND system that will create better support for children and young people and their families, while addressing the financial challenges.
8. That plan was submitted to DfE in January with endorsement from Children's Select Committee, Wiltshire Schools Forum, and a cross-sector board including membership from Wiltshire Parent Carers Council (WPCC) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB). This was then turned into an agreement which was signed in March 2024.

##### June update

9. Since the last Children's Select Committee meeting, the agreement has been signed and the programme team have begun to implement the workstreams which will deliver the change required.
10. Recruitment to the programme team has been successful. A project manager and programme support officer have already started and are delivering significant pieces of work. The final two project managers are starting on the 29<sup>th</sup> July, so that they are fully inducted and ready to fully support the programme in the new academic year.
11. The programme is currently in the process of realigning the reporting templates and dashboards to ensure that the 'programme activity' is reported alongside the 'outcome measures' so that it is easier to see the impact of the work, and parse whether additional effort is required in a particular area. This new dashboard will be easier to read, contain more meaningful data, and will be ready for the next Children's Select Committee meeting.
12. In lieu of this dashboard, Appendix 1 contains the Q1 update report which was submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) on the 29<sup>th</sup> May. This report contains updates on programme activity, and key headline measures which should give Children's Select Committee a clear understanding of progress.
13. Overall, the programme is RAG rated Green, and the financial projections are RAG rated Green.
14. This status is a reflection of the work that has begun to address all the pressure points in Wiltshire SEND system. Efforts have primarily been focussed on developing the support offer for Schools in the new academic year and reviewing internal decision-making processes. These areas are most likely to deliver meaningful impact in the short to medium term.
15. As was reported in March, the Safety Valve agreement, the new SEND and AP Strategy, and the Sustainability Plan are being brought together into a single SEND Transformation plan. This is broken down into 6 priority programme areas:
  - Voice of the child and their family
  - Improving support, skills and practice
  - Right support at the right time
  - Preparation for adulthood
  - Financial assurance in our SEND system
  - Improving communication, processes and culture
16. Two programme areas within SEND Transformation are RAG rated amber:
  - Right support at the right time – amber due to concerns about the delivery of new special school places.
  - Preparation for adulthood – amber due to delivery plans still being in draft.

It is notable that the two new project managers who are joining the council in July have SEND project experience in school delivery and in post-16. These programmes are expected to turn green once those project managers start and apply their skills and experience.

17. One area for further investigation is around the EHCP numbers. The number of EHCPs in the system currently is growing faster than was anticipated. Work has been undertaken to rule out a number of potential causes for this growth, including a statistical error. It does appear that the growth is real, and a reflection of stronger demand than expected in the forecast.
18. At this time, this is not a cause for concern as the interventions in the sustainability plan are not yet having an impact. This was anticipated in the modelling, however, steps are being taken to ensure that senior officers are sighted on the monitoring data on a weekly basis, and further analysis is being undertaken to ensure that there is a full understanding of where system pressure is coming from.
19. The council is still waiting to hear about the capital request of £5.7m that was submitted to bring forward the provision of special school places in the south of the county. The DfE requested more information about the bid in May, which was supplied. However, given this is a ministerial decision, the current expectation is that the authority is unlikely to hear back until after the UK General Election on 4<sup>th</sup> July, and probably not until September 2024 at the earliest.
20. Clearly, this delay places the opening of expanded special school provision in Salisbury at risk in the planned timeframe of September 2024. Work is underway to understand what the impact might be of a delay, and whether there are other projects in the capital portfolio which would be delayed to accommodate this project.
21. As reported in March, at the end of the plan period, the cumulative mitigated deficit is forecast to be £137.2m. In March, it was reported that Wiltshire Council would likely have to contribute £70-90m, and now the agreement has been signed it has been confirmed that the expectation is that £70.3m will need to be found from other funding sources to completely remove the deficit.
22. If the council successfully meets the deal criteria faster than expected, then this figure could reduce however, if the council fails to meet the deal criteria then this figure will go up, and could lead to the DfE withholding future Safety Valve funding.
23. The council approved the creation of an earmarked reserve as part of the budget and will be taking an approach of maximising all opportunities to set money aside to fund the contribution required.

---

Appendices:

1. Department for Education Safety valve monitoring report

This page is intentionally left blank

## DfE updates and changes – March to June 2024

### Government launches crackdown on mobile phones in schools – Press Release

1. Schools will receive new guidance on prohibiting mobile phone use during the school day [Government launches crackdown on mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-crackdown-on-mobile-phones-in-schools) published 19/02/24

2. Wiltshire's position:

In Wiltshire, we are confident that schools will choose an approach to prohibiting mobile phone use which suits their individual context, and which aligns with DfE guidance.

### Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges - Guidance

3. Find out what help you can get to develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing. Updated resources to keep them current [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/promoting-and-supporting-mental-health-and-wellbeing-in-schools-and-colleges) updated 22/02/24

4. Wiltshire's position:

Wiltshire provides a programme to support schools to plan and implement a whole school approach to health and wellbeing, through the Wiltshire Healthy Schools programme. This includes an audit theme on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. Currently 137 schools are engaged, with 77 schools holding accreditation at bronze, silver or gold level (April 2024). Our Youth Ambassadors have been involved in recent Healthy School visits, to question staff and hear about good practice in school mental health provision.

From 2021 – 2023 Wiltshire delivered a programme of DfE assured Senior Mental Health Lead training. After 4 cohorts, most Wiltshire schools (215) have now received the training and claimed a national grant of £1,200. For the small number of schools that have not yet received this offer or wish to train a new school lead, the CPD is still available from a range of national providers. These schools are supported by an ongoing series of local network meetings to help embed this work facilitated by the Healthy Schools leads in B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire. The DfE report that successful grant applications are significantly higher in Wiltshire (84%) compared with the Southwest (70%) and national (67%). Data was last received in February 2024 and will be updated when we receive further updates from the DfE.

As an additional support, Wiltshire Council provide an ongoing offer of Youth Mental Health First Aid training to schools and others that work with young people aged 8-18. This internationally recognised programme is designed to promote awareness of psychological and emotional wellbeing and mental health and to support professionals to recognise and respond to mental health issues. From April 2023 – March 2024, 7 courses were delivered training 71 people. Evaluations from our local delivery show that this training increases the knowledge and confidence of delegates that attend.

## Working together to safeguard children – Statutory Guidance

5. Statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. Changes made, Pg 26, paragraph 48: amended the wording used to describe lead safeguarding partners. Pg 42: corrected the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel email address. Pg 161: updated the glossary definition of 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' to match that on pg 7 to 8. Pg 167: linked to the latest version of 'Good practice guidance on working with parents with a learning disability' [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) updated 23/02/24
6. Wiltshire's position:

The Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership has a clear plan set out in response to changes set out in Working Together 2023, which includes the following:

- Ensuring strategic education representation within the arrangements by September 2024 – this means having a head teacher as a member of the SVPP Executive
- Publication of the SVPP Annual Report for 2023/4 by September 2024
- Publicising an updated Safeguarding Plan by Dec 2024
- Updating of policies, guidance and relevant subgroups terms of references in line with Working Together 2023
- Updating terms of reference for SVPP Executive to include the responsibilities of Delegated Safeguarding Partners

Arrangements for chairing of the partnership by a safeguarding partner are already embedded and an Independent Scrutineer is in post. Agencies who have duties with regards to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including Wiltshire Council, will be asked to provide assurance in relation to how they are embedding new principles for working with parents including parents with a learning disability, in-line with expectations for multi-agency working and national multiagency practice standards for child protection as set out in Working Together 2023. We are exploring the additional membership from headteacher representatives.

## New regulations for schools in next stage of attendance drive – Press Release

7. Every state school in England will now share their daily attendance registers across the education sector [New regulations for schools in next stage of attendance drive - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) published 29/02/24
8. Wiltshire's position:

We already receive daily attendance data from schools in Wiltshire via Groupcall and WONDE (the DfE data collection portal). This data is used to inform Targeted Support Meetings with schools and across children's services to support conversations and action planning to improve attendance. The heightened emphasis on the sharing and use of daily attendance data will further support early help work for those children and young people with lower attendance.



### **Working together to improve school attendance - Guidance**

9. Guidance for schools, academy trusts, governing bodies and local authorities on maintaining high levels of school attendance, including roles and responsibilities. Change made, added 'Working together to improve school attendance: applies from 19 August 2024' and 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance: applies from 19 August 2024'. The status of these documents will be statutory as of that date [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) updated 29/02/24

10. Wiltshire's position:

We welcome the new statutory guidance to improve attendance of all our pupils. This work has already been a high priority across the Education and Skills Directorate and the new guidance will continue to support us working together with services and schools to prioritise positive attendance for all.

The Education Welfare Service has already begun to communicate the changes to school leaders through headteacher briefings, school business manager networks and governor briefings. We have scheduled a series of 6 sessions during term 6 for school leaders, for information sharing and question and answer opportunities. Supportive materials and toolkits for schools to use will be developed and refreshed in line with the changes and we will continue termly School Attendance Champion Networks across the next academic year.

### **National school breakfast Club programme - Guidance**

11. Support for school breakfast club provision. Updated to reflect participating schools will receive the subsidy until the end of July 2025 [National school breakfast club programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) updated 04/03/24

12. Wiltshire's position:

We will continue to promote this to eligible schools and support them in setting up breakfast clubs where needed. This is in addition to the government expansion of wraparound care which aims to provide wraparound provision for all primary aged children from 8am until 6pm from September 2026.

### **PE and sports in schools - Guidance**

13. Information to help schools increase access to PE, physical activity and extra-curricular school sport, including examples of good practice [PE and sports in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) published 23/03/24

14. Wiltshire's position:

Wiltshire schools are aware of the positive benefits of physical activity on the mental wellbeing of children and young people. The guidance offers high quality case studies and links to enhanced provision in a range of areas; most notably, developing and communicating a strong rationale for 2 hours minimum PE, staffing structures to support delivering 2 hours high quality PE, embedding extra-curricular plans and targets into the school's strategy, as well as understanding the needs

of the most inactive pupils and equality of access for children with SEND. Guidance was signposted to all Wiltshire Schools on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 through the Schools' Newsletter

### **Government delivering 60,000 more special needs places – Press Release**

15. Councils are to receive a record £850 million cash boost to ensure children across the country receive an education that meets their needs [Government delivering on 60,000 more special needs places - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) published 26/03/24

16. Wiltshire's position:

In March 2024 the High Needs Capital Grant announcement resulted in Wiltshire Council receiving an extra £6.2M for 2024. This capital funding will be used to develop additional High Needs provision, including Special School and Resource Base classrooms. We are still waiting to find out if we will receive any Safety Valve Capital grant to support priority high needs capital projects, which includes a second school campus for Exeter House.

### **Participation of young people: education, employment and training – Statutory Guidance**

17. Change Made, updated statutory guidance to amend out-of-date references and links. Statutory guidance for local authorities on their duties relating to the participation of young people in education, employment or training [Participation of young people: education, employment and training - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) updated 04/04/24

18. Wiltshire's position:

Wiltshire ensures it meets its duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education employment and training. This includes strategic overview of the provision available in the area in direct collaboration with the DfE, as well as robust tracking of participation to identify risk of NEET (not in education, employment or training) so that support can be given to re-engage.

The Post 16 Skills and Participation Team carry out this responsibility and work with young people at risk of NEET in Year 11 of statutory school age through to Year 12 and 13 (post 16). Where a young person has an EHCP, the Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Team provide direct support to address risk of NEET.

Wiltshire outcomes are strong in relation to both the national average and the South-West and currently ranks 30<sup>th</sup> out of 150 local authorities.

### **Free school meals guidance updated**

19. The Department for Education has recently updated the guidance on free school meals. The update clarifies councils' responsibilities for providing school lunches for children who are educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS), as well as schools' duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children's school lunches [Free school meals \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

20. Wiltshire's position:

Wiltshire's position supports Section 512 of the Education Act 1996, which places a duty on maintained schools, academies and free schools to provide free school meals to pupils of all ages that meet the criteria.

Wiltshire Council provides an Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for all subscribing schools. Schools that do not subscribe use the government free school meal calculator and administer their own free school meal provision.

The expectation from the DfE is that local authorities consider making equivalent food provision for children who are receiving EOTAS under section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. The children need to meet both of the following criteria:

- the child would meet the benefits-related criteria for free school meals if they were in a state-funded school, and
- the meals would be provided in conjunction with education and would, in line with the aim of free school meal provision, be for the purpose of enabling the child to benefit fully from the education being provided.

Wiltshire's position is that funding is provided to EOTAS pupils in the form of e-vouchers for parents and carers to give their child(ren) a lunch provision each school day. Local authorities are allowed to draw upon the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to fund such food provision.

EOTAS pupils eligible for free school meals have also been funded during school holidays by using the Household Support Fund, although continuation of this government funding is not confirmed beyond September 2024.

Schools have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled pupils to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with pupils who are not disabled. Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils on roll at a school to ensure they are not put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to accessing meals where appropriate.

Parents and carers can escalate any concerns they have about accessing free school meals, whether its eligibility or disability, to the free school meals team in Revenues and Benefits. These cases are escalated where needed to the Education and Skills team for resolution with schools.

### Landmark childcare rollout on track – Press Release

21. Government publishes new data showing 195,355 children benefitting from government-funded childcare for two-year-olds in successful April launch [Landmark childcare rollout on track - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-childcare-rollout-on-track) published 19/04/24

22. Wiltshire's position:

We are continuing to roll out this initiative with our Early Years providers in Wiltshire. On the 17th of April 2024, the DfE data showed that Wiltshire had validated 89.52% of codes issued for the new 2-year-old funding. We are now working towards the next milestone which will be expansion

of 15 hours of funding for children from the term after they are 9 months old from a working parent/s household which will start from the 1st of September 2024.

### Managing older school buildings – Guidance

23. Guidance to help school building owners and maintenance staff identify building systems and prioritise maintenance and repair of their school estate [Managing older school buildings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-older-school-buildings) published 25/04/24
24. Wiltshire's position: This guidance is intended to give those responsible for planning and carrying out school maintenance a high-level overview of the types of construction that may be present in their estates and to help identify these common types of construction. It outlines some of the common areas that should be considered to ensure buildings remain serviceable and structural elements do not deteriorate. The guidance is being reviewed by the Council's Strategic Asset Maintenance and Facilities Management team and will be shared with schools and Trusts.

### Phonics screening check data collection: guide to submitting data – Guidance

25. How local authorities should collect phonics screening check data from all local-authority-maintained schools, academies and free schools. **Change made:** Updated the important dates section to include the date the 2024 collection opens and the deadline for submitting data. Added a link to the 2024 phonics screening data collection technical specification [Phonics screening check data collection: guide to submitting data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-data-collection-guide-to-submitting-data) updated 26/04/24
26. Wiltshire's position:

As a Local Authority, we collect the Phonics Screening Check scores from all schools in Wiltshire via Perspective Lite, following the guidance from the Standards and Testing Agency. This is organised and carried out by the data analysts in the Performance, Outcomes and QA (Children's) team, who check the data and submit to the DfE.

The PSC pass threshold is released by the DfE on 24 June. Schools can submit their scores to the LA from 17 June with a deadline of 28 June. Data and reports should be available to schools and the LA on Perspective/Nexus by 12 July. The LA must submit the data to the DfE by 19 July.

The School Effectiveness service ensures that schools are aware of arrangements and processes, communicating this through Headteacher briefings, School Business Manager briefings, weekly Schools newsletters, and detailed guidance is available on Right Choice. Schools can contact the assessment adviser directly for support and there is also a dedicated email address [assessmentcollections@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:assessmentcollections@wiltshire.gov.uk) to answer any questions from schools.

### Protective security and preparedness for education settings - Guidance

27. How education settings should prepare for and respond to terrorism and other major incidents [Protective security and preparedness for education settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-security-and-preparedness-for-education-settings) published 29/04/24
28. Wiltshire's position:

Education Safeguarding Effectiveness are preparing a course with educational settings and colleagues from wider services including the Police. The initial meeting will be at the end of May

with a view to linking with work already underway on developing an updated Critical Incident document.

This guidance was signposted to all Wiltshire Schools on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 through the Schools' Newsletter.

End.

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Working Together to Improve School Attendance</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY:</b>	<b>Children’s Select Committee</b>
<b>REPORT DATED:</b>	<b>24 May 2024</b>
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>Kathryn Davis Education and Skills</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHORS:</b>	<b>Louise Lewis Head of Service, Targeted Education</b>  <b>Karen Green Team Manager, Education Welfare</b>

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide a regular update on the Council’s implementation of the February 2024 DfE guidance ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’.
- 1.2 The 2024 DfE guidance has statutory status with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and until that point the LA must continue to work to the previously published [2022 Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) non-statutory guidance.
- 1.3 In addition to the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) statutory guidance the government has introduced the following regulations which also become effective 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and which support the statutory guidance.
  - The [Education \(Information About Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#). These regulations mandate the sharing of attendance data with the DfE
  - The [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). These regulations govern all aspects of attendance and admission registers. This includes changes to deletions from school roll and the introduction of new attendance and absence codes to support better understanding and analysis of reasons for absence from school
  - The [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#). These regulations introduce a standard national approach to how local authorities and schools can issue penalty notices related to absence from school.

**2. Implementation planning for the introduction of statutory guidance and new Regulations (Explanation of changes provided in last Select Committee report)**

- 2.1 The Education Welfare Service is reviewing all processes relating to the management of attendance in readiness for 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. This includes service delivery options and supporting information, documents and templates to be made available to all schools to assist with the implementation of the statutory requirements.

It should be noted that the LA must provide some support services related to the management and improvement of attendance to all schools in the authority area including independent schools. There are elements of the support, referred to as a core offer, that must be provided at no cost to the establishment concerned.

- 2.2** The penalty notice regulations require the publication of a new Wiltshire Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. All local authorities must be compliant with the national guidance in this regard. Consultation with schools and the Police is in process as mandated by the Regulations prior to the publication of the new code of conduct. We welcome the change to regulations as it ensures that all local authorities will be working consistently in the use of penalty notices for absence from school.
- 2.3** To support schools to understand the changes and expectations Wiltshire has a planned series of attendance briefing sessions that are available to school leaders, senior attendance champions and governors. Updates are also provided through school newsletters, headteacher and governor briefings.

### 3. Attendance Data

- 3.1** Breakdown of the attendance data from Wiltshire schools. This is the latest published data by the DfE (March 2024) for the full academic year 2022-23

**Source:** *Explore Education Statistics > Pupil absence in schools in England > full academic years:*

		Wiltshire	South West	England
Total	Number of pupil enrolments	62,971	686,421	7,396,032
	Overall absence rate	7.0%	7.6%	7.4%
	Authorised absence rate	5.1%	5.4%	5.0%
	Unauthorised absence rate	1.8%	2.2%	2.4%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	18.5%	21.3%	21.2%
	Percentage of severe absentees (50% or more missed)	1.9%	2.4%	2.0%
Special	Number of pupil enrolments	854	11,458	132,534
	Overall absence rate	13.6%	13.6%	13.0%
	Authorised absence rate	10.8%	10.6%	9.9%
	Unauthorised absence rate	2.8%	3.0%	3.2%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	38.3%	39.2%	38.3%
	Percentage of severe absentees (50% or more missed)	7.0%	7.4%	6.2%
State-funded primary	Number of pupil enrolments	34,350	363,469	3,957,555
	Overall absence rate	5.3%	5.8%	5.9%
	Authorised absence rate	4.2%	4.4%	4.2%
	Unauthorised absence rate	1.1%	1.4%	1.6%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	12.4%	15.0%	16.2%
	Percentage of severe absentees (50% or more missed)	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
State-funded secondary	Number of pupil enrolments	27,767	311,494	3,305,943
	Overall absence rate	8.9%	9.6%	9.0%



Authorised absence rate	6.1%	6.5%	5.6%
Unauthorised absence rate	2.8%	3.2%	3.4%
Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	25.4%	28.1%	26.5%
Percentage of severe absentees (50% or more missed)	3.3%	4.1%	3.4%

**Source:** Explore Education Statistics > Pupil absence in schools in England > Absence rates by pupil characteristic - full academic years:

		Wiltshire	South West	England
FSM (Free School Meals) eligible	Number of pupil enrolments	10,486	144,181	1,855,167
	Overall absence rate	11.8%	12.3%	11.1%
	Authorised absence rate	7.5%	7.6%	6.4%
	Unauthorised absence rate	4.3%	4.7%	4.7%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	37.0%	39.8%	36.5%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	4.7%	5.0%	3.8%
SEN - EHC plans	Number of pupil enrolments	2,972	30,370	313,718
	Overall absence rate	12.3%	13.3%	12.3%
	Authorised absence rate	8.9%	9.7%	8.8%
	Unauthorised absence rate	3.4%	3.7%	3.5%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	34.9%	37.8%	36.0%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	6.4%	7.2%	5.9%
SEN - SEN Support	Number of pupil enrolments	9,533	97,688	984,202
	Overall absence rate	9.6%	11.0%	10.2%
	Authorised absence rate	6.6%	7.2%	6.4%
	Unauthorised absence rate	3.0%	3.7%	3.8%
	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	27.1%	32.2%	31.1%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	3.6%	4.9%	3.8%

**3.2** Live attendance data is available via the DfE WONDE portal. For the academic year 2023-24 this data is unverified. This means that this data set may be incomplete but it provides useful statistical information related to attendance and absence trends nationally and regionally to enable the authority to make comparisons and initial judgements about attendance performance.

**3.3** For the academic year 2024-25 the live attendance data will be reliable as a result of the mandated sharing of attendance data by schools through the [Education \(Information About Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

**Source:** WONDE DfE

**Current academic year up to Monday 27 May 2024**

<b>Number of pupils</b> 53,876		<b>Overall attendance %</b> 93.1%		<b>Overall absence %</b> 6.9%		<b>Unauthorised absence %</b> 1.8%	
<b>Persistently absent</b>				<b>Severely absent</b>			
Number of persistently absent pupils		Percentage of persistently absent pupils		Number of severely absent pupils		Percentage of severely absent pupils	
9,223		17.1%		1,136		2.1%	

The data reflects better performance in Wiltshire than nationally.

93.1% of sessions were recorded as attending in Wiltshire (compared to 93% of sessions at national level)

6.9% of sessions were recorded as absence in Wiltshire (compared to 7% of sessions at national level)

17.1% of pupils were recorded as persistently absent in Wiltshire (compared to 20% of pupils at national level)

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>South West</b>	<b>Wiltshire</b>
Primary	94.6%	94.5%	94.9%
Secondary	91.2%	90.1%	91.1%
Special	87.2%	86.8%	88%

**PUPILS WITH AN EHCP**

**Current academic year up to Friday 24 May 2024**

<b>Number of pupils</b> 3,349		<b>Overall attendance %</b> 86.7%		<b>Overall absence %</b> 13.3%		<b>Unauthorised absence %</b> 3.8%	
<b>Persistently absent</b>				<b>Severely absent</b>			
Number of persistently absent pupils		Percentage of persistently absent pupils		Number of severely absent pupils		Percentage of severely absent pupils	
1,149		34.3%		265		7.9%	

## PUPILS WITH SEN SUPPORT INDICATOR

Current academic year up to Friday 24 May 2024

Number of pupils 8,657		Overall attendance % 90.6%		Overall absence % 9.4%		Unauthorised absence % 2.9%	
<b>Persistently absent</b>				<b>Severely absent</b>			
Number of persistently absent pupils 2,221		Percentage of persistently absent pupils 25.7%		Number of severely absent pupils 332		Percentage of severely absent pupils 3.8%	

## PUPILS WITH FSM INDICATOR

Current academic year up to Monday 27 May 2024

Number of pupils 10,194		Overall attendance % 88.4%		Overall absence % 11.6%		Unauthorised absence % 4.4%	
<b>Persistently absent</b>				<b>Severely absent</b>			
Number of persistently absent pupils 3,481		Percentage of persistently absent pupils 34.1%		Number of severely absent pupils 551		Percentage of severely absent pupils 5.4%	

- 3.4** Attendance performance in Wiltshire compares positively with national and South West benchmarking. We continue to work with schools across the authority area to support them to address absence matters. There is collaboration and commitment within teams across children’s services to assist children, young people and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance at school.

In recognition of the challenges we face in regard to the attendance of disadvantaged learners in Wiltshire, The School Effectiveness Service and the Education Welfare Service will be delivering the Improving School Attendance Programme. This is aimed specifically at school attendance leads, senior attendance champions and designated leads for disadvantaged learners in school. The programme will offer 6 sessions across the next academic year with each session having a different focus on aspects of attendance and engagement specifically related to disadvantaged learners.

## 4. Recommendation

- 4.1** For the committee to note this update.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Wiltshire Council**

**Children's Select Committee**

**6 June 2024**

---

## **Schools Forum update**

The next meeting of Schools Forum is due to be held on 27 June 2024 and Children's Select will receive an update at their meeting on 18 July 2024.

Agendas and minutes for Schools Forum can be accessed on: [Browse meetings - Schools Forum | Wiltshire Council](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

**Wiltshire Council**

**Children's Select Committee**

**6 June 2024**

---

## **Corporate Parenting Panel update**

Key discussion points/issues from meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel – 12 March 2024.

- Voice and Participation update
- Grandmentoring Update report
- Strategic Priority Highlight – “To feel safe and happy in a stable home and in my local community”
- Data Spotlight – Care Proceedings ending and Special Guardianship Orders granted during quarters 1 and 2 2023-24
- Bi-annual update on Children Looked After placed more than 20 miles from home
- Placement Sufficiency Update
- Update from Canons House
- Update on progressing care experience as a protected characteristic
- Updates from other Council Teams and other Representatives

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 25 June 2024 and Children's Select will receive an update at their meeting on 18 July 2024.

This page is intentionally left blank