

AGENDA

Meeting: Children's Select Committee
Place: Council Chamber - County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN
Date: Tuesday 26 November 2024
Time: 10.30 am

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Pre-meeting information briefing

There will be a briefing session starting at 9:30am, immediately before the meeting. Its focus will be on **Affordable Schools Strategy**

Membership:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman)	Cllr Kelvin Nash
Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Antonio Piazza
Cllr Helen Belcher OBE	Cllr Jo Trigg
Cllr Mary Champion	Cllr Mark Verbinnen
Cllr Caroline Corbin	Cllr Bridget Wayman
Cllr Carole King	Cllr Caroline Thomas
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 Non-Voting Members:

John Hawkins	School Teacher Representative
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Nikki Barnett
Maisy Humphrey
Declan Kiely

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

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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](#).

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AGENDA

Pre-meeting information briefing

The meeting will be preceded by a presentation starting at **9:30am**, in the meeting room.

Topic: Affordable Schools Strategy

All members and substitutes of the Children's Select Committee are welcome to attend.

Overview and Scrutiny Standard Questions (Pages 9 - 10)

PART I

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

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

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

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 September 2024.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

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

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chairman.

5 **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 **Tuesday 19 November** 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 **Thursday 21 November**. 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.

6 **Alternative Provision Update** (*Pages 19 - 30*)

To receive a report on the current Alternative Provision for children and young people in Wiltshire not attending mainstream or specialist schools.

7 **Affordable Schools Strategy** (*Pages 31 - 128*)

To consider the Affordable Schools Strategy for primary and secondary schools to reduce inequalities.

8 **Early Years, Childcare and Entitlement Strategy** (*Pages 129 - 174*)

To consider the Early Years, Childcare and Entitlement Strategy which outlines how the Council will meet its statutory duties and the Wiltshire plan's strategic objective 'Best Start in Life', to improve outcomes for young children and families.

9 **Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) Annual Report**

To receive the Annual Report of the SVPP, with reference to the work of the partnership in safeguarding children and young people.

10 **Families and Children's Services Roadmap 2024-2026** (*Pages 175 - 188*)

To receive an update on the Families and Children's Services Roadmap, as resolved by the committee in October 2023. The roadmap provides a strategic overview of the quality assurance framework and service plans in place for Families and Children's services.

11 **Executive Update to the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group Recommendations** (*Pages 189 - 194*)

To receive an executive update on progress against the actions outlined by the executive in January 2024 in response to the recommendations of the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group, Sept 2023.

12 **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.

12a **Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative** (*Pages 195 - 218*)

An update including a summary of recent activities of the Wiltshire Youth Union (WYU) and Children in Care Council (CiCC).

12b **School Ofsted Judgements** (*Pages 219 - 224*)

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.

12c **DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education** (*Pages 225 - 230*)

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

12d **Working together to improve school attendance** (*Pages 231 - 234*)

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.

12e **Schools Forum** (*Pages 235 - 236*)

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](#)

12f **Corporate Parenting Panel** (*Pages 237 - 238*)

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.

12g **Safety Valve update** (*Pages 239 - 242*)

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

12h **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.

12i **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.

12j **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.

13 **Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates** (*Pages 243 - 246*)

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.

14 **Forward Work Programme** (*Pages 247 - 300*)

The Committee is asked to note the attached documents showing the relevant items from the overview and scrutiny forward work programme and the latest version of the strategy list for the Children, Education and Skills directorate.

15 **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on 15 January 2025 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

16 **Urgent Items**

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

17 **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

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

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

Children's Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Helen Belcher OBE, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Caroline Corbin, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Kathryn Macdermid, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Mark Verbinnen, Cllr Bridget Wayman and John Hawkins

Also Present:

Cllr Peter Hutton and Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney

81 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Jon Hubbard
Cllr Kelvin Nash
Cllr Mike Sankey

82 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 18 July 2024, as a true and correct record.

83 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

84 **Chairman's Announcements**

Cllr Jacqui Lay, in the Chair, made the following announcements:

It was noted that Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had thanked *“the Select Committee for the exemplary work which they are renowned for as well as the in-depth Scrutiny which they have conducted”*

On 23 August 2024, Spurgeons sent an email notification of the temporary closure of outreach introductions to Wiltshire Family Hubs for a 4-week period. This raised concerns for the Chair and Vice-Chair and suggested further scrutiny was needed to understand what was happening. It was agreed that this

announcement would be referred to agenda item 11 to be debated as a possible Forward Work Program item.

85 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

86 **Alternate Provision (AP) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2024-2029**

Kai Muxlow - Interim Head of Families and Children Commissioning, introduced the report.

Councillors were informed on the development of the new co-produced local area SEND and AP Strategy which forms the basis of Wiltshire Council's approach to working with families and children with additional needs.

Particular attention was drawn to the strategy's six priorities:

Priority 1: Children and young people and their families would be at the centre of planning, their views and aspirations heard and acted upon, as true partners.

Priority 2: Getting the right support at the right time, identifying and acting on our children's needs at the earliest opportunity and through promotion of inclusive approaches and practice across the local area.

Priority 3: Provide opportunities for timely planning, reflective of the views of the child or young person and parent carers' current needs, that have clear outcomes.

Priority 4: Ensure good quality communication and information, for families to have a positive experience when navigating services, with information that is easy to access and use.

Priority 5: Professionals and officers across the SEND system would have the skills, knowledge and training to enable effective collaboration across services, joint assessments and sharing of good practice.

Priority 6: Children and young people would be prepared for adulthood and experience timely transitions, leading to increased skills, greater independence, and a greater range of opportunities in life

Councillors welcomed the strategy, however suggested that it would be helpful to understand with more detail what the strategy aims to achieve, with defined deliverables and how these would be measured. Councillors also raised concern that without an implementation plan, it was incredibly difficult for Councillors to understand and appreciate how the strategy's objectives would

be achieved. Councillors also expressed a wish to see a clearer role for schools within the strategy.

It was clarified that the implementation plan would be brought to the Committee for scrutiny in the near future. Officers also clarified that Alternative Provision was included in the strategy as the national framework asks both AP and SEND be developed together.

Resolved

- **To note the report**
- **That the strategy and implementation plan include specific objectives, how they will be delivered and the hoped for outcomes.**
- **That the implementation plan is shared with the committee**

87 **Support for Young Carers**

Kai Muxlow - Interim Head of Families and Children Commissioning, introduced the report.

It was highlighted to the committee that the reason for the report was to provide information as to why the service had been re-tendered and the background work that had taken place between organisations.

It was described that a lot of engagement work with young carers had taken place in 2023, and that concern had been raised at the level of support young carers had been receiving. It was stated that it was clear from discussions that the service was not meeting young carer's needs. Young carer's views were collected and directly fed into the commissioning exercise.

Councillors welcomed the report and amount of work to support young carers. Councillors welcomed the inclusion of selected KPI's in the report and asked to see the full range of KPI's and performances against them in future reports.

It was clarified that the primary focus was to support young carers to be able to live as children, enjoying their childhood and ensuring achievements at school were not affected. As part of this, young carers were being supported to avoid an overwhelming amount of responsibility.

It was further mentioned that social services were closely worked with to ensure that the full range of support was offered, and requirements were met.

It was explained that direct payments had not been stopped but were being reviewed and remodelled.

Resolved

- **To note the report**
- **That the committee receives an annual performance report on the Young Carers contract, including a full set of KPIs.**

88 **Children and Young People's Mental Health Support**

Kai Muxlow - Interim Head of Families and Children Commissioning, introduced and summarised the report.

The key points summarised included:

- That there had been increased recognition at national and local level of the increased prevalence of mental health disorders in children and young people.
- Reasons for increased levels include anxiety, self-harm and the COVID pandemic
- That these increases and the reasons for them had been highlighted in the BSW ICB's draft health strategy for 2024-2029.
- That there had been significant challenges in gathering data from the Council's CAMHS provider Oxford Health, meaning some comparative data had not been made available for a period of time.

The chair informed the committee that there had been a rapid scrutiny earlier this year on the development of the ICB's new Mental Health Strategy. The rapid scrutiny noted the following:

'There is a shift in the funding model for services from high-cost placements, inpatient and crisis services to community-based provision.

'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.'

Councillors requested that more communication was made with them, so that they could signpost the services that are available as often councillors are asked about where support is available. Councillors also asked for more information on the timeframe between first contact with children and young people and them feeling comfortable with the support being provided.

It was clarified that specific statistics on how many homeschooled children suffer with their mental health was not immediately to hand but could be provided. It was stated that efforts were made to ensure the same level of support could be offered to those homeschooled.

It was stated that Oxford Health had undertaken significant work to ensure a more robust system was in place following a previous cyber-attack which had led to lost data.

Resolved

- **That the Children’s Select Committee have the opportunity to scrutinise service specifications before providers are commissioned to understand how the contracts will meet the needs identified in the mental health strategy.**
- **That third party providers play a part in the provision of support**

89 **Adoption Report**

The Committee was informed that they had the opportunity to scrutinise Wiltshire Council’s annual report of the adoption service before it goes cabinet in October.

The Committee were also informed that included within the report was the report from Adoption West, who are the regional adoption agency commissioned by Local Authorities including Wiltshire. It is their responsibility to recruit adopters and support the adoption process. Adoption West is scrutinised by a panel of members representing each of the 6 local authorities. The representative from Wiltshire is Cllr Carole King.

Netty Lee, Head of Service for Support and Safeguarding, introduced and summarised the report.

The committee was reminded that it is a statutory requirement that Wiltshire Council’s Adoption Service provides a year-end report in relation to the child’s journey to adoption, and included the management arrangements, outcomes, priorities, and finances for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Netty Lee drew points from the executive summary of the report, and then welcomed questions from the committee.

It was clarified that adoption placement numbers were being closely monitored and that a recruitment strategy was in place.

It was clarified that should the relationship break down between Adopters and children, that there was support in place including being referred back into support services.

Councillors were extremely pleased with the report, describing it as “bright and colourful” because how the service strived to provide an excellent level of support for both adopted children and those who adopt.

Resolved

- To note the report.
- To recognise the work of Cllr Carole King in representing Wiltshire Council on Adoption West Scrutiny Panel.

90 **Regular updates**

It was noted that because of school summer holidays, there were fewer regular updates for this meeting.

90a Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative

The Committee commended the report for demonstrating the wide range of work being supported by officers.

The written report was noted.

90b DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

The chair wished to remind the Committee about the recent announcement to scrap Ofsted single word judgements. Officers clarified that they were working with schools and keeping them informed of any developments.

The written report was noted.

90c Safety Valve update

Ben Stevens introduced and summarised the report and dashboard.

Councillors raised concerns over the manageability of the number of EHCPs, with officers clarified that the number of needs assessments was no longer increasing, describing it as an important step in

It was also clarified that teachers were being supported to feel “SEND confident”.

The written report was noted.

91 **Directors' update**

Kathryn Davies – Director for Education and Skills, updated the committee that Ofsted’s report into Adoption West should be available by 30 September, and that the outcome would be shared to the committee at its next meeting.

It was also stated on behalf of Jen Salter – Director for Families and Children, that she would be starting maternity leave in the next few weeks, with cover arrangements being developed and would be confirmed in the next week.

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

Cllr Peter Hutton updated the committee that he had attended the opening of Phoenix Grove in Melksham, a provision for 7–17-year-olds, and that Ofsted were due to give their “final sign-off” soon.

93 **Chair's update**

Cllr Jon Hubbard had given his apologies, and Vice-Chair Cllr Jacqui Lay had no updates.

93a Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates

There were no updates provided for this item.

94 **Forward Work Programme**

Through the chair, proposals were offered to the committee for potential addition to the Forward Work Programme:

- As mentioned in agenda item 4, following on from the temporary hold on their outreach service in August, to request a report to committee in November on progress being made in the delivery of Family Hubs now that we are 6 months into the contract.
- A rapid scrutiny to consider the impact of out of county education – highlighted on p135 of the agenda pack.
- A rapid scrutiny of service requirements/specifications before commissioning of preventative mental health services to support children and young people.

Resolved

To approve the Forward Work Programme with the proposed additions.

95 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on 26 November 2024.

96 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

97 **Glossary**

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.50 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk of Democratic Services, direct line 01225718215, e-mail max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Wiltshire Council

Select Committee

26th November 2024

Alternative Provision in Wiltshire

Proposal:

That the committee:

- a) Considers the activity and impact data on Alternative Provision presented in this report

Author: Teresa McIlroy – Strategic Lead for Alternative Provision

Contact details: teresa.mcilroy@wiltshire.gov.uk

Alternative Provision in Wiltshire

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To set out information on the Alternative Provision available in Wiltshire, known issues or gaps and development plans.

2.0 Background

2.1 Alternative provision is for learners who are not able to attend school due to their SEN/D, medical needs, as a result of exclusion from school, or who otherwise may not receive suitable education.

2.2 Alternative Provision is defined as education provision in which a pupil participates:

- as part of their regular timetable
- (typically) away from the site of the school and
- not led by school staff or by parents. (Ofsted 2016)

2.3 Pupil referral units (PRUs) are schools registered with the DfE to teach learners who aren't able to attend school and may not otherwise receive suitable education. Wiltshire does not have any pupil referral units within its school estate. Every provider of education that is not a maintained school or academy must be registered with the DfE as an 'independent school' if it provides full-time education to:

- five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or
- one such pupil who is looked-after, or
- one such pupil with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

2.4 The DfE requires any provider offering 18 hours per week to any pupil to be registered. Alternative Providers that do not meet these criteria are not required to be registered.

Currently there are two small independent DfE registered providers of AP for secondary aged learners in Wiltshire:

- Brunel College (Previously known as WASP) in Salisbury
- On Track in Westbury

3.0 Wiltshire Alternative Provision Strategic Plan 2022-24:

3.1 This co-produced strategy set out how AP is used across the school system including SEND to deliver the following priorities:

- To create a shared understanding with parents/carers, schools, and providers about when alternative provision may be appropriate, what is available in Wiltshire, and how it can be accessed.
- To ensure all pupils experience consistent and inclusive education that is sufficiently informed to meet needs through equitable access to inclusive pathways.
- To work with providers and schools to ensure a sufficiently broad-ranging, needs-led Alternative Provision that is fit for purpose in improving outcomes and post-16 rates of young people in Education Employment or Training (EET).
- To provide high quality alternative provision locally, operating alongside mainstream and special schools to meet the needs of Wiltshire pupils for some or all their education.
- To ensure all pupils provided with AP are offered their entitlement to suitable full-time education.

4.0 Completed Strategic AP Activity Summary

4.1 Wiltshire Approved Alternative Provision (WAAP) directory set up with robust quality assurance of prospective provision and annual review.

Providers apply to be listed on the WAAP Directory. The initial application process comprises a comprehensive questionnaire which details their business security and sustainability. The responses given must demonstrate that the required health and safety arrangements are in place and ensure that safeguarding practice is in line with requirements (Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Quality assurance visits are made to all settings as part of the application process. Providers are required to evidence their arrangements as per their responses in the application form. Subject to meeting the requirements, providers are issued with formal approval notification, prior to being listed on the published WAAP Directory.

The WAAP Directory provides information about the types of provision available locally. The information details the geographical area in which the provider operates, delivery mode, pricing structure and staff skill set. Each page carries a link to the provision's website (where available) so that commissioners can access additional detail.

4.2 Ongoing Quality Assurance

A cycle of review over one year includes on-site visits where appropriate (i.e. where the provision offered takes place at a setting and not solely online or in a learner's home). Providers are required to evidence appropriate safeguarding arrangements and progression of learners against agreed outcomes as set for individual learners. Providers who have not worked with any Wiltshire learners – on roll or Educated Other Than In School (EOTIS) - for two academic years, will be removed from the directory to reduce unnecessary ongoing quality assurance.

Any provider found to be operating below our QA standards is removed from the directory.

Two marketplace events were held where schools and commissioners explored what alternative provision is available in the local area and providers gained a better understanding about the needs of schools, learners (including SEND) and other commissioners.

To provide sufficiently broad-ranging, needs led alternative provision across Wiltshire, the Alternative Provision Team sought feedback from commissioners to identify areas of need for potential WAAP applicants to fulfil. This has informed the WAAP application process for 2024-25.

Procurement of a DfE registered alternative provision for the north of Wiltshire is currently in progress (The Northwood Centre).

Improvements in specialist place sufficiency in Wiltshire over the last 2 years has ensured impact for children 'right place, first time' which is also supporting a reduction in the need for alternative provision and/or for suspensions for EHCP learners.

4.3 All Wiltshire schools are asked are requested to report their use of alternative provision on a monthly basis to the Council's AP team.

Learners on a school roll

At the end of 2023/24, 81 schools reported there had been a total of 601 placements that had ended during the year:

Totals	Total Schools	Total Pupils	No SEN	SEN Support	EHCna	EHCP
Total	81	601	111 (18%)	162 (27%)	25 (4%)	303 (50%)
Primary	57	169	8 (5%)	39 (23%)	13 (8%)	109 (64%)
Secondary	24	432	103 (24%)	123 (28%)	12 (3%)	194 (45%)

Totals	FSM	CIN	CP	CLA	CLA
Total	251 (58%)	35 (8%)	5 (1%)	16 (4%)	16 (4%)
Primary	68 (16%)	8 (2%)	1 (0.2%)	3 (1%)	3 (1%)
Secondary	183 (42%)	27 (6%)	4 (1%)	13 (3%)	13 (3%)

Schools are asked to report on the outcomes of the placement when it has ended. Compliance with this request is strong and is reflective of the positive relationships which exist between schools and the local authority teams.

During 2023/24 over 70% of placements were recorded as having met the expected outcomes of the placement. The percentage of secondary placements for which no outcomes were met was significantly higher than primary placements and is an area for development with schools as commissioners of AP.

	Placements ended						Not Recorded (% total ended)
	(% of total where outcomes were recorded)						
	Total ended	All Outcomes Met	Some Outcomes Met	No Outcomes Met	Some Outcomes Partially Met	Pupil left the School	
Total	675	161 (37%)	161 (37%)	84 (19%)	12 (3%)	17 (4%)	240 (36%)
Primary	184	36 (39%)	38 (41%)	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	12 (13%)	92 (50%)
Secondary	491	125 (36%)	123 (36%)	83 (24%)	7 (2%)	5 (1%)	148 (30%)

The dataset showing the number of learners at AP and the number of current placements at AP across Wiltshire schools may not capture all school-commissioned AP. It is not statutory for schools to report this information to the council. However, the number of schools reporting has increased significantly over time.

4.4 All EOTIS (Educated Other Than In School) learners have a Learner's Intervention Plan created by the Alternative Provision Team which enables providers to target their support to meet specified outcomes.

All Wiltshire approved providers are required to complete weekly attendance returns for the EOTIS cohort, and this is monitored by the AP team. Attendance is discussed as part of the AP review meetings for learners.

For children with an EHCP and an EOTIS designation, the SEND Lead Worker leads on establishment of a suitable AP offer. For any learner permanently excluded from school, the AP team leads on provision from Day 6 and beyond.

All EOTIS learners have three Learner's Intervention Plan progress reviews across an academic year. The reviews also focus on next steps and transitioning planning. For learners with an EHCP one of these reviews will be their EHCP Annual Review.

Each learner's provision package is monitored by the AP team and consideration given to whether the learner is offered their entitlement to full-time education. Where the AP team considers that an EHCP learner's AP package is not sufficient, the team works closely with the SEND Lead Worker and providers in order to extend the provision offer.

Outcomes set in the LIP are linked to the learner's EHCP (where relevant) and focus on the skills and knowledge needed to support a return to a school setting or to transition to post 16 employment, education or training. The Wiltshire Council Post 16 Skills and Participation team works with the Preparation For Adulthood Team (PFA) within the SEND service to ensure information is shared that supports participation of all learners with an EHCP.

Since June 2024, 57 placements have been reviewed for 46 learners.

Total reviews	Total learners	Total outcomes reviewed	Outcomes met	Outcomes partially met	Outcomes not met	Total placements ended
Current EOTIS	36	548	147 (27%)	271 (49%)	88 (19%)	5
EOTIS ceased	10	125	56 (45%)	48 (38%)	21 (17%)	11

4.5 Behaviour Support Service (BSS) works with primary schools to build stronger collaboration between schools and providers by signposting schools to the WAAP directory and supporting documents to ensure they are aware of what approved provision is available. BSS also support schools with sourcing appropriate alternative provision and creating and reviewing Learner's Intervention Plans.

The primary behaviour support teachers (BSTs) monitor reporting of the use of AP in primary schools and work with schools to support regular reviews and to report closed placements where appropriate.

In some cases, where a BST is working closely with the school, funding is provided for alternative provision.

During 2023/24, of the 46 learners supported:

- 30 learners had been identified as being at risk of permanent exclusion and only 2 learners continued to be at risk of permanent exclusion at the end of the placement. No pupil supported in this way was permanently excluded. The purpose of these placements was both to prevent the need for permanent exclusion and to help identify what approaches and strategies work well, to inform the assessment process.
- 22 learners were supported while EHC needs assessment process was underway.

A Learner's Intervention Plan (LIP) is put in place for each learner supported in this way, which is reviewed at termly intervals with the school, the AP and the Behaviour Support Service.

As a measure of success, each of the learners supported during 2023/24 received fewer suspensions from school during the term following the start of placement at alternative provision than during the same period prior to the placement.

Learners' Intervention Plans - support for AP	Total Schools Supported		33	
	Total Placements Supported		36	
	Total Learners Supported		46	
	All outcomes met	4 (11%)	Some outcomes met	25 (69%)
	No outcomes met	1 (3%)	Not yet reviewed	6 (17%)

Primary behaviour support teachers support and advise primary schools to ensure every learner attending AP, commissioned by the school, has a LIP.

A Service Level Agreement with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has been established to support day 6 provision for primary aged permanently excluded learners.

4.6 Service Level Agreement for Secondary Schools – Devolved Inclusion Funding

Arrangements were made under the Wiltshire Council (Arrangements for the Provision of Suitable Education) Order in 2012, enabling the DfE's alternative provision trial to be set up. This Order facilitated an innovative project by Wiltshire Council ("the local authority") whereby funding related to the local authority duty to provide suitable full-time education to permanently excluded pupils to the governing bodies and proprietors was devolved to secondary schools for a period three years.

Following the end of the trial, secondary head teachers and governors chose to extend the contract which became a three year Service Level Agreement, the first one of which was in place between 2014-2017. This approach is set out and validated in the 2021 DfE research report 'responsibility-based models of decision-making, funding and commissioning for alternative provision'.

In 2020, co-production work with ISOS partnership and secondary headteachers led to establishment of a set of working principles which underpin the current Service Level Agreement whereby schools are committed to using funding to increase their inclusion offer and to prevent the need for permanent exclusion which includes the use of AP for those learners who need it to supplement the school's mainstream offer.

Schools who are part of the SLA participate in annual discussions about the use of funds received to review the impact and onboarding conversations take place with every headteacher and with MAT CEOs leading up to the end of an SLA period and before a new draft SLA is issued.

In 2023, one grammar school and one multi academy trust (two schools) chose not to be part of the current SLA.

Of the 26 secondary permanent exclusions in 2023/24, 20 were from these 3 schools (1 from the grammar school and 19 from the MAT). Funding not devolved to these 3 schools who remain outside the SLA has been used for AP for these learners permanently excluded. The recent increase in permanent exclusions is attributable to the decision of these schools to step outside of the model. Headteachers in the local area have responded with a strong moral purpose, working together to meet the needs of these permanently excluded young people and effectively support their inclusion.

Through our SEND transformation programme, a new team of secondary behaviour support teachers is being established (academic year 2024/25). This is being set up as a traded service running with a 100% subsidy for two years for all secondary schools. The new behaviour support teachers for secondary schools will build schools' capacity to meet the SEMH needs of learners, reducing the rate of suspension, especially for those young people with an EHCP. They will also support/advise secondary schools to ensure any learner attending AP commissioned by the school has a LIP with clearly defined outcomes.

All behaviour support teachers will work with the newly established team of MISAs (Mainstream Inclusion School Advisers) to ensure alternative provision commissioned by mainstream schools is planned for and used robustly within a graduated approach to meeting learners' identified social emotional and mental health needs.

4.7 The AP Team works collaboratively with teams in the Targeted Education Service and wider directorate to provide advice and support to schools and commissioners about suitable alternative provision, commissioning arrangements and monitoring of placements so that learners have access to suitable provision.

The extended duties (Virtual School) and the behaviour support teams have promoted the council guide 'Supporting inclusion of children with a social worker' to ensure joint working to prevent the need for suspension of learners with a social worker.

Work undertaken by the Post 16 Skills and Participation team with the targeted schools and the Education Employment Advisers in all schools, along with the work by SEND team for learners with an EHCP and for learners EOTIS (without an EHCP and due to permanent exclusion), support the planning and assessment of need focussing on transition and preparation for adulthood for older learners in alternative provision.

A draft Promoting Attendance and Managing Absence protocol is currently being co-created by Education Welfare and the AP Quality Team. It will be published at the end of November 2024 following consultation with teams within Education and Skills directorate, WPC and wider stakeholders.

Our highly effective FAP (Fair Access Protocol) process and commitment of school leaders to belonging means that we can respond quickly and effectively to identify appropriate provision for learners who have been permanently excluded.

Additional inclusion funding to support these transitions via AP is allocated by the Fair Access Panel and progress monitored by the panel (headteachers).

Training has been provided to the SEND team by the AP team to enable them to better support schools and families.

The Section 19 multi agency panel considers cases where the council has a responsibility for education for any Wiltshire learner and tracks progress at any alternative provision placement made towards outcomes.

4.8 The voice of the learner and their parents is heard and contributes to the set up and review of alternative provision placements.

The views of parents and the learner (where possible) are sought through discussion with the commissioner:

- as part of the commissioning process of alternative provision placements
- as part of the placement review meetings.

Consent is requested at the point of commissioning for parent details to be shared with Wiltshire Parent Carer Council, who contact parent carers to discuss what worked well and what could have been better in terms of:

- the setting up of the placement/s
- communication from providers about progress, reviews and transition arrangements
- views about whether their child felt valued and included in their school/provision community while at AP

Feedback from WPCC (first round of conversations has been held with parents during September 24) will contribute not only to casework with the individual learner (where appropriate) but to our wider quality assurance of providers, and to training for schools and providers as well as commissioners.

5.0 Evidence of Impact

- Wiltshire schools continue to have very low rates of permanent exclusion compared to the south-west and national rates.
- Rates of suspension in Wiltshire for learners with SEND (with and without an EHCP) reduced in 2023/24 compared to the previous year (internal data).

- No CLA has been permanently excluded in the past 5 year and suspensions for CLA with SEN (with and without an EHCP) have reduced from 2021/22 to 2022/23. Suspensions are below the national rate.
- Locally held data show a reduction in the rate of suspension between 2022/23 and 2023/24 of learners with a CiN plan and those with a CPP (from 6.2% to 6% and from 1.5% to 1.3% respectively).
- Analysis by Post 16 Skills and Participation team of post 16 outcomes for learners who have been at alternative provision when in Year 11 at school, for 2021 and 2022 shows 80% met the duty to participate in September 2021. Early tracking for learners in year 11 in 2023/24 indicate that that the numbers of young people in EET are high for the EHCP and SEN support cohorts.
- An SLA with Brunel College prevented two Wiltshire learners attending out of county schools from being permanently excluded.
- Reviews of EOTIS cases show that of 595 outcomes reviewed since June 2024, 82% were either met or partially met (30% totally met).
- Attendance returns from providers currently show average attendance at provision for learners who are EOTIS as 79% (144 placements) where returns are received. Of those returns, the attendance rate of 102 placements (71% of these placements) is over 90%. Of the 4 placements showing 0% attendance, action is being taken to review and change the placement, support the family and learner to attend. No learner is currently showing 0% at all provisions.
- The impact of this funding through the SLA with secondary schools and via BSS to primary schools is reflected in the permanent exclusion rate from Wiltshire schools which is consistently significantly lower than the national rate and compared to schools in the south-west.
- It also reflects an impressive inclusion commitment from these school leaders, that Wiltshire children belong in local Wiltshire schools, accessing support from those who know them (and their families) the best.

The strategic direction for alternative provision is now set out in our new strategic plan, Meeting Needs Together - [Our Plan for Children and Young People with SEND or in Alternative Provision in Wiltshire 2024-29](#)

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Date of report: 5th November 2024

Appendices

N/A

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26th November 2024

Reducing Inequalities in Schools/Affordable School Strategy

Strategy Outline

The Affordable Schools Strategy is a fully resourced, proactive programme which supports schools develop whole school, inclusive practice and address challenges such as pupil attendance, behaviour, attainment, health and wellbeing. The strategy was developed in the academic year 2022/23 through a collaborative process with Wiltshire schools (5 secondary and 6 primary crossing both the LA maintained and MAT sector). The Affordable Schools Strategy primarily aims to support schools enhance their vision, culture and leadership by:

- adopting a highly inclusive strategy which ensures all pupils have the opportunity to participate, learn and thrive
- receiving a full range of resources to support delivery including Affordable Schools Strategy and Toolkit, implementation plans, surveys (staff, parent, pupils), whole school training materials, website templates and content, wealth of ideas and support for development areas, resources and signposting
- understanding strategic improvement links to school vision, culture and values, SIAMS, Pupil Premium strategy and statement, key policy links and support, Healthy Schools, health and wellbeing
- being eligible to apply for an incremental Affordable Schools Award (Bronze, Silver and Gold) to evidence successful practice and whole school commitment

The Affordable Schools Strategy was launched at the Disadvantaged Learners Conference in September 2023 and repeated in September 2024. To date, 103 schools have attended training to adopt the strategy and given a feedback score of 4.89 out of 5.0 for impact.

A comprehensive toolkit and series of termly network meetings has been available to all schools adopting the strategy to support development of practice. 20 schools signed up to attend the termly 2023/24 network meetings with a feedback score of 5/5.

The Affordable Schools Strategy has gained national recognition being described by Marc Rowland (foremost national expert on the effective use of Pupil Premium and improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners, author, Government Advisor, EEF) saying, '*The Affordable Schools programme provides a rigorous, well-planned framework and implementation resources to ensure schools are equitable. The team that has developed the programme are values led, rooted in the realities of school life. It is a brilliant programme that helps pupils and practitioners to thrive together.*'

Wiltshire were invited to attend the One Cornwall Attendance Conference (October 2023) to share the principles and activities of the Affordable Schools Strategy at the launch of their attendance project. The strategy has meaningfully connected with organisations such as the team at the Devizes District Foodbank (with their

Affordable Uniform Pledge), been discussed with Hampshire County Council who are keen to learn from our Affordable Schools approach and widely shared across our own service areas, such as with Public Health.

Participating schools are eligible to apply for an Affordable Schools Award (Bronze, Silver and Gold) which is now open for the first round of school applications and hosted on the same platform as Wiltshire Healthy Schools Award and Young Carers Award.

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Affordable Schools Strategy

Primary





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Foreword

Welcome to the Affordable Schools strategy and the opportunity to embark on a strategic school improvement journey which ensures all pupils have the opportunity to participate, learn and thrive. Designed with schools, for schools, this accessible guide brings together a large collection of ideas, experiences and practical suggestions to help schools build a universal, equitable approach, 'through the lens of affordability'.

We are especially grateful to our Wiltshire Pupil Premium Partner schools for their time, commitment and expertise in bringing the Affordable Schools strategy to life. Notably our thanks go to:

- Ashton Keynes CE Primary
- Greentrees Primary
- Manor Fields Primary
- Pembroke Park Primary
- St Michael's CE Primary.

Thank you also for your commitment to becoming an Affordable School. Schools are the change makers at the heart of each community and every day, in every interaction, it is in our gift to bring about the change required to steadily overcome the challenges of disadvantage; together we will make a difference.

Kate Wilkins (Wiltshire Disadvantaged Learners Lead & School Leadership)

Vicky Gordon (Wiltshire Vulnerable Pupils Advisor and SIA)

Affordable Schools: the background

The impact of poverty is one of the most significant barriers to overcome when improving the life chances of our most vulnerable learners. It is the strongest statistical predictor of how well a child will achieve at school but rarely has a single cause. Some children are born into poverty, while the lives of others may be shaped by life events which impact on financial stability, such as taking on a caring role, parent separation, bereavement, illness and changes to employment.

It is helpful to think about the barriers facing students in poverty as interconnected 'binds' which restrict and impact their educational journey. Children's efforts to negotiate these binds often have unintended negative consequences; e.g. parental job loss can prompt a move of home and school, in seeking social acceptance and belonging the child prioritises peer approval over success within the school where they have a weaker sense of fitting in and belonging, or the child doesn't tell Mum about the school trip because she knows Mum can't afford to pay for it. (Brown 2014)

What is Affordable Schools?

We recognise that, to authentically ensure equitable education for all our children, we must work in partnership to bring about system change, so a brighter future is a right for all, and not a privilege for some. The Affordable Schools strategy is a fully resourced, universal, non-stigmatising and proactive approach which will empower schools to:

- Develop a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty
- Make universal, positive changes to policies and practices that will improve the experience of all, especially the most vulnerable.

The 'Affordable Schools' strategy is built on a set of **guiding principles**, ensuring that every day, in all our interactions, we take advantage of opportunities to challenge and steadily overcome the effects of disadvantage

- An Affordable School is committed to reducing poverty related stigma by deliberately making positive changes to every aspect of school policy and practice through the lens of affordability
- Any 'affordable' provision is a universal provision: we cannot be certain at any one time which families, or members of the school community, are experiencing financial hardship so our policies and practice should not identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions
- Being 'affordable' means being creative and solutions focused to ensure our provision and curriculum offer is always easily accessible to all students, without limiting the quality of education
- Relationships are key to the success of the Affordable Schools strategy
- Strong leadership and positive action will make a difference to our school communities.

The **Affordable Schools** strategy draws widely on information and resources published by:

The Children's Society

The Children's Society a United Kingdom national children's charity allied to the Church of England. The charity's objectives are to improve the lives of children and young people and the related social attitudes [The Children's Society - UK children's charity \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

Child Poverty Action Group is a UK charity that works to alleviate poverty and social exclusion [CPAG - Home](https://www.cpag.org.uk/)

Children North East (Poverty Proofing)

Supporters, professionals and volunteers who have been changing the lives of babies, children, young people and families across the North East for 130 years [Homepage - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](https://www.children-ne.org.uk/)

“It doesn’t matter how great an educational idea or intervention is in principle; what really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day work of people in schools.”

EEF Implementation Guidance Report 2019

The ‘Affordable Schools’ strategy is designed to fully support schools from the initial organisation and launch of the strategy through to securing sustained improvement which brings about deep and lasting change. While every school is different, there are common themes and needs across our settings which will be met through effective implementation as an on-going process rather than one-off event. By using the wide range of resources, guidance documents and planning materials which are available in the ‘Affordable Schools Toolkit’, we aim to deliver high quality, universal provision which benefits all, especially the most vulnerable. An [Implementation Plan](#) is included in the ‘[Strategic Plans and Resources](#)’ section of the toolkit on Wiltshire Right Choice to support effective implementation.

The Affordable Schools Handbook and Toolkit is organised into 4 themed areas:

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnership

Each themed area has been broken down into key principles, common barriers, questions to explore, relevant policies, quick wins, ‘digging deeper’ strategies and resources. The statements and suggestions within each area provide useful hooks for schools to plan improvement; they are not exhaustive and can be used flexibly to meet the priorities of schools. Schools should aim to prioritise areas identified for improvement and build the strategy over a period of time (recommend 3 years for fully embedded culture and practice).

Affordable Schools theme	Coverage
Resourcing the School Day	Exploring, through a 'cost of living' lens, the demands of the school day and how to bring about positive change to policy and practice
Enrichment and Opportunities	A broad, rich and equitable offer at the heart of every school community with strategies deliberately designed to ensure access for all
Healthy Body, Healthy Mind	Considering equitable school provision which nurtures children and ensures basic needs are met so they thrive as learners in the classroom
Securing Positive Partnerships	Strong partnerships and relationships as central to securing whole school community success with strategies to promote engagement and improve outcomes

Key policies are highlighted in each themed section so that schools can prioritise these for review and make any necessary changes to practice and procedure. The following statement can be included in all policies which have been reviewed 'through the lens of affordability' to reflect the **Affordable Schools** commitment.

This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.

Groundwork

Working group identified. All staff awareness and buy in

Information gathering

Audit of costs throughout school

Staff views on costs, barriers and solutions

Pupil views on costs, barriers and solutions

Parent carer views on costs barriers and solutions

Analysis

What are the main issues? What do we focus on?

Action

Actions to tackle barriers identified



Reflecting on the following questions can help you consider the best ways to mitigate the effects of poverty in your school, particularly as a result of the pandemic and growing cost of living crisis.

- How affordable is your school? How confident are you that children and families feel that they will be met with understanding and empathy if in need of support?
- How effective is your Charging and Remissions policy in acknowledging poverty related stigma and highlighting your commitment to support lower income families?
- How effectively are financial entitlements like Free School Meals and support grants for families on low incomes being promoted to families? Do all families in the school know what is available if it is needed? Are there processes in place to support families to apply for and benefit from extra help?
- How are you communicating with families to find out what resources are needed for children to learn? What processes are in place to provide resources for all children who need them?
- To what extent are school policies and practices designed to reduce financial pressure on families and include children and young people on low incomes? Are there particular practices or policies that could be established or reinstated that have clear benefits for low income families, for example extended school services such as after school clubs?
- Is there a shared and assumption free culture which understands differing home circumstances and how they may impact on pupils' attitudes and learning (e.g. parents being 'time poor' due to shift working/additional hours etc rather than lack of interest)?

The Affordable Schools toolkit, hosted on the resource page on Right Choice, contains information, guidance materials and resources to support schools to effectively implement and deliver the Affordable Schools strategy. The Affordable Schools toolkit is designed to support school leaders and staff with conversations and activities which will embed the principles of an Affordable School, alongside providing comprehensive case studies of effective implementation.

Vision, Strategy and Implementation

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnerships

Go to: <https://rightchoice.wiltshire.gov.uk/P30675>

Becoming an **Affordable School** requires a shared understanding and acknowledgement of how important 'affordability' is in all parts of school life. Ensuring that a rich and broad education is affordable for all, is **everybody's responsibility**.

Evaluating activities to see whether they are achieving their aims is crucial, but in practice can often be overlooked. To support practice, an Affordable Schools audit is included within the toolkit to help schools understand how 'affordable' they are in their approach and what else can be done to reduce poverty related stigma.

There are eight sections to the audit. Each section has been designed to give school teams opportunities to reflect on practice and secure the most appropriate next steps to help a school on their journey to becoming '**Affordable Schools Aware**'.

- School leaders are visibly committed to making their school 'Affordable'
- School ethos and culture
- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Pupil voice
- Staff professional development.
- Monitoring impact
- Working with parents and carers
- Targeted support

Once schools have completed one year of their Affordable Schools journey, they will be eligible to apply for an 'Affordable Schools' mark which can be displayed on your school website and other areas to celebrate successful practice and communicate your commitment to universal 'affordability' practice which meets the needs of your school community. The 'Affordable Schools' mark will build through Bronze, Silver and Gold for each year of your commitment to the strategy and evidence of impact.

Year one Bronze

Adopt and implement Affordable Schools strategy



Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Year two Silver

Deepen practice and on-going evidence of impact



Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Year three Gold

Sustained, culturally embedded practice with notable impact on outcomes



Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Exploring, through a 'cost of living' lens, the demands of the school day and how to bring about positive change to policy and practice.

Rationale

1. Access to the full curriculum and all learning tasks, wherever possible, is designed to require no financial outlay and reasons for non-completion of tasks/homework, and not having the correct equipment, are assessed through the lens of affordability.
2. Active measures are taken to support a student where their external circumstances present them with additional challenges that would prevent or hinder being ready to learn.
3. Parents should not have to consider the cost of a school uniform when choosing which school(s) to apply for. Therefore, schools need to ensure that their uniform is affordable. 'Where a school's uniform is too expensive it can place an unreasonable burden on families. No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to, or attend, a school of their choice, due to the cost of the uniform.' [School uniforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).
4. We are mindful of the DfE Pupil Premium guidance 'Schools may be justified in funding items not listed where this is necessary to overcome specific barriers to student attainment, for example to meet acute needs around student equipment to ensure readiness to learn' which emphasises the importance of a nuanced and robust process for identifying needs. [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk).
5. Schools should commit to an assumption free culture in order to be sure we take a personalised, relational approach. (CPAG 'Don't assume families are ok financially. Instead, show everyone that you are aware of hidden poverty and explain the support that's out there, so nobody gets missed'.)
6. Schools should have a clear understanding of the total cost and commitment required by families to ensure full participation, including: uniform, equipment, themed days and events, celebrations and special occasions, cake days, fairs and fetes, Christmas, non-school uniform/dress up days etc.
7. Every child should feel like they belong – especially at school. A school's uniform can bring the school community together and create a shared identity. But when school uniforms are too expensive, this doesn't happen.

Questions to explore

- What does it feel like to be a pupil in your school (day in the life of...)?
- Can all students access all elements of the curriculum irrespective of their financial circumstances? What does student/parent voice tell us?
- Are students required to bring in their own pencil cases or other equipment from home?
- Is uniform affordable and information readily available on your school website?
- How often do uniform sales take place?
- What pre-loved uniform provision is available at your school students and families access it?
- Can parents buy uniform from supermarkets, or do they have to go to a single, specialist supplier?
- How do we identify families who would need support?
- How easy is it for families to purchase or order?
- What resources are required for students to complete their homework currently and do we consider impact on financial circumstances?
- Have we considered what families have available on a daily basis (e.g. computers, paper etc) and are we satisfied that we keep up to date without understanding of family circumstances to be confident of equitable access for all?
- What support is available for those who may not have these resources at home?
- Are there opportunities for students to complete their homework in school if they face barriers at home?
- How equitable is the homework policy – what prevailing culture does it communicate?
- What happens if children don't have the correct uniform? Are staff responses consistent and delivered 'through the lens of affordability'?
- Are children sanctioned if they don't have the correct uniform, shoes, PE kit etc?
- Can children take part if they don't have the correct clothing?
- Have transport costs been considered? How do pupils get to school?
- If the school offers support with transport costs, who benefits?

Key policies to be reviewed

- Charging and Remissions
- Uniform and equipment - Statutory guidance: [cost of school uniforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) , non-statutory guidance [School uniforms: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Home learning agreement
- Behaviour in schools (school response and sanctions).

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Common Barriers

- Expense of compulsory school uniform
- No pre-loved uniform available
- Lack of washing facilities in the home
- Requirement to have specialist equipment for residentials or events e.g. sleeping bags
- Sanctions in place for students who do not bring their PE kit to school or do not have the correct uniform, which leads to pupils feeling disengaged
- Expense of day-to-day resources (pens, pencil cases etc) when the prevailing culture expects 'bring from home'
- Expense of resources linked to the curriculum/enrichment such as money for cookery ingredients (extras) or special kit for an after school sport activity
- Expense of text books and revision resources linked to the curriculum
- Homework requires a suitable place to work, resources from home or digital access esp. phones and competing family needs for technology
- Homework requires specific/time consuming support from an adult e.g. projects (living in poverty puts stress on a family. Parents may be holding down multiple jobs, working difficult shifts)
- Broadband issue or getting enough easy access to the Internet
- Time to complete the homework or competing family needs (caring role)
- More than one child in the family home competing for resources (multiplying cost).

Linked policies and guidance documents

- Accessibility
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour in schools
- Charging and remissions
- Health and safety
- Uniform and equipment
- Home/school agreement
- Pupil premium statement
- School travel plan
- SEND/inclusion
- Homework/home learning
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions.

Quick wins

- Establish a prominent 'Affordable Schools' space on your school website and populate using materials from the Affordable Schools toolkit (template, model wording, resources)
- Establish a dedicated email address where students and families can communicate challenges which they have around resources, uniform, equipment (e.g. affordability@aschool.co.uk). Explain that this email address will be viewed only by x member(s) of staff (someone with seniority and a visible, positive relationship with parents) and confidentiality maintained when providing support
- Ensure non-uniform events (Christmas jumper day) have minimal expectations and that these are well communicated. If there is a more specific requirement make sure this resource is available free of charge for all families (universal)
- Review the cost of the school day using the calendar and identify events and activities which could be quickly considered to align with your Affordable Schools commitment (NB there will be some quick wins here but also necessary for a longer term 'digging deeper' approach) <https://children-ne.org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day-calendar-2022-23/>
- Design after-school clubs through the lens of affordability and provide resources, as appropriate
- Provide easy access to digital resources for students experiencing digital poverty or with competing family needs e.g. homework/study clubs, cyber cafes during school or after school
- Use more than just online resources to communicate homework tasks

- Offer opportunities to complete homework in school through breakfast club, after school clubs or a lunchtime homework hub
- Have a clear approach and consistent response to issues regarding incomplete homework so that children who would be challenged to complete homework on time are supported (e.g. free homework club is available, support in place for young carers)
- Provide pots of pens and pencils in all classrooms, replenish regularly
- Through the 'lens of affordability', consider special occasions, such as children's birthdays and end of year gifts for teachers, and design an approach which reduces poverty related stigma (e.g. an Amazon 'wish list' where families can optionally purchase a gift for the class instead of directly giving a gift to the teacher; each child is given a piece of card and access to materials where they could make a card to say 'thank you' if they wished)
- Run fairs and events during the school day so all children can attend and help with the stalls and give every child a 'Free Go' ticket so they can go on a ride or play a game
- Review non-school uniform days and requests for donations to charities etc. Could pupils work together to make something which would raise money?
- Remove highly visible collection points – charity donations, bring something for Harvest etc – which may expose pupils who are unable to make a donation
- Provide vouchers for cake days so everyone has the same
- Consider school fun events through the lens of affordability and ensure arrangements are in place to mitigate against risk of exclusion or poverty related stigma (e.g. free entry to school discos/Christmas Fair, free refreshments, end of year celebrations etc)
- Use the Sports Premium Grant to buy kit and boots so that participation in school sports clubs is not affected by lack of resources
- Make sanitary products readily available.

Digging deeper

Ensure a clear understanding of the total cost and commitment required by families to ensure full participation, including: uniform, equipment, themed days and events, celebrations and special occasions, cake days, fairs and fetes, Christmas, non-school uniform/dress up days etc.

<https://children-ne.org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day-calendar-2022-23/>

Review of uniform policy to include:

- Keep use of branded uniform items to a minimum
- Ensure that uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money (including the quality and durability of the garment)
- Ensure the majority of uniform items, and PE clothes, can be purchased from affordable sources such as supermarkets e.g. remove the need for logos at all or limit to a key item
- Remove blurred lines around shoe choice e.g. commit to no brands and black but don't worry about the style (inc. black trainers)
- Fund logo items for all FSM students to match the expectations for all
- Simplify uniform requirements e.g. black leggings rather than a specific type
- Avoid parents having to duplicate items to fit with the school policy (e.g. particular bags, coats)
- Ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire and information on second-hand uniforms should be clear for parents of current and prospective pupils and published on the school's website
- Create a pre-loved uniform store in school – link to reducing environmental impact so the stigma is removed e.g. Monday school rails or hand-down uniforms at the end of year 6 – ensure uniform is clean and name labels removed
- Consider how to link with other organisations or sponsors to provide PE kit, uniforms, boots/ trainers/ swim wear & towels and other related items of equipment provided at the start of the year(or vouchers or starting school bundles).

Equipment:

- Consider how to reduce stigma and bullying associated with possessions brought into school e.g. basic equipment such as bags / pencil cases / water bottles / items associated with fashions and trends etc
- Consider how to establish a prevailing culture where stationery i.e. bags, pens/ pencils, colouring items, rulers, calculators, other mathematical equipment, pencil cases are school resources rather than bought from home

- Explore fund-raising options that can subsidise the cost of full participation in school life for pupils living in poverty
- Review curriculum areas through the lens of affordability so cooking ingredients, dishes, carrying containers, fabrics etc are supplied
- Ensure that revision guides or additional support materials are loaned/ provided at no cost
- Establish an “equipment lending library” for residentials, forest school and LOTC activities - Collect some garments and equipment that can be loaned, such as waterproofs, hats, small rucksacks etc. This can be supported by encouraging families to speak to relatives or friends to be able to borrow equipment
- Have a readily available supply of spare coats, wellington boots, gloves, scarfs etc.

Homework:

- Profile homework/curriculum activities to understand what is being asked of pupils and parents and make reasonable adjustments (e.g. gathering together resources for projects, need for internet access and a computer, junk modelling activities)
- Establish a resource area where resources can be taken home e.g. when completing a creative homework task
- Agree a homework policy that prioritises practice or overlearning of essential skills taught in school which require limited resources (e.g. times tables, spellings and reading)
- Provide a menu of homework ideas rather than one specific task
- Assign family support workers (or similar) to build strong relationships with families around homework
- Link with other agencies to provide training for parents e.g. Wiltshire Family Learning
- Develop how pupils learn skills that allow them to work independently - link to transition projects with secondary schools and implement metacognition and self-regulation training for staff and parents/carers.

Behavior:

Reviewing the Behaviour Policy through the lens of affordability to reflect:

- Build positive relationships with individuals with a culture focused on anticipating pupil needs and taking a positive, solutions focused approach

- Profile pupils who are regularly wearing incorrect uniform/not having the correct equipment to understand the root causes and consider actions which can be taken to mitigate against this and the risk of poverty related stigma
- Fully establish a shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families which enables all staff to respond sensitively to individual pupil circumstances and enables flexibility of response.

Transport:

- Profile your school community to understand the geographical spread and challenges 'through the lens of affordability' which may affect attendance and punctuality or attendance at after school clubs etc
- Take a creative, solutions focused approach to address the identified challenges, on a case by case basis.

Resources

School uniform:

Statutory guidance: Cost of school uniforms - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Non-statutory guidance: School uniforms: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-law-to-make-school-uniform-costs-affordable-for-all>

The Children's Society, Child Poverty Action Group and **Children North East** joined forces to share some ideas and good practice to show how, with some adjustments to policies and practices, schools can relieve the pressure of uniform costs on children and their families.

<https://cpag.org.uk/affordable-school-uniforms-guide>

<https://www.headteacher-update.com/best-practice-article/making-school-uniforms-affordable-a-case-study-cost-of-living-crisis-poverty-guidance-parents-families/248160/>

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/family-learning>

<https://www.shinecharity.org.uk/starting-secondary-school/supporting-your-childs-development-at-home-12-to-19-years>

<https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk> – help fund the purchase of puddle suits

Period Poverty:

Period product scheme for schools and colleges in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Affordable Schools: Resourcing the school day at **Greentrees Primary School**

Greentrees is a large thriving primary school with a Resource Base, situated in Salisbury. The school supports an area of significant deprivation with 18% of their children in receipt of pupil premium. The school team understands the needs in their community and how hard it is for their families to finance resources for their children, so they come to school ready to learn.

As part of their 'Affordable Schools' strategy development, the team has made some significant changes to their expectations around school uniform, which have been met with huge support from the community.

The school, had already made some changes to how they approach school uniform but the Affordable School strategy allowed them to fully implement a strategic approach.

The school team started by:

- Building a shared vision for Affordable Schools through surveys and staff meetings
- Building a team around Affordable Schools, and begin to unpick barriers (one of which was uniform)
- Reviewing the uniform policy in light of staff, pupil and parent voice.

This review of the uniform policy and the surveys has resulted in the school team being able to make some key changes including:

- Removal of the requirement for pupils to wear branded items with school logo
- Removal of requirement to wear school P.E. kit
- Allowing pupils to wear black trainers.

Affordable Schools: Resourcing the school day at
Greentrees Primary School

Impact

These changes have been well supported by all members of the community:

'The stigma of wearing non-branded items has gone as more children are wearing them.'

Teacher at Greentrees

'It saves time because we don't have to change shoes to play football at break and we don't have to change back into our school shoes afterwards – we can just go straight into lessons'.

Pupil at Greentrees

'Thanks so much to FrOGS (PTA) for arranging the (uniform) sale. Saved me having to buy new things for just a few months.'

'Thanks for the change re the trainers – so sensible and such a help to parents.'

'Such good news about the trainers. Makes perfect sense.'

Parents at Greentrees

Greentrees Primary School has looked at uniform through the 'lens of affordability' and taken sensible steps which, in turn, has made a huge difference to children and their families.



ENRICHMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

A broad, rich and equitable offer at the heart of every school community with strategies deliberately designed to ensure access for all.

Rationale

- Enrichment policy, practice and process should be reviewed through the lens of affordability so that it meets the needs of the wider school community and individuals
- Active measures should be taken to ensure extra-curricular activities are planned through the lens of affordability without causing embarrassment and stigma. This will ensure students can access all available activities and do not have to make choices based on price and equipment needed
- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Extra-curricular activities, including sport, outdoor activities, arts and culture, for example music lessons and school trips' [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- By thinking creatively, many enrichment opportunities and experiences can be provided free of charge and the school is committed to this approach where possible.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Enrichment/extra-curriculum activity
- Educational Visits/Learning Outside The Classroom (LOTTC).

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Questions to explore

- What do you have planned for the academic year, what are the costs involved in these activities and how much will families be asked to contribute?
- How do you communicate with families about the curriculum and enrichment offer and financial support which is available?
- How can you ensure that families have enough time to pay for school activities and events?
- Are plans for educational visits across the year mindful of overall cumulative costs to parents? i.e. balance local low / no cost activities with activities further afield that include costs?

- How do you track enrichment, take-up of clubs, and pupil participation?
- Who does and doesn't take part in clubs? Are there any patterns by income? How could you improve engagement?
- Does the school offer transport or assistance for pupils to attend extracurricular activities? (after-school clubs, supported study)
- Is there resilience within school finances to ensure that students receive the curriculum entitlement, and enrichment, through LOTC opportunities?

Common barriers

- High cost school trips which place pressures on pupils from lower income families
- Level of cost associated with after school clubs/curriculum/enrichment/materials
- Families not given enough notice when trips, extra-curricular activities and fundraising events are organised
- Cost of travel, or travel logistics, to and from after school activities
- Parents may not have regular online access, or be time poor, so struggle to sign up for activities within allocated time frames
- Pupils may be anxious about the cost of some activities because they know this may place undue financial pressures on their family
- Families may struggle to prioritise competing needs of several family members
- Students may miss out on regular physical exercise opportunities, due to affordability
- Lack of consideration 'through the lens of affordability' about experiences and cultural capital which pupils bring to learning in the classroom (e.g. asking children to write about what they did at the weekend/during the holiday etc)
- Access to activities and enrichment experiences during the school holiday.

Policies

- Educational Visits
- Anti-bullying
- Accessibility
- Careers education
- Attendance
- Charging and remissions.
- Pupil Premium Statement
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Behaviour in schools
- Health and Safety

Quick wins

- Offer a range of clubs at lunchtimes
- Use a portion of PPG funding (wider strategies) to help vulnerable students access high-cost activities
- Spread the cost of visits and activities using Parent Pay (or similar) and payment plans
- Introduce a voucher system for spending money on residential trips e.g. all students have vouchers to spend (some students will be provided with vouchers whereas others will pay for the vouchers)
- Access the heavily subsidised music tuition service (Wiltshire Music Connect)
- Always ensure a minimum expectation of applications for a trip are taken up by vulnerable pupils (schools set own % targets)
- Consider the ease and equity of your sign-up system for clubs and activities to understand whether it advantages those who are already advantaged (e.g. if first come, first served then is it the same families who are always at the front of the queue?)
- Consider the geography of your school community and identify whether there are any pupils and families where transport may be a barrier to accessing extra-curricular activities
- Consider providing taxis or use the school mini bus to transport children home after clubs
- Engage with organisations, such as Platform who provide free [workshops](#), [train-trips](#), and bespoke, local [resources](#) to support schools in building cultural capital with out-of-classroom experiences
- Locality should be considered as a useful LOTC resource for frequent LOTC opportunities. Low cost and local often go together

- Create a lending library of craft materials, board games, popular magazines, outdoor games & activities, dressing up etc and establish a system built around equitable access
- Prioritise reading, and love of reading, and make access to books readily available ('Reading can achieve something teachers and policymakers have been attempting for decades: to lessen or even eliminate the impact of early life disadvantage'. Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP)
- Ensure information and sign up to all holiday club activities (e.g. FUEL)
- Make full use of the school grounds and organise on site 'Learning Outside the Classroom' activities and residential experience opportunities (e.g. a sleep over in school).

Digging deeper

Strategically review all aspects of enrichment policy and practice to identify pressure points for pupils and families including taking account of the following strategies:

- Create a fully costed calendar of enrichment and extra-curricular events for each year group to help understand the cost of a year and what that would equate to on a weekly/monthly basis
- Identify cost saving measures which could be taken to reduce overall affordability (e.g. cluster/partner school collaboration, staff expertise, transport sharing, resource sharing etc)
- Clearly communicate the fully costed curriculum/enrichment offer at the start of the year and provide options for an appropriate payment schedule which spreads the cost and secures greater affordability (e.g. costed menu with option to spread into monthly instalments) or, as a minimum, ensure cost of activities is communicated with strong consideration given to providing notice (e.g. provide at least a year's notice for trips abroad or high expense activities)
- Ring-fence monies, identify charities, community groups, organisations and bursaries which can finance/supplement high cost activities
- Track take up of residential, enrichment and extra-curricular activities to ensure equitable access to the opportunities on offer; act quickly to ensure no child is left behind (this could be linked to a pupil entitlement charter)
- Approach/offer sign up to vulnerable families first; do not rely on all parents being able to respond to systems such as a 'first come first serve' approach
- LOTC opportunities further afield will provide the support, enrichment and extension needed for students. Consider the curriculum links to LOTC and the visits that would provide cross-curricular support, life skills links and enhancement of prior learning, i.e. which visits are the most cost effective in terms of the impact gained to support student progress

- Consider costs of an educational visit as a group issue rather than an individual participant responsibility and organise fundraising activities on a group basis to subsidise or wholly fund the visit
- Adopt an 11 by 11, or activity passport, approach with activities (many no cost) which inspire children's ability to problem-solve, see or visit new places and develop wide interests in new subjects (e.g. Get soaking wet in the rain, skim stones, build a den, see the sun rise/sun set, make a home for an insect or small creature, roll down a hill, take part in a treasure hunt etc)
- Approach the PTA / Friends of School to help access charitable trust funding.

Resources

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom <https://www.lotc.org.uk/>

Learning through Landscapes (school grounds educational charity) <https://www.ltl.org.uk>

Low cost models for Residential Visits <https://www.learningaway.org.uk/free-resources/lower-cost-models/>

<https://wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk/schools/inst-vocal/subsidies/>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment>

<https://governorsforschools.org.uk/blog/enriching-experiences-for-every-child/>

Home - Platform (platformrail.org)

50 things to do before you're 11¾ activity list | National Trust

My activity passport - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

EEF enrichment tracker

FUEL is the holiday activity and food programme funded by Department of Education and aims to provide children who are eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM) with free access to enriching activities, nutritious meals and healthy eating information during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.
 FUEL programme - Wiltshire Council

Oxfam's Global Citizenship Curriculum: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620105/edu-global-citizenship-schools-guide-091115-en.pdf?sequence=11&isAllowed=y>

Affordable Schools: Enrichment and opportunities at Manor Fields Primary School, Salisbury

Manor Fields Primary School is a thriving inclusive school in Salisbury with a Resource Base. The school has witnessed first-hand the impact of increased austerity and has taken action to combat the impact of deprivation by implementing 'Affordable Schools' and building an 'affordable' approach to enrichment. After building a team around the Affordable Schools Strategy, Manor Fields invested time in collecting the views of parents, pupils and staff around the affordability of school. This feedback prompted the development of a number of actions including:

- An affordability section in the family handbook, school newsletters and on the school website;
- An overview of all trips for the year available at 'Meet the Teacher' events in September – including cost and payment options;
- A thorough review of enrichment activities and their affordability.

The review, led to further developments to the school's Enrichment strategy such as:

- Securing PTFA commitment to subsidise agreed events
- Building a bank of resources that can be borrowed for trips and events such as sleeping bags, lunch boxes, wellies, sports kit and dressing up clothes
- Ensuring, where possible, events are combined to reduce the amount of hours parents and carers need to take off work
- Using Evolve to complete post event analysis.

Impact

Already, the impact is tangible. The Manor Fields team share a deeper understanding of the barriers linked to affordability:

"Over time, our financial commitment to securing 100% participation has seen a significant reduction in the number of families who do not make a contribution".
School Business Manager.

"We take so much for granted and forget how difficult it can be to manage the pennies".
Chair of Finance and Staffing

Most importantly, Manor Fields are making it easier for their families.

"Me and my mum do worry a bit about money but know I'll be able to join in".
Manor Fields Pupil

Together, Manor Fields are making a difference.

Affordable Schools: Enrichment and opportunities at St Michael's CE Primary School

St Michael's is a highly successful village primary school in Aldbourne. Whilst Aldbourne is a relatively affluent area, this is not every child's experience. The team at St Michael's recognise that they need to work harder to ensure poverty related stigma does not play its part when designing their curriculum and asking families to resource their children.

The team at St Michael's has recognised that a significant challenge facing their disadvantaged pupils has been emotional stability and self-regulation. 74% of their disadvantaged learners are emotionally vulnerable. Whilst the team has been looking at ways to support this area for some time, the 'Affordable Schools' strategy gave them the opportunity to look again at their strategies through a different lens.

St Michael's used the Affordable Schools implementation plan to fully understand the links between social and emotional learning and poverty related stigma. Their implementation included:

- Surveying their staff, parents, carers and pupils
- Building a team around Affordable Schools with the specific focus on social and emotional learning interventions
- Building a deeper understanding of what was already in place and strengthen practice through the lens of affordability.

The specific review of their Forest Schools programme, along with a broader understanding of the impact of limited finances for some families allowed them to make tweaks to their programme such as:

- Providing Forest Schools clothing
- Washing clothes for children when things get muddy
- Ensuring the Forest school cycle prioritises those children who need this experience the most, and maintaining this so these children get regular access
- Developing staff awareness around the value of Forest Schools – anxious children can't learn.

Affordable Schools: Enrichment and opportunities at
St Michael's CE Primary School

Impact

St Michael's has used the Affordable Schools Strategy to enhance their existing work around Forest Schools. This had embedded the positive impact and provided the school with some exciting feedback:

"It gives me a boost in my confidence - I feel happy, calm, not stressed."

"Forest School gives me the chance to calm down and fix arguments."

St Michael's Pupils

"I can tell if he has been in the forest - you can physically see it in him, he is relaxed. He says, 'it is my happy place'".

Parents at St Michael's

St Michael's has recognised the value of looking at a strategy through a different lens. This has ensured that every day, in every interaction the team is steadily reducing the impact of having to live with less available resources.



Considering equitable school provision which nurtures children and ensures basic needs are met so they thrive as learners in the classroom.

Rationale

- An Affordable School will mitigate against the causes, barriers and challenges faced by lower income families and devise strategies to address the impact on mental health and wellbeing
- An Affordable School will operate with transparency and take active measures to address challenges presented by food poverty (e.g. availability and costings of food so pupils can make personal judgements about affordability)
- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Breakfast clubs and meal provision' [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/parental-views)
- Exploring poverty and inequality and thinking about how to make their environment more inclusive for all can also support children's participation, voice and activism around social issues.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Food and nutrition
- Anti-bullying
- PSHE & Citizenship.

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Questions to explore

- Can students at your school identify which of their peers are in receipt of free school meals?
- What do students think of their school lunch experience?
- How do we collect insights into what students think of lunchtime at your school?
- Do students on free school meals have the same school food options as their peers, including at break times and at different times of the year?
- Do all students take up their free school meal entitlement?
- How effective is your food policy and has it been considered through the lens of affordability?

- How can we best use foodbanks?
- How is the school providing visible senior leadership for the impact of poverty related stigma on mental health and wellbeing?
- How does the school anti-bullying policy respond to incidents which are related to poverty?
- How does the school assess the needs of students and the impact of interventions to improve wellbeing and reduce poverty related stigma?
- How does the school ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services?
- Are pupils able to access a wide range of physical activities and opportunities inside and outside of school to improve mental and physical health?
- How do we design our curriculum to enable discussion and development around:
 - Reasons behind inequalities in society
 - Causes and consequences of poverty
 - The social security system and welfare reform
 - Poverty and children's rights
 - Food insecurity.
 - In work poverty and low wages
 - Attitudes towards poverty in society
 - What poverty looks like globally, nationally and locally
 - Media representations of poverty

Common barriers

- Mental health can be a sensitive subject to discuss, especially so in families where mental health is presenting challenges
- Mental health is seen as the cause rather than the effect (of living in poverty)
- Recognising emerging issues in the early stages
- Families not taking up entitlement to FSM because of poverty related stigma and pupils not taking up the offer of FSM on an educational visit when it is offered to them
- School systems and processes inadvertently exposing pupils who are in receipt of FSMs
- Pressures around food affordability cause stress and anxiety (mental health)

- Families getting into arrears with school lunch payments placing additional negative pressures on the relationship between the family and the school
- Pupils display negative behaviours and lack of concentration because of lack of breakfast/feeling hungry, tired etc
- Lack of opportunity to access regular physical exercise (see enrichment)
- Home circumstances as contributing factors to pupil mental health and wellbeing (e.g. bed poverty, lack of sleep, overcrowding in houses, washing facilities, warmth, low energy due to lack of meals etc)
- Families having insufficient, timely access to services and specialist support
- School judgements about content of pupil's lunchboxes without thinking 'through the lens of affordability'.

Policies

- Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges
- PSHE/RSE
- Anti-bullying
- Health and safety
- School protocol for meeting with parents.
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND
- Behaviour in schools
- Exam policy

Quick wins

- Consider the 'root causes' of any negative behaviours/lack of concentration and provide snacks/breakfast etc to meet basic need (e.g. if a pupil presents as angry establish whether they are hungry, if a pupil presents as tired understand whether they are able to get a good night's sleep/bed poverty etc)
- Gather student voice around meal choices, the lunchtime environment and processes, to understand the 'lived experience'
- Purchase a set of lunch boxes which can be used for FSM pupils instead of paper bags to reduce poverty related stigma
- Ensure a relational approach to contacting parents when communicating any challenges around food and eating in school

- Provide fruit and healthy snacks to supplement food for all pupils, and encourage a healthy diet, especially for PP
- Provide 'toast for all' every morning - as a positive behaviour reinforcer and to combat hunger in the morning
- Send invites to a Breakfast Club/ early school opening/ social time with food
- Empower your catering team to play a frontline role in pastoral care/ wellbeing support and, where appropriate, communicate observations quickly to senior leaders so necessary support can be provided
- Set up a universal 'help yourself' resource for any extra food or snacks that may become available
- Add helplines, links and information about FSM eligibility for families to your website and weekly/termly newsletters (Affordable Schools section on websites)
- Make best use of CPOMS (or safeguarding systems) to regularly update information and bring together bits of the 'jigsaw' which may be an indicator of vulnerability 'through the lens of affordability' (e.g. came to school hungry etc)
- Consider the mental health and wellbeing of all members of staff 'through the lens of affordability' and make adjustments to staff activities (e.g. affordability of staff get togethers or events).

Digging deeper

Address poverty related stigma, which can lead to bullying, feelings of isolation, anxiety and attendance concerns, by:

- Review the whole lunchtime experience through the lens of affordability and the 'lived experience' of pupils from lower income families and strategically plan to bring about improvements
- Review the anti-bullying policy through the lens of affordability and understand the nature of incidents where poverty related stigma may have been a contributing factor
- Build a mental health awareness cycle across the school year so that you are regularly talking with pupils about their experiences of school life, including cost of living
- Ensure mental health and cost of living has sufficient coverage in your curriculum
- Build a common language to support cost of living discussions

- Carry out the Wiltshire Children and Young People’s Health and Wellbeing Schools survey and act on findings
- Use health and wellbeing data to identify health behaviour inequalities for those pupils with indices of living in poverty. e.g. annual dentist check, eye examinations, up-to-date vaccinations
- Work to achieve levels of the Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme
- Adopt Five to Thrive as a universal provision
- Build relationships with local businesses such as supermarkets who may be able to provide food vouchers, food donations and other resources to support school delivery of clubs and activities
- Carry out a curriculum review and build opportunities to explore:
 - Reasons behind inequalities in society
 - Causes and consequences of poverty
 - The social security system and welfare reform
 - Poverty and children’s rights
 - Food insecurity.
 - In work poverty and low wages
 - Attitudes towards poverty in society
 - What poverty looks like globally, nationally and locally
 - Media representations of poverty
- Build a programme of financial education (mathematics, citizenship and PSHE education) to help give the confidence, skills and knowledge needed to manage money, now and in the future. [Young Enterprise | Leading UK Charity | Empowering Young People \(young-enterprise.org.uk\)](https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/).

Resources

Financial Planning

The **Primary Planning Framework** aims to support the planning, teaching, and progression of financial education by setting out the key areas of financial knowledge, skills and attitudes, across four core themes:

- How to manage money
- Becoming a critical consumer
- Managing risks and emotions associated with money
- Understanding the important role money plays in our lives.

[FINANCIAL-EDUCATION-PLANNING-FRAMEWORK-3-11-ONLINE-2020.pdf \(young-enterprise.org.uk\)](https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/)

Young Enterprise Teachers Hub

Free resources, lesson plans and tools to support financial education from KS1 – 5
Teachers Hub - Young Enterprise & Young Money (young-enterprise.org.uk)

Values, money and me

Values Money and Me is a free KS1 & 2 online resource to help children explore the world of money with teachers, parents and carers. [Homepage](#) | [Values, Money & Me](#) (valuesmoneyandme.co.uk)

Food and Nutrition

“Wake up, mum. I’m hungry!” This is the opening line to the children’s book, *It’s a No-Money Day*, by Kate Milner, a powerful exploration of food banks and life below the poverty line.

[Healthy weight](#) : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

[Breakfast Clubs](#) : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

[Home](#) : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

[School Plates](#) | [Campaign](#) | [ProVeg UK](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/school-meals-healthy-eating-standards>

<https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/schools/benefits/school-food-standards> (Food for life parents pack)

All major supermarkets have programmes that will allow schools access to food so they can distribute it to their most vulnerable families. See also:

<https://fareshare.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Sainsburys-Food-Donation-Programme-Comms-Pack-2.pdf>

<https://www.neighbourly.com/Aldi>

Magic Breakfast: providing healthy breakfast food and expert support to help identify and reach those pupils at risk of hunger.

[Magic Breakfast](#)

Greggs Breakfast Clubs: support with funding school breakfast clubs, encouraging the use of parent volunteers.

[About the Scheme](#) | [Greggs Foundation](#)

Mental Health

Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Emotional wellbeing and mental health : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Mental Health Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

On Your Mind – We can help

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/getting-started/secondary/>

<https://www.bouncetogether.co.uk/education/wellbeing-in-schools>

<https://www.skillsforschools.org.uk>

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/wellbeing-activities-being-kind-to-yourself/>

5 ways to wellbeing: <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

School Wellbeing: a range of resources on different topics
Home school wellbeing

Oxfam's Global Citizenship Curriculum: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620105/edu-global-citizenship-schools-guide-091115-en.pdf?sequence=11&isAllowed=y>

Affordable Schools: Food and Nutrition at Ashton Keynes CE Primary School

Ashton Keynes CE Primary School is a successful school in North Wiltshire; on the border with neighbouring Gloucestershire. Although Ashton Keynes is an affluent village, many children live outside of the village and there are hidden areas of deprivation within this catchment and beyond. The school has around 8% of their pupils claiming Pupil Premium but know there are many more families who may sit just outside the threshold for this grant, who are experiencing the negative impact of the rise in cost of living. Ashton Keynes was already a poverty aware school but the 'Affordable Schools' strategy has allowed them to reshape their approach; particularly around food and nutrition.

As part of their 'Affordable Schools' implementation, the Ashton Keynes team engaged in some key activities:

- Identify need beyond those children in receipt of pupil premium
- Survey stakeholders
- Review current approaches then develop a robust, inclusive strategy for food and nutrition in Ashton Keynes.

This process has resulted in the school team being able to take concrete steps to ensuring no child and no family go hungry, and the school's 'affordable' approach to food and nutrition is universal and equitable. The team has undertaken:

- Wide communication of the affordable approach so that the whole school community understand about our drive to become an affordable school
- Wide communication of the affordable approach so that the whole school community understand about our drive to become an affordable school
- The writing of a food and nutrition policy which includes affordability [PERSONAL / SOCIAL / HEALTH EDUCATION / CITIZENSHIP \(akps.org.uk\)](#)
- A review of the school's curriculum offer and teaching about food and nutrition
- Wider engagement with families to support affordable food and nutrition at home
- To ensure their website clearly provides information about affordable schools and any links to support available
- The setting up page of their school website to inform and support [Affordable Schools \(akps.org.uk\)](#).

Ashton Keynes CE Primary School
Continues over...

Affordable Schools: Food and Nutrition at
Ashton Keynes CE Primary School

Impact

Already, the impact has been significant:

'It feels so rewarding to be helping children and families via a strategy rather than firefighting and dealing with the daily needs. Building it into the curriculum and ethos of the school makes us all aware, mindful and ensure it is actioned.'

SLT

Most importantly, Ashton Keynes are making a difference to their children and families

"This is the best day, I thought I would be good in the kitchen but now I know I am and I can make things for myself".

Ashton Keynes Pupil

"I never thought my child would cook and actually make something edible! It has helped us at home as he likes to help but has become a much less fussy eater"

Parent

Together, Ashton Keynes are steadily ensuring that access to good food and nutrition is a universal provision for all families.



SECURING POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Strong partnerships and relationships are central to securing whole school community success with strategies to promote engagement and improve outcomes.

Rationale

- A positive, family centred problem solving approach, driven by data, will improve outcomes: every family is different and should be provided with support which accurately and sensitively reflects their individual circumstances
- Building strong, trusting relationships that promote a feeling of belonging with individual families is fundamental to improving student engagement: parents and carers are treated equitably and can seek support from school without stigma or stereotyping
- Effective communication of school policy, practice and support is key to success. Parents may not be aware of the support that is in place to ensure families on a low income can get the help they need
- Actively demonstrating an understanding of the financial pressures being placed on families will help to strengthen relationships and improve engagement. (CPAG advises that parents appreciate: 'An open and proactive approach; A simple and matter of fact style in communication to parents and carers, which acknowledges that any family could fall into financial hardship at any time; Discretion, confidentiality, kindness and non-judgement when having conversations with families)
- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium Grant and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Communicating with and supporting parents' [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

Key policies to be reviewed

- Attendance
- Home/school agreement.

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Questions to explore

- How do we communicate with our families?
- How effective is school communication (website, letters, personalised messages, parent meetings etc) to support parents and secure wider engagement?
- How do parents feel about coming into school and asking for help or talking about their circumstances? How do we know?
- Are there links between parental engagement and attendance in our school?
- What is our school's prevailing culture about parental engagement and is there any deficit language or behaviours we may need to address?
- What is the strength of our relationship with parents, and do we have a positive mindset about engaging even the hardest to reach?
- Are educational visit letters and related communications aware of pupil home situations in compliance with the Education Act 1996 in respect to charging for educational activities.

Common barriers

- Poverty and impact on attendance and punctuality (transport, mental health, peer relationships etc)
- Poor relationships between families and schools (e.g. legacy disagreements)
- Challenges with transportation (including cost)
- Chronic & acute illness, family responsibilities or home situation, trauma
- Anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
- Housing and food insecurity
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- View of schooling and value placed on education due to life experiences, current challenges, type of occupation
- Parents do not like coming into school: embarrassment, poverty related stigma, previous poor experiences
- Parents not aware of support which is available

- Stigma around poverty in the community and the school lacking a whole school 'universal' approach which avoids labelling
- Parents/carers may not be readily available, or more 'hard to reach' due to work schedules e.g. shift work or holding down multiple jobs
- Relationships with parents are under developed, particularly with the most vulnerable
- Engagement with health services – sight tests, hearing, dentist, immunisations.

Linked policies

- Accessibility
- Attendance
- Anti-bullying
- Exclusion
- Pupil Premium Statement
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Behaviour in schools
- Health and Safety
- School protocol for meeting with parents.

Quick wins

- Communicate universally sharing financial information with all families, not just those who you think might need it. This universal promotion means parents don't have to ask for help and ensures information reaches the right people - even if you don't always know who that is
- Tailor communications, with careful use of language, to encourage more positive dialogue (e.g. personal text messages for families, targeted conversations, simple, clear and matter of fact, opportunities for parents to question to develop understanding)

- Whenever possible, communicate through a mix of methods (letters, emails, texts, in person...) as wide ranging, visible and open communication opens the door to conversations and encourages any parents to come forward if they need to
- Timing of communications is important so try to communicate information at your earliest opportunity, especially around induction and transition points in the school year, beginning of each term and well ahead of any deadlines
- Be aware of language barriers and literacy issues
- Make the most of home visits as an opportunity to establish relationships, provide face to face communication around school support and services and identify vulnerabilities so the school can understand/intervene early
- Breakfast club/early bird opening
- Provide consistency at the start of the school day – for all students e.g. routines feel safe and this encourages better attendance
- Install a ‘welcome to school’ processes for students who struggle to make it e.g. meet and greet/arriving earlier to avoid crowds/pick-up from home/ breakfast club/use thrive as a transition activity
- Set up regular face to face meetings (informal and formal), using family link workers or by visiting the family home at the family’s convenience
- Set up champions for all vulnerable students e.g. use specialist practitioners, family support workers
- Describe initiatives like uniform sales as ‘green’ or ‘community-focused’ to help increase uptake (instead of focusing on the financial aspect)
- Talking directly about poverty or financial difficulties can sometimes worry parents and carers. Try using collective words like ‘us’ (for example: “we want our families to get the support they’re entitled to”)
- In any messages that involve costs (for example, in letters home about school trips), remind families where to go to get information regarding financial entitlements and support (e.g. your dedicated email address).

Digging deeper

- Develop the school website to include a prominent space for a wide range of information relating to cost of living, financial support and signposting to organisations and services (e.g. Wiltshire cost of living, emergency essentials addressing issues such as bed poverty, washing machine etc)

- Refer families to affordable food providers, money advisers and other relevant outside agencies who can support them if they are struggling financially
- Use school website to signpost parents and carers to services and training
- Understand attendance issues as a symptom or barometer of health and wellbeing and have a shared understanding that commitment to the 'Affordable Schools' approach will lead to improved relationships and communication, a stronger school community and, in turn, attendance
- Any school improvement strategy to address attendance needs to understand the data and challenges, secure school systems, roles and responsibilities, take a whole school approach, target support for the whole family rather than just the individual student, work on a case by case basis for 'stuck' cases, ensure regular monitoring and feedback
- Establish a Parent Council; parents sometimes feel more comfortable talking to other parents and this will be an effective way to discuss 'Affordable Schools' and establish a network of contacts
- Build strong relationships with families and make every effort made to build trust and engagement here
- Evaluate communication systems and processes to ensure easy access for all
- Support parents/carers with making a free school meal application including providing ICT facilities for online applications and frequently promote to families
- Run specific training for staff around parental engagement e.g. use EEF guidance (see resources)
- Offer Parental training around routine and behaviour linked to the school's evidence based approaches
- Support parents with information, guidance and strategies for attendance with targeted support for individuals, as appropriate (e.g. social stories to provide information and pre-teaching which enable students and parents to be more aware)
- Set up regular parent workshops for a variety of purposes, possibly repeating each year so the community are used to this kind of connection and support (e.g. preparing your child for a residential visit or reading with your child)
- Support parents with careers advice and guidance by signposting to relevant services

Resources

Wiltshire Council 'Supporting you through the rising cost of living'

Community Directory [Interactive Community Directory - Wiltshire Council](#)

Council tax, benefits and financial support [Council tax, benefits and financial support - Wiltshire Council](#)

Energy costs advice and guidance [Energy costs advice and guidance - Wiltshire Council](#)

Housing information and support [Housing information and support - Wiltshire Council](#)

Mental Health support [Mental Health support - Wiltshire Council](#)

Local Practical Help [Local practical help - Wiltshire Council](#)

Supporting businesses [Supporting businesses through the rising cost of living - Wiltshire Council](#)

Warm spaces [Wiltshire Council warm spaces - Wiltshire Council](#)

Grants overview [Cost of Living Support \(wiltshiremoney.org.uk\)](#)

Work Wiltshire case studies:

<https://workwiltshire.co.uk/case-studies-3/>

Wiltshire Council Parenting Support

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parenting-support>

Parent Champions

Asking parents who already have a good relationship with the school to 'spread the word' among other families can be helpful in engaging parents who might not have a positive relationship with school staff, or are less likely to attend events or read a newsletter or other promotional material. Coram Family and Childcare 'parent champions' are parent volunteers who might be able to assist (see below).

[Setting up a Parent Champions scheme : Family and Childcare Trust](#)

[Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools](#)

Family and Community Learning

Wiltshire Family and Community Learning team have a wealth of resources and training opportunities to support parent engagement and access to services

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/family-learning>

Turn 2 Us: has an online grant search tool where you can find charities that offer non repayable grants to help individuals on low incomes

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk>

Gingerbread: Provide information to help single parents support themselves and their family.

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk>

Family Action: Provide practical, emotional and financial support to those who are experiencing poverty, disadvantage and social isolation across the country

<https://www.family-action.org.uk>

North Wiltshire:

<https://www.therisetrust.org/services/youth-activities/>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/supporting-parents>

Support for families during holidays

FUEL is a free holiday activity and food project that offers participants the opportunity to take part in a range of fun activities during school holiday periods

[Resources](#) | [Page](#) | [SLA Online \(sla-online.co.uk\)](#)

Entitled To: benefit calculator to make sure families are getting the support they are entitled to [Benefits Calculator - entitledto - independent](#) | [accurate](#) | [reliable](#)

Family Fund Services

The programme provides items that meet children's most basic needs such as a bed to sleep in, a cooker to give them a hot meal, clothing (in a crisis) and other items and services that are critical to children's wellbeing.

[BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials Programme - Family Fund Business Services \(familyfundservices.co.uk\)](#)

Attendance

DfE publication on improving school attendance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

[EBSA: Emotionally Based School Avoidance \(EBSA\) | Right Choice wiltshire.gov.uk](#)

[Education Welfare Resource Page on Right Choice Resources](#) | [Page](#) | [SLA Online \(sla-online.co.uk\)](#)

[Attendance Works: https://www.attendanceworks.org](https://www.attendanceworks.org)

[EEF: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment)

[Case study: https://researchschool.org.uk/durrington/news/an-evidence-informed-approach-to-improving-attendance](https://researchschool.org.uk/durrington/news/an-evidence-informed-approach-to-improving-attendance)

[SEND newsletter - Local Offer \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Affordable Schools: Attendance and parental engagement at Pembroke Park Primary School

Pembroke Park is a primary and nurse school serving one of the most deprived wards in England. 34% of their pupils are in receipt of Pupil Premium; with many more families sitting just outside of the threshold for Pupil Premium but who equally experience challenges related to the rise in cost of living.

The school was really keen to implement the 'Affordable Schools' strategy. The school team understood that looking through the lens of affordability and, specifically, the negative impact of poverty related stigma, would help them secure better relationships with all their families and hopefully improve attendance. Prior to starting the implementation, surveys showed that 55% of parents and carers would recommend the school. Furthermore, whole school attendance was 92.4% with persistent absence at 27.2%.

To begin the implementation, the school team completed the following tasks:

- Formed a team around 'Affordable Schools'
- Surveyed all staff, parents, governors and pupils around the barriers of affordability and day to day school life
- Shared the Affordable Schools context with staff.

This allowed the school to identify attendance and parental engagement as a key barrier.

Looking at this area through the lens of affordability, the school was then able to take meaningful steps to how they approached this perennial issue:

- Ensuring communications to parents and carers was as varied as possible: newsletters, social media, Teachers2Parents app, emails, texts to identify best form of communication and moving to one platform (Dojo)
- Introducing weekly Pastoral DASH meetings to monitor vulnerable pupils
- Allocating 3 hours per week HLTA time to the implementation to ensure individual needs are identified and pupil-centred solutions offered or created
- Meetings booked just after drop-off or just before collection times.

Affordable Schools: Attendance and parental engagement at Pembroke Park Primary School

Impact

These, along with many more activities and quick wins, has had a remarkable impact. Now, 87% of parents and carers would recommend the school, and whole school attendance is 94.3% with persistent absence at 14.4%.

Most importantly, the impact is voiced by the parents and children themselves:

“I love coming to school. It is my safe place.”

“Breakfast club helps me feel calm and I know I can always come back for a snack if I need it.”

Pupils

“Initially I was shut off, like you don’t talk about your problems to school. But I am so glad they kept going because I now trust that they are here to help and they have really supported me through some difficult things in my life.”

“The school doesn’t just make a difference to children but to the whole family. They go above and beyond to do all they can.”

Parents

Pembroke Park Primary School has unlocked the key to improving attendance and developing relationships between school and parents: listening to the challenges and looking through the lens of Affordability rather than basing actions on assumptions.

For further information, guidance materials and resources, please visit the **Affordable Schools Toolkit** on Wiltshire Right Choice.

Contact: Kate Wilkins (Disadvantaged Learners Lead & School Leadership)
kate.wilkins@wiltshire.gov.uk



Affordable Schools

WILTSHIRE





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Affordable Schools Strategy

Secondary





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Foreword

Welcome to the Affordable Schools strategy and the opportunity to embark on a strategic school improvement journey which ensures all pupils have the opportunity to participate, learn and thrive. Designed with schools, for schools, this accessible guide brings together a large collection of ideas, experiences and practical suggestions to help schools build a universal, equitable approach, 'through the lens of affordability'.

Thank you also for your commitment to becoming an [Affordable School](#). Schools are the change makers at the heart of each community and every day, in every interaction, it is in our gift to bring about the change required to steadily overcome the challenges of disadvantage; [together we will make a difference](#).

Kate Wilkins (Wiltshire Disadvantaged Learners Lead & School Leadership)

Vicky Gordon (Wiltshire Vulnerable Pupils Advisor and SIA)

Affordable Schools: the background

The impact of poverty is one of the most significant barriers to overcome when improving the life chances of our most vulnerable learners. It is the strongest statistical predictor of how well a child will achieve at school but rarely has a single cause. Some children are born into poverty, while the lives of others may be shaped by life events which impact on financial stability, such as taking on a caring role, parent separation, bereavement, illness and changes to employment.

'It is helpful to think about the barriers facing students in poverty as interconnected 'binds' which restrict and impact their educational journey. Children's efforts to negotiate these binds often have unintended negative consequences; e.g. parental job loss can prompt a move of home and school, in seeking social acceptance and belonging the child prioritises peer approval over success within the school where they have a weaker sense of fitting in and belonging, or the child doesn't tell Mum about the school trip because she knows Mum can't afford to pay for it.' (Brown 2014)

What is Affordable Schools?

We recognise that, to authentically ensure equitable education for all our children, we must work in partnership to bring about system change, so a brighter future is a right for all, and not a privilege for some. The Affordable Schools strategy is a fully resourced, universal, non-stigmatising and proactive approach which will empower schools to:

- Develop a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty
- Make universal, positive changes to policies and practices that will improve the experience of all, especially the most vulnerable.

The 'Affordable Schools' strategy is built on a set of **guiding principles**, ensuring that every day, in all our interactions, we take advantage of opportunities to challenge and steadily overcome the effects of disadvantage

- An Affordable School is committed to reducing poverty related stigma by deliberately making positive changes to every aspect of school policy and practice through the lens of affordability
- Any 'affordable' provision is a universal provision: we cannot be certain at any one time which families, or members of the school community, are experiencing financial hardship so our policies and practice should not identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions
- Being 'affordable' means being creative and solutions focused to ensure our provision and curriculum offer is always easily accessible to all students, without limiting the quality of education
- Relationships are key to the success of the Affordable Schools strategy
- Strong leadership and positive action will make a difference to our school communities.

The **Affordable Schools** strategy draws widely on information and resources published by:

The Children's Society

The Children's Society a United Kingdom national children's charity allied to the Church of England. The charity's objectives are to improve the lives of children and young people and the related social attitudes [The Children's Society - UK children's charity \(childrensociety.org.uk\)](https://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

Child Poverty Action Group is a UK charity that works to alleviate poverty and social exclusion [CPAG - Home](https://www.cpag.org.uk)

Children North East (Poverty Proofing)

Supporters, professionals and volunteers who have been changing the lives of babies, children, young people and families across the North East for 130 years [Homepage - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](https://www.children-ne.org.uk)

“It doesn’t matter how great an educational idea or intervention is in principle; what really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day work of people in schools.”

[EEF_Implementation_Guidance_Report_2019](#)

The ‘Affordable Schools’ strategy is designed to fully support schools from the initial organisation and launch of the strategy through to securing sustained improvement which brings about deep and lasting change. While every school is different, there are common themes and needs across our settings which will be met through effective implementation as an on-going process rather than one-off event. By using the wide range of resources, guidance documents and planning materials which are available in the ‘[Affordable Schools Toolkit](#)’, we aim to deliver high quality, universal provision which benefits all, especially the most vulnerable. An [Implementation Plan](#) is included in the ‘[Strategic Plans and Resources](#)’ section of the toolkit on Wiltshire Right Choice to support effective implementation.

The Affordable Schools Handbook and Toolkit is organised into 4 themed areas:

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnership

Each themed area has been broken down into key principles, common barriers, questions to explore, relevant policies, quick wins, ‘digging deeper’ strategies and resources. The statements and suggestions within each area provide useful hooks for schools to plan improvement; they are not exhaustive and can be used flexibly to meet the priorities of schools.

Affordable Schools theme	Coverage
Resourcing the School Day	Exploring, through a 'cost of living' lens, the demands of the school day and how to bring about positive change to policy and practice
Enrichment and Opportunities	A broad, rich and equitable offer at the heart of every school community with strategies deliberately designed to ensure access for all
Healthy Body, Healthy Mind	Considering equitable school provision which nurtures children and ensures basic needs are met so they thrive as learners in the classroom
Securing Positive Partnerships	Strong partnerships & relationships as central to securing whole school community success with strategies to promote engagement and improve outcomes

Key policies are highlighted in each themed section so that schools can prioritise these for review and make any necessary changes to practice and procedure. The following statement can be included in all policies which have been reviewed 'through the lens of affordability' to reflect the **Affordable Schools** commitment.

This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.

Groundwork

Working group identified. All staff awareness and buy in

Information gathering

Audit of costs throughout school

Staff views on costs, barriers and solutions

Pupil views on costs, barriers and solutions

Parent carer views on costs barriers and solutions

Analysis

What are the main issues? What do we focus on?

Action

Actions to tackle barriers identified



Reflecting on the following questions can help you consider the best ways to mitigate the effects of poverty in your school, particularly as a result of the pandemic and growing cost of living crisis:

- How affordable is your school? How confident are you that children and families feel that they will be met with understanding and empathy if in need of support?
- How effective is your Charging and Remissions policy in acknowledging poverty related stigma and highlighting your commitment to support lower income families?
- How effectively are financial entitlements like Free School Meals and support grants for families on low incomes being promoted to families? Do all families in the school know what is available if it is needed? Are there processes in place to support families to apply for and benefit from extra help?
- How are you communicating with families to find out what resources are needed for children to learn? What processes are in place to provide resources for all children who need them?
- To what extent are school policies and practices designed to reduce financial pressure on families and include children and young people on low incomes? Are there particular practices or policies that could be established or reinstated that have clear benefits for low income families, for example extended school services such as after school clubs?
- Is there a shared and assumption free culture which understands differing home circumstances and how they may impact on pupils' attitudes and learning (e.g. parents being 'time poor' due to shift working/additional hours etc rather than lack of interest)?

The Affordable Schools Toolkit, hosted on the resource page on Right Choice, contains information, guidance materials and resources to support schools effectively implement and deliver the Affordable Schools strategy. The Affordable Schools Toolkit is designed to support school leaders and staff with conversations and activities which will embed the principles of an Affordable School, alongside providing comprehensive case studies of effective implementation.

Vision, Strategy and Implementation

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnerships

Go to: <https://rightchoice.wiltshire.gov.uk/P30675>

Becoming an **Affordable School** requires a shared understanding and acknowledgement of how important 'affordability' is in all parts of school life. Ensuring that a rich and broad education is affordable for all, is **everybody's responsibility**.

Evaluating activities to see whether they are achieving their aims is crucial, but in practice can often be overlooked. To support practice, an Affordable Schools audit is included within the toolkit to help schools understand how 'affordable' they are in their approach and what else can be done to reduce poverty related stigma.

There are eight sections to the audit. Each section has been designed to give school teams opportunities to reflect on practice and secure the most appropriate next steps to help a school on their journey to becoming '**Affordable Schools Aware**'.

- School leaders are visibly committed to making their school 'Affordable'
- School ethos and culture
- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Pupil Voice
- Staff professional development.
- Monitoring impact
- Working with parents and carers
- Targeted support

Once schools have completed one year of their Affordable Schools journey, they will be eligible to apply for an 'Affordable Schools' mark which can be displayed on your school website and other areas to celebrate successful practice and communicate your commitment to universal 'affordability' practice which meets the needs of your school community. The 'Affordable Schools' mark will build through Bronze, Silver and Gold for each year of your commitment to the strategy and evidence of impact.

Year one Bronze

Adopt and implement Affordable Schools strategy



Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Year two Silver

Deepen practice and on-going evidence of impact



Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Year three Gold

Sustained, culturally embedded practice with notable impact on outcomes



Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Exploring, through a 'cost of living' lens, the demands of the school day and how to bring about positive change to policy and practice

Rationale

1. Access to the full curriculum and all learning tasks, wherever possible, is designed to require no financial outlay and reasons for non-completion of tasks/homework, and not having the correct equipment, are assessed through the lens of affordability.
2. Active measures are taken to support a student where their external circumstances present them with additional challenges that would prevent or hinder being ready to learn.
3. Parents should not have to consider the cost of a school uniform when choosing which school(s) to apply for. Therefore, schools need to ensure that their uniform is affordable. 'Where a school's uniform is too expensive it can place an unreasonable burden on families. No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to, or attend, a school of their choice, due to the cost of the uniform.'
[School uniforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
4. We are mindful of the DfE Pupil Premium guidance 'Schools may be justified in funding items not listed where this is necessary to overcome specific barriers to student attainment, for example to meet acute needs around student equipment to ensure readiness to learn' which emphasises the importance of a nuanced and robust process for identifying needs. [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).
5. Schools should commit to an assumption free culture in order to be sure we take a personalised, relational approach. (CPAG 'Don't assume families are ok financially. Instead, show everyone that you are aware of hidden poverty and explain the support that's out there, so nobody gets missed').
6. Schools should have a clear understanding of the total cost and commitment required by families to ensure full participation, including: uniform, equipment, themed days and events, celebrations and special occasions, cake days, fairs and fetes, Christmas, non-school uniform/dress up days etc.

Questions to explore

- What does it feel like to be a pupil in your school (day in the life of...)?
- Can all students access all elements of the curriculum irrespective of their financial circumstances? What does student/parent voice tell us?
- Are students required to bring in their own pencil cases or other equipment from home?
- Is uniform affordable and information readily available on your school website?
- How do we identify families who would need support?
- How often do uniform sales take place?
- What pre-loved uniform provision is available at your school and how do students and families access it?
- What resources are required for students to complete their homework currently and do we consider impact on financial circumstances?
- Have we considered what families have available on a daily basis (e.g. computers, paper etc) and are we satisfied that we keep up to date with our understanding of family circumstances to be confident of equitable access for all?
- What support is available for those who may not have these resources at home?
- Are there opportunities for students to complete their homework in school if they face barriers at home?
- How equitable is the homework policy – what prevailing culture does it communicate?
- Do you have a clear understanding of the total cost and commitment required by families to ensure full participation, including: uniform, equipment, themed days and events, celebrations and special occasions, cake days, fairs and fetes, Christmas, non-school uniform/dress up days etc.
- What happens if children don't have the correct uniform? Are staff responses consistent and delivered 'through the lens of affordability'?
- Are children sanctioned if they don't have the correct uniform, shoes, PE kit etc?
- Can children take part if they don't have the correct clothing?
- Have transport costs been considered? How do pupils get to school?
- If the school offers support with transport costs, who benefits?

Key policies to be reviewed

- Uniform and equipment - Statutory guidance: [cost of school uniforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) , non-statutory guidance [School uniforms: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Home learning agreement
- Behaviour in schools (school response and sanctions).

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Common Barriers

- Expense of compulsory school uniform
- No pre-loved uniform available
- Lack of washing facilities in the home
- Requirement to have specialist equipment for residential e.g. sleeping bags
- Sanctions in place for students who do not have the correct uniform/PE kit/equipment, which leads to pupils feeling disengaged and, if related to affordability, embeds poverty related stigma
- Poor school attendance because it is easier to stay at home rather than navigate the daily material and social challenges
- Expense of day-to-day resources (pens, pencil cases etc) when the prevailing culture expects 'bring from home'
- Expense of resources linked to the curriculum/enrichment such as money for cookery ingredients (extras) or special kit for an after school sport activity
- Expense of certain specific equipment that is classed as safety equipment for LOTC activities (e.g. fieldwork and / or DofE Expedition kit, such as waterproofs, warm clothing, walking boots, sleeping bags, rucksacks, stoves, etc)
- Expense of text books and revision resources linked to the curriculum and exam preparation
- Homework requires a suitable place to work, resources from home or digital access esp. phones and competing family needs for technology
- Homework requires specific/time consuming support from an adult e.g. projects (living in poverty puts stress on a family. Parents may be holding down multiple jobs, working difficult shifts)
- Broadband issue or getting enough easy access to the Internet

- Time to complete the homework or competing family needs (caring role)
- More than one child in the family home competing for resources (multiplying cost).

Linked policies and guidance documents

- Uniform and equipment
- Homework/Home Learning
- Anti-bullying
- Accessibility
- Charging and remissions
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND
- Behaviour in schools
- Health and Safety
- Exam policy
- Careers Education
- Pupil Premium Statement
- School protocol for meeting with parents.

Quick wins

- Establish a prominent 'Affordable Schools' space on your school website and populate using materials from the Affordable Schools toolkit (template, model wording, resources)
- Establish a dedicated email address where students and families can communicate challenges which they have around resources, uniform, equipment (e.g. affordability@aschool.co.uk). Explain that this email address will be viewed only by x member(s) of staff (someone with seniority and a visible, positive relationship with parents) and confidentiality maintained when providing support
- Add helplines, links and information about FSM eligibility for families to your website and weekly/termly newsletters (Affordable Schools section on websites)
- Review the cost of the school day using the calendar and identify events and activities which could be quickly considered to align with your Affordable Schools commitment (NB there will be some quick wins here but also necessary for a longer term 'digging deeper' approach) <https://children-ne.org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day-calendar-2022-23/>
- Ensure non-uniform events (Christmas jumper day) have minimal expectations and that these are well communicated. If there is a more specific requirement make sure this resource is available free of charge for all families (universal)

- Design after-school clubs through the lens of affordability and provide resources, as appropriate
- Provide easy access to digital resources for students experiencing digital poverty or with competing family needs e.g. homework/study clubs, cyber cafes during school or after school
- Advertise to all students where they can access computers, the internet in school or in the local community
- Offer a free study hub, at times within the school day, where students have free access to ICT, printing and library
- Offer free study/catch-up hub after school
- Use more than just online resources to communicate homework tasks
- Open the school early so some children can do their homework in school, link this to a breakfast offer
- Provide pots of pens and pencils in all classrooms, replenish regularly
- Make sanitary products readily available
- Use the Sports Premium Grant to buy kit and boots so that participation in school sports clubs and the curriculum is not affected by lack of resources
- Review curriculum areas through the lens of affordability so cooking ingredients, dishes, carrying containers, fabrics etc are supplied
- Remove visible 'ask' points where pupils have to expose themselves for not having equipment/uniform/curriculum resources etc.

Digging deeper

Ensure a clear understanding of the total cost and commitment required by families to ensure full participation, including: uniform, equipment, themed days and events, celebrations and special occasions, cake days, fairs and fetes, Christmas, non-school uniform/dress up days etc.

<https://children-ne.org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day-calendar-2022-23/>

Review of uniform policy to include:

- Keep use of branded uniform items to a minimum
- Ensure that uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money (including the quality and durability of the garment)
- Ensure the majority of uniform items, and PE clothes, can be purchased from affordable sources such as supermarkets e.g. remove the need for logos at all or limit to a key item

- Remove blurred lines around shoe choice e.g. commit to no brands and black but don't worry about the style (inc. black trainers)
- Fund logo items for all FSM students to match the expectations for all
- Simplify uniform requirements e.g. black leggings rather than a specific type
- Avoid parents having to duplicate items to fit with the school policy (e.g. particular bags, coats)
- Ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire and information on second-hand uniforms should be clear for parents of current and prospective pupils and published on the school's website
- Create an order form for second-hand uniform so parents don't need to identify themselves in front of peers
- Create a high quality, pre-loved uniform store in school (NB ensure uniform is clean and labels removed) – link to reducing environmental impact so the stigma is removed
- Sell new ties, or other required items, in the second-hand uniform shop to save on postage for parents buying from suppliers
- Consider how to link with other organisations or sponsors to provide PE kit, uniforms, boots/ trainers/ swim wear & towels and other related items of equipment provided at the start of the year (or vouchers or starting school bundles).

Equipment:

- Consider how to reduce stigma and bullying associated with possessions brought into school e.g. basic equipment such as bags / pencil cases / water bottles / items associated with fashions and trends etc
- Consider how to establish a prevailing culture where stationery i.e. bags, pens/ pencils, colouring items, rulers, calculators, other mathematical equipment, pencil cases are school resources rather than bought from home
- Explore fund-raising options that can subsidise the cost of full participation in school life for pupils living in poverty
- Profile homework/curriculum activities to understand what is being asked of pupils and parents and make reasonable adjustments e.g. gathering together resources for Art, Design and Technology, need for internet access and a computer
- One-page summary of ingredients required for food technology each term to allow mass purchase and advertising the support available from school.
- Create a resource library with donated/school purchased text books and revision guides (possibly donations from pupils when completed Year 11 or 13)

- Establish an “equipment lending library” - Collect some garments and equipment that can be loaned, such as waterproofs, hats, small rucksacks etc. This can be supported by encouraging families to speak to relatives or friends to be able to borrow equipment
- Establish a community officer link/assign family support workers, pastoral manager (or similar) where children/families can go to discuss resource requirements and get support.

Homework:

- Profile homework/curriculum activities to understand what is being asked of pupils and parents and make reasonable adjustments e.g. gathering together resources for Art, Design and Technology, need for internet access and a computer
- Establish a department resource area where resources, which may be required, can be taken home to support completion e.g. when completing a creative homework task
- Consider providing a menu of homework ideas rather than one specific task
- Assign family support workers (or similar) to build strong relationships with families around homework
- Link with other agencies to provide support, through training, for parents e.g. Wiltshire Family Learning
- Develop how pupils learn skills that allow them to work independently by implementing metacognition and self-regulation training for staff and parents/carers
- Have a clear and consistent ‘through the lens of affordability’ approach to sanctions regarding incompleteness of homework so that children who would be challenged to complete homework on time are supported (e.g. free homework club is available, support in place for young carers).

Behavior:

Reviewing the Behaviour Policy through the lens of affordability to reflect:

- Build positive relationships with individuals with a culture focused on anticipating pupil needs and taking a positive, solutions focused approach
- Profile pupils who are regularly wearing incorrect uniform/not having the correct equipment to understand the root causes and consider actions which can be taken to mitigate against this and the risk of poverty related stigma
- Fully establish a shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families which enables all staff to respond sensitively to individual pupil circumstances and enables flexibility of response

Transport:

- Profile your school community to understand the geographical spread and challenges 'through the lens of affordability' which may affect attendance and punctuality or attendance at after school clubs etc
- Take a creative, solutions focused approach to address the identified challenges, on a case by case basis.

Resources

Statutory guidance: Cost of school uniforms - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Non-statutory guidance: School uniforms: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-law-to-make-school-uniform-costs-affordable-for-all>

The Children's Society, Child Poverty Action Group and **Children North East** joined forces to share some ideas and good practice to show how, with some adjustments to policies and practices, schools can relieve the pressure of uniform costs on children and their families.

<https://cpag.org.uk/affordable-school-uniforms-guide>

<https://www.headteacher-update.com/best-practice-article/making-school-uniforms-affordable-a-case-study-cost-of-living-crisis-poverty-guidance-parents-families/248160/>

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/family-learning>

<https://www.shinecharity.org.uk/starting-secondary-school/supporting-your-childs-development-at-home-12-to-19-years>

Period Poverty:

Period product scheme for schools and colleges in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

ENRICHMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

A broad, rich and equitable offer at the heart of every school community with strategies deliberately designed to ensure access for all.

Rationale

- Enrichment policy, practice and process should be reviewed through the lens of affordability so that it meets the needs of the wider school community and individuals
- Active measures should be taken to ensure extra-curricular activities are planned through the lens of affordability without causing embarrassment and stigma. This will ensure students can access all available activities and do not have to make choices based on price and equipment needed
- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Extra-curricular activities, including sport, outdoor activities, arts and culture, for example music lessons and school trips' [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- By thinking creatively, many enrichment opportunities and experiences can be provided free of charge and the school is committed to this approach where possible.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Enrichment/extra-curriculum activity
- Educational Visits/Learning Outside The Classroom (LOTTC)
- Careers Education.

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Questions to explore

- Who has overall responsibility for enrichment? How is this role developed around affordable schools principles?
- How do you address inequalities in life experiences beyond school of all your pupils when deciding what trips to offer?
- How much do staff understand about affordability and the organisation of events in their department or faculty?
- What do departments have planned for the academic year ahead? How are plans communicated to parents?

- Are plans for educational visits across the year mindful of overall cumulative costs to parents? i.e. balance local low / no cost activities with activities further afield that include costs
- How do you ensure that families have enough time to pay for school activities and events?
- How do you communicate with families about the curriculum and enrichment offer and financial support which is available?
- How do you track enrichment, take-up of clubs, participation?
- Who does and doesn't take part in clubs? Are there any patterns by income?
- Is there resilience within school finances to ensure that students receive the curriculum entitlement, and enrichment, through LOTC opportunities?

Common barriers

- High cost school trips which prohibit pupils from lower income families
- School trips which may be gap wideners (e.g. Ski trip where the barrier may be around some children not being able to ski before the trip compared to some children who will already know how to ski because of life chances beyond school. Does this make a 'ski trip' stigma inducing rather than reducing stigma?)
- Level of cost associated with after school clubs/curriculum/enrichment/materials
- Families not given enough notice when trips, extra-curricular activities and fundraising events are organised
- Cost of travel, or travel logistics, to and from after school activities
- Parents may not have regular online access, or be time poor, so struggle to sign up for activities within allocated time frames
- Students will veto an opportunity, and not share information with parents, because they know this may place undue financial pressures on their family
- Families may struggle to prioritise competing needs of several family members
- Students may miss out on careers opportunities as a result of financial cost of visits to institutions (e.g. work experience placements, universities, FE college)
- Students may miss out on regular physical exercise opportunities, due to affordability
- Lack of consideration 'through the lens of affordability' about experiences and cultural capital which pupils bring to learning in the classroom (e.g. asking children to write about what they did at the weekend/during the holiday etc)

Policies

- LOTC/Educational visits policy
- Anti-bullying
- Accessibility
- Careers education
- Attendance
- Charging and remissions
- Pupil Premium Statement
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Behaviour in schools
- Health and Safety
- Enrichment/extra-curriculum activity
- School protocol for meeting with parents.

Quick wins

- Careers team or external agency always prioritise vulnerable students
- Ensure all vulnerable students have a suitable placement during career's week, and get priority access to other careers opportunities
- Ensure all vulnerable students have transportation options to and from work placements
- Offer a range of clubs at lunchtimes
- Use a portion of PPG funding (wider strategies) to help vulnerable students access high-cost activities
- Spread the cost of visits and activities using Parent Pay (or similar) and payment plans
- Introduce a voucher system for spending money on residential trips e.g. all students have vouchers to spend (some students will be provided with vouchers whereas others will pay for the vouchers)
- Access the heavily subsidised music tuition service (Wiltshire Music Connect)
- Always ensure a minimum expectation of applications for a trip are taken up by vulnerable pupils (schools set own % targets)
- Consider the ease and equity of your sign-up system for clubs and activities to understand whether it advantages those who are already advantaged (e.g. if first come, first served then is it the same families who are always at the front of the queue?)
- Consider the geography of your school community and identify whether there are any pupils and families where transport may be a barrier to accessing extra-curricular activities

- Provide taxis or use the school mini-bus to transport children home after club
- Locality should be considered as a useful LOTC resource for frequent LOTC opportunities. Low cost and local often go together.

Digging deeper

Strategically review all aspects of enrichment policy and practice to identify pressure points for pupils and families, including taking account of the following strategies:

- Create a fully costed calendar of enrichment and extra-curricular events for each year group to help understand the cost of a year and what that would equate to on a weekly/monthly basis
- Identify cost saving measures which could be taken to reduce overall affordability (e.g. cluster/partner school collaboration, staff expertise, transport sharing, resource sharing etc)
- Clearly communicate the fully costed curriculum/enrichment offer at the start of the year and provide options for an appropriate payment schedule which spreads the cost and secures greater affordability (e.g. costed menu with option to spread into monthly instalments) or, as a minimum, ensure cost of activities is communicated with strong consideration given to providing notice (e.g. provide at least a year's notice for trips abroad or high expense activities)
- Ring-fence monies, identify charities, community groups, organisations and bursaries which can finance/supplement high cost activities
- Track take up of residentials, enrichment and extra-curricular activities to ensure equitable access to the opportunities on offer; act quickly to ensure no child is left behind (this could be linked to a pupil entitlement charter)
- Approach/offer sign up to vulnerable families first; do not rely on all parents being able to respond to systems such as a 'first come first serve' approach
- Create a system which leads with expressions of interest for trips and includes indication that financial support will be required before a deposit is requested
- Consider the necessity of e.g. a 'Ski trip' by understanding this opportunity through the lens of the affordability guiding principles and take action to ensure that such an expensive, resource and skill heavy trip reduces poverty related stigma
- Ensure that any enrichment best bets include preparations for the next stage of a student's education/life e.g. include trips to visit places of work, universities, colleges etc. This could be linked to a student's entitlement charter within the school outlining where the students will be able to receive enrichment to their education and acts a monitoring tool

- LOTC opportunities further afield will provide the support, enrichment and extension needed for students. Consider the curriculum links to LOTC and the visits that would provide cross-curricular support, life skills links and enhancement of prior learning, i.e. which visits are the most cost effective in terms of the impact gained to support student progress
- Consider costs of an educational visit as a group issue rather than an individual participant responsibility and organise fundraising activities on a group basis to subsidise or wholly fund the visit
- Approach the PTA / Friends of School to help access charitable trust funding.

Resources

FUEL is the holiday activity and food programme funded by Department of Education and aims to provide children who are eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM) with free access to enriching activities, nutritious meals and healthy eating information during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.

FUEL programme - Wiltshire Council

<https://wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk/schools/inst-vocal/subsidies/>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/life-skills-enrichment>

<https://governorsforschools.org.uk/blog/enriching-experiences-for-every-child/>

<https://www.stem.org.uk/secondary/enrichment>

<https://bucketlistjourney.net/high-school-bucket-list/>

Home - Platform (platformrail.org)

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom

<https://www.lotc.org.uk/>

Learning through Landscapes (school grounds educational charity)

<https://www.ltl.org.uk>

Low cost models for Residential Visits

<https://www.learningaway.org.uk/free-resources/lower-cost-models/>

Football Beyond Borders: school-based programming to support young people to finish school with the skills and grades to make a successful transition into adulthood [Football Beyond Borders](#)

For more information on the cost of a **university education and student debt**:

- www.moneysavingexpert.com/banking/student-money-saving
Dedicated to helping you save money and find the best deals, based on detailed journalistic research
- www.student-finance.co.uk
Advice on student finance
- www.118student.co.uk
Advice on getting a loan, grant or insurance
- www.ucas.ac.uk/students/studentfinance
UCAS site on student finance
- www.suttontrust.com
Charity promoting social mobility through improved access to education
- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
For a summary of how bursaries and grants work
- courses-careers.com
Check out the bursary searcher.



Considering equitable school provision which nurtures children and ensures basic needs are met so they thrive as learners in the classroom.

Rationale

- An Affordable School will mitigate against the causes, barriers and challenges faced by lower income families and devise strategies to address the impact on mental health and wellbeing
- An Affordable School will operate with transparency and take active measures to address challenges presented by food poverty (e.g. availability and costings of food so pupils can make personal judgements about affordability)
- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Breakfast clubs and meal provision'
[Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Exploring poverty and inequality and thinking about how to make their environment more inclusive for all can also support children's participation, voice and activism around social issues.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Food and nutrition
- Anti-bullying
- PSHE & Citizenship

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Questions to explore

- Can students at your school identify which of their peers are in receipt of free school meals?
- What do students think of their school lunch experience?
- How do we collect insights into what students think of lunchtime at your school?
- Do students on free school meals have the same school food options as their peers, including at break times and at different times of the year?
- Do all students take up their free school meal entitlement?
- How effective is your food policy and has it been considered through the lens of affordability?
- How can we best use foodbanks?

- How is the school providing visible senior leadership for the impact of poverty related stigma on mental health and wellbeing?
- How does the school anti-bullying policy respond to incidents which are related to poverty?
- How does the school assess the needs of students and the impact of interventions to improve wellbeing and reduce poverty related stigma?
- How does the school ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services?
- Are pupils able to access a wide range of physical activities and opportunities inside and outside of school to improve mental and physical health?
- Are there curriculum opportunities to develop pupils' understanding within 3 key areas:
 - **Health and wellbeing:** helping learners to explore their rights and the rights of others; how to bring about positive change at school and in the wider community; and the factors which create a more welcoming environment for all
 - **Social studies:** exploring the impact of inequality, discrimination or prejudice on people's lives; analysing why some groups experience inequality; attitudes towards inequality; how the needs of groups within the local community can be supported and how inequality might be addressed
 - **Religious and moral education:** thinking about values, and how they can affect actions; considering how values like honesty, respect and compassion might be applied to moral issues; and thinking about the impact moral decision making has on society.

Common barriers

- Mental health can be a sensitive subject to discuss, especially so in families where mental health is presenting challenges
- Mental health is seen as the cause rather than the effect (of living in poverty)
- Recognising emerging issues in the early stages
- Families not taking up entitlement to FSM because of poverty related stigma and pupils not taking up the offer of FSM on an educational visit when it is offered to them
- School systems and processes inadvertently exposing pupils who are in receipt of FSMs
- Students miss out on food or limit their choice because there is an insufficient range of affordable options, pricing lacks transparency or they can't afford to pay for the food they require

- Pressures around payment cards and allocation of funds to individual pupils
- Pressures around food affordability cause stress and anxiety (mental health)
- Families getting into arrears with school lunch payments placing additional negative pressures on the relationship between the family and the school
- Lack of opportunity to access regular physical exercise (see enrichment)
- Home circumstances as contributing factors to pupil mental health and wellbeing (e.g. bed poverty, lack of sleep, overcrowding in houses, washing facilities, warmth, low energy due to lack of meals etc)
- Families having insufficient, timely access to services and specialist support

Policies

- Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges
- PSHE/RSE
- Anti-bullying
- Health and safety
- School protocol for meeting with parents.
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND
- Behaviour in schools
- Exam policy

Quick wins

- Consider the 'root causes' of any negative behaviours/lack of concentration and provide snacks/breakfast etc to meet basic need (e.g. if a pupil presents as angry establish whether they are hungry, if a pupil presents as tired understand whether they are able to get a good night's sleep/bed poverty etc)
- Gather student voice around meal choices, the lunchtime environment and processes, to understand the 'lived experience'
- Ensure food pricing is clear and visible so students understand the total cost of food being purchased and can make decisions about affordability
- Ensure students who are entitled to FSM are not inadvertently exposed at payment points by differences in the system compared to their non-FSM peers
- Ensure FSM money is available at break times as well as lunchtimes (consider some pupils may not have had breakfast) and make pupils explicitly aware how to use FSM funding in the canteen

- Use any extra funding available to 'top-up' food accounts for the canteen
- Provide guidance for purchasing food for educational visits on a group basis, in particular for example Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions or Ten Tors walks to ensure that food choices are both nutritious and cost effective
- Ensure a relational approach to contacting parents when communicating any challenges around food and eating in school
- Send invites to a Breakfast Club/ early school opening/ social time with food
- Empower your catering team to play a frontline role in pastoral care/ wellbeing support and, where appropriate, communicate observations quickly to senior leaders so necessary support can be provided
- Set up a universal 'help yourself' resource for any extra food or snacks that may become available
- Add helplines, links and information about FSM eligibility for families to your website and weekly/termly newsletters
- Make best use of CPOMS (or safeguarding systems) to regularly update information and bring together bits of the 'jigsaw' which may be an indicator of vulnerability 'through the lens of affordability' (e.g. came to school hungry etc)
- Consider the mental health and wellbeing of all members of staff 'through the lens of affordability' and make adjustments to staff activities (e.g. affordability of staff get togethers or events).

Digging deeper

Address poverty related stigma, which can lead to bullying, feelings of isolation, anxiety and attendance concerns, by:

- Review the whole lunchtime experience through the lens of affordability and the 'lived experience' of pupils from lower income families and strategically plan to bring about improvements
- Review the anti-bullying policy through the lens of affordability and understand the nature of incidents where poverty related stigma may have been a contributing factor
- Build a mental health awareness cycle across the school year so that you are regularly talking with pupils about their experiences of school life, including cost of living
- Ensure mental health and cost of living has sufficient coverage in your curriculum
- Build a common language to support cost of living discussions

- Carry out the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Schools survey and act on findings
- Work to achieve levels of the Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme
- Adopt Five to Thrive as a universal provision
- Build relationships with local businesses such as supermarkets who may be able to provide food vouchers, food donations and other resources to support school delivery of clubs and activities.

Review and develop your school curriculum to ensure opportunities to explore:

- Reasons behind inequalities in society
- Causes and consequences of poverty
- The social security system and welfare reform
- Poverty and children's rights
- Food insecurity
- In work poverty and low wages
- Attitudes towards poverty in society
- What poverty looks like globally, nationally and locally
- Media representations of poverty.

Deliver a programme of financial education (mathematics, citizenship and PSHE education) to help give the confidence, skills and knowledge needed to manage money, now and in the future. [Young Enterprise | Leading UK Charity | Empowering Young People \(young-enterprise.org.uk\)](https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)

Resources

Financial Planning

The **Secondary Planning Framework** aims to support the planning, teaching, and progression of financial education by setting out the key areas of financial knowledge, skills and attitudes, across four core themes:

- How to manage money
- Becoming a critical consumer
- Managing risks and emotions associated with money
- Understanding the important role money plays in our lives.

Young Enterprise Teachers Hub

Free resources, lesson plans and tools to support financial education from KS1 – 5
Teachers Hub - Young Enterprise & Young Money (young-enterprise.org.uk)

Health, food and nutrition

Healthy weight : [Wiltshire Healthy Schools](#)

Breakfast Clubs : [Wiltshire Healthy Schools](#)

Home : [Wiltshire Healthy Schools](#)

[School Plates | Campaign | ProVeg UK](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/school-meals-healthy-eating-standards>

<https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/schools/benefits/school-food-standards> (Food for life parents pack)

All major supermarkets have programmes that will allow schools access to food so they can distribute it to their most vulnerable families. See also:

<https://fareshare.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Sainsburys-Food-Donation-Programme-Comms-Pack-2.pdf>

<https://www.neighbourly.com/Aldi>

Magic Breakfast: providing healthy breakfast food and expert support to help identify and reach those pupils at risk of hunger. [Magic Breakfast](#)

Greggs Breakfast Clubs: support with funding school breakfast clubs, encouraging the use of parent volunteers. [About the Scheme | Greggs Foundation](#)

Mental Health

Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Emotional wellbeing and mental health : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Mental Health Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

On Your Mind – We can help

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/getting-started/secondary/>

<https://www.bouncetogether.co.uk/education/wellbeing-in-schools>

<https://www.skillsforschools.org.uk>

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/wellbeing-activities-being-kind-to-yourself/>

5 ways to wellbeing: <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

<https://www.thriveapproach.com/news/emotional-resilience-secondary>



SECURING POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Strong partnerships and relationships are central to securing whole school community success with strategies to promote engagement and improve outcomes.

Rationale

- A positive, family centred problem solving approach, driven by data, will improve outcomes: every family is different and should be provided with support which accurately and sensitively reflects their individual circumstances
- Building strong, trusting relationships that promote a feeling of belonging with individual families is fundamental to improving student engagement: parents and carers are treated equitably and can seek support from school without stigma or stereotyping
- Effective communication of school policy, practice and support is key to success. Parents may not be aware of the support that is in place to ensure families on a low income can get the help they need
- Actively demonstrating an understanding of the financial pressures being placed on families will help to strengthen relationships and improve engagement. (CPAG advises that parents appreciate: 'An open and proactive approach; A simple and matter of fact style in communication to parents and carers, which acknowledges that any family could fall into financial hardship at any time; Discretion, confidentiality, kindness and non-judgement when having conversations with families)
- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium Grant and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Communicating with and supporting parents' [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Key policies to be reviewed

- Attendance
- Home/school agreement.

Once reviewed, include the statement 'This policy has been reviewed through the lens of affordability ensuring that the principles of an Affordable School are active and have a positive impact on reducing poverty related stigma.'

Questions to explore

- How do we communicate with our families?
- How effective is school communication (website, letters, personalised messages, parent meetings etc) to support parents and secure wider engagement?
- How do parents feel about coming into school and asking for help?
- Are there links between school culture, parental engagement and attendance in our school?
- Are educational visit letters and related communications aware of student home situations in compliance with the Education Act 1996 with respect to charging for educational activities
- What deficit language is used about families and parents across the school community (e.g. sometimes, negative language is used when engaged in 'staffroom talk'. Often this is used to 'defuse' but does this set your prevailing culture and how is this being addressed?)

Common barriers

- Poverty and impact on attendance and punctuality (transport, mental health, peer relationships etc)
- Poor relationships between families and schools (e.g. legacy disagreements)
- Chronic & acute illness, family responsibilities or home situation, trauma
- Anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
- Housing and food insecurity
- Lack of predictable schedules for learning
- View of schooling and value placed on education due to life experiences, current challenges, type of occupation
- Parents do not like coming into school: embarrassment, poverty related stigma, previous poor experiences
- Parents not aware of support which is available

- Stigma around poverty in the community and the school lacking a whole school 'universal' approach which avoids labelling
- Parents/carers may not be readily available, or more 'hard to reach' due to work schedules e.g. shift work or holding down multiple jobs
- Relationships with parents are under developed, particularly with the most vulnerable
- Engagement with health services – sight tests, hearing, dentist, immunisations.

Linked policies

- Accessibility
- Attendance
- Anti-bullying
- Exclusion
- Pupil Premium Statement
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Behaviour in schools
- Health and Safety
- School protocol for meeting with parents
- Careers Education.

Quick wins

- Communicate universally sharing financial information with all families, not just those who you think might need it. This universal promotion means parents don't have to ask for help and ensures information reaches the right people - even if you don't always know who that is
- Tailor communications, with careful use of language, to encourage more positive dialogue (e.g. personal text messages for families, targeted conversations, simple, clear and matter of fact, opportunities for parents to question to develop understanding)

- Whenever possible, communicate through a mix of methods (letters, emails, texts, in person...) as wide ranging, visible and open communication opens the door to conversations and encourages any parents to come forward if they need to
- Timing of communications is important so try to communicate information at your earliest opportunity, especially around induction and transition points in the school year, beginning of each term and well ahead of any deadlines
- Be aware of language barriers and literacy issues
- Breakfast club/early bird opening
- Provide consistency at the start of the school day – for all students e.g. routines feel safe and this encourages better attendance
- Install a ‘welcome to school’ processes for students who struggle to make it e.g. meet and greet/arriving earlier to avoid crowds/pick-up from home/ breakfast club/use thrive as a transition activity
- Set up regular face to face meetings (informal and formal), using family link workers or by visiting the family home at the family’s convenience
- Set up champions for all vulnerable students e.g. use specialist practitioners, family support workers
- Describe initiatives like uniform sales as ‘green’ or ‘community-focused’ to help increase uptake (instead of focusing on the financial aspect)
- Talking directly about poverty or financial difficulties can sometimes worry parents and carers. Try using collective words like ‘us’ (for example: “we want our families to get the support they’re entitled to”)
- In any messages that involve costs (for example, in letters home about school trips), remind families where to go to get information regarding financial entitlements and support (e.g. your dedicated email address)
- Parent working group to explain support (e.g. in the community at the end of November to share help pre-Christmas).

Digging deeper

- Develop the school website to include a prominent space for a wide range of information relating to cost of living, financial support and signposting to organisations and services (e.g. Wiltshire cost of living, emergency essentials addressing issues such as bed poverty, washing machine etc)

- Refer families to affordable food providers, money advisers and other relevant outside agencies who can support them if they are struggling financially
- Use school website to signpost parents and carers to services and training
- Understand attendance issues as a symptom or barometer of health and wellbeing and have a shared understanding that commitment to the 'Affordable Schools' approach will lead to improved relationships and communication, a stronger school community and, in turn, attendance
- Any school improvement strategy to address attendance needs to understand the data and challenges, secure school systems, roles and responsibilities, take a whole school approach, target support for the whole family rather than just the individual student, work on a case by case basis for 'stuck' cases, ensure regular monitoring and feedback
- Establish a Parent Council; parents sometimes feel more comfortable talking to other parents and this will be an effective way to discuss 'Affordable Schools'/establish a network of contacts
- Build strong relationships with families and make every effort made to build trust and engagement [Building positive relationships between parents and teachers \(educationsupport.org.uk\)](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk)
- Consider introducing home visits as an opportunity to establish relationships, provide face to face communication around school support and services and identify vulnerabilities so the school can understand/intervene early
- Evaluate communication systems and processes to ensure easy access for all
- Support parents/carers with making a free school meal application including providing ICT facilities for online applications and this is frequently promoted to families
- Run specific training for staff around parental engagement e.g. use EEF guidance (see resources)
- Offer Parental training around routine and behaviour linked to the school's evidence based approaches
- Support parents with information, guidance and strategies for attendance with targeted support for individuals, as appropriate (e.g. social stories to provide information and pre-teaching which enable students and parents to be more aware)
- Set up regular parent workshops for a variety of purposes, possibly repeating each year so the community are used to this kind of connection and support (e.g. preparing your child for a residential visit or reading with your child)
- Support parents with careers advice and guidance by signposting to relevant services.

Resources

Wiltshire Council 'Supporting you through the rising cost of living'

Community Directory [Interactive Community Directory - Wiltshire Council](#)

Council tax, benefits and financial support [Council tax, benefits and financial support - Wiltshire Council](#)

Energy costs advice and guidance [Energy costs advice and guidance - Wiltshire Council](#)

Housing information and support [Housing information and support - Wiltshire Council](#)

Mental Health support [Mental Health support - Wiltshire Council](#)

Local Practical Help [Local practical help - Wiltshire Council](#)

Supporting businesses [Supporting businesses through the rising cost of living - Wiltshire Council](#)

Warm spaces [Wiltshire Council warm spaces - Wiltshire Council](#)

Grants overview [Cost of Living Support \(wiltshiremoney.org.uk\)](#)

Work Wiltshire case studies:

<https://workwiltshire.co.uk/case-studies-3/>

Wiltshire Council Parenting Support

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parenting-support>

Parent Champions

Asking parents who already have a good relationship with the school to 'spread the word' among other families can be helpful in engaging parents who might not have a positive relationship with school staff, or are less likely to attend events or read a newsletter or other promotional material. Coram Family and Childcare 'parent champions' are parent volunteers who might be able to assist (see below).

[Setting up a Parent Champions scheme | Family and Childcare Trust](#)

[Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools](#)

Family and Community Learning

Wiltshire Family and Community Learning team have a wealth of resources and training opportunities to support parent engagement and access to services

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/family-learning>

Turn 2 Us: has an online grant search tool where you can find charities that offer non repayable grants to help individuals on low incomes

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk>

Gingerbread: Provide information to help single parents support themselves and their family.

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk>

Family Action: Provide practical, emotional and financial support to those who are experiencing poverty, disadvantage and social isolation across the country

<https://www.family-action.org.uk>

North Wiltshire:

<https://www.therisetrust.org/services/youth-activities/>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/supporting-parents>

Support for families during holidays

FUEL is a free holiday activity and food project that offers participants the opportunity to take part in a range of fun activities during school holiday periods

[Resources](#) | [Page](#) | [SLA Online \(sla-online.co.uk\)](#)

Family Fund Services

The programme provides items that meet children's most basic needs such as a bed to sleep in, a cooker to give them a hot meal, clothing (in a crisis) and other items and services that are critical to children's wellbeing.

[BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials Programme - Family Fund Business Services \(familyfundserves.co.uk\)](#)

Attendance

DfE publication on improving school attendance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

[EBSA: Emotionally Based School Avoidance \(EBSA\) | Right Choice \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Education Welfare Resource Page on Right Choice Resources | Page | SLA Online \(sla-online.co.uk\)](#)

[Attendance Works: https://www.attendanceworks.org](https://www.attendanceworks.org)

[EEF: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment)

[Case study: https://researchschool.org.uk/durrington/news/an-evidence-informed-approach-to-improving-attendance](https://researchschool.org.uk/durrington/news/an-evidence-informed-approach-to-improving-attendance)

[SEND newsletter - Local Offer \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#)

For further information, guidance materials and resources, please visit the **Affordable Schools Toolkit** on Right Choice.

Contact: Kate Wilkins (Disadvantaged Learners Lead & School Leadership)
kate.wilkins@wiltshire.gov.uk



Affordable Schools

WILTSHIRE





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Wiltshire Early Years Childcare and Sufficiency Strategy 2025-2028

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Executive Summary

Paragraphs summarising, to be completed at end.

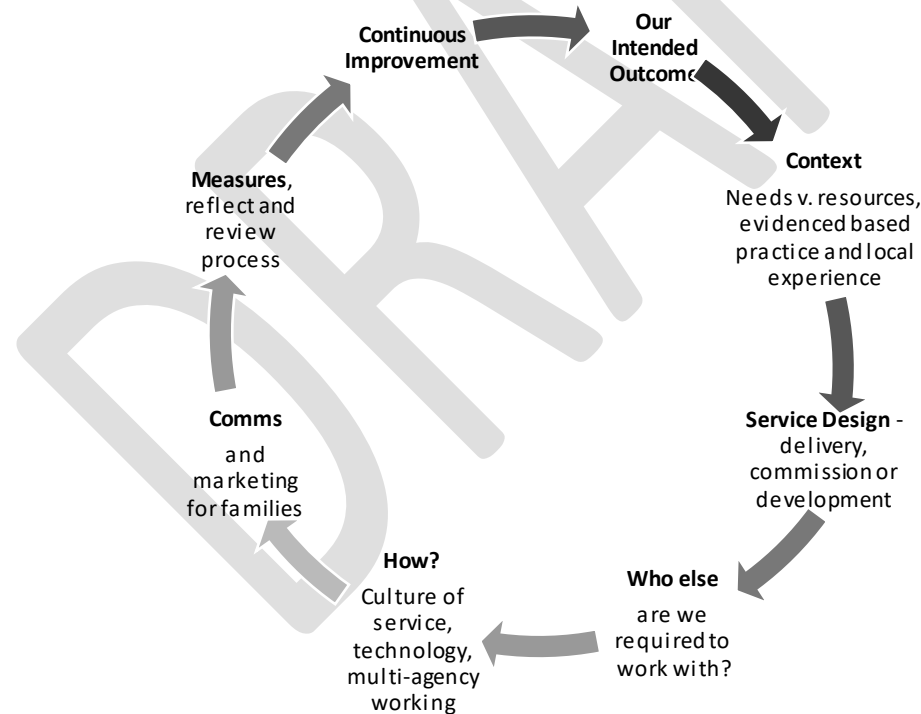
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At the 2023 'Shaping Us' National Symposium the Princess of Wales highlighted the 'vital' role that social and emotional skills play in shaping children's future wellbeing. A key member of the Business Taskforce for Early Childhood, which the Princess launched in March 2023, Sara Rajeswaran, chief of staff at Aviva, told attendees that business has 'a vested interest in spearheading and supporting this movement' and that 'if children can't reach their full potential, nor can our businesses or the wider economy'. She added, 'In the New Year, the taskforce will be calling on more businesses across the UK to act on early childhood and social and emotional development.'

1. Introduction and Opportunities

Our vision for under 5s in Wiltshire is to consolidate and build on the commitment, passion and existing great work happening across Wiltshire in the early years space (pre-conception to 5 years), by also engaging with services supporting parents and carers more widely.

Services which support the early years focus on early intervention and prevention, and this is evidentially known to reduce needs and inequalities as our children grow and develop into adults. The early years has emerged in recent years as the priority area of intervention for Health and Social Care resources. This age group of our youngest citizens and their families is the one in which we have the greatest chance



of improving outcomes for individuals and reducing the burden of provision effectively for the future. Strategic provision of services and self-help in the early years is where the greatest possible impact in all areas of need may be most successfully achieved. This is a cyclical process as shown in the following diagram.

2. Methodology

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We will focus on clear outcomes for families and setting out how we will achieve this.

3. National context and legal framework

A Family Centred Approach

- Children and families will be held central in the planning and delivery of services
- Universal public health services will be co-ordinated with early years education
- We will seek to identify, engage and empower children and families who may typically be disadvantaged.

Telling the story once

- Working must be planned to actively ensure families receive seamless pathways of services
- Service culture will promote place based approaches such as the Family Hubs model drawing together Early Years provision across Social Care, Education, Social Care, Public Health and Clinical Health with the family and child at the centre.
- We will encourage self-help and peer support, as well as balance the need for safeguarding. This will include support for economic independence.

Action planning and measurable outcomes

- Delivery planning will link Early Years activities to council strategic priorities
- Staff will understand how their roles link to the wider agenda and legal duties.
- There will be consistency of delivery in communities as close to families as possible
- Performance management frameworks setting measurable outcomes will take account of risks which might impact on the progress

All local authorities face a time of great challenge with overall resources being reduced year on year. The focus of children’s services in recent years have concentrated on safeguarding, early years and schools. Typically, these agendas, along with working towards efficiencies, tend to form local social care priorities.

Childcare legislation	SEND Legislation	Health Visiting legislation	WHO and UNICEF Strategy	Family Hubs Guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Outcomes Duties • Joint working agencies to reduce inequalities • Includes support to encourage working families • Sufficiency Duties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory requirement to secure sufficient childcare places • Information Duties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For providers and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working • Early Years Provider duties • Developmental outcomes for children • Advice, information and support • Engagement and Consultation with families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 key touchpoints with families from pregnancy to age 5 • Health development Reviews at 2.5 years are integrated with Early Years Education development reviews • Health Visitors make the only universal contact with 0-5s to identify needs and refer children and families to other agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) to improve breastfeeding rates (as a key determinant of lifelong health) • Best start in life first 1001 days government initiative. Pregnancy to age of two as critical for lifelong reductions in health and social care need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place based hubs offering early help support • Opportunity for universal community engagement with health and care services • Available to families with children aged 0-18 (25 with SEND).

4. Local Context

The Wiltshire Council Early Years Strategy brings all of our early years services and strategic processes together to provide a high-quality offer from pregnancy to five years.

Wiltshire Council's Business Plan and the local Health and Wellbeing Strategy each set out four complementary strategic objectives.

Wiltshire has a wide range of strategic undertakings in place to support children and families in the early years. This includes our over-arching strategies across the Council and NHS; and covers all of the service area strategies to support the early years locally.



Services include:

- Family hubs
- Early Years Settings (such as nurseries)
- Childcare support and help to work
- Health Visiting for all families
- Community Health Services for particular identified needs such as SEND

Public Health

There are a range of early years health and wellbeing related work areas/ projects happening in Wiltshire to support the needs of children and families from pregnancy to 5 years, such as the Healthy Movers Programme, and a FACT Programme priority project focussed on Speech,

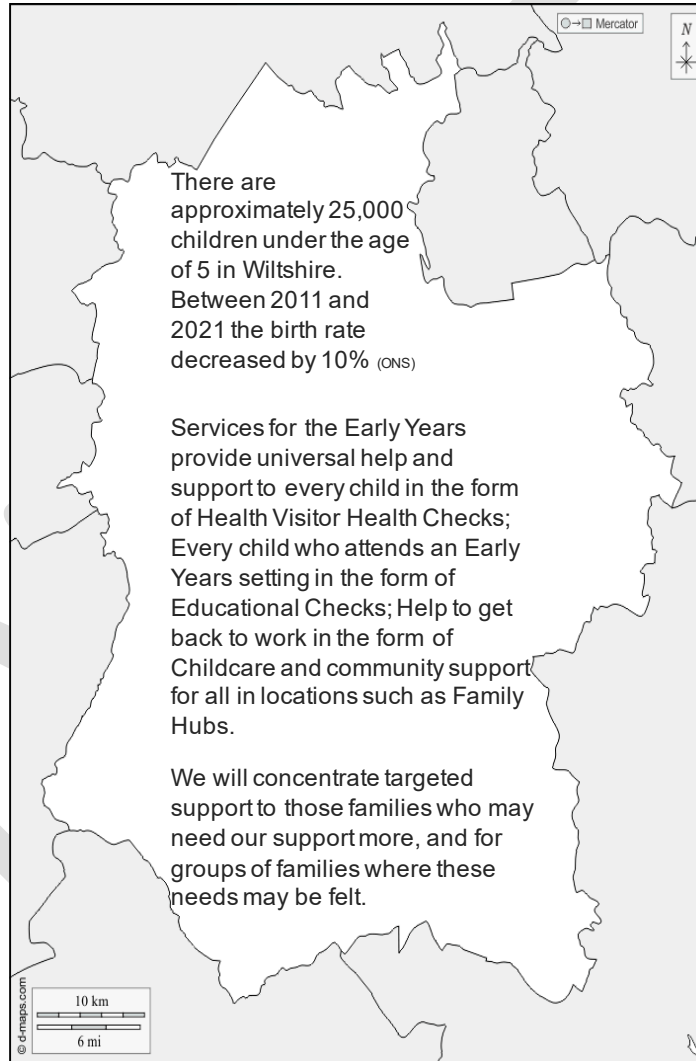
Language, and Communication. Relationships between early year's partners across the system involved in this work (from health, local authority and the voluntary sector) are well established and there are effective mechanisms in place to ensure early years childcare providers are actively engaged in work areas where appropriate.

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5. Our Starting Point, Supply and Demand

Demographics

The Early Years population has reduced slightly in recent years and is spread across a wide geography of rural towns, villages and countryside and a few larger towns.



Local Needs

Our start in life, and our circumstances influence our whole life course. It is important that we deliver services universally, but with a focus towards supporting those most in need.

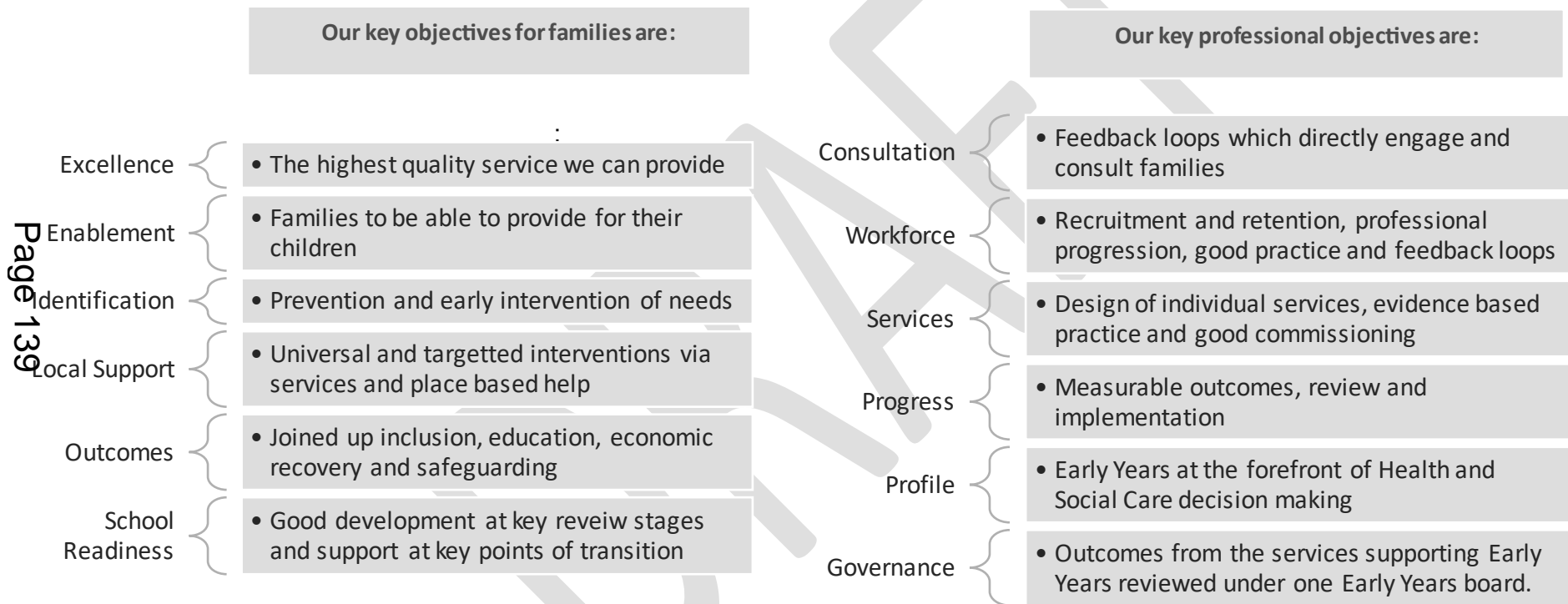
Across Health, Education and Social Care, a key aim of Early Years work is to ensure that by the age of 5 children will have educationally and physically developed sufficiently to achieve their best possible outcomes when they start school. This is described in Education as a Good Level of Development (GLD), and in Public Health as School Readiness.

This must be supported by sufficient childcare and employment opportunities, to enable parents wherever possible to return to work when their child is old enough, so that children can benefit from the educational and developmental support offered in Early Years settings, and so that families can live in the most economically advantageous position, which in turn drives improved health and social outcomes. From April 2024, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds became able to access 15 hours funded childcare. From September 2024, this was extended to 15 hours funded childcare for eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3-year-olds. This will be extended again so that from September 2025, 30 hours of funded childcare will be available for eligible working parents from the term after their child turns 9 months.

Social Care support is available for those most in need. Resources and targeted support can be most effective when needs are identified in the first months of life.

6. What are we collectively trying to achieve?

A Local Government Association Early Years Peer Review of Wiltshire Early Years Services noted in 2023: 'There is a strong commitment to partnership working, as a necessity in supporting the challenges locally, such as rurality and thinly spread resources. Rurality can make planning for the sufficiency of childcare difficult and, in particular, full day-care to support working families.'



Local services supporting the early years include midwifery, health visitors, family hubs, SEND inclusion, Portage, Family Nurse Partnership, Early Help teams, Early Years staff, social care, virtual school, voluntary agencies. In 2024 there were 241 early years settings and 190 childminders (Census March 2024).

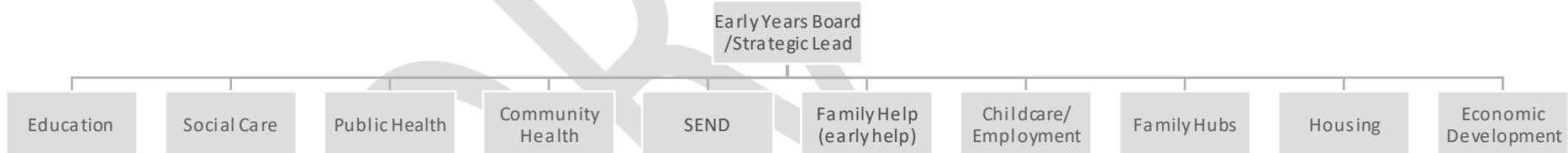
7. Performance Management

The co-ordination of local delivery will aim to ensure that each service with an Early Years agenda, compliments and contributes to each other. For example, social workers, health visitors and early years staff each have a role to play in both safeguarding and the take up of early years services.

The Local Area will work to an Early Years Action Plan included at the end of this strategy.

Governance

This strategy sets out oversight of Early Years undertakings. Other departments and services will feed into the Early Years Strategic Board and to contribute to the Early Years Action Plan, as follows.



The Early Years Strategy and Action Plan itself will report via the Early Years Board to the Performance Outcomes Board/ Children’s Select Committee. It will also inform and receive information from other boards such as the SEND Board and Health and Wellbeing Board, as needed.

8. Risks, Themes, Ideas and Recommendations

We will prioritise the following strategic outcomes and themes for the Early Years, supported by a clear action plan and performance management to oversee progress.

Areas of focus

We will concentrate our local efforts to support children and families in the early years on the following priorities: The background and reasons are set out in more detail in our action plan

1. A Good Level of Development and School Readiness
 - a. A particular focus on Speech and Language
2. Family hubs
3. Sufficient Childcare
4. Transitions
5. Physical and Mental Wellbeing
6. Integrated Early Childhood Services and workforce development
7. Information and advice for key stakeholders in Early Years Services
8. Supporting SEND in the Early Years
9. Rural Wiltshire

- [More information](#)

9. Action Plan

1. Good Level of Development and School Readiness				
Ensuring children are physically, emotionally and educationally as ready as possible to begin school by the age of 5				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
<p>Integrated checks at 2.5- 3 years draw together Health Visiting development checks and Early Years Foundation Stage educational development checks</p> <p>66.9% Wiltshire children are reaching GLD in 2021/22. Top 25% Performing LAs in England Achieve 67.5- 74.4%</p>	<p>We will use new touchpoints at different ages in Health Visiting and use our Family Hubs to reach and support children throughout the 0-5 Early Years</p> <p>We will refer children with needs identified to appropriate services</p>	<p>Strategic outcomes from integrated reviews to be reported to EY board, any issues arising. Specifics to be added</p>	<p>Public Health Commission Universal (whole population) Health Visiting Services HCRG are Provider of HV services</p> <p>Early Years Team oversee Early Years Settings This includes children who attend EY settings (ie. not whole population) Independent Private EY settings</p>	<p>HVs in turn undertake ASQ Health Development checks at 2.5 years</p> <p>Early Years settings undertake Educational development checks before age 3. This takes place in our schools sector and Private Voluntary Independent (PVI)</p> <p>The integrated check brings outcomes from these checks together</p> <p>The integrated pathway diagram is set out in Appendix 3</p>
<p>Speech and Language Services</p>	<p>Ongoing commissioning and contract monitoring of SALT services.</p> <p>Family help early intervention objectives. Headline outcomes to be reported to the EY Board</p>	<p>Speech and Language development has been delayed in the under fives due to reduced socialisation during the pandemic. We will work to meet this need locally, making and monitoring levels of referrals to SALT; ensuring there is sufficient provision of SALT services; contract monitoring SALT services for quality.</p>	<p>SALT is Jointly commissioned via Section 75 agreement by the Local Authority and ICB, and delivered by HCRG. The contract and outcomes are monitored by the ICB</p>	<p>Early language development impacts on all aspects of a child's non-physical development, including their ability to manage their emotions and communicate feelings, to establish and maintain relationships, to think symbolically and to learn to read and write. This then impacts on lifelong outcomes. The aim is to ensure children's language development enables them to thrive in their learning, to maximise their personal and social life chances and to enhance opportunities for social mobility.</p>
2. Provision of Family Hubs				
The sufficient provision of, and agencies and departments working together to integrate services within, family hubs to meet the needs of parents, prospective parents and children.				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
<p>Meeting the government plans for family hubs, including Best Start for Life</p>	<p>We will deliver partnership, placed based support for the community, all in one place. Three main hubs, 21 spokes</p>	<p>Place based Early help, health visiting, self help options, parenting, and referral to services such as housing, SEND, smoking cessation etc if needed.</p> <p>Giving out information</p> <p>Making referrals.</p>	<p>Family hub service, Commissioning Team</p>	<p>Family hubs directed by Gov't guidance Family Hubs and Start for Life programme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Builds on Best Start in Life, The First 1001 Days.</p> <p>Wiltshire is not one of 75 national pilot sites, but will follow the model as this will be implemented across England.</p>

3. Sufficient childcare and employment support for working parents				
Ensuring that there are sufficient childcare places for working parents and those parents who wish to access education or training as a way into work. Meeting our duty to facilitate and work together with partners to ensure children, parents and families universally have access to services from partners including Early Years provision, Social services, Health, Employment and training, Information and assistance				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
Meeting the Local Authority Sufficiency Duty	<p>Childcare and employment underpin a family's ability to be economically independent and benefit from all of health and social care advantages which comes from this. We will take a holistic whole-family approach, securing sufficient high-quality childcare and early years provision, working with providers from all sectors.</p> <p>Oversee task group to undertake sufficiency report identify needs and report to Early Years Board. Geography of sufficiency need: Amesbury; Melksham; RWB & Cricklade: Bradford on Avon; South-West Wiltshire – Mere/Tisbury/Wilton; Tidworth; Westbury Promote options available to fund childcare to parents through social media and other communication channels. Continue to monitor and review setting fees and charging policies through assurance checks and self assessments Reissue the childcare survey annually and hold interviews with parents to understand the reasons for childcare issues. Widen the scope of the survey and open it for longer to encourage a larger response.</p>	<p>Monitoring the number of childcare places on the Early Years Register (Ofsted) and any changes Monitoring the number of non-Early Years registered childminders and changes in last 12 months (Ofsted) Increasing the number of childcare settings with a good or outstanding Ofsted rating</p> <p>Increasing the percentage of eligible disadvantaged 2-year-olds accessing early education entitlement</p> <p>Increasing the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds accessing early education</p> <p>Take-up of all Early Years Entitlements to be increased including new entitlements for working parents of children aged over nine months old.</p> <p>Sufficient high-quality, accessible and inclusive childcare and early education places are to be secured.</p> <p>Number of pupils in schools and early years settings</p>	Commissioning, Education, Family Help	<p>Latest data shows that there are 249 early years settings and 311 childminders in Wiltshire. Based on the number of families eligible for disadvantaged two year old funding, as identified by the Department for Work and Pensions, Wiltshire's take-up of this offer is relatively high compared to other local authorities. The take-up of 3 and 4 year old funding has remained static over a number of years at 99%.</p> <p>BBC reports 2/11/23 that 'The recruitment and retention crisis in the childcare sector is affecting the number of places available in Wiltshire' Need exists, but report doesn't take into account similar national and regional comparators.</p>
4. Transitions				
Ensuring that our pathways into, out of and across different services promote good life skills and the ability to manage change.				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
Achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD and School Readiness) Children with SEND are supported	We will support the transition into reception year at primary school.	<p>Reducing placement movement (setting/school/service) Reducing exclusions/reduced timetables Reducing complaints Parent surveys</p>	Education, Social Care	<p>This is a universal need affecting children who attend early years settings and those who don't. A hard to reach group will be those children not in an early years setting, how to reach them, and how to prepare them for this transition.</p> <p>In Wilts there are 202 state-funded Primary schools, 15 private primary schools. (Also, 4 state-funded Special schools, 19 Independent schools and 5 Independent Special schools</p>

5. Improving the well-being of young children. Reducing inequalities between young children in the area.:				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
<p>Well-being includes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical, mental and emotional health. 2. Protection from harm and neglect. 3. Education, training and recreation. 4. Social and economic well-being 	<p>Our objective will be to improve the well-being of young children through good quality services that are well understood, easy to access and support families' needs;</p> <p>We will do this by securing integrated early childhood services with seamless transition from universal, to preventative, to targeted services, meeting needs in the most efficient and cost-effective way;</p>	<p>Increasing the number of children at integrated 2.5 year review</p> <p>Ensuring data share between Ed and HV</p> <p>Measuring school readiness – children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception year (DfE)</p> <p>Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest of the cohort (DfE)</p> <p>Breastfeeding rates</p> <p>Immunizations of Children in Care below average to be targeted and improved</p> <p>Infant mortality rate higher than expected for regional affluence</p> <p>Mental well-being of children and parents</p> <p>Reducing the inequality in life expectancy at birth (PHE)</p> <p>Reducing the number of children in absolute low - income families (PHE)</p>	Public Health, Commissioning	<p>There will be an increased understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and how to help mitigate any impact.</p> <p>Safeguarding, Public Health, Social Care, Education</p>
6. Integrated early childhood services and workforce development Enabling, supporting and building the workforce contributing to the Early years to work in a joined up way and to continuously improve				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
<p>Recruitment, retention, training, joining up and celebrating our Early Years staff and teams.</p> <p>Including teams and colleagues whose role overlaps with Early Years undertakings.</p>	<p>There are to be agreed key performance indicators, reporting mechanism and scrutiny of early years services.</p> <p>Our Early Years Board is to be established, in order to service delivery, and oversee and monitor progress against our action plan.</p> <p>The early years offer will enable joined up services for families, the effective use of resources and avoidance of duplication.</p> <p>Continue working with South West Local Authorities to increase the recruitment and retention of staff in early settings across the county</p> <p>Monitor and develop additional wraparound provision across the county for early years and school age children by working with schools and settings to manage gaps.</p> <p>Monitor and develop more childminding across the county by increasing advertising and working with JobCentrePlus.</p>	<p>Careers Fairs and schools</p> <p>Prospective staff in training</p> <p>Targeted project work</p> <p>Staff surveys</p> <p>CDP opportunities</p> <p>Referrals into SC, identification of need, eg. SEND.</p> <p>Early Help needs assessment. 30% of children will require involvement- aim to reduce needs for support from Social Worker.</p> <p>Outcomes at the end of early years foundation stage continue to be good</p> <p>The percentage of Ofsted good or above judgements for early years and childcare settings remains high.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention of the workforce is prioritised, with clear career progression and continuous professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Support children looked after</p>	Commissioning, Education, Transformation	<p>Recruitment in common with all areas of care remains a challenge. There is a genuine commitment to supporting children and families in the best way possible, whilst meeting change positively. There is overall a very experienced aging workforce and succession planning needs to be built in</p>

7. Information and advice for key stakeholders in Early Years Services Offering information, advice or training those who intend to provide childcare in their area and who are registered; and Information, advice and assistance to parents or prospective parents				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
Meeting our duties to make information accessible to parents and service providers, particularly around childcare and SEND.	We will provide information, advice and assistance that is clear, easy to find and easy to understand. Must establish and maintain a service providing information	Performance management indicators to be agreed in their totality, 'dashboard' indicators will be summarized and available here (e.g., annual mystery shop? Parent feedback loop?)	Commissioning team, Comms team	Family hubs and library staff to make information available to all. Action for Early Years Board to develop
8. Supporting SEND in the Early Years We will be inclusive in everything we do.				
Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
Meeting our duties under the Children and Families Act and SEND Code of Practice; particularly to engage, consult and co-produce and to maintain an Early Years presence on the Local Offer.	Children are supported with an inclusive and accessible service that meets their needs and their families' needs. Support and information, for parents and professionals, both digital and actual offer, is accessible and reflects the needs of Wiltshire's population. Parents, carers and children are included in the design of service delivery.	Increasing the percentage of Education, Health and Care Assessments completed in the 20 Week Statutory timescale Early intervention to try to negate the need for EHCPs later Improving the performance of Children with SEND support outcomes in EYFSP Specifically; measuring sufficiency for children with SEND, as a distinct part of the sufficiency assessment, e.g., through identifying take up in this group compared with the overall population, provider surveys and consultation, family engagement and feedback from partners. Early Years Inclusion Data Dashboard (ISF hours etc, needs, EHCP rates, Top referrers of settings, caseload data, POG and SEND SEF Dingley's Promise training to be undertaken by the majority of early years practitioners.	SEND team, Local Offer lead, Commissioning, Education, Social Care, Community Health	

9. Transport/ Rural Wiltshire

We will take account of local geographical and socio-economic hurdles to services and support, identify needs where possible, and do our best to ensure access to services for all

Item	Moving forwards	Areas of Focus	Accountable to Early Years Board	Notes
<p>Monitor needs and outcomes arising from Wiltshire's Geography.</p> <p>Champion support where needed. Escalate issues where identified.</p>	<p>Geography and rurality is a key feature of Wiltshire as a county. Transport and the ability of some families to physically engage with services is a challenge. Families who may qualify for home to school transport do not qualify for such support until children are of Primary School age because this the age at which school becomes compulsory.</p>	<p>Continue to make steps towards making services available to all where practical, such as securing space at County Hall in Trowbridge for a Family Hub as the most accessible location for the most people in the West of the County. Similar hubs are in place and being developed across Wiltshire.</p> <p>The issue of geography is recognised and we will continue to monitor and develop needs and strategic approaches to making services available for the greatest number of people and those with the greatest needs.</p> <p>Access to employment, benefits, socio-economic drivers of EY support</p> <p>Early Years entitlement- funded childcare increased</p> <p>Family and community learning-</p> <p>Business and Higher development needs-. Job centre plus.</p> <p>Referral in and out of family hubs</p>	<p>Public Health, Commissioning</p>	<p>Transport not funded and is not an option for this age group.</p>

Appendix 1: Early years Outcomes Framework

Domains					
Safeguarding	Nurture	Resilience	Health	Development	Determinants
Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective
Children are and feel safe	Children are cared for supported and valued	Children are resilient, capable and coping	Children Are Healthy	Children Learn and develop	Children are not disadvantaged by poverty
Aims	Aims	Aims	Aims	Aims	Aims
		Achieve Education and Health developmental milestones between 2–3 years of age in integrated reviews			
		Achieve at least 95% uptake in all scheduled childhood immunisation			
				Improve the overall attainment levels of all children in Wiltshire	
		All women experience safe and positive pregnancies and childbirth that result in the birth of more healthy babies			
				Narrow the attainment gap at the end of Foundation Phase between those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible by 10%	
		Services are accessible and available which meet parents'/carers', families' and children's needs			
				Increase the proportion of children achieving school readiness/ GLD aged 5	
		Continue to improve opportunities for families to receive childcare and seek employment			
		Continue to improve opportunities for all children to attend Early Years Settings			
Safeguarding	Nurture	Resilience	Health	Development	Determinants
Indicators	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators	Indicators
Population level					
Number of infant (first year of life) deaths	Rate of Children in Need (0–5)	Percentage of 5 year olds that achieve a Good Level of Development	Percentage of singleton live births with low birth weight <2.5kg	Developmental progress of children between ages 2-3 in ASQ/ Integrated check	Percentage of 0–5 year olds living in households in receipt of income-related benefits, or tax credits with income less than 60% of the national median
Percentage of 0–5 year residents presenting at A&E departments having had accidental injuries in the home	Rate of Children in Need on the Child Protection Register (0–5)	Percentage of disadvantaged (lowest 40% income) of families taking up 2 year entitlements	Percentage of 5 year olds up to date with routine immunisations	Percentage of 5 year olds that achieve Literacy and Communication Skills	Percentage of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieving School Readiness compared to children not eligible for free school meals
Percentage of homeless households which include dependent children			Percentage of YR/ 5 year olds who are a healthy weight	Percentage of 5 year olds that achieve Mathematical Development	
Number of child deaths (1–5 year olds)			Percentage of children with good Dental health at age 5	Attendance rates for Years 1 and 2	
Performance/ Service Quality Measures					
Percentage of all local housing authorities and housing associations that meet Standards	Percentage of eligible parents of 2 year olds accessing Early Years Entitlement a) 2 year olds b) 3-4 year olds	Percentage of mothers breastfeeding at 10 days and up to 6 months	Percentage of mothers smoking during pregnancy	Percentage of children reaching or exceeding their developmental milestones at 2 and 3 years	Percentage of children living in areas who are fully immunised by age 5
	Percentage of parents taking up universal entitlement offer				Percentage of children benefitting from Family hubs
	Percentage of Early Years settings that are awarded good or outstanding by Ofsted				

Appendix 2: Road Map of Early Years Services by age of the child

	Early Pregnancy	Late Pregnancy	Birth - Age 1	Age 1-2	Age 2-3	Age 3-4	Age 4-5
	Friends and Family						
	Voluntary and Community						
Universal Services	Family Hubs						
	Midwifery						
	Health Visiting						
							School
	Childcare Services						
	Information, Advice, Guidance						
	Libraries / Leisure						
Targeted Services available to certain groups				9m -3yrs childcare (from Sept 2024)	2 Year Old entitlement	Early Years entitlement	
	Family Nurse Partnership						
	SEND Services						
Targeted Services available in response to needs	Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)						
	Early Help						
	Children's Social Care						
	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)						
	Specific issues Response, eg debt support, domestic abuse help, drug and alcohol, smoking cessation, sexual health services						

Appendix 3: Wiltshire Learning Alliance Charter



Wiltshire Learning Alliance
Together for All

Working together for the best possible life chances for every child, young person and their family

Our Charter

Being outward facing and forward thinking

We commit to:

- Learning collaboratively from the wider community for the benefit of all our children and young people
- Being future thinking, taking from the best and exploring possibilities for a better future for all
- Encouraging the Alliance Board to act as the strategic forum for schools whilst looking beyond Wiltshire to what's happening nationally and internationally
- Sharing and deploying skills, knowledge and resources to benefit all
- Being brave, doing what is right, moving from competitive culture to a collaborative learning community
- Sharing an ethos of care, respect, openness and trust
- Seeking excellence through a self-sustaining model of continuous improvement

Learning from each other, seeking and sharing best practice

We commit to:

- Celebrating what is working well, learning from each other, maintaining a regional but connected approach to the sharing of practice
- Expanding collaboration beyond traditional clusters
- Participating with generosity and professionalism in school-based research programmes for the benefit of all
- Overcoming barriers to encourage positive collaboration across schools
- Working together from early years through to further and higher education
- Sharing our ethos and moral purpose of collaboration to improve outcomes for all the children and young people in Wiltshire
- Encouraging all professionals to develop open and trusting relationships across our schooling system, working without judgement to provide equitable provision for all

Being collectively accountable for improving the life chances of all our children and young people

We commit to:

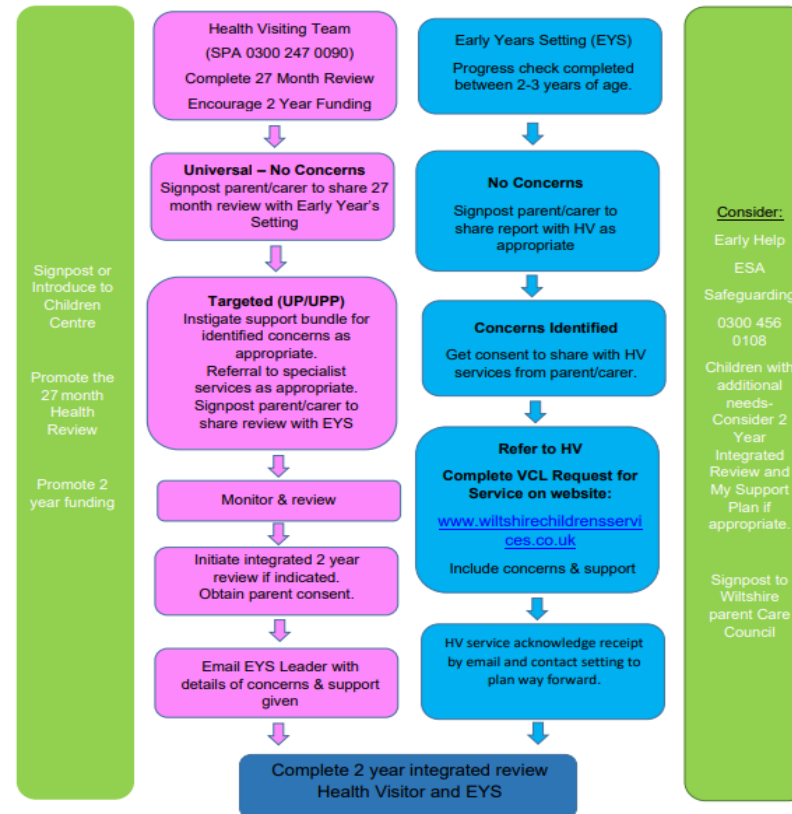
- Being brave, open and receptive to new solutions and ways of working
- Having collective responsibility for every Wiltshire child and young person, always putting them at the heart of our school-led improvement model
- Working together to ensure that no child or school is left behind
- Seeking excellence through equity of opportunity and resource management
- Building a culture of belonging in our schools, pride in our communities and ambition for their future in our young people
- Providing a curriculum which prepares learners for an ever-changing world.

Appendix 4: Integrated 2.5 year review pathway



Integrated 2 Year Pathway

Working together to achieve the best outcomes for the child.

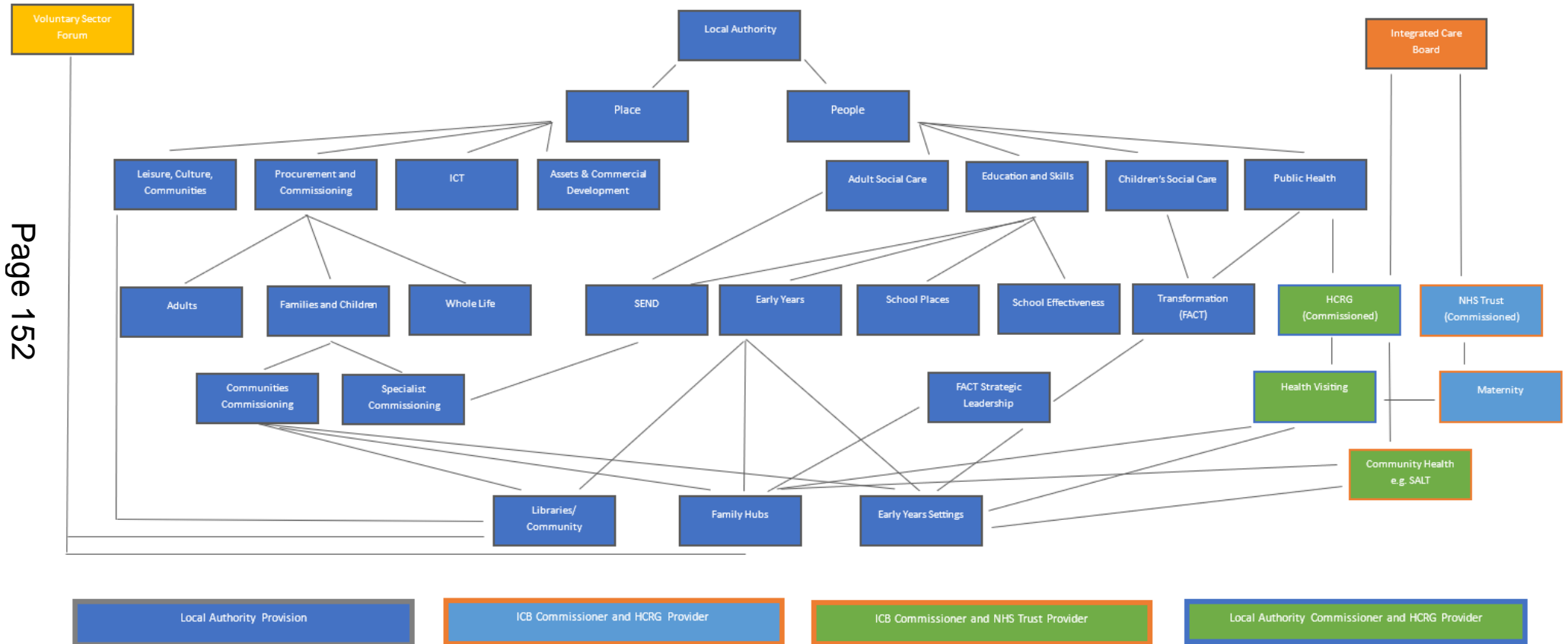


Appendix 5: Further Wiltshire Documents and Processes.

Wiltshire Early Years Strategic Drivers	Wiltshire Early Years Operational Provision
<p>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26,000 children aged 0-5 in 2022, 5,000 less than in 2018. • A relatively affluent, rural, large county with several urban areas and 8 key areas of deprivation 	<p>Family Hubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place based multi agency service delivery hub for 0-5s • Based on government initiative starting with 75 more deprived LAs., Best Start for Life (BSL) • National direction of travel to open to all school age children
<p>The Recovery JSNA- Children and Young People's Plan 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have been affected by COVID lockdown, developmental effects eg. speech remaining later • Speech and Language as an example has been delayed for babies developing during lockdown • Good Level of Development (GLD) reflects deprivation and need in Wiltshire 	<p>Family Help Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention (early help) • Multi-agency approach • Right help at right time • Co-ordination of early intervention and prevention • Integrating existing assets under one brand
<p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that children and young people are healthy and ready for learning and education • Improve skills, good work and employment • Strengthen compassionate and healthy communities • Creating health promoting places 	<p>School Places Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to work with the early years commissioning team • Identify whether any pre-schools could move into surplus school accommodation. • Particularly those pre-schools who are already on school sites in old mobiles.
<p>ICB Integrated Care Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention and Early Intervention • Good experiences of pregnancy and childbirth; healthy babies and confident parenting • Healthy environments to grow up in • availability of Mental Health support • safety and support for the most vulnerable, including those in care • children ready to start education • health and care services working together 	<p>Home to School Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in the early years do not qualify for Local Authority transport based on need (School age 5+ only) • Makes it difficult to access any early years provision for families who do not have easy access to transport. • Ongoing need to assess and address Wiltshire's particular rural local needs relating to geography
<p>Childcare Sufficiency Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop additional wraparound provision across the county for early years • More childminding across the county by increasing advertising and working with Job Centre Plus • increase the recruitment and retention of staff in early settings across the county working with LAs in the South West • Promote options available to fund childcare to parents through social media and other communication channels • Monitor and review setting fees and charging policies through assurance checks and self assessments 	<p>Early Years Service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports schools and Early Years settings, often called nurseries, preschools, and childminders • Team of specialist early years advisers passionate about raising outcomes for children to ensure they get the best start in life • Includes Early Years Advisory Teachers, Quality Assurance Officers, Early Years Inclusion Advisors Assistant Commissioners • Working closely with schools, early years settings, childminders and family hubs to offer support and advice and improve outcome • Offer support and advice and improve outcomes
<p>SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024 2029</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND is our largest needs group amongst the 0-15 Early Years, ASD largest SEND needs group • Developing holistic plans with Children and Young People • Inclusion and removing exclusion in Education • Inclusion and well-being in the community • Improving the range and quality of provision • Achievement and progress • Well planned transitions 	<p>Early Years Integrated 2-3 year review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings together both the statutory health and educational reviews • Universal Offer 27-month ASQ-3 and ASQSE review (Health Visiting Team) • Early Years Progress Check at age 2 (Early Years Settings)
<p>Wiltshire Council's Business Plan 2022-2032</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention and early intervention • Improving social mobility and tackling inequalities • Understanding communities • Working together 	<p>Community Health provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For identified/ diagnosed needs • Speech and Language Therapy - a priority local need • Occupational Therapy • Primary Care: GPs, Maternity Services • Health Visiting

Appendix 6: Current map of services relating to Early Years

Wiltshire Early Years Structure



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Source: Developed from consultation for LGA review of Early Years service

Appendix 7: Further Legislation and Government Guidance

Childcare legislation

The Childcare Act (was the first act to be exclusively concerned with early years, childcare and early childhood services. This need is supported in Wiltshire by our Childcare Sufficiency Strategy.

The Childcare Act (2006, updated 2016) enables a framework for delivery under three key areas:

- Early years outcomes duties require the provision of early years services and joint working between agencies to reduce inequalities, improve outcomes and narrow the gap
- Sufficiency duties require local authorities to ensure sufficient early education and childcare for the early years entitlements at two, three and four, and that they enable parents to take part in employment and employment-related activities (childcare for children aged 0-14, or 18 for children with a disability);
- Information duties require local authorities to ensure information for both childcare providers and families in order to meet their other childcare duties.

SEND Legislation

Local Authority responsibilities for children with SEND were further defined by the Children and Families Act 2014 which seeks to improve services for vulnerable children and to support families. It underpinned wider reforms and policies to ensure that all children and young people can succeed, no matter what their background which is further strengthened by the Equalities Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice Guidance 2015. More widely this is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1992). The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Health Visiting legislation

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 began a legislative alignment of Children's Social Care for individuals with universal Public Health priorities across the whole population of the Early Years. The Act precipitated a call to action to increase the workforce of Health Visitors and to define more specifically the frequency of Health Visitor engagement with Families in the first 5 years of life, leading to more standardised measurement of child health development. The UK's first major study to focus on the effectiveness of early years education reported in 1997

that children who attended high quality early education were likely to achieve better GCSE results, follow a post 16 academic path, have better self regulation, social behaviour and be less inclined to hyperactivity. They were also found to have a better increased lifetime earnings, an evidenced precursor in reducing future health and social care needs. Health Visiting services are commissioned to deliver 7 key touchpoints to all young children and their parents during pregnancy and throughout the early years. In this respect Health Visitors are the only professional service designed to actively meet and review the whole population of children throughout the early years. In recent years this has led to the development of integrated health and education reviews undertaken by Health Visitors and Early Years Practitioners between 2 and 3 years of age.

WHO and UNICEF Strategy

There is a well- established and growing international consensus on the importance of the Early Years age range; it is part of the World Health Organisation's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative for breastfeeding, and in England most recently this is set out in government guidance for The Best Start in Life*. This identifies the first 1,001 days from pregnancy to the age of two as setting the foundations for an individual's cognitive, emotional and physical development.

Family Hubs Government Guidance

For the term of Wiltshire's Early Years Strategy from 2024 -2029 there is a national focus on delivering place based universal and targeted services in the form of family hubs. This is intended to draw together health and social care needs with universal provision for all families using a physical community hub as a platform for early intervention and signposting to wider social care support where needed.

The family hub programme represents a significant step forward in delivering on the government's commitments as set out in 'The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days and builds on delivery of the Healthy Child Programme 0-19 Public Health services. The family hub programme was initially funded in 75 of the country's most deprived areas as those with greatest need. Supporting babies, children, and families across the country in this way is a crucial part of the government's ambition to level up. Although Wiltshire is not an area of overall deprivation or one of the family hubs funded councils it is identified locally that during the term of this strategy family hubs will become the model of delivery for the future community provision of early help services.

The Family Hubs programme retains a key early years focus on the 0-5 age group, enabling joined up community health and social care provision for families with children in both school and pre-school, and supporting the transition from the early years to primary education.

[The best start for life a vision for the 1 001 critical days.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
[Healthy child programme: health visitor and school nurse commissioning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 8: A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the Early Years (JSNA)

Local Demographics

A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is undertaken by Local Authorities in order to identify the needs which exist locally for the whole population, and for particular groups of people for whom the Council is responsible.

Wiltshire is a thriving county with a rich and diverse heritage. Approximately half a million people live in the area, with approximately half of the population living in towns and villages with fewer than 10,000 residents.

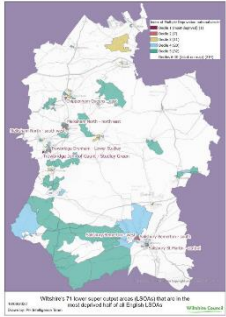
In 2022 there were 26,196 children aged 0- 4 in Wiltshire, a reduction of 16% in the child population from 5 years ago, there being just over 30,000 children currently aged 5-9. Overall the birth rate is decreasing remaining relatively consistent.

Wiltshire is notable for the scale of its military presence, which is one of the largest in any county in the UK. Wiltshire is a super garrison county where army personnel and their families live in settlements surrounding Salisbury Plain (Warminster, Bulford, Tidworth and Larkhill.)

The population of Wiltshire is less ethnically diverse than both England and the South- West with 90.0% of the total population classifying themselves as White British (Source: 2021 Census, ONS). This compares to 73.5% and 87.8% in England and the South-West, respectively. 'White Other' was the next most selected category in Wiltshire (3.6%), and the remaining 6.3% of the population selected a variety of categories from the [list of ethnic groups](#).¹¹ Community areas with the highest concentration of minority ethnic groups are Tidworth, Trowbridge, Chippenham, Amesbury and Salisbury.¹²

Overall, Wiltshire is relatively affluent. It is ranked 233rd out of 317 local authority districts where 1 is the most deprived. Child poverty levels and the number of adults on out of work and on benefits are lower than the national average. Relative affluence, along with rurality and tourism can, however, create significant distance between those disadvantaged and the rest of the population. The most deprived 20% of areas within Wiltshire have repeatedly poorer outcomes than the least deprived 20%.

There are 8 of the 285 small areas of geography (Lower Super Output Areas, or LSOAS) in Wiltshire that are within the 20% nationally most deprived. They are located mostly in the south of the county and classified as "urban city and town":



- Trowbridge John of Gaunt-Studley Green (1)
- Chippenham Queens – East (2)
- Melksham North – South-West (2)
- Melksham North – Northeast (2)
- Trowbridge Drynham – Lower Studley (2)
- Salisbury – Bemerton (west) (2)
- Salisbury – Bemerton (south) (2)
- Salisbury St Martin – Central (2)

Map of Wiltshire: Multiple Indices of Deprivation.

Wiltshire's most deprived LSOA is John of Gaunt – Studley Green, Trowbridge. This is the only LSOA in Wiltshire to be in the most deprived national decile of '1'.

The Index of Deprivation Affecting Children Indicator (IDACI) shows that in 2021 around 10% of children aged 0-15 years in Wiltshire are living in income-deprived families. For this percentage of children in Wiltshire this is the key indicator for increased health and social care needs in childhood and across the whole life course.

We will need to focus efforts to support the Early Years proportionately more in the geographical areas identified above, and in more difficult to identify smaller pockets of isolation with otherwise affluent Wiltshire villages.

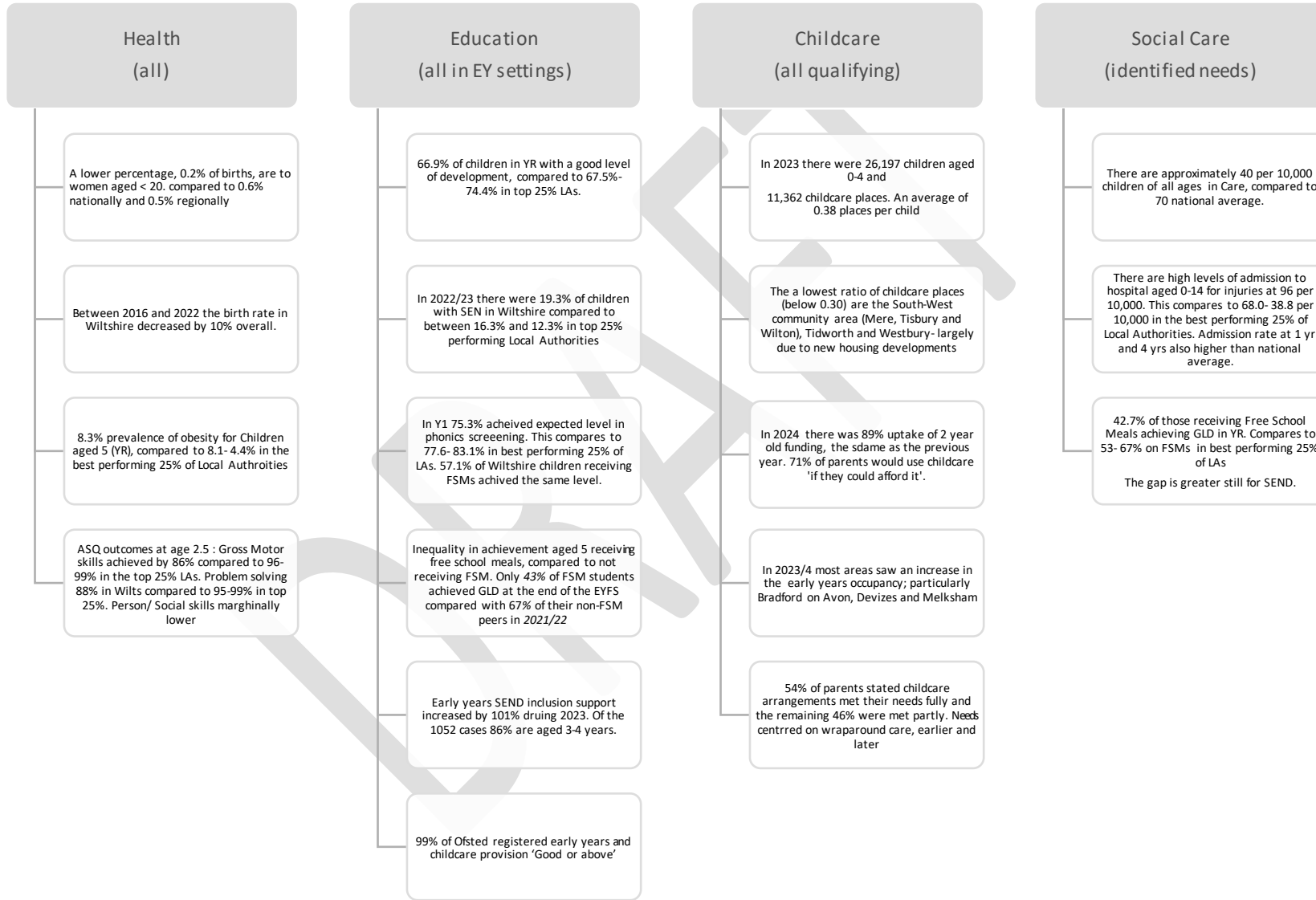
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2021>

Our Local JSNA can be viewed here. [Topics Wiltshire Intelligence](#)

The Recovery JSNA: Children and Young People (2021)^[4] identifies that families and children have been among the hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic with job losses, increased living costs, the impact of school closures on education, and significant increases in poor mental health and self-harm among young people. Prior to the pandemic Wiltshire was already seeing a marked difference in children achieving a good level of development (GLD) at the end of reception at school when the Wiltshire average was compared with the percentage achieving GLD among pupils in receipt of free school meals.

^[4] [Recovery JSNA: Children and Young People Wiltshire Intelligence](#)

Key Early Years JSNA Data



Appendix 9: Overarching Strategic Approach: Local Authority

Wiltshire Council's Business Plan (2022-2032)

The Local Plan aims to ensure that families living in Wiltshire:

- get the best start in life.
- stay active.
- are safe.
- live well together.
- have the right skills to prosper.
- live in vibrant, well-connected communities

Prevention and early intervention

We take a long-term view, focusing on what is right for Wiltshire and invest in prevention and early intervention to tackle problems before they get worse. We have a whole life approach to planning and providing services for our residents. This includes our ambition to reach net zero carbon.

Improving social mobility and tackling inequalities

In everything we do, we consider the impact of the action on social mobility and ask how we can help to tackle the disparities in opportunities that exist within Wiltshire.

Understanding communities

We ensure our dialogue with communities is open, transparent and inclusive, in the right place and at the right time so that our services meet our distinctive local need.

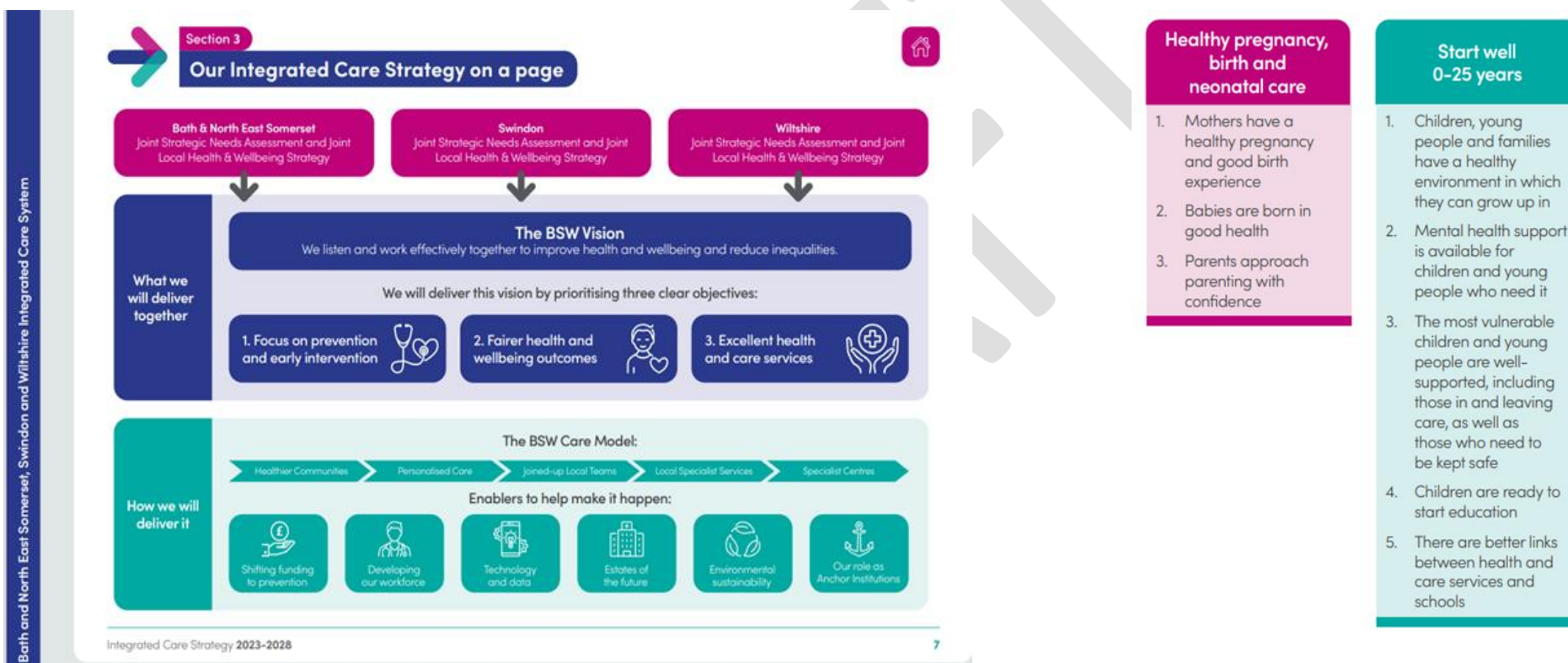
Working together

We design and deliver our services in partnership with service users, local communities and other public sector partners where appropriate. We collectively consider how to integrate our work, get maximum value for public sector spend and plan our use of the public sector estate together.



The Local Authority County Business Plan can be viewed here: [Business plan - Wiltshire Council](#)

Appendix 10: Overarching Strategic Approach: Integrated Care Board (NHS).



The Local NHS Strategy can be viewed here: [Integrated-Care-Strategy-v4.pdf \(bswtogether.org.uk\)](https://www.bswtogether.org.uk/Integrated-Care-Strategy-v4.pdf)

Appendix 11a: Local documents supporting the Early Years

Wiltshire Childcare Sufficiency Report

Wiltshire Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare places, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for children with disabilities). This also relates to children who are entitled to Two-Year-Old Funding, Three and Four-Year-Old Funding (universal Early Years Entitlement (EYE) and the extended 30 hours entitlement).

In 2022, 54% (105) of parents stated that 'their childcare arrangements meet their needs mostly or fully' (down from 80% in 2020). However, there were 46% that stated 'their childcare arrangements now 'partly, or does not meet their needs currently'. In 2020 this was 20% and has increased in 2022 to 46%. 37 of these 89 parents provided reasons why the childcare arrangements partly or do not meet their needs, and the main reason related to wraparound care and holiday provision (16 parents). This was due to the hours being offered and availability within their locality. Nine parents stated the additional cost on top of funded hours for their childcare (hours outside their funded hours or wraparound hours) was a barrier, meaning they were not able to afford more of their local childcare.

In Wiltshire, all three and four-year-old children are currently entitled to 15 hours funded part-time nursery education. Working parents with children aged three and four are entitled to an additional 15 hours per week. These places are available in pre-schools, full day-care nurseries, independent schools, nursery classes in schools and with childminders. Settings can be managed by a school or privately run and many in Wiltshire are run by the voluntary sector. They are often situated on school sites and use is also made of local facilities such as community & church halls and through private accommodation.

Early Years Entitlement funding is available to settings with at least a Requires Improvement Ofsted judgment. The 40% most disadvantaged two-year olds are able to access 15 hours early education in an Ofsted judged Good or Outstanding setting, in Wiltshire, this funding is known as 'Better 2gether Funding'. Childcare sufficiency is assessed three times a year through occupancy surveys. This gives an indication of the capacity of settings and alongside proposed housing developments produces a picture of need. A childcare census is undertaken every year, and this is used with live birth data to consider whether there is a need for additional provision.

Wiltshire has family hubs located across the county. Family hub services are also provided in a range of venues in local communities so that families can access support close to where they live as well as services being available online and via telephone if required. Spurgeons are funded to deliver services in Wiltshire with the aim to support all children to get the best start in life.

Wiltshire Council currently commissions four charities to provide District Specialist Centres (DSC) for specialist early years support for children with SEND. All four Wiltshire DSC settings are rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy^[2] is a shared strategy, latest version of which is 2019-2022, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population, reduce inequalities and promote the integration of services. A new strategy is in development following publication of the Joint Strategic Need Assessment. In line with Wiltshire Council's Business Plan, it will continue to use the following four themes:

Improving social mobility and tackling inequalities, prevention and early intervention, localisation and connecting with communities, integration and working together

Wiltshire's SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024-29^[6] has a vision for 'all children and young people with SEND and their families to have a voice that is heard. They will know how to access, and be able to access, the joined-up support they need to thrive in their communities, enjoy life and reach their full potential'.

The six priority areas for the strategy are:

- Children and young people and their families will be at the centre of planning, views and aspirations heard and acted upon, as true partners.
- Getting the right support at the right time, identifying and acting on our children's needs at the earliest opportunity and through promotion of inclusive approaches and practice across the local area.
- Provide opportunities for timely planning, reflective of the views of the child or young person and parent-carers' current needs, that have clear outcomes
- Ensuring excellent quality communication and information, for families to have a positive experience when navigating services, with information that is easy to access and use.
- Professionals and officers across the SEND system will have the skills, knowledge, and training to enable effective collaboration across services, joint assessments and sharing of good practice.
- Children and young people will be prepared for adulthood and experience timely transitions, leading to increased skills, greater independence, and a greater range of opportunities in life

^[2] [D19025-HW2018-strategy-vFINAL.pdf \(wiltshireintelligence.org.uk\)](#)

^[6] [Meeting needs together, ambitious for all - Local Offer](#)

Appendix 11b: Strategic undertakings supporting the Early Years

Family Hubs

Family hubs bring together existing services and unite a range of different organisations in a 'one-stop shop' approach across a network of different locations within the community.

The previous government had a manifesto pledge to champion family hubs to offer support for families with children aged 0-19 (25 with SEND). Family hubs are a place-based way of joining up locally in the planning and delivery of family services. They bring services together to improve access, improve the connections between families, professionals, services, and suppliers, and put relationships at the heart of family support. Family hubs offer support to families with a particular focus from conception to age two, and for school age children from 0-19 or up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core. Family hubs aim to incorporate the allied government programmes: Supporting Families Programme, Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, Best Start in Life and Early Years Entitlement for 2 year olds.

Wiltshire has a long-term focus on investing in prevention and early intervention. Children and young people having the best start in life is a fundamental part of improving their long-term life chances. Providing the 'early help' to make sure families will get the right help at the right time from the most appropriate professionals.

The main family hubs will be located at

- County Hall, Trowbridge
- Monkton Park, Chippenham
- Five Rivers Health and Well-Being Centre, Salisbury

There are smaller, 'navigator' hub locations in the map as follows:

- Amesbury Library • Bradford on Avon Library • Bulford: The Beeches • Calne Library • Chippenham Monkton Park and Library • Corsham – Springfield Campus • Cricklade Leisure Centre • Devizes Library • Downton Library • Malmesbury Library • Marlborough Library • Melksham Community Campus • Mere School/ Town Council, library • Pewsey The Vale Community Campus • Royal Wootton Bassett library • Salisbury Library and Five Rivers Health and Well-Being Centre • Tisbury Nadder Centre • Tidworth Leisure Centre • Trowbridge Library and Cotswold Space • Warminster Library • Westbury Community Project Hub

Family Help (Early Help) Strategy 2022-27

The Family Help strategy sets out in appendix 2 a clear vision, principles, and a plan for a multi-agency approach to ensure children, young people and families across Wiltshire can access the right help at the right time through a co-ordinated approach to prevention and early intervention. It brings together partners from across the system – commissioners and suppliers (local authority, health, police, education settings and the voluntary sector) to drive transformational change aimed at improving outcomes for children, young people, and families. Key workstreams include the development and implementation of a unifying brand for Family Help, an enhanced partnership workforce development offer and the family hub model for Wiltshire. At the heart of the Family Help model is a place-based approach aimed at whole system solutions and sustainability. This approach is underpinned by the principle of integrating the existing assets at community level alongside the existing services delivering both preventative and intervention activity in the sphere of early help. The implementation of a core practice framework across the children and young people's workforce will be part of the local strategy and includes training such as Five to Thrive and Making Every Contact Count (MECC).

Wiltshire School Places Strategy

The School places strategy also identifies a need to work with the early years commissioning team to identify whether any pre-schools could move into surplus school accommodation. Particularly those pre-schools who are already on school sites in old mobiles.

Wiltshire Home to School Transport Policy

Children in the Early Years do not qualify for transport support in the form of a car or a specialised minibuses to cater for wheelchair users; transport is only available for children who are of statutory school age and have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or live a certain distance from their school.

An Early Years setting in Westwood and Iford closed in 2019 and there is no alternative Early Years provision now locally. This makes it difficult to access any Early Years provision for families who do not have access to transport.

The Early Years Strategy identifies an ongoing need to assess and address Wiltshire's particular rural local needs relating to geography, transport and access to Early Years settings, services and support. This need is included in the Early Years Action Plan appended to this strategy.

A map of local Early Years Settings and other provision of relevance to Children in the Early Years in Wiltshire in 2024 is included below

The Early Years Service

The Early Years Service supports schools and Early Years settings, often called nurseries, pre-schools, and childminders in Wiltshire. It incorporates a team of specialist early years advisers passionate about raising outcomes for children to ensure they get the best start in

life. The team includes Early Years Advisory Teachers, Quality Assurance Officers and Early Years Inclusion Advisors working closely with Schools, Early Years Settings, Childminders and Family Hubs to offer support and advice and improve outcomes.

Early Years Advisory Teachers

A team of dedicated early years teachers with a wealth of knowledge and experience of working in early years settings and reception classes are able to advise on all aspects of learning and development, including assessment.

Quality Assurance Officers

A team of two highly experienced quality assurance officers work with settings and childminders to support on aspects of welfare, safeguarding and learning and development for childminders.

Early Years Inclusion Advisors

A team of highly skilled inclusion advisors support with inclusive practice in settings as well as supporting individual children in setting with specific needs. The inclusion advisors are able to support with SENCO support and how to use specific strategies and interventions effectively to support children with additional needs. Please look at our dedicated page for more information.

Early Years Co-ordinator

Works directly with our District Specialist Centres (DSCs) and Portage to ensure that we have the right children accessing the right services. They support with transition into mainstream early years settings and ensures that we as a local authority have oversight of all our early years children with SEND.

Early Years Pathway Navigators

This team work on identifying and supporting our early years children with SEND to access different pathways that will help to meet their individual needs. They will work with a range of professionals from different services across the council and externally to ensure the best outcomes for our early years children with SEND.

Early Years Sufficiency Officers

This team works directly with providers to look at their capacity and sufficiency of spaces across the council. The work with providers top create more spaces. They look at the need for childcare across the county and identify where more spaces need to be created but also where there is less demand and how can we keep small providers viable.

Early Years Entitlements Team

This team works with providers to ensure that they receive their Early Years Entitlements (EYE) correctly and on time to ensure that they can keep running. They monitor the number of children accessing spaces across all of the different funding streams. They also manage the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and the Disability Access Funding (DAF) to ensure that this additional funding get to the right children. The entitlements team also support families where there are funding queries or complaints about fees or extra charges such as consumables and are able to challenge providers where these are seen to be excessive, or the correct guidance is not being followed. This team ensure that all Wiltshire providers sign up to and agree the Local Provider Agreement (LPA) and holds settings not following this signed agreement to account where necessary.

The Early Years Integrated 2-3 year review

The purpose of the Integrated 2-to-3-year review is to identify the child's progress, strengths and needs at this age to promote positive outcomes in health and wellbeing, learning and behaviour. The review facilitates appropriate intervention and support for children and their families where needs are identified and ensures families receive a wraparound coordinated response to support the best outcomes for the child. The review also supports information gathering to support service planning to reduce inequalities in children's outcomes.

Universal Offer 27-month ASQ-3 and ASQSE review (Health Visiting Team)

The Health Visiting Team reviews the development of children between the ages of 27 and 30 months as part of the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-of-public-healthservices-for-children/health-visiting-and-school-nursing-service-delivery-model>

This facilitates early intervention and supports children to be ready for school and is one of the five mandated contacts offered to all families. The child's physical, social, and emotional development is assessed at the review using the age-appropriate Ages and Stages Questionnaires. This is a parent led assessment where parents carry out practice activities with the child prior to the review with the Health Visiting Team. At the review contact, the health visitor or community nursery nurse explores the parental responses, observes the child's behaviour and parent-child interactions as well as carrying out a further assessment of the developing speech, language and communication using the Early Language Implementation Measure (ELIM). Discussions with parents around key public health messages support healthy family lifestyles. Families are offered ongoing support for identified areas of need in the form of a support bundle and onward referral to specialist provision as required. 2-year funding conversations encourage families to explore free nursery provision. Families are signposted to partner agencies, such as the family hub for additional support as identified. The appointments are held in community-based venues, and families receiving targeted, or specialist provision are seen at home. The parent held record is completed with the review information. Families are encouraged to share this with the EYS.

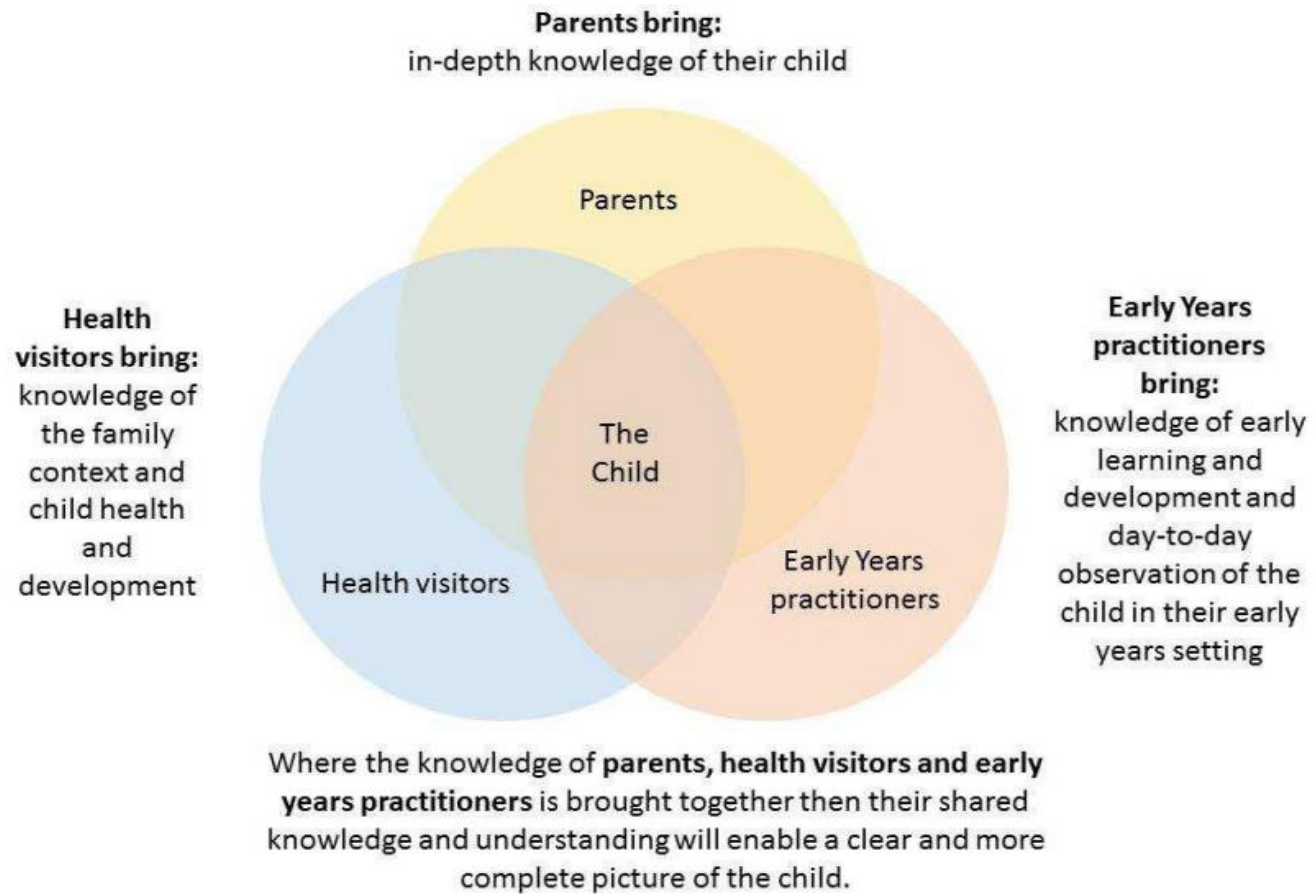
Early Years Progress Check at age 2 (Early Years Settings)

The statutory EYFS Progress Check applies to children who attend an Early Years setting, which in contrast to the Health Visiting review, is not all children in Wiltshire. It is completed by early years practitioners to assess the development of all children in settings from 24 to 36 months. The EYFS Progress Check at age two is a statutory requirement for registered early years providers as part of the EYFS Statutory Framework. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-check-at-age-2> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework-2>

This progress check identifies the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is not meeting expected outcomes within the prime areas of learning. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals (for example, the provider's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Early Years Inclusion Advisor (EYIA) or health professionals as appropriate.)

The Integrated 2.5 Year education and Health Review/Check

The combination of both the above assessments forms the Integrated Review and considers the child's progress within the social and educational environment, as well as the family environment. This then identifies any support required in areas of health, physical, social, cognitive, or emotional development. The Integrated review is an opportunity, when a need is identified, to bring together both the above health and educational reviews, as well as the parent/carer input to achieve a holistic and comprehensive picture of the child and enables areas requiring additional support to be identified. A complementary approach is key, and Parents /Carers have a fundamental part to play in the review. The starting point of the review should be that the parent/carer knows their children best. This knowledge needs to be reflected throughout the review process. Through effective partnership working, supporting children to be ready for school has the potential to increase a child's ability to achieve positive outcomes, and therefore the possibility to increase long term benefits.



Appendix 12: Legislation, policy and research impacting this strategy

Legislation	Summary points Practice	Reviews
The Children Act 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reflect 1989 United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child •Welfare of children is paramount •Introduced section 47 enquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Working Together to Safeguard Children (last major updated December 2018 with a recent additional guidance December 2020) •Criminal exploitation has been added to the areas of risk in which practitioners should be developing their skills and knowledge to address •Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) Updated January 2021 to include Covid guidance and Brexit guidance
The Children Act 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Placed responsibility on safeguarding partners to plan together to safeguard children. •Introduced Early Help •Introduce Common Assessment Framework 	Children Act 2004 – last updated in July 2018 to reflect changes brought about by the Children and Social Work Act 2017
The Childcare Act 2006 This was amended by the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, and then by the Families and Children Act 2014 (see below)	<p>Graham Allen review (2011) – the need for early intervention Several reviews of the Early Years and Foundation Stage statutory framework including introduction of welfare requirements Sarah Tickell's Early Years Foundation Stage Review framework Unknown Children Destined for Disadvantage – Ofsted- 2016 The first 1001 days manifesto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty on local authorities to ensure sufficient childcare •Local authorities required to provide information to parents and families •Agencies are required to work together and integrated services. •Introduced the early Years Foundation Stage •Reformed regulation of childcare (Ofsted changes) The 2009 Act (amidst a raft of legislation around apprenticeships and learning) set out targets around children's safeguarding boards and Children's Centres Later supported by regulations: •Local authority duty to secure early years provision free of charge (2012) •Various regulations around amendments to the EYFS Regulations made under this Act – both around early years entitlement: •The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/2147) •The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/146). 	<p>Marmot Review (2010) – focussing on reducing health inequalities Graham Allen review (2011) – the need for early intervention Several reviews of the Early Years and Foundation Stage statutory framework including introduction of welfare requirements Sarah Tickell's Early Years Foundation Stage Review framework Unknown Children Destined for Disadvantage – Ofsted- 2016 The first 1001 days manifesto</p> <p>2023 – Update to reflect change in entitlements for children from the term after they are 9 months old who are from working families to access initially 15 hours of funded children care and increasing to 30 hours funded childcare by September 2025.</p> <p>2024 – changes to the Early Years Statutory Framework</p>

Equalities Act 2010 (this superseded the Disability Discrimination Act 1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. •Replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. •Introduced protected characteristics. 	Disabled Children and the Equality Act for Early Years (Council for Disabled Children) 2010
Child Poverty Act (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Places a duty on Local Authorities to prepare a 'local child poverty needs assessment' setting out the needs of children living in poverty in the area. •Local Authorities have a duty to prepare a child poverty strategy to "set out the measures they propose to take to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty." 	Government's social mobility and child poverty commission (2010) next steps report (2013). Frank Field Poverty Review (2010) Policy paper. Policy Paper 2010 to 2015 government policy: poverty and social justice updated 2015.
Health and Social Care Act 2012	Sets out 5 mandated universal contacts between Health Visitors and children/ parents between birth and 2.5 years, including an ante natal visit.	2021 review to increase Health Visitor contacts to 7, including at 6 months and 1 year. Best Start in Life, the first 1001 Days March 2021 Family Hubs and Start for Life programme guide August 2022
The Children and Families Act 2014.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introduced a 26-week time limit for courts to decide whether or not a child should be taken into care. •introduced the Education, Health and Care Plan to support children and their families from birth to 25 years. •Made it a requirement of all state-funded schools to provide free school lunches for all pupils in Reception, year one and year two. •Amendments made to the law to protect children in cars from the dangers of second-hand smoke. 	Special educational needs and disability code of practice January 2015
The Childcare Act 2016	•Extended the entitlement to 30 hours free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for three- and four-year-olds in families where all parents are working.	Early education and childcare statutory guidance Gov.uk (latest version 2024) 2023 – Update to reflect change in entitlements for children from the term after they are 9 months old who are from working families to access initially 15 hours of funded children care and increasing to 30 hours funded childcare by September 2025.
Children and Social Work Act 2017	Increases Local Authority Support for Looked After Children and clarifies roles of partners in safeguarding boards and the remit of serious case reviews	

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Wiltshire Council

Select Committee

26 November 2024

Early Years Childcare Strategy 2025-2028

Proposal

That the committee considers and approves the proposed Early Years Childcare strategy.

The strategy looks at the needs of the local area in regard to Early Education and Childcare for children under the age of 5 years, including reception classes in school.

There is a nine-point action plan that forms part of the strategy that the Early Years teams across the council will be working on over the 3 years.

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Early Years Childcare strategy 2025-2028

Purpose of report

This report highlights the main points within the Early Years strategy, it is asked that the committee consider and approve the strategy.

Background

The Best Start in Life section of the Wiltshire Business Plan makes reference to the implementation of an Early Years strategy to bring services together.

The strategy takes into account the Local Authority statutory duties and responsibilities, and strengthens the work we will be doing to meet these duties whilst also improving outcomes for young children and their families.

Main considerations for the committee

The strategy was identified in the Council's current business plan as a way of bringing services together across Early Years.

The Best Start in Life:

- Empower People to get the best start in life:
- Ensure every one of our children achieves their optimal physical, emotional and mental health
- Support the development of speech and language, ensuring that children are ready to learn at 2 years of age and ready for school at 5 years of age
- Guarantee that there are enough high quality and accessible preschool places.
- Find the right specialist support for children with special educational needs.
- Ensure all school pupils, including those who are vulnerable, can access a high-quality education provision and are well prepared for their next stage in life.
- Provide 'early help' to make sure families will get the right help at the right time from the most appropriate professionals.
- Provide high quality Early Years services from birth to 5 years.

Thriving Economy with the right skills to prosper:

- Support educational establishments to reduce the risk to vulnerable pupils by developing early help practices and multiagency support, enabling all pupils to realise their potential.

Early Years is a priority area as it provides childcare to allow parents to work and achieve their potential, as well as to support Wiltshire's thriving economy. High Quality early education has also been shown to improve the life outcomes for young children as well as raise aspirations.

Early Years is a rapidly changing area with expanded entitlements for working families who have under twos, two year olds, as well as the development of school-based nurseries. The strategy is designed to provide a framework and action plan for the sector so that Wiltshire Council can meet its statutory duties as well as meeting the needs of the local communities.

The outcomes for the youngest children in Wiltshire are good. 68.9% achieve a Good Level of Development, which is slightly above the national average (67.2%). However, there is a gap for our most disadvantaged learners, in 2024 48% of Wiltshire's disadvantaged children achieved a Good Level of Development compared to 52% nationally, this was a 4.4% gap. We are hoping that through targeting our work on this area we will start to narrow that gap and be more in line with national outcomes. The strategy will help us to focus this work more closely and look at the factors that affect children's learning and development in the Early Years whilst also ensuring that working parents are able to access high quality childcare when they need it.

The strategy was written with support from the Local Government Association (LGA) and involved extensive consultation with partners, stakeholders, parents and teams within the council.

The strategy has a nine-point action plan which will be addressed over the next three years. The actions have been identified through stakeholder consultation as well as from local area and community needs.

Action points identified

- Good Level of Development and school readiness
- Provision of family hubs
- Sufficient childcare and employment support for working parents
- Transitions
- Improving the wellbeing of young children
- Integrated early childhood service and workforce development
- Information and advice for key stakeholders in early years services
- Supporting SEND in the Early Years
- Transport/Rural Wiltshire

The strategy is vital to the council's business plan as without sufficient, high quality childcare parents will be unable to work and this will impact on other areas of the council such as housing and revenues and benefits.

Early years education and childcare is important for all families but especially working parents or those looking to return to work.

It offers flexibility to enable parents and carers to go to work and work the hours that they need. Childcare enables parents to increase their income, access better paid

work or more secure work.

Without high quality childcare in the early years children may fall behind their peers and have reduced opportunities. This will lead to reduced life chances as they move into adulthood and work.

This strategy will support our ability to support improvement of children's educational outcomes. High-quality early education helps children to develop skills that they need for later life such as communication, resilience and independence. Attendance at good quality settings helps close the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Early Years and Childcare strategy has been developed to bring together all aspects of childcare and our duties as a Local Authority. There is a clear three-year action plan which will focus and align work, with robust accountability.

The focused work from this strategy will improve outcomes for very young children and their families whilst also enabling and encouraging parents into work which will reduce their dependence on local authority support.

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Date of report:

12/11/2024

Appendices

The Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2025-2028

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

Briefing Paper: 'Beyond Outstanding: Our Journey Forward' – A Roadmap

Purpose of Report

1. This briefing paper outlines the purpose of the Families & Children's Services Improvement Roadmap '**Beyond Outstanding: Our Journey Forward**', highlighting how it integrates with our revised Quality Assurance Framework and Service Plans for 2025-2027. The roadmap serves as the overarching ethos for our more operational tasks, shaping the way we deliver services to children, young people, and their families in Wiltshire.

Purpose of the Roadmap

2. The Roadmap sets a clear direction for how we will continue to enhance and develop our services. It serves as the guiding framework for the work we do within Children's Services, ensuring that everything we do is aligned with our vision and values. The Roadmap is not just a document of priorities; it represents the ambition, ethos, and commitment we have to every child and family in Wiltshire.

It brings together the high-level goals, values, and principles that underpin all operational work, with a particular focus on:

- Ensuring that children are safe, supported, and able to reach their full potential
- Building strong, collaborative relationships with families and partners
- Continuing to strive for improvement in the quality of services we provide, with a focus on outcomes for children and families.

Integration with the Quality Assurance Framework and Service Plans

3. The Children's Services Improvement Roadmap connects directly to our revised Quality Assurance Framework and Service Plans. The Roadmap reinforces our commitment to maintaining high standards in all our services through robust quality assurance processes. The principles outlined in the Roadmap, such as evidence-based practice and continuous improvement, directly inform how we measure the impact of our work, assess our performance, and identify areas for improvement.

The Nine operational priorities in the Roadmap are reflected in our Service Plans, which detail how we will implement these priorities at a local level. The Service Plans focus on specific actions and deliverables, while the Roadmap sets the broader strategic direction, ensuring that every service is working towards common goals and outcomes. Together, the Roadmap, the Quality Assurance Framework, and the Service Plans ensure that we are aligned across all areas, with clarity about our long-term vision and immediate actions.

Roadmap as the Overarching Ethos

4. While the Quality Assurance Framework and Service Plans provide the practical details of how we do our work, the Roadmap serves as the ethos for these efforts. It

reflects our core values and how we want to operate as an organisation. It reinforces that our approach is not just about systems and processes, but the children and families we serve, and the staff and partners we work with. The Roadmap also provides a clear framework for:

- Consistency in our approach across all areas of Children's Services.
- Collaboration between our teams and with our external partners to deliver the best outcomes for children and families.
- Aspirational Goals, ensuring that our work is always forward-looking, proactive, and focused on continuous improvement.

Key Messages

5. The Roadmap is a high-level strategy that outlines our approach to delivering services and improving outcomes for children and young people. It connects directly to the practical work of our Service Plans and the operational activities outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework to ensure that:

- Our services remain focused on the needs of children and families.
- We continue to strive for excellence in our practice and improve the experiences of the children we work with.
- We remain transparent and accountable in how we measure success and make improvements.

It will guide our actions over the next two years and beyond, ensuring that every decision we make is driven by our core values and a focus on the best outcomes for children and families in Wiltshire.

Gary Norton Sanders, Service Manager- Quality Outcome for Children & Families

Tim Sandle, Head of Service – Quality Assurance, Partnerships and Sector Led Improvement

November 2024

‘Beyond Outstanding: Our Journey Forward’. A Roadmap

Forward

Our Roadmap ‘Beyond Outstanding: Our Journey Forward’, sets a clear direction for how we will continue to enhance and develop our services. It serves as the guiding framework for the work we do within Families & Children’s Services, ensuring that everything we do is aligned with our vision and values. The Roadmap is not just a document of priorities; it represents the ambition, ethos, and commitment we have to every child and family in Wiltshire.

It brings together our goals, values, and principles that underpin all operational work, with a particular focus on:

- Ensuring that children are safe, supported, and able to reach their full potential
- Building strong, collaborative relationships with families and partners
- Continuing to strive for improvement in the quality of services we provide, with a focus on outcomes for children and families.

Together, the Roadmap, the Quality Assurance Framework, and the Service Plans ensure that we are aligned across all areas, with clarity about our long-term vision and immediate actions.

The Roadmap also provides a clear framework for:

- Consistency in our approach across all areas of Children’s Services.
- Collaboration between our various teams and with our external partners to deliver the best outcomes for children and their families.
- Aspirational Goals, ensuring that our work is always forward-looking, proactive, and focused on continuous improvement.

Our Vision:

Working alongside our partners, we will ensure that every child and young person in Wiltshire receives the support they need to thrive, stay safe, and reach their full potential.

Children and families are at the very heart of everything we do. We believe in their unlimited potential and are dedicated to making sure they have every opportunity to succeed.

We are driven by strong relationships and the ambition to provide the best care and support for every child. Our passionate and skilled workforce is committed to making Wiltshire a place where every child can achieve their dreams.

We are focused on continuous improvement, creating a culture of learning and growth, so that we can give every child, young person, and their family the very best opportunities to succeed.

Our Response to Stable Homes Built on Love:

Our plan is grounded in the belief that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. We are determined to make this a reality, working hand in hand with our safeguarding partners to build stronger, safer families.

The Government Strategy outlines six powerful goals, which align with our own ambition for Wiltshire:

1. **Family Help** – Empowering families from the very start to give every child the best chance in life.
2. **Keeping Children Safe** – Ensuring every child is protected and secure, at all times.
3. **Supporting Families to Help Children** – Giving families the tools, support, and resources they need to care for their children.
4. **Better Care for Children in Care and Care Leavers** – Providing exceptional care for children in care, and guiding care leavers towards successful futures.
5. **Children Have Great Social Workers** – Ensuring that every child is supported by a skilled, compassionate social worker.
6. **Improving the Whole System for Children and Families** – Strengthening the network of services to meet the needs of every child and family.

Our Values:

These values guide everything we do to support children and families:

1. **Working Together** – We believe in building strong, respectful relationships with families and partners, creating an environment of collaboration for the children we serve.
2. **Compassionate Support** – We will always be there for families, offering care and understanding to help them overcome challenges.
3. **Strengths-Based Approach** – Every child and family have the power to succeed; we focus on their strengths and potential, ensuring they have every chance to thrive whilst acknowledging the need to protect and safeguard.
4. **Evidence-Based Practices** – We use the most effective approaches to ensure children's safety and support their growth, empowering them to achieve their best.

Outcomes:

We are committed to making a lasting difference in the lives of children and young people in Wiltshire. Our mission is to ensure that children:

1. Are always **safe** and protected from harm.
2. **Excel** in their education and are motivated to learn.
3. Lead **healthy**, fulfilling lives.
4. Feel **happy**, confident, and **connected** to their community.
5. Have a **voice** and make a positive impact on the world around them.

Our 9 Priorities:

To turn our vision into reality, we are focused on the following priorities:

1. **Children in Safe, Loving Homes** – Our ambition is for all children to grow up in homes filled with love, care, and security.
2. **Protecting the Most Vulnerable** – We will do everything in our power to protect the most vulnerable children from harm.
3. **Supporting Families Early** – Our focus is on preventing problems before they start, ensuring children have the best start in life.
4. **Improving Care for Children in Care** – We are committed to providing the highest quality care for children in care and ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed.
5. **Listening to Children and Families** – We will listen to the voices of children and families, making sure they are heard and their needs are met.

6. **Supporting Mental and Emotional Wellbeing** – We will ensure every child has the emotional support they need to succeed, fostering resilience and confidence.
7. **Protecting from Exploitation** – We will provide safe spaces for children and protect them from harm, including exploitation and abuse.
8. **A Skilled and Compassionate Workforce** – Our workforce will be skilled, compassionate, and committed to supporting every child and family to achieve their best.
9. **Quality Services for All** – We will make sure that every child and family receives the highest quality support, every time.

How We Will Achieve Our Priorities:

To achieve these priorities, we will:

- **Listen and Learn** – We will take the time to understand the unique experiences of each child and family, ensuring they feel heard and valued.
- **Provide early Family Help** – We will intervene early to give children and families the support they need to thrive, preventing problems before they arise.
- **Work Together** – We will collaborate with partners to ensure families get the right support at the right time.
- **Act Quickly** – When a child or family needs help, we will step in immediately, with clear plans and regular reviews to ensure the best possible outcomes.
- **Provide Stable, Loving Homes** – We will ensure that children who cannot stay with their birth family will quickly find a safe, loving home.
- **Offer Close Support to Care Leavers** – Young people leaving care will receive the same level of care and support we would give our own children, setting them on the path to success.
- **Celebrate Diversity** – We will celebrate the diversity of every family, ensuring that our services meet the unique needs of each child and their family.
- **Support Our Workforce** – We will provide our staff with the tools, training, and support they need to deliver the best services to children and families.
- **Continuously Improve** – We will constantly review and improve our services, ensuring that we are always learning from children, families, and staff.
- **Be Transparent** – We will be honest, clear, and fair in how we deliver our services, ensuring that families always know where they stand.

How We'll Know We've Made a Difference:

We'll know we've made a difference when:

1. Children are living in stable, loving homes.
2. Families feel supported and heard throughout their journey.
3. Children are excelling in school and enjoying learning.
4. Children have easy access to healthcare and mental health services.
5. Fewer young people are involved in crime, and more feel safer in their communities.
6. More children and young people are in education, training, or employment, on track to reach their full potential.

DRAFT

PRIORITY 1: Children in Safe, Loving Homes

We believe that children thrive best within their family and community. Our approach is to empower families, ensuring they have the support they need to nurture their children in safe, stable, and loving environments.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Recognising that family is the most effective place for children to thrive and embedding this value into our approach.

Our actions will include:

- Developing a revised Kinship Care Strategy that strengthens family and community-based options for children in need of support.
- Expanding family-based care and support options through innovative kinship and foster placements.
- Utilising and strengthening our reunification activity to ensure that, where it is appropriate to do so, children can return to their family networks.

PRIORITY 2: Protecting the Most Vulnerable

Every child deserves to be protected from harm. We are committed to a system of responsive, child-centred interventions that actively safeguard those most at risk.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Maintaining consistently high-quality chronologies, assessments, and SMART plans that link clearly to assessed risks and needs.
- Engaging children directly in planning to ensure their views are central to safeguarding strategies.
- Ensuring that strategy meetings involve all appropriate partners to assess and respond to significant harm risks.
- Providing clear contingency plans for all children's care plans to outline alternative actions if needed.

- Using reflective and task-focused supervision to set clear actions, review progress, and ensure timely case progression.
- Guaranteeing that senior managers review children's plans to provide timely, authoritative action where necessary.

Our actions will include:

- Continuing manageable caseloads through a caseload challenge process.
- Improving consistency in the quality in strategy meetings, Section 47 investigations, and single assessments.
- Routinely updating case summaries and chronologies so that the child's journey is clear.
- Delivering the Family Led Child Protection Conferencing approach, embedding it across multi-agency practices.
- Implementing family-friendly SMART plans for Child in Need and Child Protection cases.
- Ensuring independent reviews for Children in Need plans by Independent Reviewing Officers to apply consistent thresholds.
- Addressing delays in assessments to ensure timely action.

PRIORITY 3: Supporting Families Early

Early Family help builds stronger families. By intervening early, we empower families and prevent the need for more intensive interventions.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Collaborating with families, schools, and community partners to provide proactive support.
- Building local networks that offer accessible, timely resources to families.

Our actions will include:

- Expanding early help Family hubs to meet families where they are and simplify access to support.
- Offering consistent outreach to families to ensure they receive support before crises escalate.

PRIORITY 4: Improving Care for our Children in Care

Children in care deserve timely, thoughtful placements that meet their holistic needs.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Placing children into care only when necessary and with careful consideration of legal grounds.
- Supporting timely pathways to permanency, ensuring stable family settings.
- Listening to children's needs and considering their views in placement decisions, prioritising their long-term well-being.

Our actions will include:

- Implementing a Children in Care Strategy that prioritises reunification and placement stability.
- Reviewing our sufficiency strategy and fostering recruitment efforts to increase placement options.
- Ensuring independent advocates are available to children in our care who need them.
- Building Independent Reviewing Officer capacity and quality assurance activity to reinforce oversight and scrutiny of Children Looked After Plans.

PRIORITY 5: Listening to Children and Families

Every child deserves a voice. Their experiences, wishes, and aspirations are central to everything we do.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Ensuring that children's views are documented in all plans and processes.
- Providing independent advocates for children who need one to support their voice in decisions.

Our actions will include:

- Building an in-house advocacy team to foster independent voices for children and families.
- Developing Voice in a variety of forms for Parents, Carers, and Young Carers to strengthen family engagement.

PRIORITY 6: Supporting Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Wellbeing

A healthy mind supports a healthy future. We aim to support children's wellbeing, enabling them to grow into confident and resilient young adults.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Providing a range of therapeutic supports that meet children's social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- Ensuring a trauma informed and shame sensitive approach is embedded in a practice approach when working with children and their families and carers.

Our actions will include:

- Partnering with mental health services to ensure timely support and interventions.
- Embedding emotional literacy, systemic practice ideas and trauma informed awareness in our work with children and families.

PRIORITY 7: Protecting from Exploitation Risks

Children and young people should feel safe and empowered in their communities, free from exploitation and harm.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Overseeing Child Exploitation, missing children, and gang involvement through dedicated leadership, data analysis, strategic oversight and operational resource within our Emerald Team.
- Collaborating with local partners to address risks of exploitation, ensuring timely, effective responses.
- Maintaining a thorough assessment for children at risk of Child Exploitation, trafficking, or gang involvement, and using these to inform responsive care plans.
- Working with external partners and researchers to further develop our contextual safeguarding approaches to create safety in the places and spaces

Our actions will include:

- Consolidating thorough Risk Outside the Home and context based assessments and care plans for children at risk of exploitation, criminalisation or trafficking
- Strengthening partnership collaboration and oversight on exploitation to inform responsive commissioning and support.

PRIORITY 8: Skilled and Compassionate Workforce

Our workforce is our foundation. By supporting a skilled, reflective staff, we deliver compassionate, evidence-based support to children and families.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Supporting social workers and social care workers with reflective, outcome-focused supervision.
- Embedding a culture of continuous learning through a robust learning and development offer.
- Engagement and collaboration with colleagues to enhance skills and wellbeing.
- Regularly reviewing practice standards to ensure high expectations and effective support for the workforce.

Our actions will include:

- Revising the Quality Assurance Framework to inform performance improvements.
- Strengthening expectations of reflective supervision in our staff supervision policy and delivery.
- Conducting regular audits and wider quality assurance activity of casework to improve consistency.
- Developing retention and well-being strategies to support and develop workforce health and well-being.
- Reviewing all policies and procedures to keep practice standards current and effective.

PRIORITY 9: Quality Outcomes for all.

Consistency in care ensures that all children, regardless of circumstance, experience outstanding service.

We will ensure outstanding practice by:

- Reviewing all cases through regular audits to prevent drift and delay.
- Using performance data and system developments to guide proactive improvements.

- Collaborating with partners through the Families and Children's Systems Assurance and Partnership Practice Review Groups to promote innovation.

Our actions will include:

- Strengthening our Quality Assurance Framework and team Performance Review mechanisms
- Leveraging sector-led improvement programs and activities to stay at the forefront of best practices.
- Enhancing the use of our electronic Audit Tool to close the loop on learning and drive continuous improvement.
- Strengthening the use of information technology, data sets, systems support and AI to support practice efficiency and capacity

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26th November 2024

Executive Update to the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group

Purpose of report

1. To update the committee on the progress on the recommendations made by the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group.

Background

1. On 21 September 2023 the Children's Select Committee endorsed the Final Report of the Task Group.
2. The Committee resolved to refer the following Task Group's recommendations to the relevant Cabinet member for response at the Committee's next meeting on 31 October 2023.
3. In January 2024 the Executive delivered an initial response to the recommendations and advised that a progress update would be provided in late 2024 to advise of progress. It has been agreed that the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries and Communities will attend the January 2025 Children's Select to discuss these further with the committee.

Main considerations for the committee

Recommendation No.1	The Council develops an overarching youth strategy to bring together youth provision from within the Council with Area Boards, youth providers and external agencies. A 'product owner' could be used who is not responsible for delivery but could be responsible for co-ordinating the different strands of activity, connecting back to the strategy.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>The development of Wiltshire Youth Strategy is progressing well and will be presented back to the Children's Select Committee in January 2025. There has been a significant and collaborative effort to ensure this strategy provides an accurate reflection of the local youth offer within Wiltshire and the delivery to s507b of the Education Act. Importantly, it will also include recommendations in areas where further work is needed.</p> <p>Communities and Children's services have consulted internally and externally on the strategy. This has been</p>

	delivered through direct conversations with services and partners as well as via partnership FACT, Youth Council, Wiltshire Youth Partnership and the Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network. A small task and finish group made up of council and VCS representatives is now in place to finalise the strategy draft.
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Recommendation No.2	The Council sets out a timeframe to meet the incoming statutory guidance to local authorities. It should ensure, with the support of stakeholders, that the needs of young people and current provision is mapped and an annual plan for young people in Wiltshire is developed. In doing so, it may want to seek guidance from the NYA on developing this approach. There would be benefits too in learning from the FACT project in developing a single source of information.
Updated position – November 2024	The updated statutory guidance has been incorporated within the draft Wiltshire Youth Strategy. Relevant updates have additionally been made to the draft Area Board grants criteria and will be reflected on the Area Board webpages. The All Together platform is being used as a platform for mapping current provision for young people and will continue to be supported.

Recommendation No.3	The proposal by the youth partnership to develop a tiered system for youth grants should be considered, as it complements the work already being piloted by the grant assessment panel to allow for differences in provider capacity and geographic cover.
Updated position – November 2024	The majority of applications for youth grants are from local groups to enable them to provide local activities and services. Where a provider is looking to work across more than three community areas, the Grant Assessment Panel (GAP) process is in place to evaluate this request as an exception, and has already agreed on multiple occasions and is working successfully. The Communities team is in a position to flag to the wider Council any issues which are appearing across the county, and which may require a new or revised service to be considered. Officers will be exploring other sources of funding such as social value and crowdfunding, which may be used to support youth organisations.

Recommendation No.4	The criteria for Area Board youth grants is amended to remove the requirement for organisations to apply for funding for a ‘new’ project and allow for repeat funding of ongoing projects that are meeting the needs of young people effectively.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>The current wording of the Area Board grant criteria is to ensure that any project does not solely rely on Area Board funding, as this is not guaranteed.</p> <p>An updated Area Board grant criteria has been proposed that will reflect that youth projects are not required to be ‘new’ as long as they can demonstrate that they are working towards sustainability.</p> <p>This will be implemented subject to single member decision.</p>

Recommendation No.5	The requirement to promote funded activities should sit with the grant holder who is more likely to have stronger local communication networks than the Council does.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>The All Together platform provides the opportunity for all locally delivered young person activities to be added and communicated. All successful Area Board youth grant applicants are requested to add their projects and activities onto the website through the terms and conditions of their grant. This platform is being promoted through the Area Boards and the Engagement and Partnerships service.</p> <p>Whilst we do encourage the applicants to promote their activities to young people, as it is in their best interest to be successful, the statutory duty for this remains with the council. We use our available platforms to promote and broadcast messages through social media, newsletters and sharing with partners such as youth groups and schools.</p>

Recommendation No.6	Consideration should be given to funding or part funding the development and infrastructure of Wiltshire’s youth sector, through the youth partnership. This would be an investment with longer term aims of supporting the development of this sector and increasing the likelihood of drawing down external funding for the county.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>Conversations have progressed positively between Wiltshire Council Children’s Commissioning and the Wiltshire Youth Partnership. A multi-funder model continues to be pursued between Wiltshire Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. We have been working to align the key objectives of the partnership with those of Wiltshire Council, to finalise the funding arrangement.</p> <p>Key aims being discussed are as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the recruitment of a Youth Partnership Development Manager • Enable the set up and delivery of a Youth Capacity Building, Training and Support Fund which will deliver targeted grants to enable WYP project tasks and activities. This will help increase youth work capacity across Wiltshire over a two-year period, resulting in strengthened local youth provision with more trained youth workers.
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Recommendation No.7	Area Boards need to be actively encouraged to work with a LYN (Local Youth Network), Youth Forum, or partner-led multi-agency group, perhaps identifying an elected member for each Area Board to take the lead in setting up or maintaining community involvement in the provision of youth activities.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>Area Boards are encouraged to develop local youth working groups where they are required. This has been reiterated to Area Board Chairs. The Area Board Handbook 2022 states as follows:</p> <p>“Working groups are an excellent vehicle for driving Area Board priorities. It is recommended that each Area Board has a working group linked to each of their respective priorities (up to 5) however, the board does not need to be the lead organisation for each group. There are many excellent partner and community run working groups already in existence across Wiltshire and the aspiration where this is the case is to work in partnership and complement this work. Once the Area Board has established its priorities, it should assess the local landscape and agree whether an Area Board working group is required or whether to progress its local priority work through a partner or community led group.</p> <p>17 of the 18 Area Boards currently have a youth working group that they are engaged with or directly leading.</p>

Recommendation No.8	Explore with the Youth Council how to best support the Area Boards in ensuring the voice of young people is represented in decision-making.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>Significant work has been undertaken to develop the Wiltshire Youth Council and align this to local community work. All Cllrs have been invited to future Youth Council meetings and the Service Manager has attended the Area Board Chairs meeting to discuss.</p> <p>The Youth Council has developed a clear work plan and additional resource from Democratic Services has been</p>

	provided to support the Youth Council and ensure a closer tie to Area Boards and communities. Additional volunteers from within the Children’s Services Directorate are also supporting the operation. The relevant Heads of Service from both areas are meeting regularly to ensure closer communication.
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Recommendation No.9	Explore how to facilitate increased engagement between officers delivering services for young people and Area Boards when community issues have been identified.
Updated position – November 2024	As per the above, this is now happening. There is regular dialogue and fixed meetings between officers at all levels within Children’s services and Communities.

David Redfern, Director of Leisure Culture and Communities

Darryl Freeman, Corporate Director, Children and Education

Report author: Rhys Schell, Head of Community Engagement and Partnerships

Date of report: November 2024

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Children's Select Committee

Voice and Participation Update

November 24

Executive Overview

Dear Members of the Children's Select Committee,

I am pleased to share an update on the incredible work undertaken by Wiltshire's Voice and Participation Service, which continues to amplify the voices of children, young people, and families. Our efforts span multiple projects and initiatives, promoting empowerment, inclusion, and positive change.

This quarter, we have celebrated significant successes:

- **Children in Care Council (CiCC):** From confidence-building activities like mountaineering and bushcraft to the co-creation of a magazine, *Your Voice Matters*, we are enabling children in care to feel heard, valued, and included.
- **Young Carers Voice:** The new Young Carers Voice Service empowers young carers through councils, surveys, and co-produced projects. Their insights shape support initiatives such as the Young Carer ID Card and the Young Carers in Schools Award.
- **Tailored Support for Parents with Learning Disabilities:** In response to research findings, member of the Family Advisory Board has coproduced a Learning Disability (LD) Assessment and Plan. These tools promote early identification of learning needs and provide tailored support for parents during care proceedings. Feedback from parents and the Family Advisory Board highlights the positive impact of these initiatives, fostering better understanding, communication, and outcomes for families.
- **Independent Advocacy:** We received over 50 children's referrals for advocacy support in just one month, empowering them to participate meaningfully in care proceedings and reviews.

The outcomes from these initiatives have been transformative, helping young people develop confidence, build positive relationships, and inform key service developments.

However, challenges remain. There is still work to do to ensure:

1. **Sustained Engagement:** Recruitment for volunteers remains difficult, which impacts our ability to provide consistent support to all who need it.
2. **Consistency in Leadership:** The long-term absence of two out of three managers within the Voice and Participation Service has placed increased strain on staff and slowed the progression of key initiatives, particularly in areas like SEND and advocacy development.

3. **Service Integration:** Strengthening collaboration across teams and with external partners is essential to achieving our ambitious goals.

We are committed to addressing these gaps through focused actions and collaborative efforts. As we move forward, your continued support and strategic guidance will be invaluable in overcoming challenges and driving systemic improvements.

Thank you for championing the voices of Wiltshire's children and young people. Together, we can create a brighter future for all.

Yours sincerely,
Joe Sutton
Participation Manager

1. Voice Updates

Children's Social Care - Children and Young People

Children in Care Council (CiCC)

In the recent quarter, the team has continued to build its engagement through Children in Care Council activities.

Participants have had the opportunity to engage with a number of activities to increase their confidence and give them the platform to share their valuable experiences:

Activity Days:

- In August we completed a Joint voice mountaineering trip whereby 6 young people from across our Children in Care, Young Carers and Youth Council group were offered the 'experience of a lifetime' to climb the peaks of Pen Y Fan. 2 Virtual School Officers also attended.

"I absolutely loved the trip to Pen Y Fan, it was lovely to meet the young carers group and Wiltshire Youth Councillors, I am keeping in touch with them and would love the opportunity to do some joint voice activities again, we had so much in common and it was nice to feel that we could build positive friendships and learn about the different work everyone is doing."
Child in Care, aged 15.

- In September 3 CiCC members were supported to attend a trip to Thorpe Park.
- In November 17 children in care attended an adventure day at Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre, participating in fun activities such as archery and Bushcraft.

CiCC Committee: The team consistently organises monthly sessions providing young people with valuable opportunities to engage with key professionals. These sessions serve as a platform for mutual feedback, fostering a two-way exchange of insights. Professionals benefit by refining their practices based on the feedback received from young individuals, while the latter gain insights into the supportive services offered by these professionals.

Corporate Parenting Panel Priorities- Our CiCC Committee's focus this quarter has been on the Corporate Parenting Panel Priority 4 'To have positive relationships with people who are important to me and for me to be part of my local community where I am trusted, respected, accepted and feel included.'

Our CiCC Committee members have met with SASS Service Manager and priority lead Michael Graham to discuss their key thoughts around what this priority means to them, what 'good looks like', and have raised some of the potential barriers that children in care and care-experienced young people may face. Common themes were identified and were discussed further at a Dragons Den event on 30th October, whereby 10 care-experienced young people heard more about the priority from Michael Graham, the lead



Councillor (Laura Mayes) and also in attendance was Katrina Mcjannet (Head of Children in Care & Young People). Findings will be shared at Corporate Parenting Panel in the January meeting.

The team has also coproduced a new magazine for children in care called 'Your Voice Matters'. The aim of this magazine is to help children understand how they can share their views, understand their rights and have all of the information needed to them in one place rather than many different leaflets.

LINK TO MAGAZINE

https://www.canva.com/design/DAGQEnKz14/L6Q7XGOqJWfalJL5p5Z-Yg/edit?utm_content=DAGQEnKz14&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

Voice Ambassadors:

Our care-experienced Ambassadors continue to support the co-production of services across Wiltshire. They continue to support to support by delivering training, inspecting services, interviewing, and engaging in voice consultations. Here are some of the initiatives they have supported over quarter 2.

- **Consultation with Become Charity-** in August, our care-experienced Ambassadors shared their feedback on strengthening the care system by providing insights into the biggest issues facing CIC, identifying key areas of support, and suggesting how the national approach can improve the experiences of young people living in the care system.
- **Young Persons Fostering Consultation Panel-** Delivered a Young Persons Fostering Panel in August, whereby young people continue to meet with applicants and engage in a two-way discussion which promotes both applicants learning, and the opportunity for panellists to have a say in who are appointed as Wiltshire foster carers.
- **Co-producing the residential offer-** Ambassadors continue to co-produce the offer delivered by our new residential home providers. They have contributed their ideas to the furnishing of the houses, and delivered training to providers, including a session with the staff of Pheonix House, Melksham in August.
- **Interviewing-** 2 ambassadors were panellists for the on the Interim Director of Families and Children's Services interviews.
- **Corporate Parenting Panel-** Ambassadors continue to present their work and provide meaningful contributions at Corporate Parenting Panel meetings.

Outcomes from our Care-Experienced initiatives:

- Young people have had the opportunity to maintain and develop positive relationships with other children in care.
- Young people have had the opportunity to take part in unique confidence building opportunities that provide an 'experience of a lifetime'.
- Young people have been given the opportunity to scrutinise the services that are offered to them, and provide both positive and constructive feedback for future developments.

- All the feedback will be presented into a 'you said, we did together' format to ensure that young people and decision makers are clear on the developments following on from feedback and action agreed.
- Our Voice Ambassadors continue to gain valuable workplace experience whilst contributing invaluable insights for our initiatives.

Future Activities:

- CiCC Christmas Laser quest Party in December
- Ongoing Monthly Committee sessions that will consult the voices of young people and drive forward the key priorities.
- Contribute to the Supported accommodation moderation in January.

Other Consultation Work:

Training: over quarter 2 we have continued to deliver training to professionals which is led by our care-experienced staff.

- **Family Time Training-** 2 Family time training sessions delivered to foster carers. These training sessions equip foster carers with the knowledge and skills to support family time, and to help maintain positive relationships between young people and their birth families.
- **Ways Of Writing Training-** In October we delivered a Multiagency ways of writing session which will equip attendees across the Safeguarding Vulnerable Peoples Partnership with the skills to develop trauma aware case recordings.
- **Beyond Language that Cares Symposium-** Wiltshire's Voice and Participation Service attended the Beyond Language that Cares Symposium, this was a national consultation hosted by The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT), alongside other Local Authorities and Charities to take a joint approach to feedback and develop ideas on how we work in a trauma aware way across safeguarding and children in care services. A toolkit will be created in the following months which can be utilised by local authorities.

Other notable updates:

- **Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group-** Cameron Draisey is now a member and representing the Voice and Participation Service and the Care-Experienced community within the EDI workgroup.

Key Outcomes:

- Training delivered by 'experts by experience' ensures that staff access a meaningful learning experience that informs their practice utilising service user feedback.
- Care-experienced employees are getting meaningful representation at our EDI group, which ensures that the recruitment process and policies made at Wiltshire Council are inclusive for this group.

Mind of My Own

Mind of My Own is an app that enables young people to share their thoughts and feelings directly with their workers. Since August 1st 2024 - 42 Young Person Accounts have been created.

Numbers of statements sent to workers.

Number of One Statements sent	150
Number of Express Statements sent	31
Total statements sent to Wiltshire Children's Services (One and Express)	118

One App Usage

Statement Type	Sent by Young People	Sent by Practitioners	Total
Totals	63	87	150
Conference	1	3	4
Foster Care Review	9	8	17
My Life	12	28	40
My Wellbeing	8	2	10
Pathway	1	0	1
Preparation	10	5	15
Problem	7	1	8
Share Good News	1	0	1
This Is Me	6	8	14
Worker Visit	8	32	40

Positive examples of the impact of using Mind Of My Own:

"I used mind of my own with two boys who had recently become looked after. They moved to a foster placement with their grandparents, a three hour drive away, leaving in July not knowing which school they would go to in September. Prior to this, they were clear they wanted to stay in Wiltshire. I completed a Mind of My Own with them two weeks after they moved. It was great to see the 8 year old boy talk about how happy he was, the other stating there was nothing he would change about home. This was great news for the boys and also very reassuring for me as their social worker. We always do what we think is in children's best interests however- Mind of My Own showed me that all the work was worth it."

Abbi, Kinship and Fostering Team

"I went to see the Young Person last Friday to gather his wishes and feelings. Then, over the weekend, he used Mind Of My Own to submit further information to his Social Worker, focusing on his mental well-being. I just wanted to let you know that the combination of the two had a really powerful impact at the conference. Everyone opted for a Child Protection (CP) Plan, with scaling scores of 8 and 9. Several participants commented that these decisions were due to hearing the YP's voice loud and clear through the two forms of advocacy. It was heartening to see both approaches working in tandem for the good of the child."

Conclusion

The Voice and Participation Service continues to promote the voices of children and young people through diverse and wide-ranging initiatives highlighted in this report. The service continues to empower Children in Care through transformative adventures to fostering youth-led advocacy with the Mind of My Own app. The engagement of Youth Voice Ambassadors, the establishment of a robust in-house Advocacy Service, and the strategic focus on young carers continues to support all our young people empowering them and valuing their experiences.

Young Carers Voice

Learning from the successful work we have done with the Children in Care Council; we have involved young carers from the very first point in setting up the new dedicated young carers voice service. We held a young carers council session around developing the questions for 2 new staff members the Young Carers Voice Worker and Young Carers in Schools Worker. We then had young carer representative on the interview panels for these positions and their insights were particularly helpful in choosing the right candidates. We were successful in recruiting Amy Tanker to the Young Carers Voice Worker position, and she started with The Voice and Participation Service in October. We have also recruited Lorraine Pullin to the Young Carers Schools Worker position, and she will be joining us in January.

Young Carers Council

In September the Young Carers council had a joint session with Community First and Forward Carers to look at a new young carers card that is being developed they gave their views on what the card can be used for (see below session feedback)



Young Carer Engagement Sessions- Feedback Report.pdf

The Young Carers Council last met on 29th October 2024. We had 9 Young Carers attending in-person. The focus of this meeting was identifying what type of project Young Carers would like to focus on. Training days for staff and professionals received the highest number of votes for how to raise awareness. Teachers, support services and police came joint top for who to raise awareness to. A training presentation will be co-produced and delivered by Young Carers to ensure Young Carer Voice is championed when training professionals.

The next Young Carers Council meeting (19th November) will be a follow up meeting on what Young Carers would find helpful as part of their Young Carer ID Card. Discussions will involve, why this will help young carers, and which idea is the most beneficial for young carers. A proposal to the Carer Commissioner will follow, detailing the actions and takeaways from the Young Carers Council Meeting.

Young Carers Magazine

Young Carers have told us that they do not like multiple leaflets and would rather have information in one place. Given this, work to create the Young Carers Magazine similar to the Your Voice Matters Magazine is underway, partners working directly with young carers

have been contacted and asked to write half a page on who they are, what they do to help young carers and how to get involved.

Young Carers Annual Survey

The Young Carers Survey aims to gather feedback from Young Carers aged 8-15 and Young Adult Carers age 16-24. The questionnaire will involve questions about their emotional wellbeing, support network, support in school and experiences as a young carer. These questions will be analysed alongside national benchmarks for Young Carers and young people who are not young carers. Current work supports the target for the survey to be distributed to Young Carers in January 2025.

Young Carers in Schools Award (YCiS Award)

The Young Carers Council have had an introduction to what the award is and how schools can achieve it. Ideas on what schools need to improve on were discussed in the most recent Young Carers Council Meeting. Themes such as being less strict on being late and having correct uniform and more emphasis on identifying and supporting Young Carers were raised. The training tool that will be co-produced by the Young Carers Council will contribute to the implementation of the YCiS Award. In addition, the Young Carers Schools Worker will be in position from January 2025 to continue and grow the support available for Young Carers in schools.

SEND Voice Update

Overview of SEND Initiatives

Wiltshire Council and the Voice and Participation Service are implementing a range of initiatives to enhance services and support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The approach prioritises the voices and participation of SEND individuals and their families, ensuring that their experiences and aspirations are central to planning and decision-making. Key the below key initiatives include the SEND CYP Participation Development Plan, SHARE Consultation, SEND Youth Forum, the "Meeting Needs Together - Ambitious for All" strategy, and expanded support for SEND parents. Progression of some of the initiatives have been slower than expected due to the Ofsted inspection and long term sickness within the team.

Empowering SEND Children and Young People

We are committed to empowering children and young people with SEND by actively involving them in shaping service improvements. Through focus groups, collaborative committees, and events, young people are encouraged to share their experiences. The development of accessible resources, such as the "How to Plan for My Future" crib sheet and e-learning tools, aims to provide young people with the skills to advocate for themselves and navigate their future confidently. Additional initiatives, like the Transitions Advisory Board, support young people post-16, with a focus on preparing them for adulthood through opportunities in employment, independent living, and community inclusion.

A coproduction session held on 4th October 2024 at Fairfield College focused on engaging students with learning disabilities to understand their views and preferences regarding Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) and annual reviews. Co-delivered by Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire CIL, the session aimed to ensure that young people could confidently share their thoughts in an interactive and accessible format. Key themes identified by the students included the importance of independence, safety, communication preferences, and the inclusion of key personal details in their EHCPs. The students also highlighted their desire for a more personalised and visually engaging format, with clear symbols and easy-to-read sections. The session provided valuable insights into how young people want to engage with their plans, such as through short, focused discussions and with trusted individuals who can support them. Several recommendations were made, including rethinking the terminology around EHCPs, using more relatable language such as “my life plan,” and considering individual preferences when presenting their plans. Follow-up consultations are planned to explore specific areas, such as transport and further contributions to the EHCP, ensuring that young people’s voices continue to shape the process.



Consulting on Key SEND Themes

The SHARE consultation engages children and young people with SEND on quarterly themes, capturing a broad perspective on their needs. These insights shape ongoing improvements in services and ensure that Wiltshire’s actions are guided by the voices of those directly impacted. By involving young people in decision-making processes related to Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Annual Reviews, Wiltshire aims to significantly increase youth participation in these areas. Collaboration across multiple agencies ensures a united effort to amplify youth voices and drive positive change.

Amplifying Voices through the SEND Youth Forum

The SEND Youth Forum is being developed as a platform for young people with SEND to share their lived experiences. This forum aims to bridge the gap between young people and decision-makers, enabling SEND youth to contribute directly to service improvements.

Commitment to Inclusive and Coordinated Planning

Wiltshire’s “Meeting Needs Together - Ambitious for All” strategy focuses on empowering individuals with SEND and their families through six core priorities:

1. **Child- and Family-Centered Planning:** Ensuring that SEND children and their families are at the heart of planning and decision-making.
2. **Early Identification and Support:** Providing timely and tailored support to meet each child’s individual needs.
3. **Flexible Planning with Clear Outcomes:** Developing adaptable, outcome-driven plans.

4. **Accessible Communication:** Offering clear, family-friendly information to improve the overall experience.
5. **Skilled, Collaborative Professionals:** Training staff with the knowledge to provide effective support and work seamlessly across services.
6. **Supporting Transitions to Adulthood:** Focusing on independence, community inclusion, and timely, supported transitions for young people entering adulthood.

Strengthening Support for SEND Parents

Recognising the specific needs of parents with SEND, Wiltshire has enhanced collaboration with Social Care to provide targeted support. This includes a new SEND screening tool to identify and address parental support needs, ensuring a more responsive and comprehensive system. Co-created materials developed with the FAB parenting group aim to provide helpful guidance, while training and tools are available to help parents navigate SEND services effectively.

New Tools for Gathering Feedback

Wiltshire is introducing a new in-house tool to collect feedback from stakeholders, ensuring insights are actively integrated into future planning. Designed with accessibility and inclusivity in mind, this tool will facilitate comprehensive, meaningful data collection.

Promoting Inclusivity through "We Are One Society"

The "We Are One Society" initiative seeks to foster inclusivity and empathy by inviting individuals with lived experiences of disability to share their stories with schools. Through interactive sessions, the programme raises awareness of disabilities, promotes understanding, and encourages a supportive, inclusive culture within school environments. Outcomes are monitored through metrics such as student engagement, feedback scores, and shifts in attitudes towards inclusivity.

Summary

Wiltshire Council's initiatives demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the lives of children, young people, and families with SEND. By prioritising empowerment, inclusion, and responsive services, these initiatives aim to create an environment where every individual has the support needed to achieve their full potential.

Wiltshire Special School Healthy School Audit

As the school has not yet been officially accredited with its award, we will not mention which school the visit pertains to.

The Senior Leadership Team, staff and pupils have a whole-school approach regarding accessing and delivering support. Prior to our visit, the school developed a questionnaire entailing Healthy Schools questions which were distributed to several classes, this totalled to around 30 responses. The feedback provided by students was majority positive with most students selecting 'yes' to 'is there always a teacher you can speak to/get support from' and were able to name the teacher that the question referred to. This demonstrates that the school is meeting standards in the emotional and wellbeing section.

School notice boards displayed clear policies on anti-bullying and young carers. There was also a board dedicated to youth voice, which also outlined when the next meeting takes

place and current discussion topics. School notice boards emphasised their commitment to a whole school approach as they were clear, accessible and updated.

Student surveys and student's that volunteered to speak with us spoke highly about the food choices at school. During break time, almost all young people were utilising the outdoor space, socialising with their peers or supporting break time staff. It was also positive that food and drinks are also provided at break and lunch for staff if they wish. The school provides a welcoming dining environment for both young people and staff.

During the visit the school's approach PSHE education was both inclusive and educational for their students. Activities such as 'welly wanging' were explained which involved a fun physical activity combined with the mathematics of measuring distances and science of gravity.

In summary, the team left the school with a positive view of their quality of support, knowledge of inclusivity and associated actions and it is evident that they have a true commitment to their young people.

Family Voice Update

Parents with Learning Difficulties in Care Proceedings

Wiltshire Council recently participated in research led by the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University. The study explored the prevalence and experiences of parents with learning disabilities or difficulties involved in care proceedings concerning their babies in England. Findings indicated that a significant proportion of parents involved in care proceedings had learning disabilities or difficulties, with Wiltshire reporting a higher rate than the average across the four local authorities studied.

The study involved an analysis of court bundles and social work records of care proceedings for babies under one year old across four local authorities, including Wiltshire. Additionally, researchers conducted interviews with parents with learning disabilities or difficulties, as well as with social care and legal professionals.

Key Findings Specific to Wiltshire

In Wiltshire, 44% of care proceedings cases involved at least one parent with a learning disability or difficulty, compared to an average of 33% across the other authorities. The study highlighted a pattern of late identification of these needs, with 64% of Wiltshire cases only recognising parental learning disabilities or difficulties during the care proceedings. This late identification led to several challenges:

- Social worker communications, interventions, and assessments were not typically tailored to meet the parents' specific needs.
- Resources were often wasted due to repeated work necessitated by the late identification.
- In 40% of Wiltshire cases, no evidence was found of interventions being adjusted to support the parents' needs, particularly regarding pre-birth preparations.

Despite these challenges, Wiltshire demonstrated a higher quality of social worker interactions compared to other areas. Practitioners were noted for using clear, open, sensitive, and straightforward language. However, there were still instances where practitioners did not adequately address parents' lack of understanding. The research also

found that access to advocacy was particularly difficult in Wiltshire, compounding challenges for parents with learning disabilities or difficulties.

Response: Learning Disability Assessment and Plan

In response to the findings, Wiltshire Council has developed a Learning Disability (LD) Assessment and LD Plan, aimed at improving early identification and providing tailored support to parents with learning disabilities or difficulties. The Family Advisory Board played a crucial role in reviewing the new documents and providing feedback for changes. Our Parent Voice Ambassador also reached out to others with a LD who have been supported by Social Workers to gather their thoughts around the documents.

“It seems like it can be a massive contribution for families and it gives a better understanding of what need there is and what type of support can be given. It's a fantastic tool” (FAB member with LD)

LD Assessment

The LD Assessment tool is a screening mechanism designed to identify potential learning disabilities or difficulties in parents involved in care proceedings. This assessment:

- Includes questions about whether the parent has previously been assessed for learning disabilities or difficulties.
- Prompts practitioners to check records within Adult Social Care and to consider any history of support or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Helps practitioners gather comprehensive information about the parents' needs and create a responsive plan.

LD Plan

The LD Plan builds upon the LD Assessment by outlining specific actions to support identified learning disabilities or difficulties in parents. It uses insights from the LD Assessment to develop an individualised support plan, which may include:

- Addressing specific learning needs, such as reading difficulties.
- Providing support strategies tailored to each parent's assessed requirements.

Aims of the LD Assessment and LD Plan

By implementing the LD Assessment and LD Plan, Wiltshire Council seeks to improve outcomes for parents with learning disabilities or difficulties in care proceedings by:

- Promoting early identification of learning needs through systematic screening.
- Supporting the creation of individualised support plans.
- Enhancing communication between social workers and parents.
- Ensuring interventions and assessments are tailored to address each parent's specific learning requirements.

These tools represent a proactive step towards addressing the challenges highlighted by the research, promoting a fairer and more supportive process for parents with learning disabilities or difficulties involved in care proceedings.

Parental Advocacy for those with a LD

In response to the research findings, the Voice and Participation Service has formalised its parental advocacy support within the broader Independent Advocacy Initiative. Under this initiative, parents with identified learning difficulties, as documented during assessment, will now be eligible for dedicated advocacy support. This support will help them to better understand their plans, be informed of their rights, and more effectively communicate their views.

The Family Voice Worker attended the Black Advocacy Belt Annual Conference on 16th October and participated in follow-up online courses over the subsequent weeks, gaining insights and best practices for advocating effectively for parents.

Additionally, the Family Voice Worker and Parents Voice Ambassador have expanded their networks by participating in monthly meetings with other advocacy and voice service providers across the UK, facilitated by the Parents Families and Allies Network (PFAN). These connections have provided valuable advice, support, and shared expertise in enhancing advocacy services for parents and families.

Since August Family Voice has provided advocacy support to four parents during their families' Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences (ICPC/RCPC). Some of these meetings have been held in person, either in the parents' own homes or in other accessible and familiar settings, such as local GP surgeries, to ensure a comfortable environment for meaningful participation. Additionally, Family Voice supported two parents in joining their ICPC/RCPC reviews online, helping to facilitate their engagement despite potential barriers to attending in person.

Efforts were also made to engage three other parents ahead of their ICPC reviews. Unfortunately, some of these parents disengaged from the process following the initiation of the Public Law Outline (PLO) process, which underscores the challenges of sustaining engagement during difficult stages of care proceedings.

Training for Practitioners

FAB members are collaborating to develop training for the workforce that focuses on the experiences of individuals with learning disabilities (LD) and the social care interventions they receive. By incorporating their valuable lived experiences into the conversation, they aim to foster a more empathetic dialogue and improve the training being offered.

Bournemouth University Visit

FAB members recently visited Bournemouth University to engage with 24 student social workers, with the aim of exploring best practices and gathering feedback on effective strategies, tools, and methods for engaging with parents. During this session, FAB members shared real-world insights and experiences, encouraging an open dialogue where students could ask questions and provide their perspectives.

Through these discussions, FAB members and students explored a variety of engagement techniques and approaches, including:

- **Tools for Effective Communication:** Students shared innovative tools and methods they have encountered during their training, such as visual aids, simplified language resources, and digital engagement tools, which could be beneficial in helping parents understand complex information.

- **Strategies for Building Trust with Parents:** Recognising the importance of trust in social work, students provided feedback on approaches to foster trust with parents, such as active listening, transparency, and consistency in communication.
- **Feedback on Parental Engagement Challenges:** Students discussed potential barriers they face in engaging parents, including cultural differences, language barriers, and the stigma some parents may feel. They shared ideas on overcoming these barriers to improve rapport and collaboration with families.

The outcomes of this visit are expected to positively impact both the students and the FAB members, including:

- **Enhanced Student Preparedness:** By hearing from experienced advocates, students gain a deeper understanding of the practical challenges and ethical considerations of engaging with parents, which could improve their confidence and effectiveness in future roles.
- **New Ideas for FAB Initiatives:** Feedback from students provides FAB members with fresh ideas and perspectives, which could inform the development of new tools and resources for parental engagement. These insights may lead to more effective advocacy efforts, particularly in engaging parents who may be unfamiliar with social services.
- **Strengthened Partnership with Bournemouth University:** This visit reinforces the partnership between Wiltshire Council, FAB members, and Bournemouth University, opening doors for further collaboration. Future workshops, internships, or joint projects could be developed to support ongoing knowledge exchange and practical learning opportunities.

"The students reported that they massively valued the time that you gave them" (SW lecturer)

"The biggest take away for me is the importance of building relationships before giving feedback" (student SW)

Overall, this engagement with student social workers creates a mutual learning experience, potentially shaping best practices in parental advocacy and helping to prepare the next generation of social workers for more compassionate and inclusive practice.

FAB Magazine

Overview and Aims of the FAB Magazine

The inaugural edition of FAB Magazine is currently underway, designed to amplify the voices and experiences of parents and families navigating the child protection system in Wiltshire. It will particularly focus on those involved in children's hearings, child protection investigations, and the care system. The magazine seeks to foster understanding, challenge existing practices, and advocate for changes that provide stronger support and respect for families.

Key Objectives:

- **Empowering Parents:** FAB Magazine will empower parents by providing a space for them to share their stories, insights, and perspectives, helping them feel heard and validated within the system.

- **Promoting Advocacy and Rights:** The magazine will champion parents' rights and emphasise the importance of treating parents as equals in interactions with social workers and other professionals within the child protection system.
- **Providing Resources and Information:** A dedicated resources section will offer a directory of organisations that provide advocacy and support for families navigating child protection.
- **Raising Awareness of the FAB Group:** The magazine will spread awareness of the FAB Group's mission and work within Wiltshire to enhance services for parents.

Content Highlights:

FAB Magazine will feature a range of compelling content, including:

- **Personal Narratives:** First-hand accounts from parents and grandparents will share experiences with child protection investigations, children's hearings, and navigating the complexities of the care system.
- **Professional Advice:** Contributions from social workers, legal experts, and advocates will provide practical guidance on topics such as subject access requests, contact arrangements, and building effective support networks.

Impact Goals:

By giving parents a platform to share their experiences, challenge existing practices, and advocate for their rights, FAB Magazine aspires to:

- Reduce the isolation and stigma often associated with involvement in child protection.
- Foster greater understanding and empathy between parents, professionals, and the wider community.
- Ultimately improve the overall experiences of families engaging with the child protection system.

National Consultations:

This quarter our voice groups contributed to two national consultations in October.

Local Government Association (LGA) Mental Health Consultation (17/10/2024):

- 10 representatives across our voice groups attended- including Young Carers, SEND, Children in Care, Youth Justice and the Wiltshire Youth Council.
- Attendees shared their views around mental health support with The Local Government Association.
- Young people also reflected on the findings of the 'Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Survey' which was delivered by Wiltshire Councils Public Health Team.
- Following the consultation the LGA will be creating an informative report to be shared with the government and local authorities on how best to support young people's experiences of mental health.

The Children's Society Financial Exploitation Youth Voice Consultation (21/10/2024):

- 11 representatives across our voice groups attended- including Young Carers, SEND, Children in Care, Youth Justice and the Wiltshire Youth Council.
- Attendees shared their views around financial exploitation with The Children's Society.
- Following the consultation their views will be included in The Children's Society's report which will inform the government and Local Authorities on how best to support young people experiencing financial exploitation.

Future Activities:

- Work with a 'One Council' approach with Public Health to deliver a Child and Young Persons Emotional Wellbeing Summit in February 2025.

Key Outcomes:

- Wiltshire young people have contributed to national consultations which will ensure they are heard when reports are produced and policies are developed in these areas.
- Young people have felt heard and empowered knowing that their voice is being heard

"The mental health written summary, it couldn't be better in words, honestly it sums it all up in one. It just feels like you guys listen to my points." Young Carer Council Member

Wiltshire Youth Council

The Wiltshire Youth Council continues to enhance the voices of our young people across Wiltshire and provides an invaluable opportunity to contribute to youth democracy. This period we have had an additional 3 schools sign up to the initiative.

Meetings:

The Wiltshire Youth Council continue to meet once a month via a hybrid meeting hosted at County Hall, Trowbridge. Youth Councillors have had the opportunity to consult with different professionals and initiatives across the council including the following:

- Provided feedback to Public Health to inform their development of the No Worries Service and the new Condom App which was being launched. (<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/1408/Sexual-health>).
- Provided insightful feedback for the library 5 year strategy, including how to improve the services offered to young people in Wiltshire Council Libraries.
- Community Engagement- Wiltshire Youth Councillors were given the opportunity to review the results of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and provide feedback on how more of the young people population can be reached.
- Councillors, including the portfolio holder for SEND and Inclusion and Area Boards have attended to provide an insight into the work they do and offer a Q&A opportunity.

“Thank you for having me at the meeting and being so accommodating. It was valuable to hear from that cohort and they had really insightful questions” Public Health Practitioner

“Thank you for so much for introducing Wendy and myself to the Youth Council this week and to spend time gathering very valuable feedback on their view of Wiltshire Libraries. What a great bunch of teenagers with informed views, willingness to share experience, articulate and confident. We were impressed with how much they already knew about libraries and their great ideas about what they could like and provide.” Library Development and Communities Manager

Members of Youth Parliament (MYP):

Our MYPs have started their work on promoting Wiltshire Youth Councils voice on a national scale.

- **MYP Annual Conference-** Wiltshire MYPs attended the UK Youth Parliament annual Conference Residential on 26th to 27th October at Coventry University. This was a chance to contribute their views nationally, and influence the development of the manifestos which will be reviewed and presented at the House Of Commons in March 2025.

Here is an **outline of the MYP’s additional responsibilities:**

- be a champion for young people’s issues locally and nationally
- work with their locally elected councillors and MPs to promote youth voice
- attend regional conventions of the UKYP (three Saturdays per year)
- attend the annual conference of UKYP (a residential weekend away)
- attend an annual debate in the House of Commons
- deliver the Make Your Mark youth voice campaign and other UKYP campaigns

Hygiene Initiative:

Wiltshire Youth Councillors have decided that they would like to raise donations to the charity Re-Fresh who ‘provides toiletry and sanitary items to children and youth in need.’ Along with donations Youth Councillors are doing the following:

- Raising awareness of supporting vulnerable groups of young people.
- Raising awareness of period poverty
- Action: Youth Councillors are working in their schools to encourage donations, they have been given until Monday 16th December to raise as much awareness and contributions as possible. Boxes will then be combined to deliver to the Re-Fresh donation points in Wiltshire.
- See more details on refresh here (<https://www.communityactionwestwilts.org/refresh>)

Outcomes:

- Our 28 elected Youth Councillors are representing the voices of young people across Wiltshire.

- We have representatives from our SEND, Young Carers and Children in Care groups who raise awareness on behalf vulnerable groups.
- Youth Councillors have met with different guests and been able to feedback their insights on how services are shaped and how funding is spent.
- Youth Councillors are working towards their chosen awareness raising projects, and more information will follow on completion.
- Young people attending get to experience youth democracy and lots of skills such as public speaking, minute taking, and 'youth inspection' skills.

Activities going forward:

Each full youth council meeting will continue to have a guest invited who will seek the youth councillors' views on important topics such as environmental issues, transport, or mental health the members of youth council will have a say in how policy at the council is shaped. With support from Wiltshire's Voice and Participation Service, the Youth Council will take part in activities such as youth inspections, advising on how money is spent for young people and advocating for young people where they live.

2. Independent Advocacy Service

What is Independent Advocacy?

Independent advocacy ensures that children and young people have their voices heard during important decisions about their lives. Advocates are completely independent from other services, meaning they do not represent the views of social workers, carers, or any other professionals. Unlike other professionals who work in a child's "best interests," advocates act as a mouthpiece for the person being supported, ensuring their views, wishes, and feelings are communicated exactly as they want them to be heard. The advocate's role is to empower the person to express their opinions and make sure those opinions are taken seriously in all meetings and decision-making processes.

Our Offer

Our advocacy service typically follows a three-meeting process:

1. Initial Meeting: The advocate meets with the individual receiving support to understand their wishes and feelings. These are then shared with the relevant professionals involved in the upcoming meeting.
2. Professionals Meeting: The advocate attends the meeting, either alongside the individual, or on their behalf.
3. Feedback: If the individual would like feedback on the meeting's outcome, they can request this from the advocate. However, it remains the lead worker's responsibility to explain how decisions were made.

For Non Instructed Advocacy (taking action on behalf of someone who is unable to clearly indicate their views or wishes), the process will be determined on a case by case basis.

Advocacy Service Criteria:

All children who are CLA, CP and SEND are provided with the offer for independent advocacy which they can choose to opt out from.

People eligible for advocacy include:

- Child involved in CP
- Parent with SEN involved in CP (ICPC and RCPC only)
- Looked-after children, including:
 - Residential special schools
 - Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)
- Children with SEND (Representation of Views, Independence, Support with Rights, Participation)
- Living in kinship care
- Children in need
- Care leavers
- Children subject to the Mental Capacity Act (aged 16-18)
- Children detained under the Mental Health Act
- Homeless young people (16-17 years)
- Young carers and young adult carers (up to 24)

A new referral form was integrated into the Liquid Logic system, going live on 10th October 2024. This streamlined process has already led to 54 referrals since launch. Previously, a temporary Microsoft Form collected 37 referrals between July and October, which demonstrates a substantial increase in accessibility and use following system integration. The following data has been collected from the new Liquid Logic form so only reflects 1 month's reporting.

Type of meeting where advocacy is needed	Count of Type of meeting
Subsequent CLA Review	12
Second CLA Review	11
Initial Child Protection Conference	8
Review Child Protection Conference	7
First CLA Review	3
Prior to Pathway Plan (when CYP turns 16)	3
	1
Other/ Not Applicable (blank)	6
Grand Total	54

The below table represents the referral reasons, the values in this field may be higher due to some children having multiple reasons selected.

Category	Value
CLA (Children Looked After)	30
CP (Child Protection)	15
CIN (Children in Need)	2
SEND Specific (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)	3

Young Carers	4
Mental Capacity Act	2
Kinship Care/SGO (Special Guardianship Orders)	8
Homeless (Aged between 16 and 17)	1

The average time from referral to ICPC is 10 days, and to CLA Review is 42 days. These timelines allow advocates sufficient time to build rapport with children, gather their wishes, and adequately prepare for meetings, enhancing the child-centered approach in every case.

Integration into existing workflows, including amending the Section 47 form, has brought advocacy considerations into earlier stages of the child protection process.

The below table represents which team supports the children that have been referred, the CiC North Team have higher numbers, which is due to them holding the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, who we have had 9 referrals for.

Teams who Support Referred children	Number of Children
Children In Care (North)	16
CYPDT	9
Children In Care (South)	7
Support And Safeguarding (West W/M)	7
Support And Safeguarding (North)	7
Support And Safeguarding (South)	6
Allocated Team	1
(blank)	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	54

Feedback

Staff feedback highlights the advocacy service's impact:

"The advocacy reports you provided were excellent and really captured the children." (Social Worker)

"Thanks for sorting it out for me! Really grateful, meant a meaningful meeting could go ahead...so it was invaluable!" (Independent Reviewing Officer on short-notice advocacy)

Child feedback from four closed cases indicated that children felt their views were genuinely heard, and they were satisfied with meeting outcomes.

Since 10 October - 13 visits have taken place with children to attain their wishes and feelings and 11 professional meetings have been attended by an Advocate to speak on behalf of a child.

Moving forward, a "Wishes and Feelings" form has been introduced within Liquid Logic. This addition will allow for data on recurring themes in children's perspectives, further supporting service improvement and thematic analysis.

Expansion and Capacity-Building

The team is recruiting one full-time and one part-time Independent Advocate to join the current two part-time staff. These roles were factored into the original contract and ensures sustained support for children and timely advocacy service delivery.

The Independent Advocacy Service has made significant strides in operational efficiency, child-centred support, and collaboration with staff and other teams. Through system integration, timely engagement, and continuous expansion, the service is well-equipped to adapt to growing needs and foster positive outcomes for children and young people.

3. Volunteering

Volunteer Recruitment

The ongoing recruitment of new volunteers remains challenging, reflecting trends across the volunteer sector. The team is holding regular meetings with the Communications team to develop a strategic marketing approach, including a rolling recruitment programme with four annual training courses. This ensures prospective volunteers can access training within three months of expressing interest. Plans are underway for two main recruitment campaigns each year, supplemented by continuous advertising to maintain interest and awareness throughout the year.

Mentoring

Primary Mentoring

Over this period, the primary mentoring programme supported 44 children, with notable changes in participation. September saw the formation of 12 new mentor-child matches, while July included the closure of 14 mentorships. Three children participated in additional mentoring sessions up to July, and 15 have continued into the current academic year. Feedback from closed cases highlights positive outcomes: children were more able to express their feelings, felt supported, gained confidence, and grew in independence. Nine children's schools reported improvements, particularly in tolerance of others and openness in discussing feelings.

Three students who transitioned to secondary school in September are part of a trial programme, continuing with their primary mentors through Year 7. These students have demonstrated improvements in independence, and one is notably progressing in maturity and forming friendships.

Community Mentoring

Three young people continued to receive community mentoring. One transitioned smoothly into secondary school, another has developed confidence through a 3D printing hobby that enhances his mentoring sessions, and a young person post-18 has received support after interventions with the Youth Justice Service and the Emerald Team. Another child received mentoring for two months before feeling ready to return to school after initially being homeschooled.

Volunteer recruitment challenges continue to affect mentor availability, with waiting lists managed by temporary support from a Young Persons Support Worker until suitable matches are found.

Expanding the Advocacy Offer

The team will be increasing its mentoring offer, this will now include children that are victim of crime and care leaver mentoring, previously the Grand Mentors Scheme

IV Scheme

In September, the team organised an activity day at Thoulstone Park near Westbury, where 30 young people and their Independent Visitors enjoyed activities like archery, zip lines, and climbing walls. This event fostered connection and engagement among participants.



KPI Data for Quarter 2 (from Liquid Logic):

- **Referrals:** 3 in July
- **Assessments Completed:** 5 in July, 1 in August
- **Matches Made:** 2 in July, 3 in August, 3 in September
- **Visit Data:** 213 visits arranged, with 187 completed, totalling over 600 hours of engagement

Currently, 19% of Wiltshire’s children in care have an Independent Visitor, reflecting a 1% increase from Quarter 1. Three new IVs were recruited, with five young people on hold and 25 on the waiting list, six of whom reside out of county.

Number of open IV cases				117
-pre-referred status				4
-referred status				5
-assessed status				18
-matched status				87
-matched for 0-1 yrs				21
-matched for 1-2 yrs				23
-matched for 2-3 yrs				12
-matched for 3-4 yrs				14
-matched for 4-5 yrs				5
-matched for 5 plus yrs				12
-on hold status				2
Current CLA				460
- % with a matched IV				19%

Appropriate Adults

The Voice and Participation Support Worker (VPSW) has focused on engaging with first-time entrants (FTEs) into police custody, either through follow-up outreach or in-custody support. During these encounters, the VPSW discusses the custody process, voluntary support from the Youth Justice

Service, and the benefits of engaging with available resources. Access to custody remains limited pending police vetting.

The VPSW is conducting ongoing data collection to assess the impact of trained Appropriate Adults (AAs) compared to family members or guardians acting as AAs, focusing on how each affects a child's decision to engage with a solicitor. This includes voluntary attendance interviews as well as cases involving children detained in police custody. Data from daily Police Electronic Notifications is being gathered and analysed to provide insights into the effectiveness of trained AAs versus family members in this role. Early findings indicate that trained AAs often have a stronger influence on children's decisions due to their expertise, which enables them to advise and sometimes override a child's initial decision while explaining the solicitor's role.

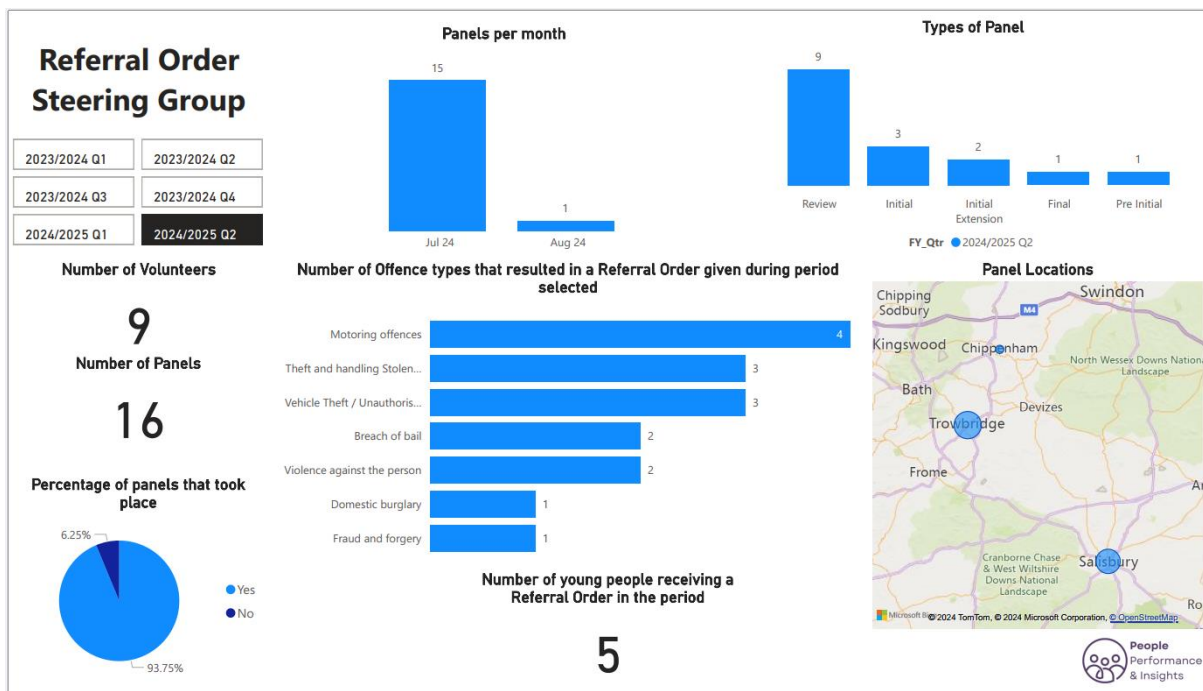
This data also monitors response times for AAs arriving in custody, instances where children are held overnight, and other demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, type of alleged offence, and outcomes. The project is in its early stages, with data collection and analysis ongoing to inform future best practices.

Rise in Assaults on Emergency Workers:

A project initially focused on girls arrested for assaulting emergency workers has expanded to include both boys and all types of assaults. Data collection has begun, with plans to interview children involved in these incidents. Findings will be analysed and presented to the Youth Justice Executive Board.

Panel Members

The following information contains the panel stats for the period that is collected by the Youth Justice Service:



At the time of writing this report, we were unable to access the data from September and therefore it has not been possible to make comparisons with the previous quarter's data. Feedback from participants of the panels is being collected and analysed by one of our volunteer panel members which will be reported on in Quarter 3.

-End-

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

November 2024 (data correct at 25/10/2024)

School Ofsted Judgements

Purpose of report

1. This report is a regular update for the Children's Select Committee and is focused upon Ofsted inspections in Wiltshire schools.

Background

2. The report shows details of schools inspected and provides updates on inspection judgements based on the inspection framework introduced in September 2019 using the categories below:
 - Overall effectiveness
 - Quality of education
 - Behaviour and attitudes
 - Personal development
 - Effectiveness of leadership and management
 - Early years provision
 - Sixth form provision
3. For the current academic year a new grading system has been introduced for full section 5 inspections moving away from singular graded judgements; this came into force on 16 September 2024. [School inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121212/school-inspection-handbook-2024.pdf). This change has seen the ending of the overall effectiveness grade and instead inspections will report the key judgements for quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision) against Ofsted grade descriptors.
4. Ungraded inspections are carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and remain the same. They were previously known as section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools. An ungraded inspection differs from a graded inspection because it does not result in individual graded judgements. Instead, it focuses on determining whether the school has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.
5. Urgent inspections are also carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. They were previously known as inspections with no formal designation and unannounced behaviour inspections. These remain the same.

Main considerations for the committee

1. The table below details the published inspection outcomes of all schools inspected (graded and ungraded inspections) between 25th May and 25th October 2024. Please note that all these inspections were conducted in the previous academic year 2023-24 prior to the change to inspection gradings introduced for the current academic year.
2. Of the 24 inspections held between this period, 17 were judged good (70.8%), 1 outstanding (4%) and 6 requires improvement (25%).

School name & date of inspection (web address to access Ofsted report below)	Status	Overall Effectiveness (previous grade in brackets)	Quality of education	Behaviour and attitudes	Personal development	Leadership and management	Early Years or post-16
Ludwell Primary School Ludwell Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (16&17 April 2024)	Academy	Good (n/a)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
St Augustine's Catholic College St Augustine's Catholic College - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (30 April & 1 May 2024)	Academy	Good (RI)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
The Avenue Primary School and Children's Centre The Avenue Primary School and Children's Centre - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (30 April & 1 May 2024)	Academy	Good (Good)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Luckington Community School Luckington Community School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (9 May 2024)	Maintained	Good – short insp. (Good)					
Lacock Church of England Primary School Lacock Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (8&9 th May 2024)	Maintained	Good (RI)	Good	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
Durrington All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infants' School Durrington All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infants' School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Academy	Good – short insp. (maybe less at S5) (Good)					
Westbury Church of England Junior School Westbury Church of England Junior School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (21&22 May 2024)	Maintained	RI (Good)	RI	Good	Good	RI	n/a
Zouch Academy Zouch Academy - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (4&5 June 2024)	Academy	Outstanding (Good)	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Winsley CoE VC Primary School Winsley CoE VC Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Academy	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good	Good
Avon Valley Academy Avon Valley Academy - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (6 June 2024)	Academy	RI – <i>monitoring visit (RI)</i>					
Five Lanes CofE VC Primary School Five Lanes CofE VC Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (11&12 June 2024)	Maintained	RI (RI)	RI	Good	Good	RI	
Bowerhill Primary School Bowerhill Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (11&12 June 2024)	Academy	Good (RI)	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good	Good
Frogwell Primary School Frogwell Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (11&12 June 2024)	Maintained	RI (RI)	RI	Good	Good	RI	Good
Lydiard Millicent CofE Primary School Lydiard Millicent CofE Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (12&13 June 2024)	Academy	Good – short insp. (maybe less at S5) (Good)					
Lea and Garsdon Church of England Primary School Lea and Garsdon Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (12&13 June 2024)	Maintained	Good (Good)	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Preshute Church of England Primary School Preshute Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (18&19 June 2024)	Maintained	Good (Outstanding)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Corsham Primary School Corsham Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (18&19 June 2024)	Academy	Good (Outstanding)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Pewsey Vale School Pewsey Vale School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (18 July 2024)	Academy	RI – monitoring visit (RI)	RI	Good	Good	RI	

Priestley Primary School Priestley Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (3&4 July 2024)	Maintained	Good (Good)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Winterslow Church of England Primary School Winterslow Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (9&10 July 2024)	Academy	Good (Good)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Charter Primary School Charter Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (9&10 July 2024)	Maintained	RI (Good)	RI	RI	Good	RI	RI
Bemerton St John Church of England Primary Bemerton St John Church of England Primary - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (10&11 July 2024)	Academy	Good (n/a)	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good	Good
Langley Fitzurse Church of England Primary School Langley Fitzurse Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (10&11 July 2024)	Maintained	Good (Good)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Malmesbury Church of England Primary School Malmesbury Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted (21&22 May 2024)	Academy	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

Published Ofsted outcomes as of 25th October 2024 – Wiltshire compared to national and regional

Table 1 shows the data in relation to published Ofsted outcomes as of 25th October 2024. Table 2 shows outcomes over time exemplifying that overall Ofsted outcomes for Wiltshire schools overtime have risen in parallel with national and regional data with some marginal gains however the percentage of good and outstanding schools remain 6% below national data and 1% below regional data.

Ofsted inspection outcomes for Wiltshire primary schools are 6% less than national for percentage of outstanding schools, 2% less for good schools and 7% above national for those requiring improvement. Wiltshire secondary school outcomes are 1% below national for percentage of outstanding schools, 5% above for those judged good and 2% below for those requiring improvement. All our special schools are judged good.

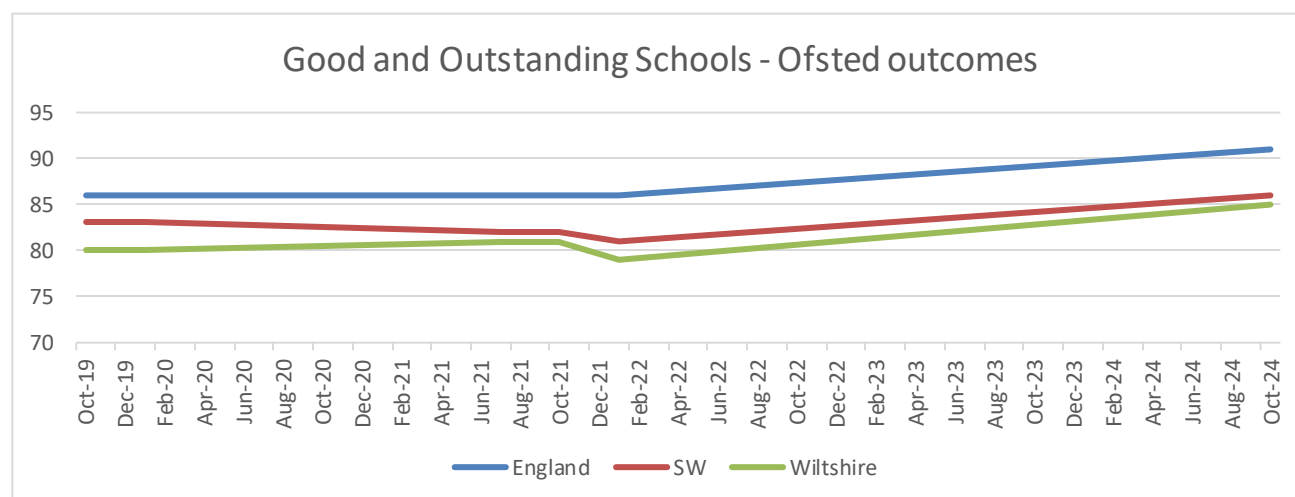
Table 1: Published Ofsted outcomes as of 25th October 2024 - % of schools

Source: [State-funded school inspections and outcomes: management information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/state-funded-school-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information)

By schools	Primary	Secondary	Special	All
Outstanding - National	11%	15%	34%	14%
Outstanding – SW	8%	9%	14%	8%
Outstanding - Wiltshire	5%	14%	0%	6%
Good - National	81%	70%	56%	77%
Good – SW	80%	75%	74%	78%
Good - Wiltshire	79%	75%	100%	79%
Requires Improvement - National	7%	13%	6%	8%
Requires Improvement – SW	11%	14%	8%	11%
Requires Improvement - Wiltshire	14%	11%	0%	14%
Inadequate - National	1%	3%	4%	1%
Inadequate – SW	2%	2%	4%	2%
Inadequate - Wiltshire	1%	0%	0%	1%
Good and outstanding total - National	92%	85%	90%	91%
Good and outstanding total - SW	88%	84%	88%	86%
Good and outstanding total - Wiltshire	84%	86%	100%	85%

Table 2: Ofsted outcomes over time – national, regional and Wiltshire Council

Source: [State-funded school inspections and outcomes: management information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/state-funded-school-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information)



Conclusion

Most of our schools in Wiltshire are judged as good or outstanding and there has been a gradual improvement in the number with this grading. These outcomes do however remain below national and regional figures. For maintained schools, we discharge our school improvement duty through the school improvement framework [School Effectiveness resource page | Right Choice \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/school-effectiveness-resource-page-right-choice). This sets out how we work with all maintained schools. For academies they have their own school improvement arrangements but can also purchase school improvement support and training through our traded offer.

Name: Kathryn Davis

Director – Education and Skills

Report author(s): Louise Lewis

Acting Head of School Effectiveness

Date of report: 28th October 2024

DfE updates and changes – September to November

Child Poverty Taskforce kicks off urgent work to publish strategy in spring – Press release

1. Urgent work on tackling one of Britain's biggest social injustices begun yesterday [Wednesday 14 August] as the Government's Child Poverty Taskforce met for the first time [Child Poverty Taskforce kicks off urgent work to publish strategy in spring - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
Published 15/08/24
2. Wiltshire's position: A pre-meeting briefing will be held prior to this committee to share Wiltshire's Affordable Schools Strategy.

Elective home education - Guidance

3. Guidance for local authorities and schools about children educated at home. Updated 'Elective home education: guidance for local authorities' with 2 new sets of attendance regulations that came into force on 19 August 2024 [Elective home education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) updated 19/08/24
4. Wiltshire's position: Our elective home education policy already provides full coverage of expectations from this guidance and minor changes (i.e. wording) have not affected the policy.

Children missing education – Statutory guidance

5. Statutory guidance for local authorities and advice for other groups on helping children who are missing education get back into it. Updated to bring the guidance in line with the Working together to improve attendance statutory guidance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 [Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) updated 19/08/24
6. Wiltshire's position: Our children missing education policy already provides full coverage of expectations from this guidance as this update relates to Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Minor changes to policy are in process within the Education Welfare Service.

High needs provision capital allocations – Guidance

7. Local authority funding to support the provision of new places and improve existing provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities or requiring alternative provision. Updated 'High needs provision capital allocations: 2023 to 2025' with new local authority information and changed its title to 'High needs provision capital allocations: 2021 to 2025 [High needs provision capital allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) updated 20/08/24
8. Wiltshire's position: Wiltshire Council was awarded £6,373,219 of additional high needs capital grant for 2023/24 and a further £2,591,776 capital grant for 2024/25. In addition, Wiltshire Council was awarded £5,700,100 Safety Valve capital grant towards a new special school

provision in a separate capital allocation in September 2024. These funds will be used to deliver additional capacity in primary and secondary resource bases, special school provision and alternative provision accommodation solutions.

Government funded childcare offer to kick in from next week – Press release

9. Hundreds of thousands of parents of children from nine months old take up new 15 government funded hours of early education from Monday [Government funded childcare offer to kick in from next week - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) published 30/08/24
10. Wiltshire's position: Some new expanded places are available for children aged two and under. 91.8% (963) of two year codes have been validated and 89.91%(2467) of under two codes. The national averages are 86.15% and 86.45% respectively.

Single headline Ofsted grades scrapped in landmark school reform – Press release

11. The government announced that it will stop single headline grades for schools with immediate effect as they fail to provide a fair and accurate assessment of overall school performance across a range of areas [Single headline Ofsted grades scrapped in landmark school reform - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) published 02/09/24
12. Wiltshire's position: We welcome the move from single headlines to a more balanced reflection of a school's performance, strengths and areas for development through the reporting of grades across 5 areas.

These areas are:

- a. Quality of Education
- b. Leadership and Management
- c. Behaviour and Attitudes
- d. Personal Development
- e. Early Years and Sixth Form

Grading in this manner will be in place across this academic year with a move to using a School Report Card in September 2025. Our school effectiveness team continue to support all maintained schools and self-evaluation work with school leaders reflects the focus on the areas outlined here.

School food standards: resources for schools – Guidance

13. Resources to help schools plan and provide healthy food in schools. Added a link to the Schools Allergy Code in 'Allergy guidance for schools' [School food standards: resources for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) updated 19/09/24
14. Wiltshire's position: The School Food Standards and related resources are highlighted to all schools through the Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme and related webpages and CPD events. In order to gain accreditation, Wiltshire Healthy Schools are required to provide evidence that they are: meeting the National School Food Standards, providing healthy food, promoting

healthy eating, providing opportunities to develop cookery skills and have implemented a whole school approach to food.

123 schools are currently part of the Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme, with 83 schools holding Wiltshire Healthy Schools accreditation.

Breakfast clubs' early adopters scheme - Guidance

15. Information on the breakfast clubs early adopters scheme for schools [Breakfast clubs early adopters scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) published 23/09/24
16. Wiltshire's position: During September, Wiltshire schools were encouraged to join the breakfast clubs early adopters scheme. Early adopter schools will be confirmed by early 2025 and the scheme will launch in the summer term (April 2025).

Eligible Wiltshire schools have also been encouraged to access the National School Breakfast Programme, which has been extended and is now running until July 2025.

Teaching relationships education to prevent sexual abuse – Research and analysis

17. A rapid evidence assessment of the academic and grey literature on teaching relationships education to prevent sexual abuse [Teaching relationships education to prevent sexual abuse - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) published 27/09/24
18. Wiltshire's position: This new research was highlighted to Wiltshire schools during October in online news articles, newsletters and during CPD for PSHE subject leaders. The new recommendations support previous guidance on good practice for relationships education.

Teaching about healthy relationships has been a focus of recent partnership work and support for Wiltshire schools including from the NSPCC at Healthy Schools network meetings. Free interactive, creative media workshops and assemblies on healthy relationships have been offered to schools as part of the public health approach to breaking the cycle of domestic abuse, funded by Wiltshire Council.

Cost of school uniforms survey 2023 – Research and analysis

19. This research provides an understanding of the costs of school uniform in England and updates previous research completed in 2007 and 2015 [Cost of school uniforms survey 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) published 27/09/24
20. Wiltshire's position: A pre-meeting briefing will be held prior to this committee to share Wiltshire's Affordable Schools Strategy.

Thousands of pupils receive support to boost school attendance – Press release

21. Government makes significant expansion to size of attendance mentoring to get thousands more persistently absent pupils back in school [Thousands of pupils receive support to boost school attendance - GOV.UK](#) published 11/10/24

22. Wiltshire's position: The funding for this programme is being distributed to 10 areas with the poorest attendance in England. Wiltshire's overall attendance for 2023-2024 was not significantly lower than national average overall attendance (0.6%). Therefore, Wiltshire is not eligible for this support. Wiltshire services remain committed to supporting pupils to achieve excellent attendance and have robust processes in place to reflect the requirements of new statutory guidance and regulations.

School-based nurseries plan kicks off with £15 million funding – Press release

23. First round of funding launches for up to 300 school-based nurseries – part of government's Opportunity Mission to give every child the best start in life [School-based nurseries plan kicks off with £15 million funding - GOV.UK](#) published 17/10/24
24. Wiltshire's position: Commissioning have mapped all provision on school site, whether run by the school or not. Officers have liaised with School Places Planning over under capacity school in areas of low birth rate. Officers are speaking with schools about the opportunity and supporting applications where appropriate.

Early years places and workforce need – Transparency data

25. Analysis of the need to create places and recruit workers due to the entitlement expansion [Early years places and workforce need - GOV.UK](#) published 17/10/24
26. Wiltshire's position: There are 10,208 registered early years places, due to a lack of appropriately qualified staff only 9,073 places are currently available to children. Officers regularly attend Job Centre venues and careers fairs to raise the profile of early years as a career option so that more places can be offered.

Managing asbestos in your school or college - Guidance

27. Guidance for school leaders, governors, local authorities and academy trusts about managing asbestos in schools and colleges [Managing asbestos in your school or college - GOV.UK](#) published 31/10/24
28. Wiltshire's position: This updated guidance aims to help schools and colleges understand their duties in relation to asbestos management. It provides further clarity on the role of duty holders and employers, practical information about what duty holders are required to do to manage asbestos effectively and an updated section on what to do if things go wrong. The guidance has been circulated to all schools. The LA undertakes routine asbestos surveys of all maintained schools.

Ofsted opens registrations for new childcare provider type – News story

29. Ofsted has today begun accepting applications for a new category of childcare provider, as part of a series of changes the Department for Education has introduced to give the early years sector more flexibility [Ofsted opens registrations for new childcare provider type - GOV.UK](#) published 01/11/24

30. Wiltshire's position: The Department for Education has introduced new flexibilities for childminders from 1 November to help more childminders join and stay in the profession. The new flexibilities will:

- Create a new category of childminder (childminder without domestic premises) who work entirely from non-domestic premises
- Increase, from 3 to 4, the total number of people that can work together under a childminder's registration (including the childminder)
- Give childminders and providers of childcare on domestic premises (CODPs) more flexibility, allowing them to spend more time operating outside of domestic premises, such as a community hall or school
- Increase the number of people needed for CODPs to operate from 4 or more, to 5 or more people providing care. Note: CODPs that were registered, or applied to register, before 1 November can continue operating with 4 or more people.

The Early Years teams are seeing this as a positive step in enabling more childminders to enter the profession and this will support the LA to meet its sufficiency duties. The Early Years Team will be supporting both current and new childminders to understand the changes and ensure they are operating under the correct registration.

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TITLE:	Attendance Summary
REPORT DATED:	15 November 2024
DIRECTOR:	Kathryn Davis Education and Skills
REPORT AUTHORS:	John Spring Head of Service, Targeted Education

The 2024 DfE guidance for school attendance has statutory status with effect from 19th August 2024. In addition to the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) statutory guidance. T

- 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 of statutory guidance and Regulations

2.1 We have published a suite of guidance documents, resources and templates to support schools with compliance relating to the new statutory guidance and regulations. There has been a review of council processes and procedures that ensure the authority is also compliant and has a clear strategic response to supporting improvements in attendance.

2.2 We will continue to deliver the Improving School Attendance programme throughout this academic year. Feedback from previous sessions indicates that schools have found the focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners has been helpful – supporting them with tools and resources to focus on belonging and attendance for these learners.

2.3 A series of Senior Attendance Champion network meetings has been scheduled:

- 1 session held attended by representatives from 21 schools. The focus of this meeting was the changes to the penalty notice process arising from the new regulations. The next session will focus on Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) at the request of attendees. This session will be led by the Wiltshire Educational Psychology Service

- 2 sessions at the School Business Manager Forum – attendance will be a standing item into next academic year.
- Contribution to new headteacher induction.
- Contribution to new school business manager session.

3. Attendance Data

3.1 Breakdown of the attendance data from Wiltshire schools. This is the latest published data by the DfE (October 2024) Time period: 2023/24 Autumn and Spring term

Source: Explore Education Statistics > Pupil absence in schools in England > Autumn Spring 2024 data:

Green highlighting – better than national and regional

Yellow highlighting – higher than national but lower than regional

		South West		England
		Wiltshire	South West	
Total	Number of pupil enrolments	62,115	679,871	7,375,396
	Overall absence rate	5.5%	7.4%	6.9%
	Authorised absence rate	5.1%	5.3%	4.7%
	Unauthorised absence rate	0.4%	2.1%	2.2%
	Percentage of persistent absentees - 10% or more sessions missed	19.1%	20.3%	19.2%
Special	Number of pupil enrolments	946	11,861	138,422
	Overall absence rate	12.1%	13.4%	13.0%
	Authorised absence rate	9.5%	10.2%	9.8%
	Unauthorised absence rate	2.6%	3.2%	3.1%
	Percentage of persistent absentees - 10% or more sessions missed	31.8%	37.8%	36.8%
State-funded primary	Number of pupil enrolments	33,223	356,470	3,904,687
	Overall absence rate	5.1%	5.5%	5.4%
	Authorised absence rate	4.2%	4.3%	4.0%
	Unauthorised absence rate	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%
	Percentage of persistent absentees - 10% or more sessions missed	15.2%	14.4%	14.7%
State-funded secondary	Number of pupil enrolments	27,946	311,540	3,332,287
	Overall absence rate	8.8%	9.5%	8.5%
	Authorised absence rate	6.0%	6.4%	5.3%
	Unauthorised absence rate	2.8%	3.1%	3.2%
	Percentage of persistent absentees - 10% or more sessions missed	13.1%	26.4%	23.9%

3.2 Live attendance data is available via the DfE WONDE portal. The DfE has mandated data sharing through new regulations and WONDE is the preferred mechanism for this. Whilst this data is not published it is a useful tool for benchmarking in real time. We now have 233 Wiltshire schools submitting data via WONDE

In addition we are making use of Group Call to extract and review attendance data from Wiltshire schools. There is now a data analyst in post who is using Group Call data to develop robust attendance review and scrutiny to inform attendance service delivery and facilitate targeted support to schools where attendance may be of concern. We are greatly supported in this by new regulations which introduced new attendance and absence codes to better define absence reasons.

3.3 Source: WONDE DfE

Current academic year up to Thursday 14 November 2024

Number of pupils 68,934		Overall attendance % 94.2%		Overall absence % 5.8%		Unauthorised absence % 1.6%	
Persistently absent				Severely absent			
Number of persistently absent pupils 10,977		Percentage of persistently absent pupils 15.9%		Number of severely absent pupils 1,293		Percentage of severely absent pupils 1.9%	

The data reflects better performance in Wiltshire than nationally.

94.2% of sessions were recorded as attending in Wiltshire (compared to 94.1% of sessions at national level).

PUPILS WITH AN EHCP

Current academic year up to Thursday 14 November 2024

Number of pupils 4,092		Overall attendance % 86.9%		Overall absence % 13.1%		Unauthorised absence % 3.2%	
Persistently absent				Severely absent			
Number of persistently absent pupils 1,312		Percentage of persistently absent pupils 32.1%		Number of severely absent pupils 340		Percentage of severely absent pupils 8.3%	

PUPILS WITH SEN SUPPORT INDICATOR

Number of pupils 9,825		Overall attendance % 91.8%		Overall absence % 8.2%		Unauthorised absence % 2.5%	
Persistently absent				Severely absent			
Number of persistently absent pupils 2,162		Percentage of persistently absent pupils 22.0%		Number of severely absent pupils 369		Percentage of severely absent pupils 3.8%	

PUPILS WITH FSM INDICATOR

Current academic year up to Thursday 14 November 2024

Number of pupils 11,964		Overall attendance % 89.8%		Overall absence % 5.8%		Unauthorised absence % 3.6%	
Persistently absent				Severely absent			
Number of persistently absent pupils 3,525		Percentage of persistently absent pupils 29.5%		Number of severely absent pupils 573		Percentage of severely absent pupils 4.8%	

4. Recommendation

4.1 For the committee to note this update.

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26 November 2024

Schools Forum update

Key discussion points/issues from meeting of Schools Forum – 17 October 2024.

- Updates from the joint meeting of the School Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group and from the meeting of the Early Years Reference Group
- Review of Wiltshire Schools Forum Proportionality, Membership and Terms of Reference
- Schools Revenue Surplus and Deficit Balances 2023-24
- Dedicated Schools Budget Monitoring update for quarter 1 2024-25
- Briefing on the Core Schools Budget Grant
- Update on the FACT Transformation Programme and the work of the School and Family Support Team
- SEND Transformation Update
- Review of EHCP Top-Up Funding

The next meeting of Schools Forum will be held on 12 December 2024 and Children's Select will receive an update at their meeting on 15 January 2025.

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

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26 November 2024

Corporate Parenting Panel update

Key points/issues from meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel – 24 September 2024.

- **Voice and Participation Team Update**
The Panel were given details of the consultations and activities that the team, Voice Ambassadors and the Children in Care Council had been involved with since the last meeting. It was highlighted that a second Dragons Den style event would be held in October with on focus on the Panel's Strategic Priority 4 (to have positive relationships with people who are important to me and for me to be part of my local community where I am trusted, respected, accepted and feel included). A draft version of a Children in Care magazine that was planned to be circulated twice a year was shared. An advocacy service was now part of the Voice and Participation team. The four Voice Ambassadors at the meeting gave an update on what they had been working on/involved with.
- **Examination Results Update from the Virtual School**
The Panel were given details of the (unverified) examination results for our Children Looked After and young people for the 2023-24 academic year.
- **Annual report of the Conference and Reviewing Service 2023-24**
The Panel were given details of what the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and Child Protection Chairs had done over the year to help the children and young people, an overview of performance, details of the updated team structure, what changes were made in 2023-24, the successes of the IROs, and the priorities moving forward.
- **Update on the Grandmentors Scheme**
The Panel received details of the current matches and referrals of young people with a Grandmentor and the challenges for some matches due to some complex needs. The promotion of the scheme was also discussed.
- **Annual report of the Kinship and Fostering Team 2023-24**
The Panel were given details the number of approved fostering households and that there were 56% of our children looked after placed with Wiltshire approved foster families. They were also informed of the support available for foster carers and that retention of existing carers was a key focus. Wiltshire and Cornwall Councils were the lead authorities for the new Southwest region Fostering Recruitment and Retention Hub and there were targets set by the DfE to increase enquiries to become foster carers and for there to be an increase in foster carer approvals by 2026.
- **Impact and Outcome update from the Connect Service 2023-24**
The Panel received details about the Connect provision and what other services it worked in collaboration with. A case study of a 12 year old child looked after who was referred by their school for cannabis use was shared. Details were given of hospital referrals and the young person's outcomes and the apps and websites used to support young people with self-help tools.

- Corporate Parenting data and exceptions report for Quarter 1 (April to June 2024)
The Panel received details of the greens to celebrate and reds of concern in the most recent data collection.
- Data Spotlight – Young People aged 16+ in Education, Employment and Training (EET)
The Panel were informed that the numbers of Wiltshire’s young people who are in EET was very positive and compared favourably across the region but had remained static and below the target ranges for those people. Two care leavers had secured apprenticeships with Wiltshire Council. A further care leaver had started a 6-month internship, spending time with virtual schools, SEND and Personal Advisor teams.
- Bi-annual update on Children Looked After placed more than 20 miles from home
The Panel were informed that as at September 2024 there were 36% of children placed more than 20 miles from home (excluding UASC and adoptions) and 12% more than 20 miles from home but in Wiltshire.
- Placement Sufficiency Update
The Panel received an update that the first of the Council’s residential homes (Phoenix Grove in Melksham) had opened recently. The provider was currently recruiting the team for a second home in Melksham, and it was hoped that this would open in November 2024. Further capital funds had been secured to develop a specification to tender for a provider to deliver complex care in Wiltshire owned properties.
- Update on the Care Experienced Development Plan
The Panel were informed that Wiltshire were now a member of the care leavers regional group and that they had signed up to the regional care leavers app, which was more interactive, engaging and showed what support was available across the region. When comparing offers for care leavers, Wiltshire had the best local offer and other local authorities had to come in line with Wiltshire. Officers were continuing to look for a suitable space for a care leavers hub in the south of the county.
- Updates from other Council Teams and other Representatives
The Panel received details of the take up of the intensive swimming lessons that had been arranged for the summer holidays for children aged 4-16 that were unable to access lessons with a particular focus on older children who had not had this opportunity. The Panel also received an update from the Designated Nurse for children looked after on initial health assessment timeliness, vaccinations and dental assessments. The Designated Nurse also shared the findings of an audit of training for maternity staff and general health professionals to raise awareness of children looked after and care experienced young people. The quarterly newsletter from the Care Leaver Covenant was also noted by the Panel.

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 26 November 2024 and Children’s Select will receive an update at their meeting on 15 January 2025.

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26th November 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 31st 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.
- 9) At the end of the plan period, the cumulative mitigated deficit is forecast to be £137.2m. The agreement commits the DfE to contribute £67m of additional DSG towards this figure, while £70.3m will need to be found from other funding sources to completely remove the deficit.

- 10) 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.
- 11) The plan that the council submitted sets out how the savings can be met through a series of "invest to save" projects that will improve support for children and young people with SEND, and their families.
- 12) The plan has been combined with other strategic documents in SEND, and the new SEND and AP Strategy, and an Implementation Plan is being developed. This has 6 priority programme areas which are closely aligned to the new SEND and AP Strategy:
 - a) Voice of the child and their family
 - b) Improving support, skills and practice
 - c) Right support at the right time
 - d) Preparation for adulthood
 - e) Financial assurance in our SEND system
 - f) Improving communication, processes and culture
- 13) The Implementation Plan will be underpinned by an Outcomes Framework that sets out the ambition of the SEND Local Area Partnership and how they will measure the impact of the plan.

November update

- 14) Overall, the Safety Valve programme has been RAG rated Amber/Red. This is because, while the project activity is mostly proceeding as planned, the data indicators are still moving in the wrong direction.
- 15) Financial indicators are currently RAG rated Amber/Red, because the overspend is now forecast to be £38m against a £28m overspend forecast at the start of the plan.
- 16) This is described in further detail in the August submission to the DfE (appendix 1), which illustrates these concerns and articulates the steps that are being taken to address it.
- 17) Officers have met with the Department for Education and Wiltshire Council's Safety valve advisors to discuss the plan being forecast as off-track. While the advisors are disappointed in the lack of progress, they are not surprised. Most councils, even those which are eventually successful, go off-track in year one.
- 18) One such council, Hammersmith and Fulham, have provided advice to Wiltshire about how they managed to recover the position. They are now nearing the end of their plan, and are on track.
- 19) The August submission is now outdated, and a November submission is being prepared. This submission sets out a revised plan to get back on track, and identifies the data insights which have been identified since January and are feeding into this revised plan.
- 20) The key insights are:

- a) EHCP demand is higher than expected, and the new forecast is significantly above the old one. This is due to a flawed assumption about suppressed COVID demand in the original analysis, taking a five-year average when demand has followed a two-year average line instead.
- b) Demand is strongest in Early Years – which was understood before, but the new analysis has revealed that a quarter of assessment requests were made for three year olds last year.
- c) There appear to be opportunities to cease plans pre-16 when children and young people meet outcomes. According to the data, since 2020 fewer than 15 children and young people with SEND have ‘met all outcomes’ and been able to have their plan ceased.
- d) While they are improving, significantly, this year, the No to Assess and No to Issue rates in Wiltshire are lower than our statistical neighbours. This implies that there are opportunities to further improve the robustness of decision making in this area, alongside effective help at SEND support level.
- e) There have been consistent and sustained shifts ‘up’ in placement, with more children going into Special School or Independent Special schools, and with more children on a Band 3 or 4 plan instead of a Band 0 or 1 plan. The EHCP Top-Up Funding review is targeted at this change in practice.
- f) The biggest growth areas are in Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Speech Language and Communication (SLCN) which have grown as a proportion of EHCPs.

21) To respond to this, the plan has been reviewed and further interventions have been proposed, as well as understanding where there are opportunities to accelerate delivery.

22) Additionally, to urgently stop the deterioration of the plan position, there are some interventions being developed to have an impact in the short term (first 2 years of the plan), so that the growth in EHCP numbers and Independent Special School Places can be slowed. This will prepare the system for the medium-long term interventions around culture change which may not impact until later years in the plan.

23) Officers would welcome the chance to brief Children’s Select Committee on these new interventions, and the wider revised plan, at the next committee or at an arranged briefing at the appropriate time.

24) Since the last report to Children’s Select Committee, the £5.7m Safety Valve capital grant, submitted to bring forward the provision of special school places in the south of the county, has been confirmed. This project is now being taken forward, at pace, to ensure these vital places can be delivered as soon as possible.

25) As was reported in September, a decision was taken to reprofile capital projects to prioritise the delivery of special school places in lieu of the £5.7m grant. These projects, related to the roll out of secondary school resource bases, have not been compromised, and are back on track.

Appendices:

- 1. August 24 – DfE monitoring update

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26 November 2024

Task Group and Rapid Scrutiny Update

Purpose

To provide an update on any recent work from task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises linked to the Children's Select Committee (CSC), as well as information on any upcoming overview and scrutiny (OS) activities for the committee.

UPDATES FROM ACTIVE TASK GROUPS

1. Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel

Supporting officer: Julie Bielby

Membership

Cllr Jon Hubbard (chair)

Cllr Carol King (Wiltshire representative)

+ one elected member from each of the other Local Authorities supporting Adoption West (Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, Gloucestershire Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council)

Recent activity

The Joint Scrutiny Panel met on 16 October 2024 and scrutinised the findings of the Ofsted report of Adoption West which were overall 'good'. There was, nonetheless, learning to take forward and safeguarding policies and procedures have since been revised.

The panel approved the introduction of working groups to develop knowledge of the region and increase insight of subjects under scrutiny. The pilot working group is focusing on post adoption support.

2. Mental Health Support for children and young people task group

Membership:

Cllr Caroline Corbin

Cllr Jo Trigg

Cllr Carol King

Cllr Gordon King

Cllr Jon Hubbard

Terms of Reference

- a) Review the needs assessments, outcomes and analysis that has been undertaken for children and young people in Wiltshire.
- b) Consider what is being done elsewhere, e.g. regional and/or national examples of good practice as well as what third sector is doing in Wiltshire
- c) Review proposals for future service(s) with a focus on the outcomes sought (and how these would be measured and monitored).

Members of the task group agreed that the remit of the rapid scrutiny to consider service specifications for mental health support services (resolution, Children's Select Committee, Sept. 2024), could be incorporated into the work of this task group under category 'c'.

Recent activity

Members met on 14 November to scope out the work of the task group which is anticipated will take place over three further meetings.

UPDATES FROM UPCOMING RAPID SCRUTINY EXERCISES

3. Homelessness and Young People

Volunteers:

Cllr Trevor Carbin

Cllr Iain Wallis

Vacancies: **1 or 2**

the group will consider:

- How the council is meeting its duties regarding housing young people
- The measures in place and/or planned in response to Ofsted recommendations for supported housing

Provisional date set for 23 January 2025.

4. Out of County Education – Rapid Scrutiny

Volunteers:

- Cllr Liz Alstrom

Vacancies: **2** minimum.

This Rapid Scrutiny aims to consider the potential impact on young people having to attend education outside of county (i.e. where the school they are in catchment for is outside of the county).

To do so, members will explore a number of topics such as communication with and consultation of young people who live in Wiltshire but do not attend school in Wiltshire, the recording of NEET (not in employment, education, or training), transition between primary

school (likely to have been in Wiltshire) and secondary school (outside of county), support and activities available to young people before and after school, as well as holiday provision.

Pencilled in date: Tuesday 3 December, 1-3pm

5. Education Performance Outcomes – Rapid Scrutiny

Volunteers:

- Cllr Caroline Corbin (NB not sure Cllr Corbin will actually be available due to work conflict and also putting herself forward for the Children and Young People's Mental Health Services and Development task group)
- Cllr Martin Smith

Vacancies: **1 or 2.**

This Rapid Scrutiny aims to understand in more depth the performance figures for primary school outcomes, as well as identifying trends and outliers.

This is expected to be a single meeting in November / December and to inform how the Children Select Committee will consider education performance outcomes going forward.

Proposals

- 1. To note the update on task group and rapid scrutiny activities provided.**
- 2. To seek members for the vacancies on the following rapid scrutiny activities**
 - **Homelessness and Young People**
 - **Out of County Education**
 - **Education Performance Outcomes**

Report authors:

Julie Bielby, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 718 712, E: julie.bielby@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Children's Select Committee (CSC) – Forward work programme Updated 14 November 2024

Standing items (at all meetings)

Title - Details / purpose	Type	Report author / lead
Safety Valve update – summary of recent developments, successes and issues	Written	Ben Stevens
Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice - summary of recent activities	Written	Joe Sutton/Gary Norton-Sanders
School Ofsted Judgements - effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspection.	Written	Louise Lewis
DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education	Written	David Harris
Working together to improve school attendance - latest requirements of the non-statutory guidance the DfE published in May 2022 to apply from September 2022.	Written	John Spring
Schools Forum's update - very brief update on key items from the last meeting of Schools Forum	Written	Lisa Pullin
Corporate Parenting Panel update - brief update highlighting key items from the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel	Written	Lisa Pullin
<p>Directors' update/Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holders' update/Chair's update</p> <p>Verbal updates 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.</p>	Verbal	<p>All directors</p> <p>Cabinet Members and Portfolio holders</p> <p>Chair</p>

Current/Active Task Groups

Name Terms of reference/aims	Membership	Start date
<p>Children’s Select Committee’s Standing Task Group</p> <p>Detailed reviews of the regular reports that come within the Children’s Select Committee’s remit and to present any key issues, findings and recommendations to the Children’s Select Committee, and / or other relevant committees, for discussion, endorsement or further scrutiny where appropriate.</p>	<p>Cllr Helen Belcher John Hawkins Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chair) Cllr Jacqui Lay Cllr Jo Trigg</p>	<p>n/a standing TG</p>
<p>Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>The panel acts as a critical friend, providing independent scrutiny of the work of Adoption West (AW). It is an essential element of assuring democratic accountability for the use of public funds.</p>	<p>Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chair)</p>	<p>n/a standing panel</p>
<p>Children and Young Peoples Mental Health services and developments</p> <p>Proposed over three meetings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review of needs assessment undertaken and outcomes / analysis b. What is being done elsewhere? Both national / regional comparison as well as what third sector is doing in Wiltshire (will link with Youth Network - and others - as witnesses for this part) c. Proposal for future service(s) with a focus on the outcomes sought (and how these would be measured and monitored) <p>NB – consideration to be given on how to get young people’s views (may be survey promoted by different providers / groups). (OS/Exec meeting 2024).</p>	<p>Cllr Caroline Corbin Cllr Carol King Cllr Gordon King Cllr Jo Trigg</p>	<p>14.11.2024</p>

Meeting Date	Item	Details/Purpose of report	Associate Director	Responsible Cabinet Member	Lead Officer/Author
15 Jan 2025	Safety Valve – one year review	Report to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline and plan to enable future monitoring; • Financial impact; • Service impact (for “customers”). Aim – to determine if OS is required.	Kathryn Davis	Cllr Jane Davies/ Cllr Laura Mayes	Ben Stevens
15 Jan 2025	Children and Young People Health Wellbeing Survey – “so what” / analysis report	To consider actions taken from the responses to the survey (from CSC Jan 2024/ OS Exec Meeting May 2024)	Kate Blackburn	Cllr Laura Mayes	Sally Johnson
15 Jan 2025	Youth Strategy	To review progress on actions of the executive response to the Youth Provision and youth area board funding	David Redfern	Cllr Ashley O’Neill/Cllr Laura Mayes	Rhys Schell

		task group to include the youth strategy and draft amendments to the area board funding criteria before it is published. (from CSC Jan 2024)			
15 Jan 2025	Wiltshire Learning Alliance (WLA)	To receive feedback following a “relaunch” and advertising campaign in September for the WLA. (from OS/Exec meeting May 2024)	Kathryn Davis	Cllr Laura Mayes	Kathryn Davis
11 March 2025	Family Hub – one year review	To consider a report on the implementation of the Family Hub model, on the monitoring of performance and on plans for the year ahead. To include input from libraries and leisure.	Florah Shiringo David Redfern	Cllr Laura Mayes	Kai Muxlow

		This would inform the committee's legacy report in terms of any further scrutiny required. (from OS/Exec meeting May 2024)			
11 March 2025	Ofsted inspection outcome - Business plan update	To receive the updated Business Plan (from CSC Jan 2024)	Kathryn Davis	Cllr Laura Mayes	TBC
11 March 2025	Special Guardianship Orders	To receive an annual report on SGOs and other care orders (from CSC March 2024)	Florah Shiringo	Cllr Laura Mayes	Netty Lee
11 March 2025	Business Plan Update	To receive an update on the Business Plan relating to Children and Family Services. To include briefing on work of family health practitioners. (last received CSC March 2024)	Florah Shiring	Cllr Laura Mayes	TBC

11 June 2025	Access to NHS Dentistry	Update on work to improve access to dentistry for CYP. (Chair and Vice Chair to check progress since July 2024)	Kate Blackburn	Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling	TBC
16 July 2025	Youth Justice	Briefing on work of Youth Justice Team (CSC July 2024)			
3 Sept 2025	Young Carers Annual Performance Report	To receive a performance report on the YC contract, including full set of KPIs.	Alison Elliott	Cllr Laura Mayes	TBC

Planned Rapid Scrutiny Exercises (to carry out this Council)

Homelessness (as relevant to Children's Services) To ensure the robustness of the Council's action plan and measures in place in response to Ofsted recommendations.	*Vacancies* Cllr Trevor Carbin Cllr Iain Wallis	23 January 2025
Out of County Education To understand the impact of out of county education on young people. The focus will be on students who live in a catchment area for a secondary school outside of Wiltshire.		Nov 2024

<p>Education Performance Outcomes</p> <p>To set up a rapid scrutiny to understand in more depth the Year 6 performance figures, trends and outliers (CSC 12 March 2024)</p>		<p>Nov 2024</p>
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<p>Post 16 provision – task group</p> <p>To establish a clear picture of post-16 education provision available to young people in Wiltshire and availability of / options for transport to access that provision.</p> <p>This should also take into consideration the following information the committee had previously identified as of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the Youth Transport task group’s work and executive response – including National Bus Strategy and any decision or progress regarding a single “Wiltshire Youth Card” . • To include input from the council’s review of transport services for children and young people with SEND (commissioning team). 	<p>Cllr Jo Trigg Nikki Barnett Cllr Graham Wright Cllr Bridget Wayman Mr Michael Thompson</p> <p>Vacancies: 0</p> <p><i>Supporting officer</i> <i>Marie Gondlach</i></p> <p>Lead officers Kirstie Barter Cara Madden Clara Davies</p>	
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Rapid Scrutiny Exercises (deferred)

<p>Inclusion (on hold)</p> <p>To review currently available data on inclusion and determine if further scrutiny could add value. This may include a review of current exclusion data and whether the information available enables monitoring of impact for pupils with either EHCP or SEND. Links to Alternative Provision and Safety Valve should be considered in terms of the timing of this activity. (OS/Exec meeting 2024)</p>		
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Task Groups (deferred)

<p>School performance and attainment outcome</p> <p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • What can be done to improve results? • The role of the Wiltshire Learning Alliance (WLA) in delivering improvement <p>NB – information on the WLA is coming to the committee in November 2024 (OS/Exec meeting 2024)</p>	<p>Vacancies: 5</p>	<p><i>Origins: OS/Exec meeting 2024</i></p>
<p>Residential care and complex care</p> <p>Longer term support for children with more complex needs.</p> <p>To consider (by comparing with other models available):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping of the service • How to ensure good outcomes for children <p>NB – this links to a tender process in the New Year (OS/Exec meeting 2024)</p>	<p>Vacancies: 5</p>	<p>Autumn</p> <p><i>Origins: OS/Exec meeting 2024</i></p>
<p>Budget and Major Contracts task group</p> <p>To regularly review implementation of the budget and impact on services, and to consider major contracts (value to be agreed) either when they are approaching renewal or extension or before the tender process with a focus on the council's expectations and requirements with regards to the quality, quantity and frequency of monitoring information provided by contractors and how that information will be monitored by the council (including overview and scrutiny involvement)</p>		

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Subject: Childcare Sufficiency Report

Cabinet Member: Councillor Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Executive Summary

Childcare is key to preparing children for school and supporting the economy. The economic value of childcare is evidenced not only in the employment opportunities this sector provides but also in enabling people to work so they can contribute to the economy. The childcare sector has faced several challenges post Covid. The ongoing recruitment and retention crisis is continuing to reduce the number of childcare places available. Currently there is sufficient provision at a county level, this is continuously monitored.

The expansion of Early Years Entitlements is increasing the demand for places, physically this is being mitigated by the capital expansion funding. The Wraparound Childcare Programme requires the development of places for primary aged children from 8am -6pm. Both of these programmes require a clear plan for workforce recruitment and retention.

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the work being taken forward to meet the requirement to ensure sufficient childcare is available in the local area, which is a statutory duty placed on the Local Authority. This includes infrastructure and development work of the local childcare provider market.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposals are relevant to the following priorities and objectives laid down within the Council's Business Plan¹:
 - Empower People to get the best start in life:
 - Guarantee that there are enough high quality and accessible preschool places.
 - Find the right specialist support for children with special educational needs.
 - Ensure all school pupils, including those who are vulnerable, can access a high-quality education provision and are well prepared for their next stage in life.
 - Thriving Economy with the right skills to prosper:

¹ [Business plan - Wiltshire Council](#)

- Support educational establishments to reduce the risk to vulnerable pupils by developing early help practices and multiagency support, enabling all pupils to realise their potential.

Background

3. Wiltshire Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare places², so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for children with disabilities). This is also relevant for:
 - Disadvantaged two year olds are eligible for 15 hours childcare
 - All children aged three and four are eligible for 15 hours childcare
 - For working families:
 - 30 hours childcare for children aged three and four
 - From April 2024, 15 hours childcare for children aged two years.
 - From September 2024, 15 hours childcare for children aged over 9 months
 - From September 2025, 30 hours childcare for children aged over 9 months.
4. Childcare should be available all year round, meaning there is an expectation that families will be able to access childcare through holiday periods, and outside school times, between 8am and 6pm if they wish. This makes for a very complex childcare market. The schemes and benefits that support parents with childcare are outlined in appendix one.
5. Officers use three sources of information to establish commissioning priorities and actions to create sufficient childcare across Wiltshire:
 - Current and forecasted population and demographic data, to understand potential demand.
 - The percentage take up or occupancy of places in each community area, town or village to understand the specific localised demand. This data is collected three times a year and the summer occupancy data is presented in this paper as it reflects the busiest time of the year, when most children are eligible for a funded place.
 - Local knowledge allows for an appreciation of how a local community operates e.g., there may be available places in a village which are not accessible to children from a nearby town, or extra demand may be put on a town by families who work but do not live there.
6. This data is used to inform funding applications to the Department for Education, and requests for funding in relation to Section 106 contributions for capital projects where there is housing development and insufficient places to meet demand.

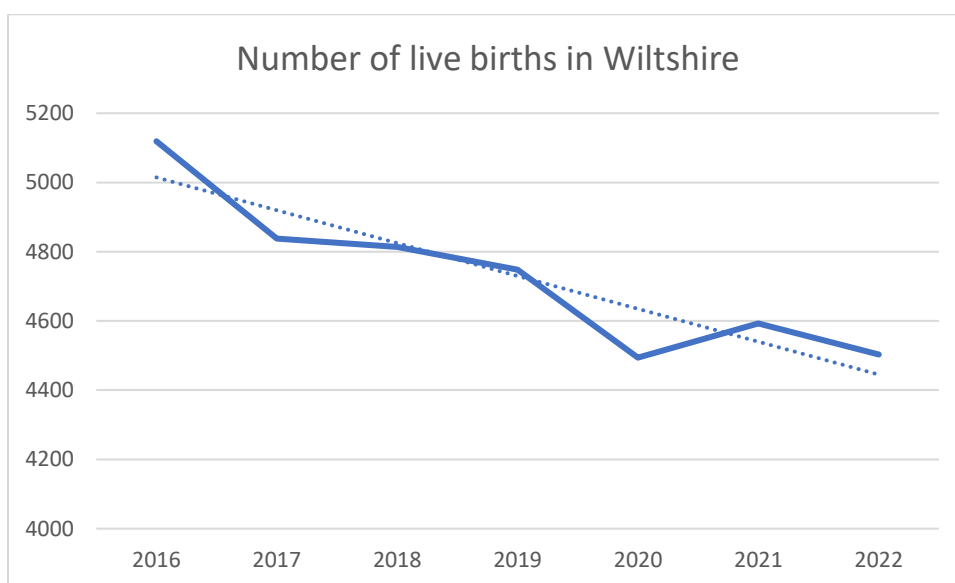
² [Early Education & Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities \(applies from 1 April 2024\)](#)

7. The Spring Budget 2023 announced the new childcare entitlements for working families as outlined in paragraph three. Additionally, the previous government announced a programme for all schools to provide term time wraparound childcare for primary age children from 8am to 6pm by September 2026. With the change of government, the new Minister has confirmed the Early Years Entitlement expansion for working parents and the wraparound programme remain a priority.

Current Supply of Childcare

8. The latest data available shows that in 2022 there were 4503 live births in Wiltshire³ which shows a steady decline since 2016. This significantly dropped in 2020 but has since steadied, although it still shows a downward trend.

Year of birth	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of live births in Wiltshire	5119	4838	4814	4748	4494	4593	4503



9. The table below shows the number of childcare providers across the county by type and the range of available provision for families of children under 12 to choose from.

Ofsted registered providers in Wiltshire as of 31 July 2024:

Type of childcare provider	Number registered
Childminder	311
Day Nursery/Preschool/School nursery	249
Childcare Register wrap around childcare	37

³ [Births in England and Wales: summary tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/births-in-england-and-wales-summary-tables)

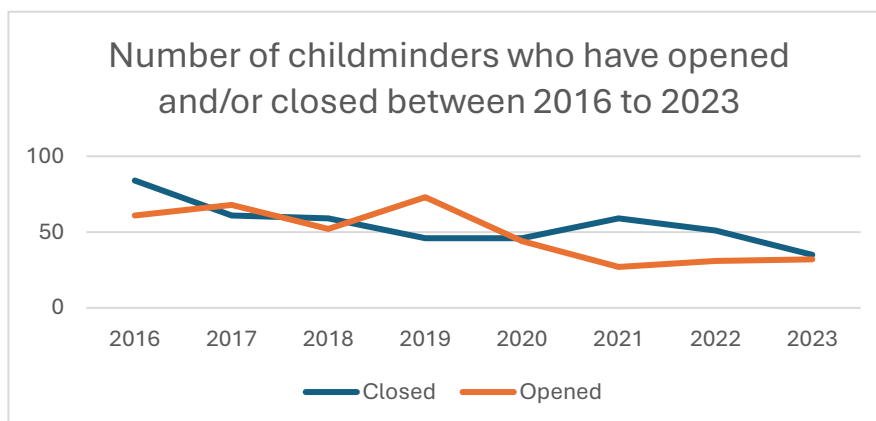
Early Years register for wrap around childcare	20
Voluntary Childcare register (drama /performing arts)	16
Home Childcarer	81

Group provision

10. In Wiltshire the 249 Day Nursery/Preschool/School nursery providers are registered for 10,208 early years places. However, due to a lack of appropriately qualified staff only 9,073 places are currently available to children.
11. Between July 2023 and July 2024, nine group settings closed with a loss of 275 places. The reasons were varied: premises issues, sustainability pressures, personal reasons, recruitment issues.
12. To mitigate some of the loss, a school took over two nurseries in September 2023 and a further four new group settings have opened in the last year creating 176 new places. This has reduced the overall loss in Wiltshire in the past year to 59 places.

Childminders

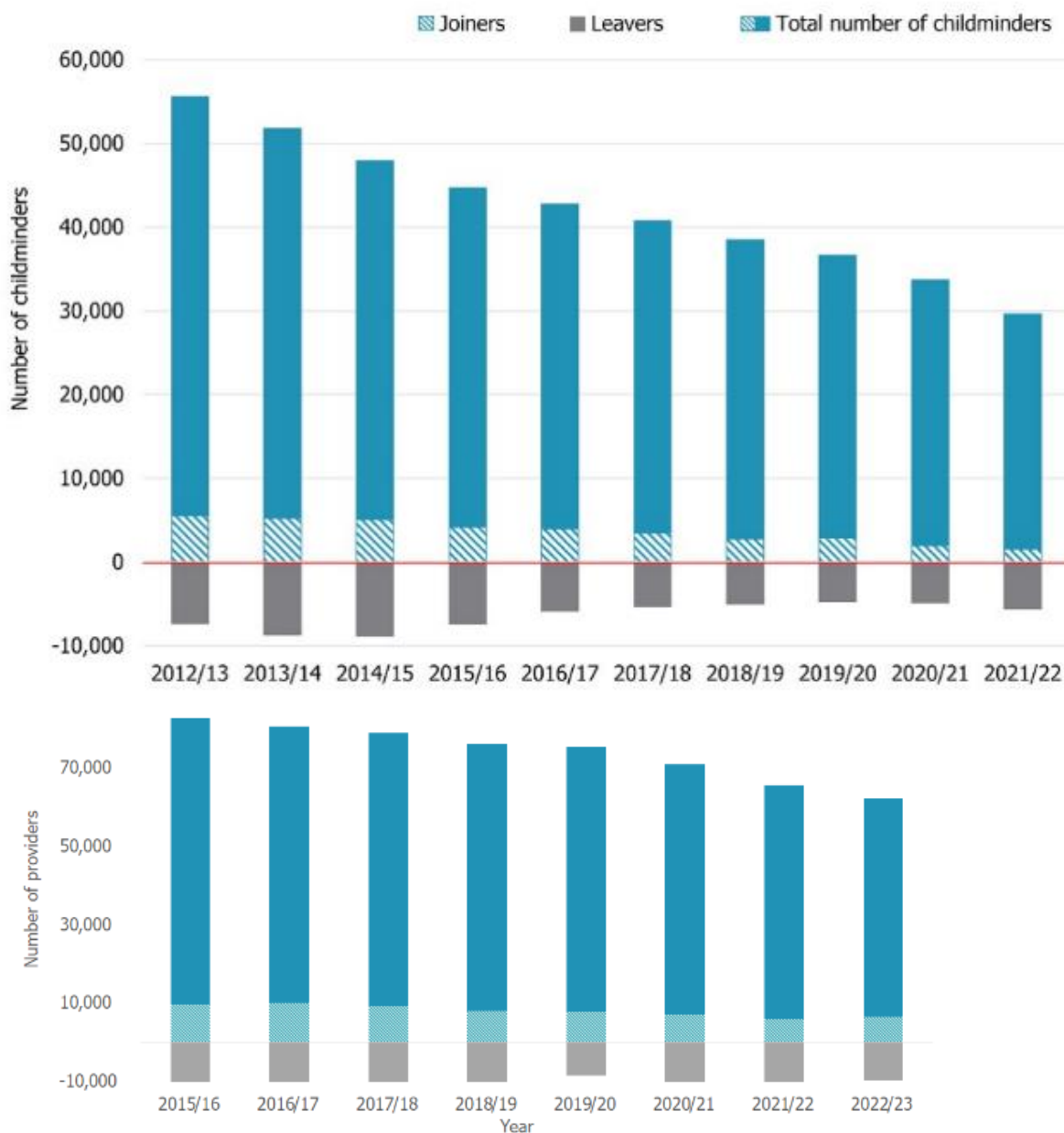
13. There are 311 childminders in Wiltshire offering a maximum of 933 places. The graph below shows the continued downward trend on numbers. However, the number of childminders has stabilised this last year.



14. The launch of the childminder 'start-up' grant⁴ in November 2023 enabled childminders registering after 15 March 2023 to access funding of £600 if registering with Ofsted or £1200 if registering with a childminding agency. This has not had a significant increase on the number of enquires received by the sufficiency team with 22 new enquiries received in 2023 compared to 21 received in 2024. However, for the period September 2023 – August 2024, Ofsted confirmed 28 proposed new childminders compared with 20 in the same period for the previous year.

⁴ [Apply for a childminder start-up grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

15. Annually Ofsted produce a report – ‘Main findings: Childcare providers and inspections as of 31 August 2022’⁵, the tables below show the steady national downward trend in Ofsted registered childminders compared with the national trend for all providers. The number of childminders registered on 31 August 2023 has further reduced by 2,580 to 27,000. This is replicated in Wiltshire as the enquires from prospective childminders in Wiltshire has significantly reduced over the last few years.



16. Nationally, the total number of paid childcare staff increased by 4%. School-based providers and group-based providers both saw increases in the total number of staff of 7% and 4% respectively. In contrast, the number of

⁵ [Main findings: Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
[Main findings: childcare providers and inspections as at 31 August 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

childminders and childminder assistants fell by 5%⁶. Therefore, the national trend shows reductions in the spread and variety of childcare options for parents.

17. An exit survey is conducted with Wiltshire childminders following their resignation. Responses were received from five out of the 34 resignations that occurred between 1 September 2023 to 14 August 2024. Of these five, two said they would consider either working in group childcare provision or becoming a childminder again in the future. Within the same timeframe we had 28 people apply to childmind with Ofsted.



18. All comments and reasons gathered during exit interviews are informing future recruitment plans and the awareness that in some cases childminders will only mind for as long as is suitable for them and their family. Many older childminders and early years staff are leaving and there is an acknowledgement nationally of a lack of younger people joining the sector. Some of the reasons mentioned by potential applicants are the low pay and requirement for qualifications.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

19. The early years team within the School Effectiveness directorate work with children with SEND. The Early Years Inclusion Advisors (EYIA) received 724 new referrals from September 2022 and August 2023. 572 children who received support from EYIA team transitioned into Primary School in September 2023.
20. There were 967 Inclusion Support Funding (ISF) applications of which 900 were accepted. 407 children were supported. This may have been up to three applications in an academic year.

⁶ [Childcare and early years provider survey, Reporting year 2023 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

21. Of children who started school in September 2023, 165 had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP):

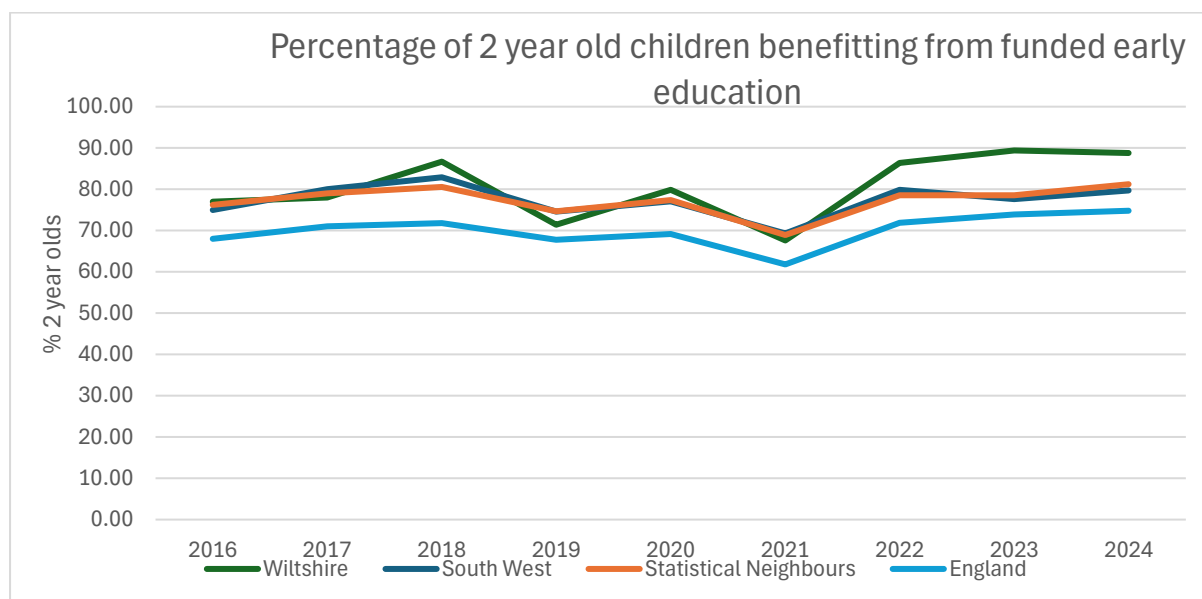
- 80 went into mainstream
- 47 went to Resource Base
- 38 went to specialist provision.

Government Funded Early Years Entitlements

22. Percentage of disadvantaged children aged two benefiting from some early education entitlement (Data from the Local Authority Interactive Tool - LAIT):

Local Authority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Wiltshire	77%	78%	87%	71%	80%	68%	86%	89%	89%
Regional	75%	80%	83%	75%	77%	69%	80%	78%	80%
Statistical	76%	79%	81%	75%	77%	69%	79%	79%	81%
England	68%	71%	72%	68%	69%	62%	72%	74%	75%

NB - These January 2024 statistics do not cover the expanded entitlements for children of eligible working parents which includes, from April 2024, the 15-hour entitlement for 2-year-olds and, from September 2024, the 15-hour entitlement for children aged 9 to 23 months.

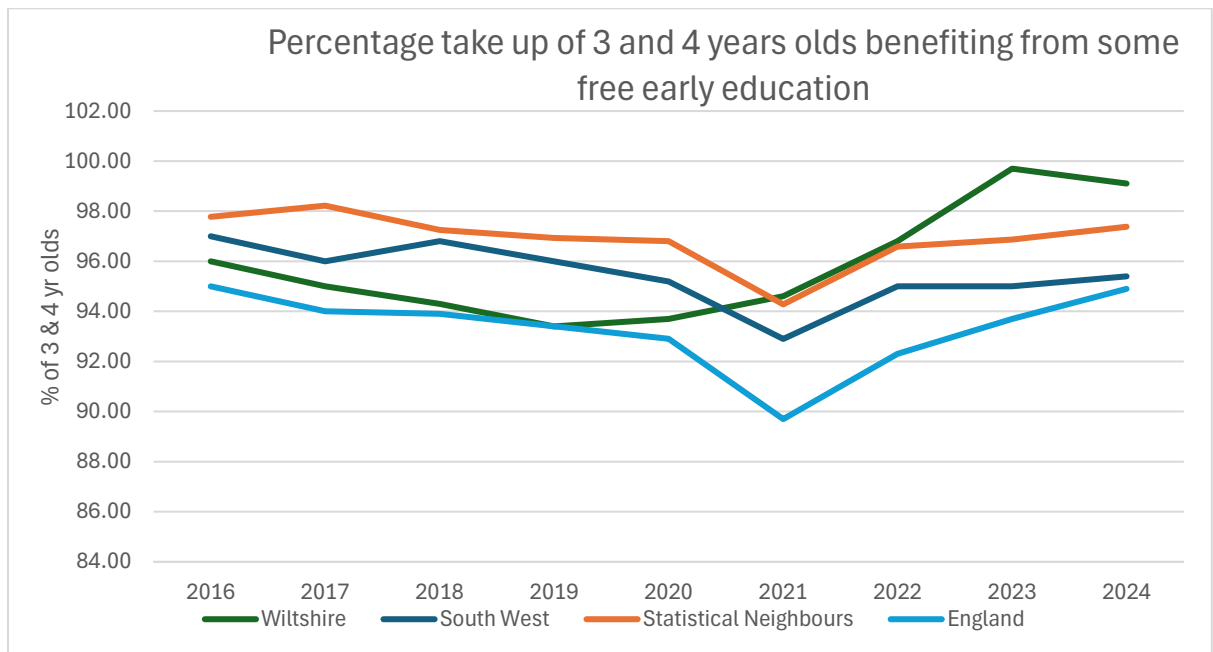


23. The table above shows that there has been an overall increase in the take up of 2-year-old places since 2016, Wiltshire continues to exceed national performance. The Department for Work and Pensions share regular lists with the Local Authority of those families identified as being eligible. Uptake has been increased and maintained by an effective method of communication; families are invited to apply for the funding via text and e-mail from the Early Years Entitlements Team. The family hub team also contact eligible families who have

not accessed funding. To simplify the process applications are made online and parents can be supported by either the setting or family hub if they need help.

24. Percentage of children aged three or four benefiting from some early education entitlement (Data from the Local Authority Interactive Tool - LAIT):

Local Authority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Wiltshire	96%	95%	94%	93%	93%	95%	97%	99%	99%
Regional	97%	96%	97%	96%	95%	93%	95%	95%	95%
Statistical	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%	94%	97%	97%	97%
England	95%	94%	94%	94%	93%	90%	92%	93%	95%



25. Wiltshire continues to perform very well with early years entitlement uptake in comparison with regional, statistical and national percentages.

26. The EPPE Project Research 2004⁷ shows that disadvantaged children who have attended childcare providers achieve better outcomes than those who do not. A good quality preschool education can support a child to reach a Good Level of Development by the end of the Foundation Stage, so that they are ready for school and able to participate in a learning environment. An 89% update of two year old funding and a 99% for three and four year old uptake means that a high percentage of disadvantaged children are accessing some sessions in an early years setting and this will support their development and outcomes.

Occupancy of early years group settings across Wiltshire

⁷ Sylva K, et al (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

	Occupancy percentage across the week								
Community Area	Summer 2023				Summer 2024				Overall Difference
Age range	0-1 year olds	2 year olds	3-4 year olds	Overall	0-1 year olds	2 year olds	3-4 year olds	Overall	Difference
Bradford on Avon	89%	88%	90%	89%	90%	88%	88%	86%	-3%
Calne	76%	69%	85%	80%	82%	74%	88%	83%	3%
Chippenham	87%	88%	74%	78%	79%	69%	90%	85%	7%
Corsham	69%	61%	81%	76%	48%	69%	78%	74%	-2%
Devizes	75%	65%	89%	83%	93%	55%	88%	77%	-6%
Malmesbury	66%	59%	88%	77%	67%	62%	94%	82%	5%
Marlborough	71%	72%	85%	81%	72%	55%	81%	73%	-8%
Melksham	66%	75%	95%	90%	69%	73%	91%	88%	-2%
Pewsey	79%	65%	81%	76%	85%	43%	74%	66%	-10%
RWB and Cricklade	83%	62%	90%	83%	63%	63%	82%	75%	-8%
Salisbury	77%	71%	87%	81%	70%	70%	78%	75%	-6%
Southern Wilts	67%	66%	85%	77%	68%	71%	87%	81%	4%
Stonehenge	69%	65%	86%	81%	69%	64%	87%	79%	-2%
SW Wiltshire	81%	61%	85%	80%	78%	65%	85%	78%	-4%
Tidworth	83%	76%	88%	85%	63%	73%	85%	79%	-5%
Trowbridge	84%	90%	89%	85%	64%	69%	88%	82%	-3%
Warminster	85%	70%	91%	86%	74%	77%	86%	82%	-4%
Westbury	48%	76%	92%	87%	62%	82%	89%	86%	-1%
Total	75%	71%	87%	82%	72%	68%	86%	80%	-2%

27. There has been a decrease in the overall occupancy between Summer 2023 and Summer 2024. Three and four year old occupancy continues to be high at 86%, even though this is 1% lower than last year, it is still indicative of pressure for this age group, which is accessed by the greatest number of children.

28. There were 616 fewer births in 2022 compared to 2016, which should result in a reduction in the demand for childcare. However, the expansion in Early Years Entitlements means that there is likely to be an increase going forward and this is why new places are being developed across the county.
29. Housing developments add pressure on the demand for places, applications are made for S106 funding (mentioned later in the paper) to increase places through building new or extending existing provision.
30. Overall, Summer 2024 (see appendix two maps) saw a downward trend in occupancy compared with 2023. The summer term is when the settings are at their most busy and it is felt that 85% is a comfortable rate of occupancy for a community area. There are four community areas which show an overall (0-4 year olds) occupancy of 85% or above: Bradford on Avon, Chippenham, Melksham and Westbury. Specifically, Chippenham, Malmesbury and Melksham have occupancy of 90% or above for 3- and 4-year-olds.
31. To mitigate the overall occupancy rate, new places are being developed in all these four community areas as part of the DfE Early Years Capital expansion as shown in paragraph 64.
32. Melksham is the area with the highest overall occupancy of 88% for 0-4 years-olds and 91% for 3- & 4-year-olds. In January 2025 a new 42 place day nursery is due to open in the old children's centre building in Melksham which will support the increasing demand in the area. Planning consent for a new Primary School on Pathfinder Way in Melksham has now been approved and this includes a new nursery. However, the school and nursery are not expected until September 2027 at the very earliest.
33. Malmesbury is continuing to be closely monitored whilst we await the transfer of the 0.3hectare of land secured through S106 where a new 80 place day nursery will be built.
34. Chippenham has seen an overall 7% increase in occupancy since 2023. There are numerous housing developments and there is S106 available to expand provision in this area.
35. Pewsey has the greatest decrease in occupancy, this is due to the creation of a new 31 places provision that opened in September 2023, as well as a fall in birth rate in the area, there are 72 four year olds in the area 13 less than last year and this will decrease to 53 in 2028.
36. It is important to acknowledge that available space does not always meet the needs of a parent or carer. An early years setting may have 24 full time places, but 35 children could be attending. This could be to meet parents' work requirements or personal preferences and not all children will access 30 hours or more of early years education.

37. A setting may show that it is at 88% capacity, leading to the belief that there is 12% of spaces unused. This capacity could already be reserved for younger children not currently in attendance but will require the place in the near future. Therefore, it cannot be made available to another parent. The available spaces may also not be the hours required for a parent, as they may wish for their child to attend Monday to Thursday 9am-4pm, but only Tuesdays to Fridays are available 9am-3.30pm. Other patterns and considerations affect the availability of spaces.
38. Representatives at the Early Years Reference Group have previously shared that they are not able to offer baby places until 2025. New places are being created for under twos as part of the capital expansion. Officers continue to closely monitor occupancy for this age range. Some settings are continuing reduce the number of their registered places available due to a lack of suitably qualified staff, as recruitment and retention remain a significant challenge. There continues to be concerns around the ability to recruit managers and deputy managers which could risk further closures in the future and affect the quality of the provision.

Occupancy of childminders across Wiltshire

39. Occupancy data is successfully collated for settings, but it has always been a challenge to replicate this for childminders, due to various anomalies that could increase or decrease their capacity including: having their own children (need to reduce their capacity accordingly); working part time (e.g. 3 days a week) or full time; working with assistants and whether these are full or part time; work all year round or term time only; some offer early years places only; some only offer wraparound childcare and some offer both.
40. Childminders can care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight. This includes their own children. Of these six, a maximum of three can be early years children who do not attend school. Assuming all childminders had no children of their own and worked full time providing the maximum of three places a day, then the 311 childminders (as June 2024) could potentially provide a maximum of 933 early years places across Wiltshire.
41. A snap survey was issued to childminders June 2024 to request their occupancy data (summary in Appendix three). 79% (245) of childminders completed the survey this year compared to 65% in 2022. A completely accurate reflection of places is not possible without 100% returns; however, it does provide a guide indicating the value childminders provide offering places within Wiltshire. Officers are currently chasing the 21% of childminders who did not respond to the survey to gain 100% feedback.
42. Of the 245 childminders responding, 233 indicated they offer places to 0–4-year-olds. Of which 17% (42) indicated they care for 64 of their own children within the early years age group. Therefore, 635 chargeable places are provided by these childminders.

43. Of the 245 childminder, 31 (13%) employ 44 assistants. Assuming their hours provide care for this age range at maximum capacity, this increases the number of places by 132 places.
44. Childminders support the wraparound offer to our families offering care for school age children 4-8 and 8+. If a childminder is caring for three early years children, then they can also provide care for an additional three children aged 4-8. They can also care for children over eight but there are no restrictions on the number of over 8s (dependent on insurance). The survey indicated 170 cared for 4–8-year-olds and 215 cared for children 8+. The care offered is a mix of breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs and during school holidays, but not all work all year round. In 2022, 96 childminders did not offer all year-round care, this reduced to 35 in 2023 and 37 in 2024.
45. The survey asked childminders what vacancies they had for the different age groups; it is to be noted that these vacancies are only a true reflection of the day they complete the survey. This highlighted there were no spaces in Marlborough, Melksham, Pewsey, RWB & Cricklade and South Wiltshire for 0-4 year olds. The Early Years team in partnership with Job Centre Plus are providing fully funded training and pre-registration support to potential childminders with an intake cohort of 8 per month. The first cohort attended their training in July 2024.
46. The vacancies at the time of the survey for the different age groups show a significant reduction in numbers compared to last year.

	0-4 years	4-8 years	8+
2024	47	41	40
2023	142	129	139

47. To stimulate the childminder market the government has introduces a new Ofsted category. 'Childminder without domestic premises' This will enable a childminder to operate from somewhere other than home, like a community or village hall or a school. The hope is that this new flexibility will encourage more people to consider childminding, as often the loss of space in their home is the reason childminders cease to operate.

Quality of Childminders and Early Years Group Settings

48. Ofsted is the arbiter of the quality in early years settings, therefore all settings must be registered and regularly inspected. All group settings are registered with Ofsted, although private schools can register with the Independent Schools Inspectorate as well. Most childminders are registered with Ofsted, however, 15 are registered with a Childminding Agency who provide them with training, advice, administrative support and marketing to families.
49. Ofsted regularly inspects early years providers. The table below shows the Ofsted gradings for all Wiltshire early years providers on 2024. Most providers

are graded good or outstanding. Settings and childminders graded below Good are supported by the Early Years Quality and Assurance Team.

Ofsted/Independent schools Inspectorate grading for Early Years Group settings	Number of providers
No grading due to new registration	27
Inadequate	3
Requires improvement	3
Good	171
Outstanding	44
Met (may be due to no EY children in when completing inspection)	1

Ofsted/Childminder Agency Grading for Childminders	Number of childminders
No grading due to new registration	43
Inadequate	2
Requires improvement	4
Good	186
Outstanding	37
Met (may be due to no EY children in when completing inspection)	22
Not met with actions	1

50. Wiltshire Council Early Years team offer quality support to all providers which will include focussed support if they are graded Requires Improvement or Inadequate.
51. If a provider receives an Inadequate grading according to the terms of the Local Provider Agreement⁸ Early Years Entitlement funding can be withdrawn, with an opportunity for appeal.

Wraparound Childcare Programme for Primary age children

52. The DfE national wraparound childcare programme aims to ensure that childcare provision is available in all primary schools from 8am-6pm (or similar hours) this means that it will be regular, has longer hours and is more dependable for working parents. Local Authorities are critical to the successful delivery of the programme. Wiltshire were involved in the co-production of the programme along with 20 other Local Authorities (LA).
53. DfE funding has been allocated to the Council to support the development of places for the expansion of wraparound childcare. The funding has three strands to support:

⁸ [Wiltshire Council Provider Agreement April 2024 FINAL.pdf](#)

- Capacity funding to enable the LA to build internal capacity to deliver the programme and fund a designated wraparound lead if one does not already exist for the duration of the programme (up to end of March 2026).
 - Programme funding to deliver the programme objectives, including distribution to providers to set up new provision or expand existing provision. This is a tapered payment.
 - Capital funding to support new/extended wraparound provision.
54. For the duration of the programme (until March 2026), the Capacity funding provides:
- two assistant commissioners to support delivery of the programme
 - 0.5fte Wraparound Lead
 - an extra Quality Assurance Officer from September 2024
55. Critical to achieving successful delivery of the wraparound programme is securing sufficient, quality, and accessible wraparound provision. This will be achieved through a strong partnership between commissioners and providers in all sectors; Primary Schools, PVIs and childminders.
56. A delivery plan allocating for £2,353,148.58 for Programme Funding as agreed by the DfE in June 2024. This will provide 8am-6pm care across the county by:
- Expanding place capacity at provision that already meets 8am to 6pm (490 places)
 - Expand hours of provision to meet 8am to 6pm (2452 places)
 - Addition of new provision to existing provision, new breakfast or after school club (481 places)
 - Creation of new provision to meet the 8am to 6pm (325 places)
 - Total of 3748 places.
57. A Wraparound Reference Group has been established as a sub-group of the Wiltshire School's Forum in response to the government's plans for wraparound care
58. Expressions of Interest and cash flows are presented to a panel monthly, so far 28 applications have been approved for programme funding, of these 17 have requested capital funding.
59. To date the following programme funding has been agreed:

Community area	Total number of new places	Programme funding approved
Bradford on Avon (4)	113	£85,262.88
Calne (2)	45	£43,436
Devizes (4)	101	£93,198.57
Malmesbury (1)	30	£47,116

Marlborough (1)	25	£27,752
Melksham (3)	130	£72,625
Pewsey (1)	16	£20,530
Southwest Wiltshire (1)	30	£33,270
Southern Wiltshire (1)	12	£14,209
Stonehenge (1)	40	£16,134.87
Tidworth (3)	56	£105,545.84
Trowbridge (5)	180	£183,551.71
Warminster (1)	35	£12,263.26
Total (28)	813	£754,895.13

60. To make the best use of the available funding it is expected that all new and expanded places will be available before March 31st 2025 and will be funded for a maximum of five terms. There is good evidence that schools are working with early year providers, private, voluntary, independent (PVI) settings and childminders to help deliver the most suitable wraparound model for their area.
61. Wiltshire is one of 20 LAs that have been randomly selected by the DfE to take part in the formal evaluation of the National Wraparound Childcare Programme. The evaluation is split into two parts. The first part is a process evaluation consisting of an interview conducted by IFF Research to understand how the programme has been delivered and what has worked well. The second part will consider the impact of the programme.

Childcare Expansion Capital Grant

62. The DfE acknowledged that capital funding would be necessary to support the expansion of childcare places. Wiltshire's capital grant allocation is £1,106,833.34.
63. £221,366.60 is available to create new and/or increase access to wraparound places. This could include building modifications, such as secure external access, outside lighting or storage of wraparound resources.
64. There is £885,466.40 available to create additional places for two-year-olds and under to meet the demand from the new Early Years Entitlements starting April 2024 (see paragraph 3). Providers able to expand must complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) outlining their project. They also need to include costings to complete the project. These are reviewed by a panel to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria:
- Demand in the community area
 - Number of new places for two-year-olds and under
 - Percentage of contributions from the provider
 - Speed of delivery of places (planning permission etc).
65. 11 applications have been approved and the work is near completion. These are outlined in the table below:

Community area	Number of settings	New Places under two years	New places two-year-olds	Extra 3&4 year old places	Total new places	Capital Grant contribution
Calne	2	32	9	20	61	£71,752
Chippenham	1	6	4	0	10	£21,600
Melksham	2	21	24	26	47	£90,218
Southwest Wiltshire	2	21	3	6	24	£38,956
Trowbridge	2	0	38	24	62	£58,950
Westbury	2	21	19	14	14	£156,000
Totals	11	101	70	157	328	£437,476

66. The remaining £447,990.40 will support further expansion or development of early years places for two year olds and under. Further places will be required in Wiltshire to ensure we can meet the demand in readiness for September 2025 when the Early Years Entitlements expands to offer working parents up to 30 hours childcare for children from 9 months old.

67. Wraparound capital allocations approved by community area:

Community area	Capital allocation approved
Bradford on Avon (1)	£11,735
Chippenham (1)	£6,368
Devizes (4)	£57,000
Melksham (1)	£26,500
Pewsey (1)	£7,500
Southwest Wiltshire (1)	£6,138
Southern Wiltshire (1)	£2,000
Tidworth (1)	£37,094
Trowbridge (5)	£48,674
Warminster (1)	£1,073
Total	£204,082

School Nurseries Capital Mobile Replacement

68. £1,170,000 has been secured as a contribution towards the replacement of temporary mobile buildings which are leased by Wiltshire Council to 22 early years providers, with 23 temporary mobile buildings. This capital funding is to enable Wiltshire Council to support the providers with a maximum of 25% of the build costs for a replacement building. This investment will support Wiltshire Council to maintain its statutory duty to provide sufficient childcare.

69. Following the successful completion of the first project Summer 2023, the second priority project is now under construction. The preschool is temporarily using a space within the school building whilst the new building is completed.

Once finished this will secure the continuity of care for children attending the school from early years through to year 6. This project is also going to create an additional 8 places for two-year-olds with further support from the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.

70. A RAG rating was devised as part of the policy to support the replacement of mobile buildings. Due to maintenance undertaken on some of these temporary buildings since the policy was agreed in 2022, a review of the remaining buildings will be undertaken in Autumn 2024. Two of the 23 initial temporary buildings are now void due to closure of provision and their disrepair. Once the second project is complete there will be 18 units remaining in scope of this project.

School Based Nurseries

71. In October 2024 The new government launched the first round of funding for school based nurseries. Primary schools can now apply for up to £150,000 capital funding to develop a nursery in available space in school buildings.
72. Any application should be agreed by the LA and should be able to support the most vulnerable children. It can be delivered by the school or by a provider from the voluntary or private sector or by childminders.

Housing Developments

73. Continuous monitoring of available childcare provision ensures that the future demand for early years places can be met. Officers are involved in spatial planning to influence appropriate sites for future development until 2036. Under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 contributions can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure. Requests for capital funding under the S106 policy continue to be made as necessary to meet new demand. Contributions for new early years places are sought where there are more than 10 housing units proposed.
74. The table below shows the amount of S106 capital funding that is currently held to support childcare provision in the county and ensure that families have access to good quality provision as the demand for places increases.

Area	Source of funding	Amount of contribution received	Amount committed to date
Bradford on Avon Kingston Farm	S106 contribution for Early Years and Childcare provision	£194,271	Christchurch Primary developing a nursery to open Jan/April 2025

Area	Source of funding	Amount of contribution received	Amount committed to date
Calne Berhills Farm, Chilvester Hill	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£78,091	No funding has been committed at this time.
Chippenham Hunters Moon Phase 5	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£175,220	No funding has been committed at this time.
Corsham Land at Bradford Road	S106 contribution for Early Years and Childcare provision	£178,336	£20,000 was allocated to the Springfield Hub Early Years project
Corsham Land of Potley Lane	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£35,044	No funding has been committed at this time.
Malmesbury Backbridge Farm	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£394,086	This will be pooled with other contributions for the new 80 place nursery.
Malmesbury Land at Filands Road/Jenners Lane	Site of 0.3ha for early years provision and S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£245,940	This will be pooled with other contributions for the new 80 place nursery.
Melksham Land at Semington Road	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£169,146 (50% of total due)	No funding has been committed at this time.
RWB Purton Land at Restrop Road	S106 contribution for Early Years and Childcare provision	£52,566 (50% of total due)	No funding has been committed at this time.
Trowbridge Land at Bradley Road	S106 contribution for Early Years and Childcare provision	£ 153,645	No funding has been committed at this time.
Trowbridge Clarks Mill and Mill House	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£27,315 (50% of total due)	No funding has been committed at this time.
Trowbridge 26 Fore Street	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£36,248	No funding has been committed at this time.
Trowbridge Elizabeth Way	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£361,559	No funding has been committed at this time.
Salisbury Land North of Netherhampton Road	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£105,132 (50% of total due)	No funding has been committed at this time.
Salisbury Land South of Netherhampton Road	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£365,707 (10% of total due)	No funding has been committed at this time.
Southern Wiltshire Downton Scotts House	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£37,691	No funding has been committed at this time.
Warminster Land to Northwest Folly Farm	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£52,274 (50% of total due)	No funding has been committed at this time.

Area	Source of funding	Amount of contribution received	Amount committed to date
Westbury Land West Dartmoor Road and South A3098	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£52,566	No funding has been committed at this time.
Westbury Land South of Sandhole Lane	S106 contribution for Early years and Childcare provision	£122,654	Cygnets Preschool is named within the S106 for expansion.

75. To meet the demand in Bradford on Avon the S106 funding will be used to support the development of early years provision at Christchurch Primary which will open January/April 2025. This goes a considerable way to managing sufficient childcare provision in the needs of the area.
76. S106 funding was allocated to develop a nursery in the Springfield Campus. However, a lack of demand for places caused the setting to withdraw. With the expansion in entitlements there is now increased demand in Corsham and options for expansion are currently being considered.
77. S106 funding allocated for Malmesbury will be pooled to create a new 80 place early years provision. Further funding is expected in Malmesbury, and this will also support the new nursery. The new nursery will be located on the 0.3ha of land secured through the planning application. The development of the housing site has commenced, so once the services are in place, the land will be transferred to the Council to manage the project. Officers are developing a project plan for the new nursery working with colleagues from procurement and the Senior Project Manager for the Build Programme (who manages creating new school places).
78. S106 funding for Melksham will be used towards a nursery class within a new Primary School at Pathfinder Way.
79. S106 funding for Trowbridge can be pooled to expand provision within the locality. The funds allocated to Bradley Road Trowbridge was specified for Clarendon School site. The school are no longer able to facilitate a provision there, and the developers have to date not agreed for it to be used at an alternative site. This funding may need to be returned in future. To mitigate against this issue in future, any new S106 developer contributions we try not specify a site to ensure we are able to meet the needs of the area within a range of options at the time of the development.
80. S106 funding for Chippenham will be used with other funding in the area in the future to develop new provision alongside new primary schools on the new housing developments, which will meet the sufficiency needs of Chippenham.
81. S106 funding for Salisbury in Netherhampton Road will provide a nursery class within the new school. The remaining contributions will be used to create further new provision within the locality.

82. S106 funding for Westbury had to name a project during the appeal process and names Cygnets Preschool to be expanded. Other S106 within the locality of Cygnets can be pooled towards further expansion.

Sufficiency and Sustainability

83. The cost-of-living crisis continues to affect the sustainability of some of our childcare providers. The increased pressure of the National Minimum Wage and affect the ability of providers maintain viability. This could further affect the number of childcare places if providers are forced to close due to the ongoing financial impact year on year.
84. The community areas with the greatest sufficiency concerns are listed below with the actions to address the issue:

Community area	Gap	Action
Bradford on Avon	Shortage of provision for children aged 0-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106 funding has been agreed for the development of new places at Christchurch Primary School with a new nursery planned to open 2025.
Chippenham	Shortage of provision for children aged 0-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106 funding requested to develop early years places across all ages. New places being created as part of the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.
Melksham	<p>Shortage of provision for children aged 0-4 but specifically 0-1-year olds.</p> <p>No childminders spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106 funding requested to develop early years places across all ages. Canberra Children's Centre building to open as new nursery in 2025. Continue to look at new options for delivery in the area. Possible location of a School Based Nursery Look at increasing childminder provision within the area.
Malmesbury	Shortage of provision for children aged 0-4, specifically 3-4 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106 funding requested and 0.3ha land secured for a new 80 place day nursery to develop early years places across all ages.

Community area	Gap	Action
Marlborough	Lack of provision in the town which is open from 8am- 6pm, specifically for babies No childminders spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with providers to increase the provision. • Look at increasing childminder provision within the area
Pewsey	No childminders spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at increasing childminder provision within the area
RWB & Cricklade	No childminders spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at increasing childminder provision within the area
South Wiltshire	No childminders spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at increasing childminder provision within the area
Westbury	Shortage of provision for children aged 0-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S106 funding requested to develop early years places across all ages. • Expansion of existing nurseries to create an additional 40 places using Childcare Expansion Capital Grant.

Military Population

85. As Wiltshire has such a high proportion of military families the needs of these families must be considered. Since the major programme arising from the British Army's Basing Project (ABP), there has not been any significant movements. Any subsequent additional demand will be discussed with the military as and when they expand their Army Basing Project. These areas continue to be monitored.

Main considerations for the council

Early Years Workforce

86. There is an acknowledged ongoing recruitment and retention crisis in the early years sector. Existing staff are leaving for a range of reasons, including higher paid less stressful roles in retail or administration.

87. The increase in the National Living Wage to £12.21, for over 21 years olds from April 2025, puts additional pressure on the running cost of settings. It was announced in September 2024 that additional funding for early years providers

will be distributed through a new grant, the Early Years Budget Grant⁹ (EYBG) in 2024-25 (covering September 2024-March 2025). At this stage it is too early to say how this will impact the funding rates to providers to support increasing costs.

88. Providers continue to try and address recruitment challenges through growing their own staff, apprenticeships and encouraging more people to work in childcare.
89. Officers have benefitted from the support of Hempsall's in creating an action plan on recruitment and retention. DfE funding for Assistant Commissioners has increased the capacity to now attend Job Centre Plus and school careers fairs to promote working in childcare. Additionally, the DfE have re-launched their early years and childcare recruitment campaign 'Do Something BIG, Work with Small Children'¹⁰. They are also revamping the jobs category of 'Find a Job' entitled 'Education and Childcare Jobs'. Employers in both early years and wraparound will be able to advertise any available positions on this site for free.
90. Programme funding is also being used to provide free advertising on the Wiltshire Council Jobs Site for Wraparound Care as providers are impressed with the quality of candidates from this site.
91. The Early Years team in partnership with Job Centre Plus are participating in a pilot which offers fully funded training and pre-registration support to eight potential childminders per month. The first and second cohorts have commenced their training. If this is successful the scheme will be rolled out nationally.
92. Officers continue to meet with other Local Authorities and share ideas around the workforce crisis. Concerns are continually raised with local DfE representatives at monthly meetings and at DfE events.
93. Settings report that Level 3 qualified staff and above are the most difficult roles to recruit, there is also a challenge in finding Level 2 qualified staff. It should be noted that in any setting on the Early Years Register, the manager must hold an approved level 3 qualification or above and at least half of all other staff must be at least level 2 qualified¹¹.

Early years entitlement and the cost of childcare

94. A continuing challenge for early years providers is the ongoing reported concern that the funding rate itself remains insufficient to ensure sustainability (please see the finance section from paragraph 105). This is a national issue which continues to be widely discussed. Rising running costs have had an impact on

⁹ [Early years budget grant \(EYBG\) 2024 to 2025: methodology and operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-budget-grant-2024-to-2025-methodology-and-operational-guidance)

¹⁰ [Do something big - Early Years Careers](https://www.gov.uk/government/campaigns/do-something-big)

¹¹ [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000)

setting viability as well as the 17% increase of the National Minimum Wage from £10.42 to £12.21 in 2025.

95. Childcare settings are open for a variety of times during the day and are open for different numbers of weeks across the year. Therefore, when looking at the cost of childcare it can be difficult to compare like with like, as costs vary from one childcare setting to another. Some settings choose to charge extra fees for consumables, such as nappies, wipes, snacks and meals. Whilst some settings include them as part of their fees. This results in a range of costs across Wiltshire. Additionally, some settings offer discounts to siblings and staff. South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) have undertaken a review of Early Years Entitlements. The audit findings will enable officers to address any concerns.
96. Officers provide business support to settings who have concerns about their sustainability. A Business Health Check tool is available on the early years and childcare pages of Wiltshire Council website¹² to support providers to maintain and review their sustainability.

Commissioning Considerations

97. Officers continue to develop the quality and scope of early years and childcare provision and work closely with the providers to ensure there is sufficient high-quality places available across the county where required.
98. Officers are working with existing nurseries and childminders across the county, to respond to any increase in demand due to the new entitlements for working parents introduced in April 2024, September 2024 and those planned for September 2025. There is continued interest in the childcare market from providers who would like to move into Wiltshire and from existing providers looking for new provision in Wiltshire.
99. Wiltshire Council has a statutory duty to secure information, advice and training to all providers registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register who are judged less than 'good' at their most recent inspection and to any new providers. In addition, Wiltshire Council must offer information advice and training to any provider that requests this to ensure the provision meets the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
100. The Early Years Teachers employed by the Council offer support for learning and development and the Quality Assurance Officers support settings with safeguarding and welfare requirements. Regular training events are held throughout the year. The Commissioning team also offer support around sustainability and sufficiency.
101. The table below shows the actions that Officers will be taking in the coming year in relation to childcare sufficiency, working with colleagues and providers

¹² [Information for professionals - Wiltshire Council](#)

across the sector to ensure that enough provision is available to meet the local demand in each area.

Issue	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale
Secure sufficient childcare in key areas of need – Bradford-On-Avon, Chippenham, Melksham, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Pewsey, RWB & Cricklade, South Wiltshire and Westbury To also secure sufficient childcare across the whole of Wiltshire to support the new childcare entitlements for two-year-olds and under.	Develop new childcare places at Christchurch School in Bradford on Avon with S106 funding	Local families will have sufficient childcare to meet demand for all types of provision	Commissioning Manager, Senior Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners – Families & Children’s Commissioning	April 2025 & Ongoing
	Dialogue with national and local chains about expanding in Chippenham, Melksham, Marlborough, Warminster and Westbury			
	Consult and discuss with current providers about expanding in Bradford-On-Avon, Chippenham, Melksham, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Pewsey, RWB & Cricklade, South Wiltshire and Westbury			
Promote childminding as a career to support gaps in areas of need e.g. villages Specifically in areas where childminders report no vacancies – Marlborough, Melksham, Pewsey, RWB & Cricklade and South Wiltshire	Advertise in local village newsletters Online campaign and marketing using national and local materials	Sufficient childcare provision in villages and areas where required	Assistant Commissioners – Families & Children’s Commissioning Quality Assurance Officers – Early Years	April 2025 & Ongoing
Promote childcare as a serious career option	Attend school careers events and job centre fairs	Sufficient qualified staff available to meet the demand for childcare places across the county	Assistant Commissioners – Families & Children’s Commissioning Quality Assurance Officers – Early Years	April 2025 & Ongoing
	Advertise widely using social media			
	Promote the positive aspects of childcare			

	Use DfE promotional material widely on social media channels			
Identify new ways to promote early years funding to more families	Speak with minoritized groups to find out what would encourage them.	More families and children will access good quality childcare	Commissioning Manager, Senior Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners – Families & Children’s Commissioning	April 2025
	Use videos to show how good early years is for the child and the family.			
To secure sufficient wraparound childcare from 8am-6pm for primary age children of eligible families	Develop new wraparound childcare places where gaps are identified.	Local families will have sufficient childcare to meet demand for all types of provision	Commissioning Manager, Senior Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners – Families & Children’s Commissioning	April 2025 & Ongoing

Safeguarding Considerations

102. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there is 'effective safeguarding and promotion of welfare of the children for whom the early education is provided'. The School Effectiveness team within Wiltshire Council monitor the quality of provision and respond to any safeguarding risks, with support from the Safeguarding teams as necessary. These can be identified from a range of sources, including employees in a setting, parents or carers, and Ofsted in the main. The Quality and Assurance team, who are part of School Effectiveness, respond to any queries that are raised and participate in Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) meetings. There have been nine open LADO cases in 2023/2024, two of which will be carried over into the next academic year.

Public Health Implications

103. The provision of sufficient childcare is part of the Local Authority's overall commitment to support the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire's communities. Wiltshire Council recognises the importance of the early years as part of the Family and Children's Transformation (FACT) Programme which includes a workstream focusing on the Best Start in Life. As part of this, there is a focus on Speech and Language and the Home Learning Environment with associated campaigns being developed. This includes the 0-5 Journey¹³. Early Years educational attainment checks are undertaken in early years settings at age 2-3; findings are co-ordinated with mandated Health Visitor two and half year old developmental checks.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

104. There are no specific environmental and climate change issues because of developing childcare sufficiency.

Financial Implications

105. The DfE (DfE) funding is allocated from the early years funding block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) which is calculated on a per pupil basis and allocated on part time equivalents (PTE) i.e. children attending settings on an annual basis. In December initial allocations are published prior to the new financial year starting and these are updated with the final allocations mid financial year using updated census data.

106. In his 2021 Spending Review, the Chancellor announced a number of national increases to increase early years entitlements including £170 million in 2024-25.

107. The early years funding block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) is set by the local authority and, following consultation with early years representatives, recommended by Schools Forum at their January meeting to be ratified by Full Council in February 2024. The final allocation for 2023-24 was

¹³ [0-5 years journey - Wiltshire Together](#)

£32.743m, republished in July, using Wiltshire's updated census data. The total 'initial' or provisional allocation for 2024-25 from the DfE is £52.886 million. Hourly rates have increased by 1.73p per funded hour for 2 year olds, and 0.53p per hour for 3&4 year olds (excluding the one-off, now nationally baselined supplementary grant of £0.33). In addition to the early years funding, the high needs block makes a contribution of £0.180m to the ISF. The original budget set using the provisional early years block settlement for 2024-25 for Wiltshire comprises of the following elements:

Provider Rates	PTE (where applicable)	2023-24 Wiltshire Rate	Proposed 2024-25 Wiltshire Rate	£ million
3 & 4-year-old entitlement (all)	10,722	£4.68/hour + £0.33p Supplementary grant	£5.21/hour	31.842
9 months to 2 years working parent entitlement	1,100	N/A	£9.63	6.038
2-year-old working parent entitlement	2,171	N/A	£7.17	8.872
2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement	727	£5.75/hour + £1.86 Supplementary grant	£7.48/hour	3.101
Deprivation, rurality				0.25
Central EY functions				0.859
EY Inclusion Support Fund				1.143
Disability Access Fund	360 children	£828/child	£910/child	0.328
Early Years Pupil Premium	1,065 children	£0.62/hour	£0.68/hour	0.413
Total proposed budget for 2024-25				52.886

*Includes £0.041million contingency

Commercial considerations

108. Creating and meeting the childcare sufficiency expectations across the county has a direct impact on the capacity of communities to enable as many parents who are seeking employment or training as possible to have the opportunity to realise their ambitions. Government funding of Early Years Entitlements supports any parent to be able to access affordable, accessible good quality childcare provision. Access to early years provision promotes a good level of development for all children, which helps to support the viability of the sector.

Equalities Impact

109. Childcare sufficiency seeks to promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children, children in need and children with special educational needs and disability. As a Local Authority, there are duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 to consider when securing free places, so that all families can access the provision they require in the right place. Officers continue to work with providers, and social care and education colleagues, to remove barriers of access to free places, and work with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential. As detailed in paragraphs 22 and 24 Wiltshire provided childcare for 89% of disadvantaged 2-year olds and 99% of all 3-and4-year olds across the county, both being above the national average.

Risk Management

110. There are risks related to insufficient early years and childcare provision. Without sufficient early years and childcare provision:
- Wiltshire Council would not meet the statutory duty to ensure, where reasonable, that there is sufficient provision.
 - Children may not have access to an early years setting and consequently may not have the experiences they require to ensure that they are ready for school and achieve a good level of development.
 - There is a risk that early years childcare will be negatively affected by the cost of living and recruitment and retention crisis.
 - There is a risk to places if providers in temporary buildings leased by Wiltshire Council are unable to raise the 75% capital to replace their building within the next ten years, or as required.

To mitigate these risks:

- Officers are working with current and prospective providers to develop childcare in areas of need.
- The DfE have provided Early Years Capital Expansion to create additional childcare places for two-year-olds and under.
- The DfE have provided Programme funding to develop wraparound provision for primary age children 8am to 6pm term time only.

- Officers are working with Job Centre Plus and Wiltshire College to encourage interest in working in the early years sector.
- Officers are working with providers to look at income sources and alternative building options.

Legal Implications

111. It is a legal requirement that Wiltshire Council ensure sufficient childcare is available across Wiltshire to all parents who wish to access this provision. Officers will continue to work with the providers to ensure there is sufficient high-quality Early Years and Wraparound provision across the county.
112. Wiltshire currently has adequate provision which is keeping up with local demand in most areas. However, due to the high occupancy rates in the identified areas and the introduction of the new Early Years Entitlements, all provision is being closely monitored. The main challenges are:
- cost of living crisis
 - the expansion of housing
 - the recruitment and retention of early years staff
 - increase in entitlements for both early years and wraparound childcare
 - maintaining quality of provision with the current recruitment crisis.

Conclusions

113. The new Government has recognised that early years and childcare is a very high priority area.
114. The continued increase in the capacity of Officers is crucial in ensuring Wiltshire is ready to meet the need for places and meet the statutory duty of the Local Authority.
115. It is acknowledged that there continues to be to be a crisis affecting the early years and childcare sector which is compounded by:
- Cost of living crisis
 - the impact of the increase in the national living wage
 - the expansion of housing
 - the recruitment and retention of early years staff

To mitigate these issues:

- The demand for places in community areas is monitored by a member of the commissioning team who works closely with School Place Commissioning Lead to review planning applications. This enables plans for future sufficient childcare places to be developed and applications for future S106 funding to be submitted.
- The DfE is aware of the nationwide recruitment and retention crisis and has created marketing resources and a careers website. The LA has

developed a recruitment plan and offers the advertising of job roles free of charge

- Further programmes are being developed to support recruitment and retention in the early years sector
- Childminder pilot with Job Centre Plus to encourage this employment opportunity.
- Frequent conversations with DfE and other local authorities are held to discuss current and future issues and solutions

116. The expansion of Early Years Entitlements has put additional pressure on the sector. It is experiencing a particularly challenging time at the moment with a range of factors affecting the viability of settings and the wider childcare market as detailed in the paper. Even with the range of mitigating actions, some settings are already unsure if they will be able to continue to be sustainable into the new year and beyond. We are in a very precarious position with regard to continued sufficient childcare, and although work will continue to ensure we maintain delivery of our statutory duty, pressure still needs to be put on central government to review the sector and improve funding to ensure children continue to receive the best start in life.
117. In the meantime, some families may need to travel further to access their nearest childcare setting, as we may not be able to maintain all childcare provision across such a rural county in every area.
118. The county wide action plan in paragraph 101 will focus development work in the coming year. There will be increased work with schools to continue to address the wraparound care for school age children.
119. The Wiltshire Council website must be updated to provide clearer information for those interested in setting up new childcare provision in the county. Officers will continue to work with colleagues in School Effectiveness to promote the online childcare directory, and ways of paying for childcare.

Nicola Harris

Senior Commissioner

Gemma Oakley, Steven Smith, Vicky Watt

Assistant Commissioners

Appendices:

Appendix 1 : Schemes and Benefits

Appendix 2 : Occupancy maps for Wiltshire

Appendix 3 : Summary of June 2024 Childminder Occupancy

Appendix 1. Schemes and benefits

Tax-free childcare

- For working families, including the self-employed, in the UK
- Earning under £100k and at least £131 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage) each
- Who aren't receiving Tax Credits, Universal Credit or childcare vouchers
- With children aged 0-11 (or 0-16 if disabled)
- For every £8 you pay into an online account, the government will add an extra £2, up to £2,000 per child per year

15 hours free childcare – 2-year-olds

- For families in England, receiving some form of support
- With 2-year-old children
- 15 hours of free childcare or early education for 38 weeks
- To be able to take up 15 hours of free childcare for your two-year-old you or your child must meet the eligibility criteria
- A total of 570 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider
- Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week

15 hours free childcare – 9-month-old to 2-year-olds

- For working families in England
- With 9-month-old to 2-year-old children
- 15 hours of free childcare or early education for 38 weeks
- To be able to take up 15 hours of free childcare for your nine months to two-year-old you and your child must meet the eligibility criteria
- A total of 570 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider
- Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week

15 hours free childcare – 3- and 4-year-olds

- For all families in England
- With 3 and 4-year-old children
- 15 hours of free childcare or early education for 38 weeks
- A total of 570 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider
- Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week

30 hours free childcare – 3- and 4-year-olds

- For working families in England
- With 3 and 4-year-old children
- 30 hours of free childcare or early education for 38 weeks
- A total of 1,140 hours per year, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider
- Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week

Tax credits for childcare

- For working families, in the UK
- With children under 16 (or under 17 if disabled)
- 70% of childcare costs, up to a cap

- If you cannot make a new claim for Tax Credits, you may be able to apply for Universal Credit instead.

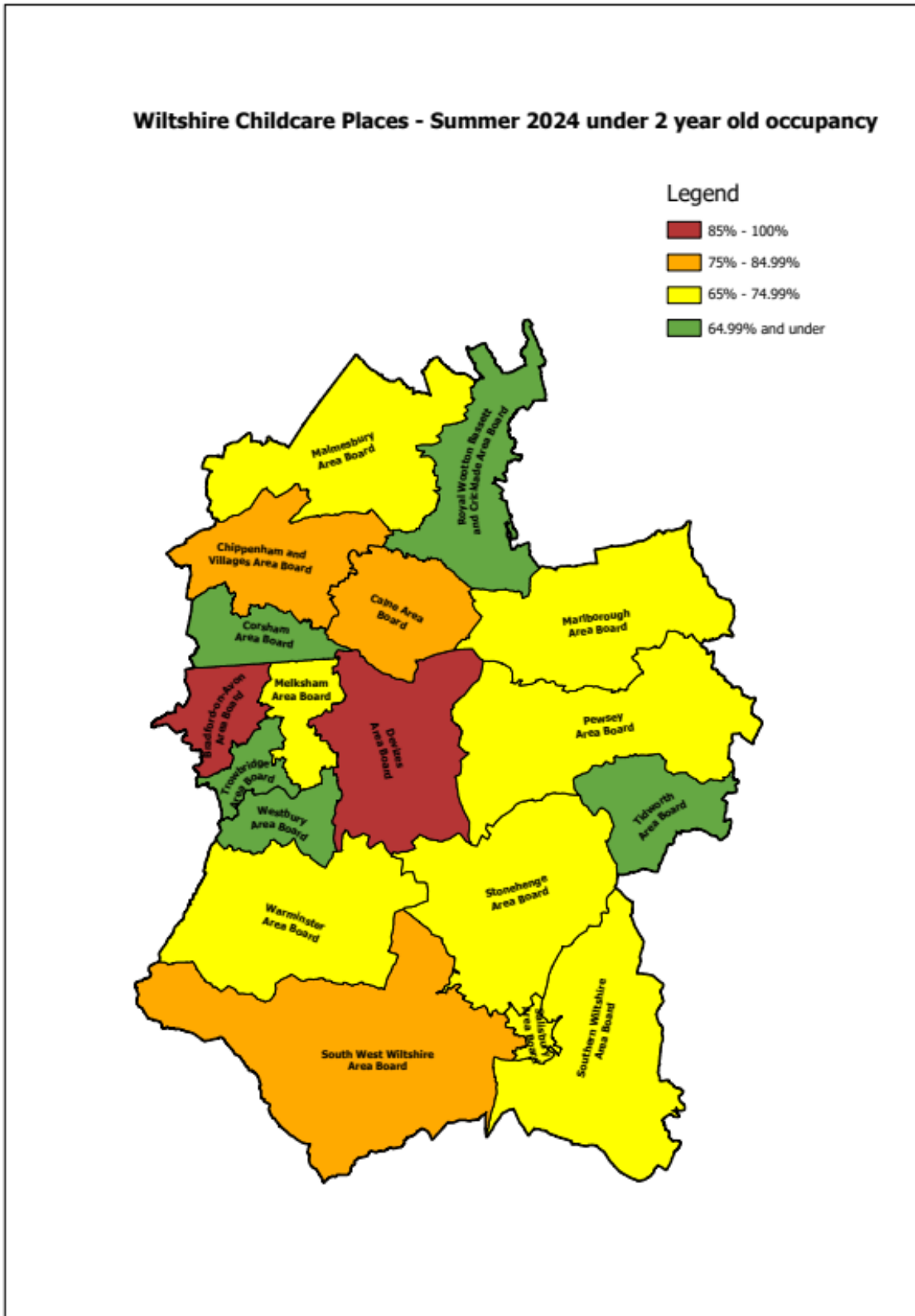
Universal credit for childcare

- For working families claiming Universal Credit, in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales
- With children under 17
- 85% of eligible childcare costs, up to a cap

Support while you study

- Weekly payments from Care to Learn if you're at school or sixth-form college
- Help through your college if you're in further education
- A weekly grant if you're in full-time higher education

Appendix 2



Wiltshire Childcare Places - Summer 2024 2 year old occupancy

Legend

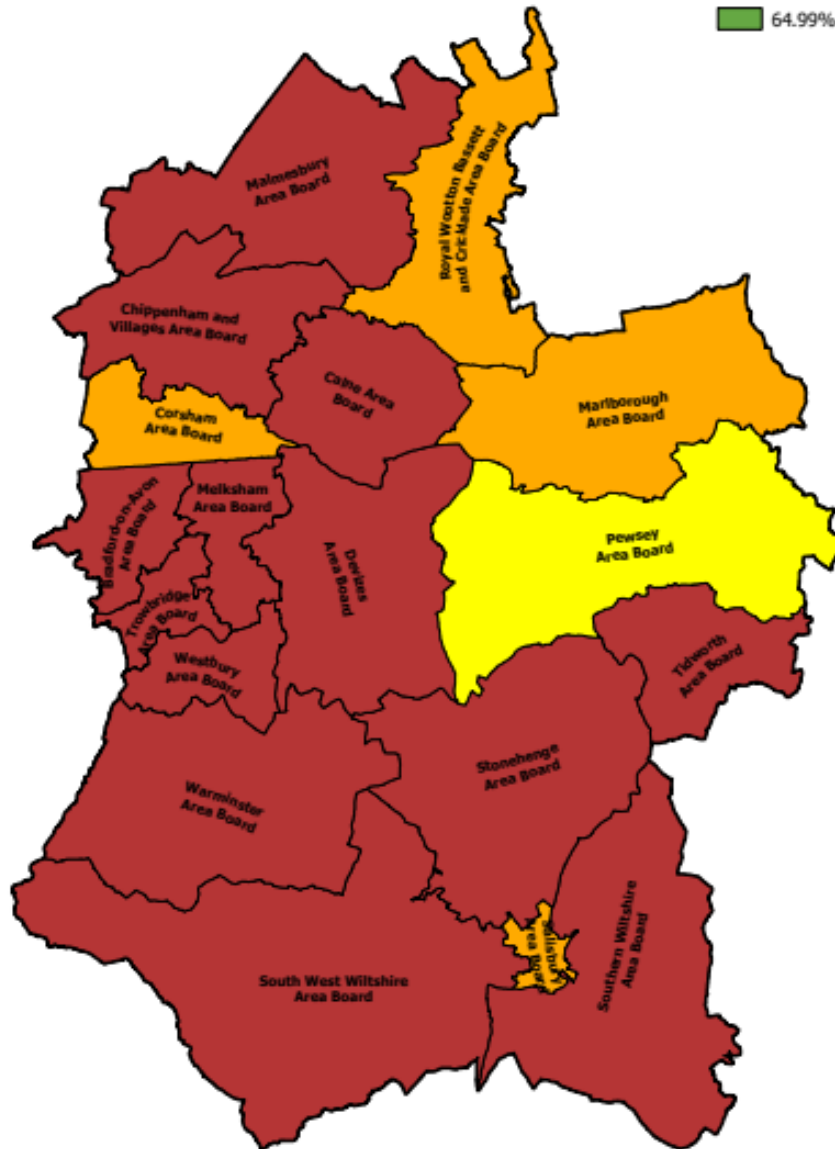
- 85% - 100%
- 75% - 84.99%
- 65% - 74.99%
- 64.99% and under



Wiltshire Childcare Places - Summer 2024 3 & 4 year old occupancy

Legend

- 85% - 100%
- 75% - 84.99%
- 65% - 74.99%
- 64.99% and under



Appendix 3

Summary of June 2024 Childminder Occupancy Survey

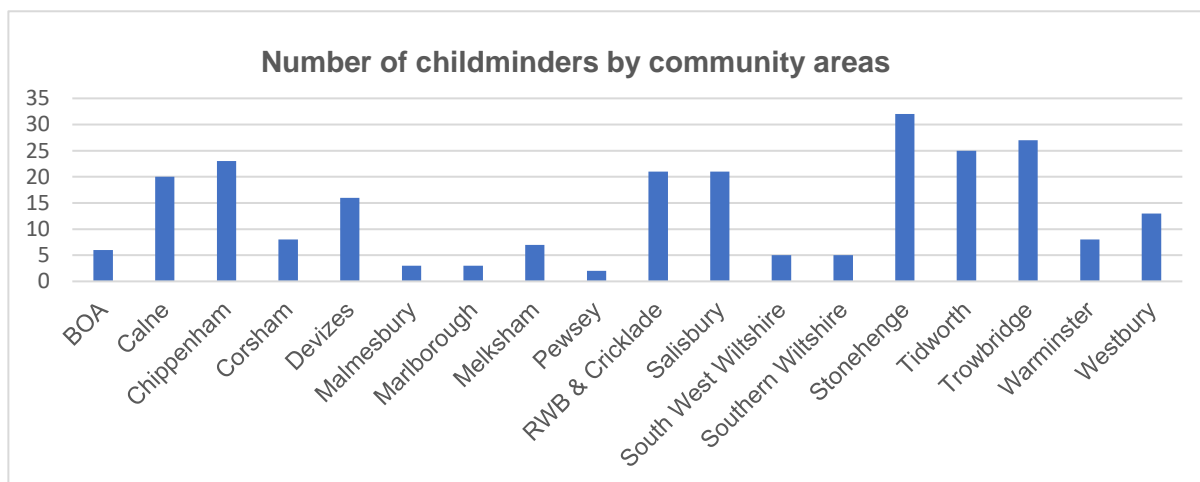
Introduction: In June 2024 registered childminders were asked to provide their occupancy data. At the time of the survey Wiltshire had 311 registered childminders. 79% (245) of childminders responded to the survey, compared to 65% (204) in 2023. Not having 100% return does not enable an accurate reflection on places, however the data available can be used as a guide.

Childminders choose the hours they work and can care for a maximum of 3 young children and a maximum of 6 children under the age of 8¹⁴.

Childminders can work alone or with other childminders and/or assistants. When working with childminders/assistants the number of child places increases subject to restrictions, for example space.

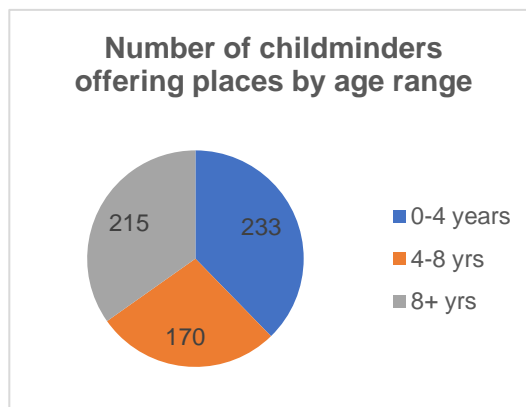
A maximum of 3 childminders/assistants can work together at any one time. Where there are more than 3 this would be classed as childcare on domestic premises and ratios applicable to nurseries and preschools would apply.

Community Areas: The below graph shows the number of childminders who responded to the survey by community area.



Age ranges: Childminders can choose to care for any age group of children or combination.

- Early years (0-4years)
- 4-8 years
- 8+ years



¹⁴ At any one time, childminders (whether providing the childminding on domestic or non-domestic premises) may care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight. This includes the childminder's own children and any other children for whom they are responsible, such as those being fostered. Of these six children: • A maximum of three may be young children (i.e. a child is a young child until 1st September following his or her fifth birthday). • There should only be one child under the age of one. [Statutory framework for the early years' foundation stage for childminders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714444/framework_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage_for_childminders.pdf)

Capacity 0-4 years: 767

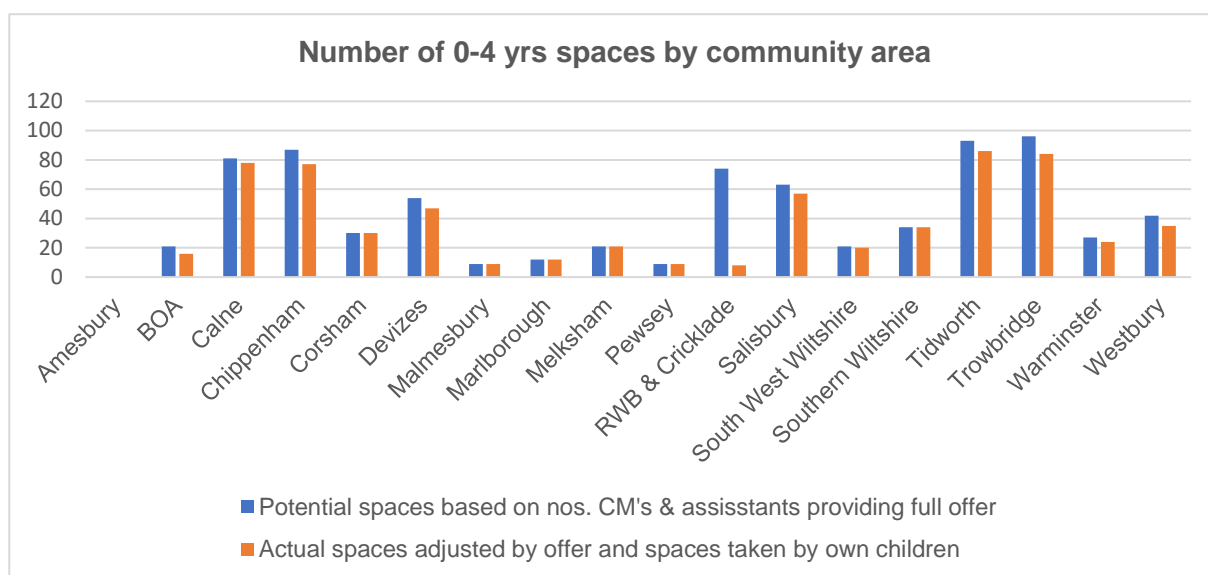
Of the 245 childminders who responded to the survey, 233 offer places for 0–4-year-olds. Based on 3 spaces per childminder, this allows for 699 places. 42 childminders, (17%) had 64 places taken up by their own children resulting in **635** actual available spaces.

If all childminders (311) had responded, assuming they all offer spaces for 0–4-year-olds at full capacity this could potentially provide a maximum of 933 early years places across Wiltshire. If all childminders (311) had responded assuming they all offer spaces for 0–4-year-olds using 17% as an average of childminders providing space for 1 of their own children, this would potentially provide 877 spaces.

From those who responded to the survey, 13% (31) employ 44 assistants. Assuming their hours provide care for this age range at maximum capacity, this increases the number of places by **132** places. This is slightly below the national average of 17%.

To show the value of assistants working with childminders and the impact on places. If we assume an average of 13% of all registered childminders employing 1 assistant on a full-time basis, this will provide 121 spaces.

The below table shows the potential number of 0-4 years places based on the number of respondents providing a full offer against the actual number of places adjusted by actual offer including places taken by childminder’s own children. This shows that with the exception of RWB and Cricklade, the majority of childminders across all community areas actual offer is very close to the potential offer.



It is important to review this data alongside the occupancy data provided by our settings to identify any areas where we need to actively advertise for more childminders to support demand and give parents choice. The summer occupancy returns (for which we have 100% return) show:

- Bradford on Avon, Melksham, Tidworth and Westbury are all showing as having high occupancy rates for this time of year. There are plans in place to address this.
- The remaining areas show overall occupancy levels within ranges we would normally expect to see at this time of year.

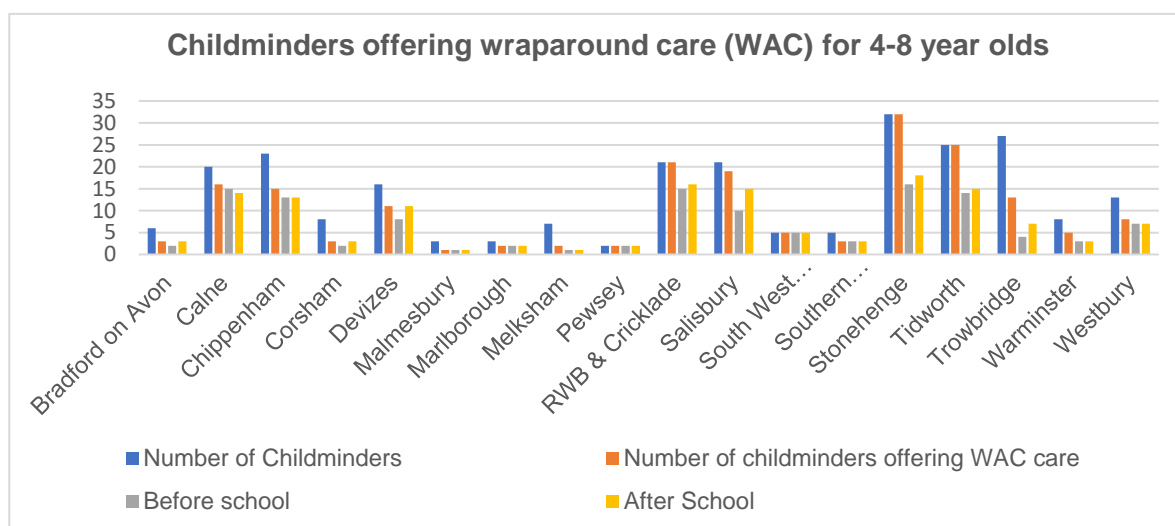
Capacity 4-8 years:

69% (170) of responding childminders offer before and/or after school care. 125 childminders offer before school care and 141 offer after school care. Childminders can provide 3 spaces in this age range which provides 375 and 423 places respectively.

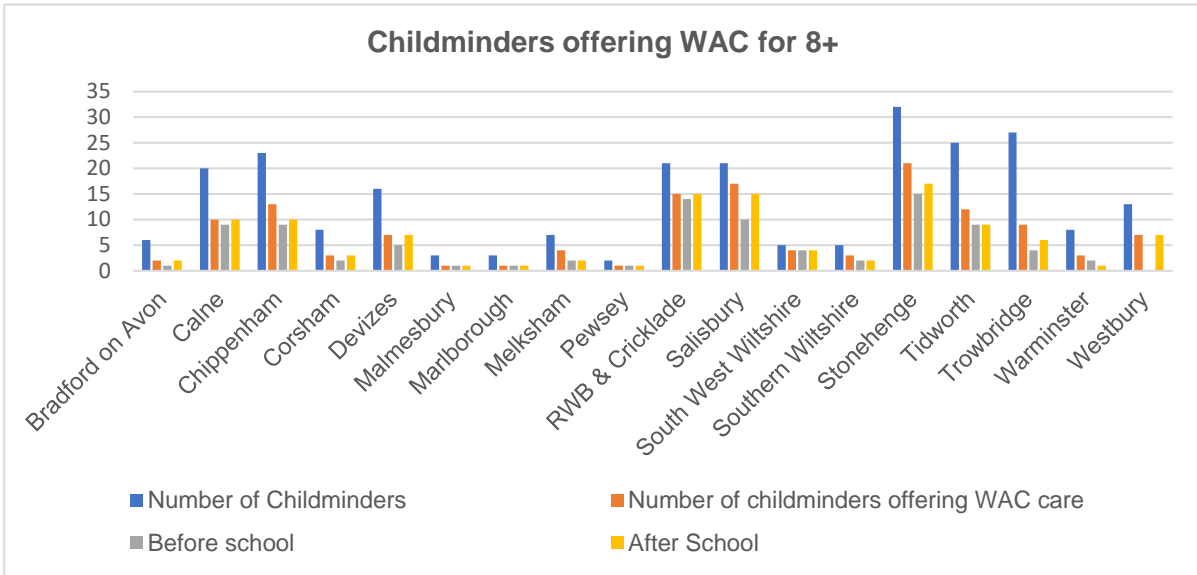
There are 44 assistants across the county, assuming their hours cover wraparound care at full capacity this would provide an additional 132 spaces.

The wraparound care expansion programme aims to provide wraparound care for all primary aged school children by September 2026 and is designed not to displace the existing market. It is too early to tell if this will have an impact on childminders should parents decide to move to a school-based provision.

Childminders can apply for funding to expand their provision within this programme however to date we have not received any expressions of interest from childminders. The commissioning team will be looking at ways of promoting this funding opportunity to expand places with the childminder community.

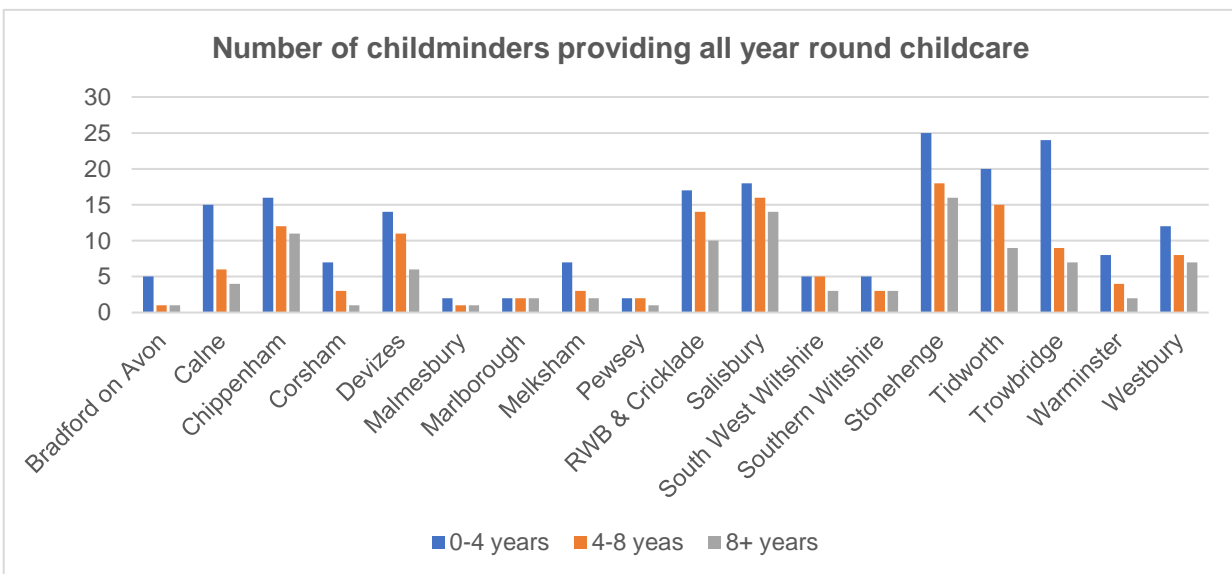


Capacity 8+ years: 88% (215) of responding childminders offer care for children aged 8+. There is no ratio or limit to numbers of children aged 8+ years, therefore we cannot calculate the number of places offered.



Holiday provision:

Childminders support the provision of holiday care for working parents. 85% (208) said they work all year round. Childminders working all year round also support families whose children attend sessional preschool provision.



Childminders vacancies:

Childminders in Marlborough, Melksham, Pewsey, RWB & Cricklade and South Wiltshire do not have any spaces for 0-4 year olds.

Childminders in Bradford on Avon, Marlborough and South Wiltshire do not have any spaces for 4-8 year olds.

Childminders in Bradford on Avon, Marlborough, South West Wiltshire and South Wiltshire do not have any spaces for 8+ year olds.

Marlborough and South Wiltshire report no spaces across all of the age ranges.

Planned expansions from schools and private providers as part of the wraparound expansion programme will offset some of these vacancies and will start to become available from September 2024.

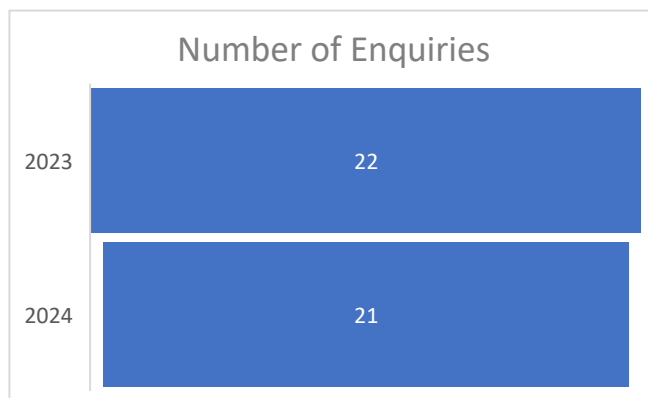


Incentives:

The launch of the childminder ‘start up’ grant in November 2023 enabled childminders registering after 15th March 2023 to access funding of £600 if registering with Ofsted or £1200 if registering with a childminding agency.

This has not had a significant impact on the number of enquires received by the sufficiency team.

The Early Years team in partnership with Job Centre Plus are providing fully funded training and pre-registration support to potential childminders with an intake cohort of 8 per month. The first cohort attended their training in July 2024.



Conclusion:

Childminders in Wiltshire support the demand for childcare across the county.

It is too early to tell the impact of the early years' team funded training programme on the numbers of childminders.

Whilst not directly related to childminders, the Early Years Capital Expansion programme is currently on track this Autumn to create an additional 154 places across the county for 0–2-year-olds through expansion of current provision. This supports the delivery of the new entitlements announced in the Spring 2023 budget. Further expansions are planned in the coming year to create additional places. Ongoing childminder recruitment is also crucial to support the new entitlements and provides choice for parents.

The change in government will potentially lead to changes in the childcare sector in terms of funding and priorities and we are already receiving questions regarding what this could look like particularly around the pledge to provide free breakfast club spaces.

When repeating this survey consideration should be given to capturing 100% return to enable a full picture to be given. In the meantime, the team are working towards 100% return this year by contacting childminders who have not responded to the survey.

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