

AGENDA

Meeting: Children's Select Committee
Place: Council Chamber - County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN
Date: Thursday 21 September 2023
Time: 10.30 am

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Max Hirst max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225718215 or email max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Pre-meeting information briefing

The meeting will be preceded by a presentation starting at **9:30am** on Alternative Provision.

Alternative Provision (AP) is defined as 'education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools themselves' and is full-time education. Local authorities can arrange education for young people, who because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education.

Membership:

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

Substitutes:

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

Non-Elected Voting Members:

Dr Mike Thompson

Clifton Diocesan RC Representative

Non-Elected Non-Voting Members:

Nikki Barnett

Further Education Representative

John Hawkins

School Teacher Representative

Maisy Humphrey

Children & Young People's Representative

Declan Kiely

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:

Alternative Provision

Alternative Provision (AP) is defined as 'education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools themselves.' It is full-time education.

Local authorities can arrange education for young people, who because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education.

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

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 9 - 20*)

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 July 2023.

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 **14 September 2023** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Monday 18 September**. 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 **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy**

The Committee will receive an update with a focus on the CYP element of the strategy.

7 **Outcome of the SEND LGA Peer Review**

The Committee will receive a report from Helean Hughes on the outcome of the LGA Peer Review of Wiltshire Council's SEND Strategy.

8 **Children Missing Out on Education**

The Committee will receive a report from Kathryn Davis on Wiltshire Council's Strategy for children missing out on education.

9 **Elective Home Education**

The Committee will receive a report from Kathryn Davis on Wiltshire Council's Strategy for supporting parents who choose to home educate their children.

10 **Task Group Report - Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding**
(Pages 21 - 44)

To report the findings and recommendations from the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group.

11 **Outcome of the review of the "Dads Matter Too" multi-agency project**
(Pages 45 - 52)

Jen Salter, Director for Families and Children, will inform the Committee of the outcome of the review into the multi-agency project "Dads Matter Too".

12 **Annual Adoption Report** *(Pages 53 - 62)*

The Committee will receive the annual report from Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service which provides a year-end report to the Council in relation to a child's journey to adoption.

13 **Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates**

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

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

14 **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.

14a **Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative** (Pages 63 - 64)

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

14b **School Ofsted Judgements** (Pages 65 - 70)

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.

14c **DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education** (Pages 71 - 76)

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

14d **Working together to improve school attendance**

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

14e **Schools Forum**

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](#)

This agenda item has no update due to no Schools Forum meeting taking place since the last Childrens Select Committee meeting.

14f **Corporate Parenting Panel**

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.

This agenda item has no update due to no Corporate Parenting Panel meeting taking place since the last Childrens Select Committee meeting.

14g **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.

14h **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.

14i **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.

15 **Forward Work Programme**

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.

16 **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on Tuesday 31 October 2023 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

To note that the following meeting, scheduled on 16 January 2024, has been moved to 24 January 2024, starting at 10.30am.

17 **Urgent Items**

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

18 **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

Children's Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2023 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman), Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Caroline Corbin, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Kathryn Macdermid, Cllr Antonio Piazza, Cllr Mike Sankey, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Mark Verbinnen, Cllr Bridget Wayman, Dr Mike Thompson and Cllr Trevor Carbin (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Peter Hutton and Cllr Jane Davies, Matt Hitch, Jen Salter, Lucy Townsend, Professor Katy Burch, Simon Thomas, Cate Mullen and Joe Sutton

61 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from the following committee members:

Cllr Helen Belcher OBE (Substituted by Cllr Trevor Carbin)
John Hawkins

Apologies were also received from:

Cllr Laura Mayes
Cllr Suzanne Wickham

62 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 6 June 2023, as a true and correct record.

63 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

64 **Chairman's Announcements**

The chairman informed the committee that the meeting would run in a different way to allow the time necessary for the committee to consider item 6 on the agenda. Therefore, a short recess between 11.30 and 11.45 was to be included.

65 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

66 **Safeguarding processes - outcome of the review by the Institute of Public Care**

The chair informed the committee that Wiltshire Council had commissioned the Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University to undertake a follow up review of Support and Safeguarding Services across the county. The review was undertaken between July 2022 and February 2023 and the summary findings are presented in the attached report.

Jen Salter (Director for Families and Children) and Professor Katy Burch (Assistant Director, Institute of Public Care, Oxford Brookes University) were invited to present the report.

The review looked at 4 key areas:

- Child and family presenting needs and overall 'demand' for support and safeguarding.
- Thresholds and families getting 'the right help at the right time'.
- The quality and effectiveness of Support and Safeguarding Services.
- Supports for effective practice.

Key points raised:

Interviews were conducted regarding decision making with people working at Wiltshire Council and key partners.

There had been a re-growth in contact being made with the local authority, and even though rates of looked after children remained lower than geographically neighbouring authorities, rates when compared to 'outstanding' local authorities had a similar proportion. There was however a downward pressure in demand, largely due to a reduction in re-referrals.

When looking at the nature of demand, factors relating to poverty, unwillingness to return to school and substance misuse were identified.

Other characteristics were identified including disability - 14% had a diagnosed disability, mainly ADHD. This increased to 1/5th when looking at the whole child journey and up to 1/3rd of front door referrals was linked to a disability.

Key questions about families getting the right help at the right time were asked, including the rates of threshold criteria being met and when to refer a child.

It was found that all staff and partners interviewed were aware of the council's threshold documentation and had received training on it. Most staff thought thresholds for targeted support service were clear.

There are key indicators of success in Wiltshire Council's handling of Safeguarding and Support. Child protection investigations had been reduced and a tendency for better early help and prevention in the community. Partners felt reassured they could challenge the Council and ask questions when necessary. Referrals had timely handling and efficiency. Oversight was noted as being particularly strong and positive. Practitioners also felt listened to and that they could challenge approaches. It was witnessed that children were not having to repeat their experiences at multiple stages which was a major positive.

There are ongoing challenges to recruit and retain social workers, however Wiltshire Council was identified as having experienced family support workers that provided consistency and good quality assessments and reports with significant detail. Analysis was also seen as strong and contributed significantly to key decision making.

Although overwhelmingly positive, some areas where further improvement could be made were identified....

The responsiveness of commissioned services (particularly substance misuse and domestic abuse) had dropped off. Families coming into the Council's safeguarding process are vulnerable and some need in person support, not just online as this is not always suitable.

Gaps around adult mental health and wellbeing were identified, specifically around criteria for help being too high.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - support for suspected ADHD children was described as needing improvement and the level of need described as overwhelming. The burden of work in the area was mainly falling on family support workers to fill. Support workers end up filling lots of roles and may not have specialist training. Some children with less complex Special Educational Needs had fewer options than before and the offer of activities during school holidays had been reduced. However, getting a diagnosis was seen as the biggest stumbling block.

It was summarised that the majority of areas were extremely strong with good staff and practices. A small number of areas including early help for children have been identified for improvement.

Debate

During debate a number of clarifications and points were raised:

The committee thanked the Director for Families and Children and Professor Katy Burch Assistant Director, Institute of Public Care, Oxford Brookes University for report and welcome positive findings.

Youth services are involved in key decision where appropriate. For the most part safeguarding decisions often involve police and social services.

The importance of including community led partners in feedback was stressed.

A support worker previously employed at Wiltshire Council was quoted as saying they felt prevented from attending the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and giving insight since leaving even though they had set up a charity that works with children with mental health difficulties. It was clarified that partners would be invited to strategy discussions where relevant, and that the Council would not want people to feel they haven't been treated like professionals.

On the use of Area Board funding for supporting work with children on their mental health, it was reminded that there is a youth provision in Area Board grants but the ongoing task group surrounding this may decide to make a recommendation shortly about interfacing with partners.

The Council is aware of the needs of young people regarding mental health and have worked closely with the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The model is being reviewed and a workshop was held specifically on children's mental health.

Looking at schools' contribution to early support is important and when a review was made over 3 years ago it was found that schools were more enthusiastic to refer children to services and less so in taking a lead role themselves compared with currently. Schools are not begrudgingly accepting step downs from statutory support plans but rather are remaining supportive and understanding of children's ongoing needs.

It is not unusual for schools to find their referrals accepted for support plans more often than other partners as the police are more likely to refer for a safeguarding issue whereas schools are more likely to refer cases when not an out and out safeguarding issue. This hasn't been considered a concern.

The benefits of having Oxford Brooks conducting a review was emphasised and the need to compare to other local authorities to understand progress and to learn was stressed.

It was clarified that the report shared at the committee was only a summary report and that more detail could be provided. The report shows that Wiltshire Council are doing well and should be seen as a significant positive and congratulation to Children's Services. All local authorities are different in providing children's services, but comparisons yielded similar positive statistics which indicates good practise.

Actions to tackle substance abuse and mental health issues are going to be drawn from the recommendations of the report and be used with the Service Delivery Plans. This will be brought back to the committee to consider.

It was clarified that post 16 transition from NEET was not included in the report as it wasn't a strong feature and wasn't being focused on in the context of looking at all features of support and safeguarding across the county. NEET figures were not looked at due to the theme of the report being safeguarding.

When asked about the rates of Looked After Children per 10,000, it was emphasised that the report had focussed on comparing Wiltshire with outstanding local authorities in rural areas, rather than those in large urban areas. When compared directly with outstanding rural authorities Wiltshire's rates were broadly in line and supported the conclusion that good practice was taking place.

The Chairman believed the report marked a milestone Wiltshire's journey of improvement over the past decade. We now have a report which show we deliver for young people in Wiltshire.

The full report can be found in the agenda pack.

Resolved

To consider the recommendations again in an update report within 6 months.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 and was resumed at 12:00

67 **Community Health Services**

The Chair informed the Children's Select Committee that at its meeting on 4 July 2023, the Health Select Committee received an update on the progress of the Integrated Community based services Programme, including an outline of the aim and purpose of this programme, the link to the Integrated Care Partnership strategy, and key milestones/timelines. The information provided can be accessed on the [meeting's recording](#) and the written briefing is attached.

It was also clarified that officers had not been requested to attend the meeting but was an opportunity for committee members to ask questions and / or consider whether this is an area for further scrutiny for this committee.

It was clarified that the Children's Select Committee was being asked to consider how health services across BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire were being commissioned. Wiltshire Council had an integrated service for children's community health provided by HCRG including a public health nursing element which had now been commissioned by Wiltshire Council by themselves going forward. The Children's Select Committee was seen as an important committee to cite on the process and would be updated accordingly.

Resolved

For the chair and vice-chair to receive a joint briefing with the chair and vice-chair of Health Select Committee before the next update is taken to Health Select to determine whether this should be an area of work / interest for the Children's Select Committee.

68 Corporate Parenting Annual report - outcome of review by the Children's Select Committee's Standing Task Group

The Chair informed the committee that the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel was considered by the Children's Select Committee's Standing Task Group on Monday 26 June, ahead of the annual report being finalised by the Corporate Parenting Panel on 27 June and being presented to full council on 18 July 2023.

The findings of the Standing Task Group were being presented to the committee alongside the Corporate Parenting Panel's annual report – both are in Agenda Supplement 2.

The chair stated that he thought it was a robust and detailed review by the Standing Task Group and was glad to see that some of the suggestions had already been implemented by officers.

It was specified that it was for the committee to review the findings by the Standing Task Group and decide whether to endorse the recommendations. It would then be for officers to offer a response to these recommendations when the finalised report is presented to full council on 18 July 2023.

Peter Hutton, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel, was invited to comment and stated that the Head of Children in Care and Young People and he had attended the task group meeting referred to. It was echoed that the report was robust and detailed and was already being acted on by officers. Focus on providing narratives to data going forward was highlighted.

It was asked that as certain members of the CPP take on specific responsibilities, that those members might attend and inform the committee of their roles.

Resolved

To endorse the report of the Children's Select Committee's Standing Task Group and accordingly the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report.

69 FACT (Families And Children Transformation programme) - interim report

The chair reminded the committee that it had received a report on FACT at its meeting on 25 October and requested a 6-months update, which is the attached

report, to review the data set that had been created and how the Family Help programme had been implemented.

The full report can be found in the agenda pack.

The FACT Programme Lead and Director of Families and Children's Services were invited to comment.

The programme is a 2-year programme in its early stages and some elements are operational whilst others are yet to be launched. In response to questions at the last committee report it was highlighted that information regarding the development on the outcomes framework and information on stakeholder engagement in Warminster and Westbury had been included to reassure members that that work is robust. It was noted that FACT is working with Oxford Brookes Institute of Public Care.

Debate

During debate a number of clarifications and points were raised:

The FACT activity that is laid out in the report was fundamentally about the whole partnership approach to early-stage intervention and prevention. Family Hubs are one area of this and the development of them is integrated within the Family Help Strategy and thus rooted within its monitoring and evaluation. It's a national framework with set principles and objectives that will be delivered.

Presentations had been delivered to Warminster and Westbury Area Boards and the contacts list is constantly growing. FACT is open to inviting individuals to conversations. Local members were highlighted as important participants in such discussions and more effort would be made to include them by default.

The reason for headings in terms of themes is due to the overall strategy, which is fundamentally a strategy of social mobility and the link between education and opportunities in later life. This is the reason for the link between education and wealth in this way and is not judgemental at all. It is also related to the terminology and Health and Wellbeing categories within the strategy.

The integrated front door manager line manages the pilot coordinator to allow family help workers to link with the locality team in Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), therefore avoiding duplication of services and/or families being missed by both teams.

The committee expressed its willingness to receive a further update in 12 months.

Resolved

To note the report

70 **Update on the building developments at Silverwood School**

The chair informed the committee that the attached report provides an update on the building developments at Silverwood School, a co-educational special school for children and young people aged 4 to 19 years, formed in September 2020 with campuses in Rowde, Trowbridge and Chippenham (former schools of Rowdeford, Larkrise and St Nicholas).

Cllr Jane Davies (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SEND and Transition and Inclusion) was invited to speak on the report.

It was stated that the desired outcome did not just revolve around the buildings but the excellent education of the children.

The delays were noted but it was stressed that positives have been seen in the offers of support from Longfield, Hardenhuish and Paxcroft Schools. Specifically Paxcroft was singled out for high praise given the agreement of a ten year lease on some outdoor space to reduce physical constraints on Silverwood School in Trowbridge and the lease of a temporary classroom for a year whilst the transition is completed.

A risk was highlighted in paragraph 25 that couldn't be fully controlled but was being closely managed.

The Head of SEND and Inclusion gave a PowerPoint presentation that can be found in the agenda pack.

Key points from the presentation included:

Demand for a specialist place is extremely high. Places are increasing from 340 to 460 across Silverwood School.

The new build has had 40 weeks of construction delays, however £10,000 per week was received from the developer as compensation for this.

Transitional developments are in place and solutions have quickly been implemented, including the hosting of a satellite provision from Bellefield School for the past 2 years. Satellite provisions are being prepared at Paxcroft, Longfield, Longmeadow and Hardenhuish Schools.

Delays to phase 3 have had implications for phase 4, with phase 5 being the retention and investment in Chippenham and Trowbridge and are in the early stages of building plans.

The overriding intention is for the Silverwood leadership team to have as smooth a transition as possible.

The need to manage a growing number of students at Silverwood given the ongoing work was stressed.

Silverwood had its first Ofsted inspection recently which will be shared when the report is available.

Debate

During the debate the following points and clarifications were raised:

The delays are predominantly down to weather issues. The biggest risk for the project was ensuring that the delivery of the electricity sub-station for the new building was completed by October 2023. Delays are being managed and additional support is being provided where needed. The most important thing is mitigating the effects of any delays.

The committee expressed its delight at the teamwork shown by the surrounding Trowbridge Schools mentioned in the report.

Financial liability for damage to materials lies with the contractor Wilmore Dixon and the contract with them is well-crafted.

The committee expressed its concern at the additional costs from the delay. It was clarified that although money was being received from the contractor for the delays there is a shortfall against the additional cost.

It was clarified that some of the additional cost was due to mobile classrooms having doubled in priced and become more difficult to source.

The committee requested a written answer regarding paragraph 25 and the issues of SSE once the correct legal advisors had been consulted with for information.

Cllr Piazza left at 12:52pm.

Resolved

- 1. To note the report**
- 2. To request a written answer on the risks associated with the delivery of the electricity substation to be provided by SSE.**
- 3. For a briefing to be given to the chair and vice-chair in early February 2024 to update on the planned move to Rowde classrooms from April 2024. At that time the chair and vice-chair will consider whether an update on the whole programme should be presented to the committee at its meeting on 12 March 2024.**

70a Child, Youth and Family Voice Team Annual Report, 2022-2023

The chair informed the committee that this agenda item was to consider the attached Child, Youth and Family Voice Team Annual Report, 2022-2023

covering work for the past year and the future plans of Families and Children's Services, Children in Care Council, and the Wiltshire Youth Council.

The Head of the Child and Youth Voice Team presented a PowerPoint which can be found in the agenda pack.

Key points from the presentation:

Children In Care Council (CICC) had run since April 2021 and 48 children have participated in sessions. The last year has mainly been aiming to build connections and a community feel.

'Mind of My Own' App has captured the views of children and young people to share with workers. Just under 100 times it was used by children to share views with workers and can raise safeguarding concerns which helped to get support quicker.

A fostering consultation panel has been used to provide a 2-way discussion and provide lived experiences to allow positive and constructive feedback.

Forward thinking includes recruiting voice ambassadors to use their lived experience to deliver recruitment and feedback.

The use of the bright spot survey that many Local Authorities use was highlighted to help understand the wider cohort in care and pinpoint areas to develop.

Debate

During the debate the following points and clarifications were raised:

Resources for the Youth Council would be looked at once a managerial replacement is made. A decision about how to resource the team going forward would depend on its role and how it aligned with other council initiatives. They were looking for alternative venues as the Studley Children's Centre was closing.

The CICC are very happy with the amount of participation from the children in care and stated that Wiltshire had far higher numbers than other Local Authorities.

The Youth Council have had specific targets. The amount of resource required to support the shadow cabinet had been underestimated and they would use the lessons learned and apply them in the next Youth Council electoral cycle. The Chair expressed his wish for more engagement with the youth representative on the Children's Select Committee.

Pride events and the need to look into resources and coordination for youth involvement was highlighted.

Resolved

To note the report and welcome a future report for 2023-24.

71 **Regular updates**

71a School Ofsted Judgements

The written report was noted.

71b DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

The written report was noted.

72 **Working together to improve school attendance**

The written update was noted.

It was clarified that emotionally based reasons for non-attendance would come under illness figures but wouldn't capture all young persons but mainly those where a conversation had taken place regarding the young person.

A DfE attendance advisor is meeting with Wiltshire Council to give advice on the national picture and actions Wiltshire Council can take to improve attendance. The committee expressed its interest at seeing the advice that is given.

The Vice-Chairman left the meeting at 1:24pm.

Cllr Corbin left the meeting at 1:25pm.

73 **Schools Forum**

The written update was noted.

73a Corporate Parenting Panel

Nothing further was added from the report given earlier in the meeting.

74 **Directors' update**

Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director – People) stated that Ofsted inspections were expected shortly. There had also recently been a peer review from LGA on SEND and the report was due shortly.

Cllr Jo Trigg wished to highlight that as a governor at Studley Green School she was extremely grateful for the support given by Corporate Director People and her team and from educational psychologists that had been exemplary. The committee echoed Cllr Trigg's recognition and thanks.

The chair wished to add that he had met an individual from the new music service and wished to pass on the comments of the great work they had been

doing. Concern was raised at the possibility that Wiltshire's service could be regionalised and lead to a lower quality of service. Therefore, it was asked that the issue be taken away from the meeting to be considered.

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

Cllr Peter Hutton, Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding, mentioned work that had taken place in the Youth Justice Service, including on anti-social behaviour.

76 **Chair's update**

An update on the Food, Unity, Energy, Laughter (FUEL) Programme was given in that it would be going ahead with a new company and thanks were given to officers for their work.

It was highlighted that Wiltshire Council had featured at the recent Local Government Association conference.

Ben Stevens had been appointed the Better Value Project and was looking at the deficit in the High Needs Block.

77 **Forward Work Programme**

Was noted as being attached to the agenda and praised for being in a more readable format.

78 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the Childrens Select Committee is Thursday 21 September 2023.

79 **Urgent Items**

The chair stated his wish for an organisation under the Wiltshire Community Foundation that brings together youth services to be invited to send a non-voting representative to sit on the committee. No objections were raised on this proposal.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.35 pm)

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

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

21 September 2023

Youth Provision and Area Youth Board Funding Task Group – Draft Report

Purpose of the report

1. To present the findings and recommendations from the task group review of Wiltshire's delivery of youth provision through the Area Board community-led model.

Background

2. The Children's Select Committee proposed the setting up of the task group to review how the youth grants were being used and whether they provided a consistent offer for young people across the 18 Area Boards. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed the Youth Provision and Area Board youth funding task group on 17 March 2020. The task group was put on hold because of Covid but remained on the Forward Work Plan and initiated in April 2023.

Terms of reference

3. Wiltshire Council has taken a community-led approach to meeting its statutory duty to youth provision. Each Area Board has a responsibility to support youth activities in their area through partnership working with local organisations, supported by a youth grant system. The remit of the task group was to review:
 - a) How the Council utilises the Area Board youth funding.
 - b) How the Council assures itself that it is meeting its duties with regards to youth service provision.
 - c) How the Council ensures that young people are aware of what youth provision is on offer.

The committee had further aspirations for the Task Group, which were,

- To identify best practice to better deliver youth work within the budget the Council has.
- To explore the smartest way of using the Area Board Youth Funding.
- To reinforce consistency across the 18 area boards in terms of allocating youth funding and confirming that the eligibility criteria reviewed last year remains fit for purpose and can be applied appropriately.

Methodology

4. The task group comprised the following membership:

Cllr Jo Trigg (Chair)
Cllr Helen Belcher
Cllr Jack Oatley
Cllr Mark Verbinnen
Cllr Iain Wallis

5. The task group met on seven occasions:

26 April 2023	Scoping meeting
17 May 2023	Meeting with officers, cabinet member and portfolio holder to review how the Council utilises Area Board youth funding.
7 June 2023	Meeting with officers and portfolio holder to review how the Council assures itself that it's meeting its duties with regards to youth service provision.
8 June 2023	Meeting with Youth Partnership – providers of youth services in the county.
28 June 2023	Meeting with officers and portfolio holder to review how the Council ensures that young people are aware of what youth provision is on offer.
5 July 2023	Attended Youth Council to talk to members about the involvement of young people in decision-making, barriers to participation in activities and preferences for finding out about local activities.
26 July 2023	Meeting of task group to review findings and agree report and recommendations.

Evidence

Meeting the statutory duties with regards to youth provision

6. Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, (amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) requires that every local authority in England must, so far as reasonably practicable, secure for qualifying young persons* in the authority's area access to sufficient educational and recreational activities** (also referred to as positive leisure-time activities) which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities.

**Qualifying young person's" are those aged 13-19, and up to 24 for young people with a learning difficulty.*

***Sufficient educational leisure-time activities" and "sufficient facilities for such activities" must include those which are for the improvement of young people's personal and social development.*

7. The duty for local authorities is broad. The Council sought legal advice (Appendix B) to provide reassurance that the framework outlined in the Area Board Youth Engagement Strategy (Appendix A) would meet the statutory duties on youth provision.
8. There is an expectation that councils will involve young people. According to the 2012 statutory guidance, 'local authorities must take steps to ascertain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them'.
9. Councils are required to take the strategic lead for coordinating the overall local youth offer of all available youth work and activities for young people. Effective partnerships should also be developed with other providers and community partners to plan and deliver activities. The National Youth Agency (NYA) states '*local authorities need to ensure that planning is not undertaken in isolation from other agencies and services to ensure access, resources and accountability for shared outcomes and collective impact for young people by bringing together public, private, voluntary and community sectors to secure youth services.*'
10. There is no requirement on local authorities to report on how they are meeting the statutory duties on youth provision. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) recommends that local authorities seek advice from the National Youth Agency (NYA) on good practice in youth provision. The Council has been in contact informally with the NYA and is aware of the possibility of inviting the NYA to carry out an audit.
11. The Council does not currently carry out a formal self-assessment on youth provision in the county and whether it is meeting the needs of young people. Officers reported activity over the past 12 months has increased the focus on youth activities, to ensure going forward there is a cohesive approach to services for young people. Officers also link in external providers of youth services partnership, to improve awareness of Council thinking and initiatives relating to young people.

Future Statutory Guidance

12. Following a consultation in 2019, the DCMS advises it will be publishing new guidance for Local Authorities in 2023 but this will be 'an update to the guidance only', all Councils will retain their current statutory duty to provide 'sufficient youth services.'

13. The National Youth Agency (NYA) advises that the new DCMS guidance will be much more explicit about the steps and actions councils should consider when developing its youth provision offer.
14. According to NYA, the expectation in the guidance is that each Council will undertake 1) a needs analysis, mapping existing provision as a baseline. The next step would be 2) to publish an annual plan which states the gaps between the needs and current provision and the steps the council will take to meet the needs of 13–19-year-olds and young people with learning disabilities up to the age of 24.

Area Boards youth grants – identifying need

15. The Area Board Youth Engagement Strategy sets out how Area Boards should develop their youth funding investment approach. It details three key mechanisms to enable Area Boards to understand the needs of young people, which are listed below.
 - A local youth working group in each of the 18 community areas. These are not necessarily led by the Area Board, but they must be key partners. Ideally, they support the Area Boards to create strong community links to inform their priorities.
 - A ‘positive activities’ needs assessment. This is undertaken through an online youth survey every 2 years to identify the kind of activities young people would like to see in their area.
 - At least one direct engagement event with young people per annum per area board.
16. Officers provided a breakdown of youth focused activity by area board from the last two years, 2021-2023 (Appendix C).
17. The breakdown showed that ten area boards work with Local Youth Networks (LYNs), in some areas these are called youth forums. Two area boards work with partner led LYNs or forums. Six area boards are operating without a LYN or Youth Forum.
18. The last youth survey, carried out in 2021, had 4874 responses in total. Responses varied from none in two areas to 575 being the largest response. Schools have a pivotal role in engaging young people to complete the survey, so where area boards don’t have an effective partnership with local secondary schools, they will struggle to get a good response to the survey. Most would have too small a response to be able to rely on the survey results alone to inform the priorities for young people in their area.

19. Area boards have adopted different approaches to delivering a direct engagement event. An effective approach has been to hold LYN meetings in schools. There are plans in several areas to hold youth themed area board meetings in 2023. Some areas have commissioned outreach projects to engage with young people in their area.
20. Innovative approaches highlighted by officers, included Malmesbury Area Board's effective partnership working, leading to joint projects with partners and strong links with the school supporting school-based engagement with young people. Salisbury Area Board has a roving youth panel and is focused on identifying gaps in provision. It is working with a wide range of partners including Salisbury City Council.
21. When making comparisons between the area boards, the task group recognised the variances in the profiles of area boards and the different challenges they face in meeting their remit to support youth provision.
22. As stated above, the community-led model depends on the Area Board having effective communication and partnerships with the local communities and providers. This presents a particular challenge in areas where these community resources are limited.
23. One response to this challenge has been the Rural Outreach Project where five Area Boards agreed to procure a youth provider to deliver engagement and activities for young people across their community areas. They all faced similar circumstances with limited existing community-led activities and young people isolated with little or no access to transport. As well as providing direct delivery the project aims to have a longer lasting impact and is tasked to strengthen links with rural communities and identify potential future provision.
24. Some Area Boards continue to face these challenges. They may struggle to engage with local partners such as schools or lack experience in community capacity building. Furthermore, they may not see it as their role to proactively develop provision for young people. The Strategic Engagement and Partnership Managers have a key role in supporting Area Boards to maintain community links and kick start projects to fill a gap in provision.

Area Board Youth Grants – Distribution of Funding

25. The current annual budget for Area Board Youth Funding is approximately £350,000 which is divided proportionately (with more populated areas receiving larger grants) between the 18 Area Boards to distribute as grants.
26. The Council publishes an annual summary of how this money is invested in the county. In 2021/22, for example, £326,955 was awarded to 122 projects. The

average grant was £2680 and the total value of the projects (i.e., including matched funding) totalled £766,169.

27. The annual summary doesn't illustrate the disparity in funding in different areas, with some Area Boards fully committing their budget while others are not spending their allocated budget. An underspend of £105,479 in the 2022/23 financial year was noted by the task group. One significant factor given for the underspend was the level of engagement undertaken by an Area Board. Area Boards with no LYN, or equivalent group, tend to allocate less funding for youth activities as evidenced in the Area Board Youth Data (Appendix C). In addition, different boards had different interpretations of funding criteria and some Area Boards are stricter in applying it.
28. The task group queried whether investment in youth activities needed to be restricted to the age-range of statutory duty, 13-19 years (or up to 25 years for projects involving young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability). Informally, most Area Boards do apply some discretion and approve applications for funding for activities that would include a younger age group if most beneficiaries fell within the statutory age-range.
29. Proposals from officers and the executive were considered regarding diverting some of the funding currently allocated to youth grants to a younger age range or to resource a post dedicated to identifying opportunities for external funding and partnership bids, although it was thought there may be existing resources to cover this role.
30. The task group queried whether there could be more value in having greater flexibility in funding arrangements, for example, allowing larger organisations to bid for larger amounts and possibly to allow bids that cover core costs as well as one-off project costs. In response, it was confirmed that work had started to meet the needs of providers covering much of the provision in their community area and/or delivering activities over more than one community area. A Grant Assessment Panel had been introduced in 2022 to consider application for covering a third grant (the current guidelines state a maximum of 2 grants per organisation per financial year) or for work across multiple areas.
31. While the Council is cautious of having some providers dominate funding, some consideration had already been given to amending guidance and funding criteria to give Area Boards autonomy to continue funding activity the board views to be useful.
32. The task group has observed that the catchment area for providers does not always fall within the Council's defined community areas, which could prove a barrier for making an application.

Area Board Youth Grants – Measuring Impact

33. There is a framework in place to measure; the volume of funding; the leverage on funding investments; outcomes as fed back through the annual grant funding survey of grant recipients; youth working group meetings; and the number of youth engagements delivered.
34. The Council can record and analyse the profile of beneficiaries to assess the extent to which they are representative of the general population.
35. The Council recorded that 9,345 young people took part in activities funded by Area Boards in 2021/22. Grant recipients were asked to report 'the number of individual young people who took part or benefitted from the outcome of your project.'
36. While data is available to analyse the activities funded by the Area Board, the task group questioned the data available to assess whether Area Boards were meeting need and understanding the gaps in provision. The response was that Area Boards need to rely on data obtained through their work with partners which could be both quantitative and qualitative.

Area Board Youth Grants – Feedback from Stakeholders

37. In 2020, Wiltshire Community Foundation (WCF) developed the Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network, as they recognised there was a gap in connectivity across Wiltshire's youth sector.
38. What began as an informal network offering peer support and information sharing has developed into an effective partnership, that provides a co-ordinated framework for professional development and collaboration. As well as regular meetings for members, the group advocate for the sector, carry out research and support a network of youth providers big and small. The partnership is ambitious and wants to develop quality standards and be a voice for the sector. The Wiltshire Youth Partnership is developing national links and is working collaboratively with the Young People's Foundation on capacity building.
39. The task group met with 9 members of the youth partnership, all representatives were from organisations who were providing activities for young people and many of whom had experience of applying for funding from area boards and, in the case of Youth Action Wiltshire, supported small, volunteer-led groups who were looking for funding.
40. Providers fed back that the current system helped local groups and had been instrumental in supporting some youth clubs to start and develop. It works well when organisations build good relations with elected members who appreciate and support the work of their charity. In return, it also helps elected members to understand what is happening in their area. It can underpin the work of an organisation when there is little funding available for open access youth work.

41. Members of the partnership felt that there were definite areas for improvement with the current system. Key issues were a) only being able to apply for 2 Area Board grants; b) needing to go to multiple Area Boards when projects crossed Area Board 'boundaries'; c) funding being available for projects but not running costs; d) smaller groups having limited resources to engage with the Area Boards and secure match funding.
42. Suggested improvements from network members included the introduction of a tiered grant system, which would maintain the existing project grants for small, local organisations and then add a tier for larger organisations, covering bigger areas and delivering a substantial proportion of youth provision in their area.
43. The partnership suggested a further tier of funding, alongside the Council taking a more strategic role. If the Council invested in infrastructure, for example in training and development of the youth sector, it would support the partnership to develop a coherent voice for the youth sector in the county. This would enable them to make effective consortium bids for youth funding in Wiltshire that are currently being missed.
44. Partnership members welcomed the increase in collaboration between the Council and providers. They wanted support and recognition rather than direction. As providers, they are the ones working directly with young people, and they do not want 'a council resource to tell us what the priorities are.'
45. They would welcome more flexibility to allow funds to be diverted to areas where funding was needed. At a time of funding shortage and increasing need, it was frustrating for them to learn that there was an underspend in the youth budget.

Area Boards and Youth services provided by the Council

46. The task group wanted to understand the connection between the services provided to young people by the Council and the remit of Area Boards to support youth provision in their areas.
47. Presentations were received from Young People's Services (including Youth Justice, Stronger Families and Emerald Child Exploitation), the Post-16 Participation Team, providing support around employment and training and the Families and Children Transformation (FACT) project.
48. The focus of Council directly delivered services for young people is targeted rather than a universal offer, this is facilitated via the Area Board model. The teams responsible for targeted work with young people, work with community partners and value being able to refer young people to community youth provision.

49. The experience of the Council teams was that the presence of community-based youth providers was variable across geographic gaps.
50. While some community partners were well known within the Council, there was uncertainty about where to find information or advice about community organisations working with young people. This lack of clarity around who to approach for information could be partly explained by a staff restructure and role change from Community Engagement Managers to the introduction of the Strategic Engagement and Partnership Managers.

Communication with Area Boards in the delivery of Council services for young people

51. Some of the Council services for young people had made a connection with an Area Board. There was an example of targeted work to reduce anti-social behaviour delivered in-house and in liaison with the Area Board in Devizes.
52. This project was more of an exception than standard practice and there may be the potential for Council teams to engage more with Area Boards and use them as a resource. They have strong connections with town and parish councils as well as community organisations and their support could be used to resolve community issues.

Meeting the Duty to ensure young people are aware of the provision on offer.

53. In the community-led model, it is seen as a responsibility of the Area Boards to make sure that young people are informed of activities and opportunities through their local youth networks (or equivalent), via youth providers and via schools.
54. The task group reflected that there is a weakness to the approach of relying on Area Boards to disseminate information to young people when some Area Boards do not have good community links. As stated previously there are currently areas where there is not an established network, which may reduce awareness or take-up of youth activities in those areas.
55. Centrally, the Council uses the following communication methods; social media, a resident newsletter which people can sign up to receive, schools' newsletters and the website. These are not really aimed at promoting individual activities but could increase general awareness of the Area Board funding.
56. It was acknowledged that consideration needed to be given to different age groups when promoting activities for young people. It was likely that schools, parents, and carers would be sources of information for young people up to 16. For the 16–19-year-old group, with the exception of targeted communication on employment or training, there was no specific approach being taken.

57. According to statutory guidance, local authorities have a responsibility to 'publicise effectively to young people and their families the overall local offer of all services and activities available to young people locally'. The NYA adds further detail, 'to fulfil the statutory duty all local authorities should produce a clear index of current open access provisions across local authority, voluntary, community and private sector providers.' While there is a published local offer for young people with SEND, there is currently no central source of information on general youth provision in Wiltshire.
58. The task group were interested to learn about the work being undertaken by FACT to create a webpage for families. It is a subsite on an existing website, Wiltshire Together [Wiltshire Together - Wiltshire Together](#) . Its development has been informed with input from the FACT community forum and consultation with families who have been very clear that they want a single platform. Information is going to be migrated to the new platform so that it will be extensively populated at launch. As many community partners already use Wiltshire Together, there is potential for promoting activities through this route.
59. The task group understood the logic of having a dedicated website, noting that it is not easy to find information on the main Council website. There were some doubts, however, about the public awareness of Wiltshire Together. They were assured that work was planned to ensure a high level of awareness. Oxford Brooks are supporting the project and adopting an agile approach of Test, Trial and Learn.

Feedback from the Youth Council

60. The task group attended a Youth Council meeting and carried out a live survey with Youth Council members to get their feedback on the promotion of activities, young people's involvement in deciding what happens in their area and barriers to involvement.
61. The Youth Council members present fed back that they predominantly gained information about activities, groups, and events at school (5 responses), also parents (2), friends (2) and social media (1) with Instagram seeming to be the most popular choice.
62. The majority (7 of 9) had not been asked what they would like in their area. If they were to be involved their preference would be by survey (6), although a young person only forum was a possibility (3), nobody opted for attending a public meeting. Youth Council members fed back experience of providers going to schools, which they thought was a good idea with a caution that providers shouldn't assume that the information would cascade from older pupils to younger ones. One participant had experienced attending an Area Board and felt that evening meetings with predominantly adults attending would not be appealing to young people.

63. When considering barriers to involvement, anxiety (5) was the most significant obstacle, with cost (2) and travel (2) also having some impact.
64. The task group welcomed the honest feedback from participants. They concluded that Area Boards needed to involve young people in the design of events and consultations if they were to involve young people effectively in Area Board decision-making.

Conclusions

65. The strength of the Area Board led approach to youth provision is that it allows for creativity in developing local solutions to issues. The weakness is that it does not guarantee consistency. While most Area Boards are working with community partners, others are not. The impact of this variance is an inconsistent offer for young people across the county.
66. The lack of a requirement from central government to monitor and measure the delivery of the Council's statutory duty means that there is no robust system for recording, analysing and gap analysis in relation to the delivery of youth provision under the Act. This makes it hard to determine how well the duties are being met and where any gaps in provision may lay.
67. A change in approach to allocating the Area Board youth funding budget is needed to ensure that money allocated for youth activities is spent effectively to make the best use of limited resources.
68. The Council devolved delivery of youth provision to the voluntary and charity sector. While the task group has focused largely on the youth provision supported through Area Board grants, the task group recognises this provision does not illustrate fully the youth provision being delivered in Wiltshire.
69. The Area Board youth grants have a short term, project based and localised focus. There is external pressure for the Council to consider taking a wider view of youth provision. One expectation in the statutory duty is for local authorities to take a strategic lead and the new guidance is likely to consolidate this expectation by outlining a process and structure for councils to take this forward. Youth service providers too are asking for a longer term, strategic approach from the Council to provide a sustainable future for the provision of youth services.
70. There is a range of services being delivered by different departments to support the needs of young people. There has been a shift within the Council to take a more collaborative approach and to extend that partnership working to external stakeholders. However, there is no one single team or individual with oversight and tasked to ensure that the Council is meeting its responsibility. The Council's

services are targeted rather than focussed on communication of a Wiltshire-wide offer to young people.

71. There is scope for further integration between the youth work being provided in the community and supported by Area Boards and the targeted provision for young people delivered directly by the Council. There were examples of officers working closely with Area Boards on issues relevant to their area and it might benefit Area Boards and officers if this could become standard practice.
72. Young People's voices are not always being heard when funding impacting young people is being decided.

Recommendations

73. The task group proposes the following recommendations for endorsement and response from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Area Boards and Children and Education:
 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.**
 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.**
 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.**
 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.**
 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.**

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.**
 7. **Area Boards need to be actively encouraged to work with a LYN, 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.**
 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.**
 9. **Explore how to facilitate increased engagement between officers delivering services for young people and Area Boards when community issues have been identified.**
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Cllr Jo Trigg, Chair of the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group

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Appendices

- A. Area Board Youth Engagement Strategy**
- B. Legal Advice Summary s507b**
- C. Area Board Youth Data 2021-23**

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Area Board Youth Engagement Strategy

Updated May 2021

1. Context

In 2014 Wiltshire Council adopted a community-led model for the provision of positive activities for young people. By delegating responsibility, resources and funding to Community Area Boards for youth activities, the council is committed to supporting young people and their communities to come together to develop a responsive and locally driven positive activities offer for young people. This means the positive activities offer will develop differently in each of the 18 Area Board areas to reflect local needs.

Definition of Positive Activities

A positive activity can be any educational or recreational leisure-time activity that is arts, sports, leisure, informal education and community based which helps young people achieve healthy and safe lifestyle outcomes.

Positive activities are for young people aged 13-19 (up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities) and may include activities and support which:

- Helps young people connect with their communities, enabling them to belong and contribute to society e.g. through volunteering
- Provides opportunities for young people to take part in a range of sports, arts, music and other activities where they can socialise safely with their peers and develop relationships, including with adults they can trust
- Encourage young people's personal and social development
- Improve young people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Help young people to achieve in education, work or training
- Prevent and divert young people away from risky behaviours e.g. teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour

2. Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996

S507B of the Education Act requires Council's, so far as reasonably practicable, to secure for qualifying young persons (aged 13-19 in the local area¹) access to sufficient positive leisure-time activities which improve their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities. With an annual budget for positive activities for young people this responsibility has been delegated to Community Area Boards.

The Equality Act 2010

Community Area Boards are required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under S149 of the Equality Act 2010. Community Area Board members must consider the equality issues and impact of proposals as part of the decision-making process. This requires the council to have regard to the need to:

¹ Up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Duty is in relation to protected characteristic groups and has to be applied in the delivery of Wiltshire Council services and in the employment of its staff. The relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, and nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Wiltshire Council Constitution

Area Boards are required operate in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Constitution. Area Boards must comply with the statutory equality and safeguarding duties as well as the council's rules on contracts and procurement and the Code of Conduct.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Area Board Youth Engagement strategy are:

- To engage young people and support their voices being heard in order to help shape local decision making.
- To adopt an evidenced and need based approach to the provision of positive activities for young people.
- To make the best use of local resources to secure suitable, safe providers and/ or projects/ programmes of positive activities for young people.
- To ensure partnership working between organisations and groups working with young people, and develop links with other services and organisations for young people.
- To promote the local positive activities offer effectively, in a way which maximises young people's participation and involvement.

4. Local Youth Engagement Mechanism

Local youth arrangements should be aware and connected to other council strategies and groups related to children and young people. Some examples include the Children in Care Council, Corporate Parenting Panel, Youth SEND, BAME integration and Youth Employment and Skills.

A versatile approach to engaging with young people is needed in Wiltshire given the size, rurality and complexity of the county. Engagements may be delivered through meetings, events, surveys, consultations, social media or via partners such as youth providers and schools. There are three fundamental aspects that each Area Board must ensure are delivered:

a) Community area youth survey

Each community area must undertake research to ensure the voice of a wide cross section of young people is heard on a regular basis. It is recommended that a survey or consultation exercise is undertaken at least every two years to ensure information is up to date and appropriate to the young people of that time. This assessment will seek to understand how young people believe their community area can be improved and what they perceive to be the key issues that should be addressed. The assessment must be delivered in a way that reduces barriers to participation, especially to those in under-represented communities who may struggle to take part. Key partners should be engaged to help ensure a thorough representation of young people are involved.

b) Working Group

Each community area must have an active youth working group. It will review local needs, priorities and outcomes for young people and provide intelligence to the Area Board. The working group may be asked to make recommendations to the Area Board on how funding for positive activities for young people should be deployed, however, this is not a requirement. The network should work proactively to ensure the voice of young people is amplified to help inform local decision making.

The full terms of reference for a local youth network is set out in appendix A. It is understood that the exact membership, meeting frequency and relationship between the LYN and the Area Board may vary across areas. Each network will be supported by the local Community Engagement Manager, however, models that are independently run in the communities are also encouraged.

c) Direct engagement with young people

Each area should undertake a direct engagement with young people at least once per year. This approach promotes visibility of the council with young people and improves dialogue. Some examples of such engagements are as follows:

- Meeting with young people for an organised school discussion
- A youth event which encourages youth providers and young people to attend
- An informal visit to a youth or sports club to discuss local issues with young people
- An online conversation with local youth representatives e.g. Youth Consultants on a particular issue

5. Safeguarding (Appendix: B)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

When entering into agreements with voluntary and private sector organisations, Community Area Boards need to be assured that the successful individual/organisation has the following in place:

1. Safer recruitment processes, including DBS checks; induction and supervision
2. Identified designated lead(s) for child protection with appropriate relevant training
3. Single central record of staff and volunteers
4. Safeguarding policy, allegations management processes and policy; code of conduct policy
5. Child protection and Safeguarding training at the level appropriate to posts and roles

For further details please see appendix B.

6. Priorities

- Ensure access to a broad range of safe positive activities is open to all young people regardless of their circumstances or needs;

- Ensure that young people are directly involved in the design, development, delivery and review of local provision. To include representation of local youth organisations;
- Ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people are made a high priority;
- Ensure that the positive activities offer reflects the needs of young people and the wider community, enabling them to pursue and progress in their areas of interest.

7. Financial

A budget for positive activities for young people will be allocated annually to Community Area Boards using the Area Board Funding Formula based on the population of 13-19 year old's. This will ensure that funding is allocated equitably across community areas according to local needs.

The funding is revenue based and must be used for the provision of positive activities for young people, targeted at the 13-19 age range (up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities). The funding is ring-fenced for these purposes only.

This funding is not to replace other local funding which is currently used to support services and activities for young people. Community Area Boards are required to use the positive activities for young people funding to complement and enhance other local resources, to secure an offer of positive activities which meets the needs of young people in their area.

Community Area Boards will be accountable for the budget, which will include regular financial reporting of spend and compliance with the council's budget and policy framework.

Budgets are allocated annually for use within one year. Roll-over will not normally be permitted although funding that is committed to local positive activity provision but unspent at year end will be carried forward subject to the normal financial management arrangements.

8. Wiltshire Council expectations of Area Boards and Youth Engagement

Monitoring and evaluation requirements for Area Board funded provision:

- Share best practice with other Area Boards across the county.
- Put into place monitoring and evaluation arrangements with providers of positive activities to ensure good quality services and that young people's needs are being met;
- Monitor and evaluate the impact and outcomes of the overall local positive activities offer on an annual basis e.g. grants impact survey
- Review and assess how funds are spent
- Ensure that young people have participated and been involved in decision making processes to develop the positive activities offer, and that their views have been taken into account.
- Provide evidence that any recommendations of the chosen Local Youth Engagement Mechanism (section 4) have been taken into account.

Policies and Procedures

Area Boards are required to adhere to Wiltshire Council policies and procedures. It is particularly important that Area Boards ensure they understand and are compliant with the equality of opportunity and safeguarding policies. Safeguarding guidance has been developed for Area Boards in respect of positive activities for young people and this will need to be adhered to at all times.

9. Quality and Standards Framework (Appendix: 3)

A quality assurance framework has been developed to promote and facilitate efficient and effective youth activities provision for young people.

There are six Quality Standards

Achieving outcomes for young people:

- Standard 1: Positive activities reflect young people's needs and interests
- Standard 2: Young people are aware of the positive activities available to them
- Standard 3: Young people are helped to achieve positive outcomes through positive activities
The design, development, delivery and review of positive activities:
- Standard 4: The positive activities offer is planned, developed, delivered and evaluated collaboratively
- Standard 5: Positive activities are inclusive and promote and provide equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes
- Standard 6: Positive activities are safe

Area Boards should promote and embed these standards through all stages of the decision making process, to make available a local positive activities offer that meets young people's needs and improves outcomes. Decisions on how the standards are encouraged, implemented and monitored are to be determined locally.

10. Decision-making process

Community Area Boards will make decisions at public meetings on how funding should be deployed to ensure that decision making is open and transparent.

The decision making process must:

- Take into account recommendations, advice and guidance from the chosen Local Youth Engagement Mechanism;
- Evidence that young people have participated and been directly involved in the decision making process and that their needs and views have been taken into account;
- Take into account and ensure compliance with the statutory duties outlined in Section 2 of this guidance;
- Demonstrate that safeguarding and quality assurance standards have been met;
- Ensure that the JSNA/ Needs Assessment will form a condition of any funding and/or procurement decision so that the effectiveness of positive activities may be monitored.

11. Review

This guidance is subject to change and may be reviewed at any time in conjunction with the Head of Service for Communities and Cabinet Member for Area Boards.

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Response to general query regarding use of Youth Funding to deliver s507b duties (February 2023)

1. Duty to provide (Section 507B(1))

Wiltshire Council, as a local authority, has a legal duty to secure sufficient access and facilities to educational and recreational leisure time activities which are for the improvement of wellbeing to people between the ages of 13 to 20. This duty is also extended to persons who are between the ages of 20 and 25 and having a learning difficulty to disability. In respect of the educational activities, they must also improve personal and social development. Sufficient means sufficient in respect of the quantity of activities offered. The legislation does not specify what these activities are or how this duty must be fulfilled. It goes onto include a list of how a local authority may interpret the duty. This list is set out below:

(5) a local authority may—

(a) provide facilities for positive leisure-time activities;

(b) assist others in the provision of such facilities;

(c) make arrangements for facilitating access for qualifying young persons to such facilities;

(d) organise positive leisure-time activities;

(e) assist others in the organisation of such activities;

(f) make arrangements for facilitating access for qualifying young persons to such activities;

(g) enter into agreements or make arrangements with any person in connection with anything done or proposed to be done under any of paragraphs (a) to (f);

(h) take any other action which the authority think appropriate.

(6) For the purposes of subsection (5)—

(a) the provision mentioned in paragraph (a) may include establishing, maintaining and managing places at which facilities for positive leisure-time activities are provided;

(b) the assistance mentioned in paragraphs (b) and (e) may include the provision of financial assistance;

(c) the arrangements mentioned in paragraphs (c) and (f) may include the provision of transport, of financial assistance or of information to any person.

2. Duty to consult (Section 507B(9))

In exercising functions under s507B, the Council must:

(a) take steps to ascertain the views of qualifying young persons in the authority's area about—

(i) positive leisure-time activities, and facilities for such activities, in the authority's area;

(ii) the need for any additional such activities and facilities; and

(iii) access to such activities and facilities; and

(b) secure that the views of qualifying young persons in the authority's area are taken into account.

A change/ reduction in funding could be viewed as the authority exercising a function as outlined in s507B(1) as it has a direct impact on the sufficiency of the positive leisure activities and facilities for qualifying young people. This is the stance that was taken in the case of *R (Aaron Hunt) v North Somerset Council* (Hunt). Hunt's case was that, as the Council was exercising a s 507B(1) function, it had first to carry out a proper consultation exercise under subsection 9 and ensure that the results were taken into account when making its budget cut decision. I have described the details more fully in paragraph 4 below.

However, the duty to consult under s507B(9) as above can also be interpreted in a wider sense, in that it could be considered as a duty to take steps and obtain views of qualifying young people as to what activities and facilities are to provided generally. This, in essence, would be getting an idea for demand. If this is done properly, then there is arguably no need to obtain views afresh every time a new decision is made, including the closure of a youth centre because their views will already be known as to the ss9 matters and can be taken into account. These comments were made in the judgment of the Hunt case also.

3. Equality duty

The public sector equality duty is found in s149 Equality Act and will need to be considered by the Council in the exercise of its functions. To discharge this duty, the Council will need to have due regard to statutory equality needs of those involved. This could be the completion and provision to members of an equality impact assessment (EIA) when putting forward the proposal.

Any EIA will need to address the obligations to pay due regard to the statutory needs to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons of different groups defined by reference to protected characteristics.

4. Risk of non-compliance

There is a risk of challenge to the council's decision making if it does not properly comply with its legal duties. There is some case law which is relevant to these issues and helps us interpret how a court may assess a claim if one was made. I have summarised this below.

R (Aaron Hunt) v North Somerset Council

In this case, the council made cuts of 72% to youth services in their budget. There was concern that in making this decision, the council had failed to comply with their obligations under S507B Education Act, and s149 Equality Act.

The Council argued that the s507B duty was not engaged because the proposal concerned a remodelling of the services (who should provide them) and that the closure of centres would be a last resort if community providers did not take them over.

In respect of the S507B duty, the Judge found that the proposal had a direct impact on the sufficiency of the positive leisure-time activities and facilities for qualifying young people. There was also a duty to consult under s507B(9) and this was not met as the council had not sought the views of qualifying young people about its proposed budget reduction; they had only brought the "remodelling" to their attention.

In respect of the equality duty, when the proposal was given to council members at the budget meeting, they were provided with a set of materials for that meeting which included a summary of the EIA. In court, it was found that there had been no requirement for the members to have read the EIA, therefore, the duty had not been discharged.

In this case, a fair amount of time had passed since the budget decision was made and it was not considered appropriate to grant remedy as it was too late to unwind what had been done. However, it is worth noting that the usual remedies for judicial review would usually apply, this may include having to redo an appropriate consultation and retake the decision.

5. Proposed changes to guidance

As we discussed, from the information that I have seen, there is no proposed change to the Education Act or the legal duties. There are some proposed changes to the the statutory guidance that runs alongside it. This means that the obligations within the Act will remain the same as to provide the activities and the duty to consult in the event that the budget is reduced and services are cut, as these obligations are firmly rooted in the Act itself - [Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). Authorities must, however, have regard to any guidance which is published by the secretary of state, which of course, is set to be changing. The council will need to have regard to the version of the statutory guidance that is in place at the time the decision is made. This means it may need to be regularly reviewed and materials updated, as required.

6. Other considerations

It is worth noting that there is provision for the local authority to charge for any activities provided to any qualifying young person under subsection 11. This could be something to look into.

It will be important to ensure there are clear reasons for decision making including that they are necessary and proportionate and those decisions must be backed up with evidence. This will assist the council in defending any future claim.

Response to query regarding extending Youth funding to 11 & 12 year olds (February 2023)

1. Consultation

In respect of extending the funding to 11 and 12 year olds, this age group would fall outside the scope of s507B of the Education Act. This means that they would not need to be consulted as the duties under the Act only apply to those qualifying young persons affected by a change in the leisure time activities. It could be seen that the extension to include 11 and 12 year olds is exercising a function under s507B in that it affects those qualifying persons that already use the service. Therefore those that already use the service may need to be consulted with. Would extending the scope of the activities to include 11 and 12 year olds mean that there are less places for qualifying persons, and would the inclusion of pre-teens affect the experience of those qualifying persons already using the service?

2. EIA

An EIA should be completed as this duty stands separately to the s507B duty. This will consider the impact of all those individuals that the decision affects.

3. Charging

As the duty to provide under s507B does not extend to 11 and 12 year olds, the provision for charging will also need to be looked at separately.

The Council has charging powers under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 and Section 3 of the Localism Act 2011.

In summary, under these provisions a Council can charge for discretionary services only (i.e. the Council has a choice whether to provide that service). In doing so, the Council is required to ensure that income from such charging “does not exceed cost of provision”.

The reference to costs is often determined by reference to the CIPFA Best Value Accounting Code of Practice. This states that there are two methods for assessing costs:

- (i) total cost – this includes employee costs, expenditure relating to premises and transport, supplies and services, third-party payments, support services and capital charges but not central establishment costs.
- (ii) total cost plus a contribution for corporate and democratic core costs – as above but includes a share in central establishment charges.

Wiltshire Council Evaluation of Dads Matter Too

Executive Summary

August 2023

Agnes Turnpenny, Katy Burch, Ellie Macey, Viv Taylor and Simon Bradley from the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University

Wiltshire Council

Evaluation of Dads Matter Too

Executive summary

Introduction

Traditionally, children's social care has tended to view mothers as the ones with the responsibility for children. This has led to criticism that social care approaches can be 'father-blind' and overlook the important role – both positive and negative – of fathers in children and family life (The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2021).

Fathers in child protection systems are rarely "all bad" or "all good". They are important to children, and similarly to mothers. Most fathers present a combination of positive and negative factors (Brandon et al., 2019). Researchers have suggested that their importance and influence should be better recognised and work undertaken wherever possible so that children can stay safe and be involved with their fathers (Brandon et al., 2017, The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2021).

The Dads Matter Too (DMT) Programme in Wiltshire

Dads Matter Too (DMT) is an evidence-informed multi agency programme aiming to identify, engage and support Wiltshire fathers and males who are in a caring role to children under 1 year. It was launched in 2022, initially as a pilot for 12 months (referred to as the 'pilot phase' in this report), then extended with local authority funding from May 2023 ('implementation phase').

DMT aims to improve outcomes for children in need by coming alongside fathers, actively addressing barriers to engagement and providing intensive family key-worker-led support designed specifically for fathers. The key theoretical underpinnings of the programme include that it should be:

- **Relationship-based** including an emphasis on creating a therapeutic alliance with fathers.
- **Trauma-informed** including through providing opportunities for fathers to reflect on their life journey and positive or damaging patterns and behaviours (and how they may want things to be different for their own child).
- **Educative**, including to improve fathers' understanding of their child's needs or, for example, the impact of frequent, intense and unresolved arguing on children.
- **Strengths-based and solutions focused**.
- **Person-centred, needs-led** (i.e. flexed to meet the needs of individual fathers).

The pilot was conducted in South and West Wiltshire¹ and, to be eligible to receive support from Dads Matter Too, fathers and males in a caring role had to:

¹ Fathers in the army were also eligible to take part from the North and East of the county.

- Be aged 16-30 years.
- Be considered 'hard to engage'.
- Have a child ('key child') under 1 year (including unborn) open to Early Help or subject of a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.

The intervention was provided by DMT key workers (both male and female) with multi-agency support during the pilot phase, including a domestic abuse behaviour change worker at FearLess (formerly Splitz) and a substance misuse worker from Turning Point. The programme was also supported by designated practice leads from within Health Visiting, the Family Nurse Partnership and Midwifery Services. Stakeholders met regularly during the pilot phase to oversee the programme's implementation.

Overview of the evaluation

The evaluation team at IPC employed a theory-based evaluation approach to explore DMT's implementation and early outcomes for fathers and families during the pilot phase (March to December 2022). Based on the findings from the pilot evaluation, a draft report was shared with Wiltshire Council in March 2023 and later presented to professional stakeholders.

In addition to capturing the essence of the programme, its theoretical underpinnings and key elements (see above), the evaluation explored the following questions:

1. How many fathers (and families) were introduced to and worked with the Dads Matter Too Programme? What were their characteristics?
2. How well did the Dads Matter Too Programme engage with fathers and 'what worked' in terms of effective engagement?
3. What was the nature and quality of support provided by the programme to fathers (and families)?
4. What were the short-term outcomes and effects of the programme, if any, including on parents and parental behaviours, also on Child in Need systems (for example on levels of expectation that fathers should or will be involved, levels of understanding of the needs of fathers and confidence in working with fathers)?
5. What are the key supports for programme implementation and impact on whole-system change?

The pilot evaluation was mixed method and involved the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data including 30 case records, administrative information, interviews with eight fathers, four core team members and 13 professional stakeholders, as well as seven referring/case holding professionals (e.g. social workers).

The evaluation was intended to encompass a 12-month period. However, as is normal with this type of pilot programme, there were some delays in starting the implementation phase and in initially recruiting fathers into the intervention. Therefore, the evaluation captured experiences from a shorter implementation period with a smaller than anticipated overall number of participants and few closed or closing cases. The findings presented in this report therefore provide a snapshot of early implementation and effects of the programme.

Key evaluation findings from the pilot phase

In its pilot phase (up to the end of November 2022) 30 fathers were introduced to the Dads Matter Too Programme.

- The average age of fathers involved in the programme was 24 years and the majority were White British.
- Over one third of the fathers were working at the time of their involvement in DMT.
- One half of the DMT interventions commenced antenatally: between 21 weeks to just a few days before birth.
- At the start of the DMT intervention, approximately two thirds of key children were subject of a Child in Need Plan and approximately one third were subject of a Child Protection Plan. There were multiple risk factors (mostly parental mental ill-health, domestic abuse and neglect) present in all cases and, in most of these, risks were attributable to both the mother and the father.
- Approximately two thirds of fathers were cohabiting with the mother at one point during the intervention but, on the whole, families experienced considerable relationship turmoil, often ending in their separation during the DMT involvement.
- The majority of fathers whose history was recorded had extensive and significant adverse childhood experiences including domestic abuse, parental abandonment, neglect, physical abuse, and parental substance misuse. At least one third of the fathers were care experienced (two thirds of those with recorded history).

Most fathers had not been engaging with any service when they were introduced to Dads Matter Too. Pressures on fathers to earn money and support their family emerged from the evaluation as one of the barriers to their engagement.

The pilot phase was successful in engaging fathers traditionally perceived by services to be 'hard to engage' for example because of their (young) age and vulnerability. Approximately two thirds of fathers recruited into the pilot engaged with Dads Matter Too. Given the cohort's characteristics and their history of non-engagement, this is considered to be a high success rate.

Fathers also perceived the programme positively, as "something new and different", specific to them and, as such, "worth trying". It seems that the name 'Dads Matter' helped in this respect. The flexibility was highly valued, for example in that the support could be provided out of normal working hours. However, the skills of workers and their key attributes including empathy and non-judgemental attitude were what kept some fathers involved beyond an initial contact.

Four programme/practice features were identified during the pilot phase as instrumental to engaging fathers effectively in the intervention: persistence; relationship and trust building; bespoke support for fathers; and skills of the key workers. A key learning has been that it takes time to build a trusting relationship, also that a significant motivation and 'draw' for fathers to being open to support was the prospect of connecting or re-connecting with their child/children.

Evaluators explored the content and quality of support provided by DMT key workers during the pilot phase by reviewing the key child's case notes in Liquid Logic and undertaking qualitative interviews. The evidence suggested that the programme offered

support for fathers in relation to their holistic needs including housing, debt, employment, mental and physical health, and involvement with the police / criminal justice system as well as parenting. However, relatively few fathers were referred to the domestic abuse change worker or substance misuse worker using the dedicated pathway for two main reasons. On the one hand, the relatively small size of the cohort and their needs meant that demand was limited. Interviews with programme leaders suggested that there was also a degree of mismatch between needs and what these services would offer (e.g. lack of evening appointments etc.).

According to case holding professionals, DMT contributed to Child in Need and Child Protection Plans positively and strengthened the overall work with the family, plugging gaps for example where the father had not engaged well with the child's social worker or where they identified that the father might need specific forms of support. Effective coordination and communication between the lead social worker and the DMT worker were instrumental in this. Fathers interviewed for the evaluation spoke highly of the quality and content of support they received from the programme and valued both the relational / therapeutic and practical aspects of the key worker support that were tailored to their needs. It was helpful to have someone to hear their story and provide targeted help for mental health, substance misuse and other factors getting in way of their parenting but also their own life. It was also helpful to use the Recovery Star to set goals and agree an action plan.

Evidence gathered by the evaluation in the pilot phase suggested that the programme had the potential to achieve positive outcomes including improved paternal:

- Engagement with professionals and (ex) partners.
- Involvement in childcare and co-parenting.
- Positive communication and conflict resolution in the family.
- Emotional health and wellbeing including developing better coping mechanisms.

There were also early signs that the programme could have a positive effect on fathers' addictive behaviours, community supports, physical health, use of time, self-esteem, trust and hope (other key areas in the Recovery Star).

There was not enough information during the pilot phase about the likely effects of the intervention on risks to the child. In five cases (16.6%), the risk level for the key child decreased substantially as indicated by case de-escalation or closure. Most of the fathers in these cases had a positive engagement with DMT. Furthermore, in some of the cases where risk had increased and the case was escalated (e.g. from Child in Need to Child Protection), this was not associated with any increased father-related risks.

The implementation of Dads Matter Too during the pilot phase was effectively supported by a dedicated and highly skilled and supervised core team, and a multi-agency Steering Group providing opportunities for developing better understanding and coordination across the partnership.

DMT incorporating the DMT Steering Group contributed to a growing recognition of the importance of involving fathers across agencies in Wiltshire. The commitment to improving work with fathers was shared by all partners represented in the Steering

Group and evidenced by various initiatives, such as dedicated resources for fathers in the health visiting service, a website for dads, training initiatives and increased awareness of fathers' needs.

Summary of further implementation of DMT and recommendations

Based on available and emerging evidence during the pilot phase, the independent evaluation concluded that Dads Matter Too was a viable intervention showing real promise of positive impact and outcomes in working with vulnerable fathers in children's social care. On this basis, IPC evaluators recommended that the programme should be continued with some notable adaptations to incorporate learning from the pilot.

From May 2023, DMT was rolled out with funding from Wiltshire Council, incorporating a number of adaptations arising from the pilot phase:

- The programme was extended to include all of Wiltshire without any additional condition.
- Eligibility was amended to include fathers of any age but key child must be subject of a child protection plan or above.
- DMT support was limited to six months, this to be clearly communicated at the start of the intervention.
- Coordination and collaboration with social workers was strengthened, including professional support to facilitate better engagement with fathers.
- Training is scheduled to take place in October and November by the support workers across social care teams to continue with awareness and embedding of practice with fathers.
- Consultations are being undertaken to provide a reflective space to discuss barriers to engagement and how these can be overcome.

Pre-birth work continued to be a priority, recognising the momentum and windows of opportunity that present during this period. However there was no change in the formal eligibility criteria in terms of the key child's age (under 1).

Family Nurse Partnership has identified father champions within the service and has father inclusion as an item on the team agenda. Midwifery is looking at developing information packs that will be sent to fathers following booking and Children's Centres will be arranging a father inclusive forum towards the end of the year while also offering a parenting course called Baby and Me, where the emphasis will be on fathers. Bi-monthly focus groups have been arranged so that the momentum of ensuring and promoting father inclusive practice in Wiltshire is kept.

Information about the sustainment of paternal and family outcomes has remained anecdotal, but it appears that positive impact has been sustained for many fathers and no escalation of risk has been reported within any of the relevant cases regarding fathers on the programme. However, evaluators recommend that longer-term monitoring and regular programme feedback should remain a part of the implementation to ensure that programme impact and outcomes are well-documented and evidenced.

Based on the findings from pilot evaluation and subsequent service developments, evaluators recommend that:

1. There continues to be a dedicated Dads Matter Too key worker resource to engage and work with fathers who are persistently non-engaging. Experiences from the pilot suggest that, in specific circumstances and contexts, a dedicated worker for the father can be instrumental in achieving change and promoting positive outcomes for the children.
2. Drawing on the lessons from the pilot phase, good practice should also be incorporated into mainstream work with families to achieve sustainable and systemic change. Professional support and consultation for children's social workers offered by DMT key workers and training for this group are both promising elements. Broader sharing and mainstreaming of good practice across the Partnership should be considered, including with the involvement of DMT key workers sharing with other groups of professionals including for example Health Visitors and Midwives how they have involved fathers and 'top tips' for doing so based on the experience from DMT and the broader evidence base.
3. With reference to the characteristics of fathers involved in the pilot phase, the opportunity to refer them with relative ease into substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse behaviour change support appear important. However, evidence on the effectiveness of the original multi-agency (commissioned) delivery model was limited and highlighted some potential barriers i.e. low take up. The new post-pilot arrangements will need to be monitored to understand their feasibility and effectiveness and to draw out any implications for the optimal way of providing these services (i.e. part of long-term commissioned services and/or some internal provision).
4. Oversight of how DMT is working should continue, including measuring the medium and longer-term impact and outcomes for individual fathers and families (for example using questionnaires and standardised measures) and incorporating a 'fathers' lens into regular practice audits of as well as the development of practice standards.
5. The partnership approach should be further strengthened – the continuation of the Steering Group beyond the pilot phase is welcome – to provide a multi-agency forum for coordination to drive good practice development and synergies across organisations. The Steering Group could also be asked to suggest ways in which the learning from DMT in Wiltshire could be shared more broadly, across the UK. Evaluators at IPC would be very pleased to support such dissemination activities.

Next steps

Since DMT commenced an approach was made by the Fatherhood Institute to Wiltshire Council to be involved in their Improving Safeguarding Through Audited Father Engagement (ISAFE) work. The primary outcome is father engagement practices among social workers in children's social care services. This work is being undertaken across all of the 5 Support and Safeguarding teams. The evaluation of this work is due in November 2023 and will be considered alongside the findings of DMT in order to make final recommendations for future practice across the partnership.

This report is being shared with the following forums to discuss the partnerships response to the learning and how this will be taken forward. The governance of the work therefore sits ultimately with the Safeguarding Vulnerable People's Partnership (SVPP).

- Families and Children's Systems Assurance Group – 12 September 2023

- SVPP Executive – 14 September 2023
- Under 1s Steering Group - 27 November

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

10 October 2023

**Subject: Wiltshire Council Annual Adoption Service: 2022-2023
Year End Report**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Laura Mayes - Cabinet Member for Children's
Services, Education, and Skills**

Key Decision: Non-Key

Executive Summary

It is a statutory requirement that Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service provides a year-end report to the Council in relation to the child's journey to adoption. It describes the management arrangements, outcomes, priorities, and finances for the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adoption West (AW), is commissioned to provide defined adoption services, and has responsibility for recruiting, assessing and approving adopters for our children. Adoption West is registered with Ofsted and has a separate inspection.

In this reporting period, 80 adopters were approved, this is a slight reduction on the previous year where 87 adopters were approved (85-95 target). However, there are fewer children waiting for adoptive homes than the number of families approved which means the demand can be met. As of 31 March 2023, there are 64 approved adopters waiting for a match. 36% of adopters approved in 2022/23 are available to adopt siblings, which exceeds the target range of 25-35%, a 15% increase on the previous year.

The focus for Adoption West is to recruit adopters for older children, those with additional needs, children from black and minority ethnic communities and larger sibling groups.

Nationally over the last nine years there has been a gradual decline in adoption being the outcome for children leaving care. In Wiltshire, the rate has remained relatively stable, ranging between 11-14%. Where adoption is the right permanence plan for a child, this is pursued by the Council and predominantly endorsed by the Court.

Comparative performance for local authorities is via the National Adoption Scorecard which, for Wiltshire, shows that performance remains strong. There are some fluctuations related to the commitment to deliver permanence via adoption for some children, despite factors which may make it more challenging to find a match, which impact on timeliness performance. Progressing the right permanence plan for a child will always remain the priority.

The national three year scorecard data is not yet published (due by the end of this year) and therefore comparator data is not currently available. Wiltshire has local reporting and therefore continues to have visibility of performance, but is unable to make comparisons against other authorities performance due to the lag in published data.

The three key scorecard measures each local authority Adoption Agency uses are as follows:

- A10: the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family:

The estimated figure for 2022-23 is 491 days, up on the previous year at 369. The target is 300-380 days.

- A2: the average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family:

The estimated figure for 2022-23 is 162 days, a slight increase from 145 in 2021/22. The target is 140-160 days.

- A20: the average time between entering care and placement order:

The estimated figure for 2022-23 is 283, a minor increase from the 282 days in 2021/22. The target is 210–230 days.

These measures on the surface indicate a decline, however those children outside of target have been reviewed to ensure the reason for delays are reasonable, and to determine whether there are practice improvements required to increase timeliness. For all children outside of targets, all delays were purposeful and in the child's best interests, or outside of the Local Authorities control. Where improvements could be made via the performance of courts, these are highlighted at the Family Justice Board. 4 children (1 sibling group) representing 25% of the total cohort was outside of timescale for reasons relating to their best interests; and 11 children (2 sibling groups) representing 69% of the total cohort were outside for reasons not within the Local Authority's control.

Whilst local measures show a decline, Wiltshire continues to perform well nationally and has robust quality assurance mechanisms in place to analyse practice outside of target ranges. Adoption performance remains strong, as evidenced within the data and quality review of individual children's experiences through routine audit. Annual target setting takes place to ensure targets remain appropriate, with a review of the targets taking place at the Performance and Outcomes Board on 05 September.

Adoption performance is reported quarterly to the Director of Families and Children's Services and to the Performance and Outcomes Board, chaired by the Corporate Director for People (DCS) and attended by the Cabinet Member.

Proposal(s)

It is requested that this report is approved and the contents of it are considered against the Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities for children in care to have a loving home, good relationships, and be respected.

Reason for Proposal(s)

Wiltshire Council is an Adoption Agency registered with Ofsted. The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards (25.6) and 2013 Statutory Guidance (3.93 and 5.39) describe the information that is required to be reported to the executive side of the local authority, on a six monthly basis, to provide assurance that the adoption agency is complying with the conditions of registration whilst being effective and achieving good outcomes for children. A report to Cabinet is prepared annually.

Adoption West is subject to separate scrutiny arrangements through its own Scrutiny Board.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

20 September 2023

**Subject: Wiltshire Council Annual Adoption Service: 2022-2023
Year End Report**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Laura Mayes - Cabinet Member for Children's
Services, Education, and Skills**

Key Decision: Non-Key

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides a year-end report to Cabinet regarding the performance of Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service, alongside a consideration of the effectiveness of Adoption West. It is a requirement of the condition of registration, as described in the 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards and 2013 Statutory Guidance, that Cabinet is satisfied the Adoption Agency complies with the conditions of registration, is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children.
2. Cabinet received an Annual Report regarding the Adoption Service in October 2022, covering the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. This report relates to the full year 2022/23 reporting period.
3. This report includes information regarding the management and performance of Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service and the Adoption Scorecard, relating to children who require adoptive families and those who are placed; the disruption of placements and children where the plan for adoption changes. It also includes summary information about the recruitment and approval of adopters by Adoption West and the work of the Adoption West Panel. It should be noted that details of the performance of Adoption West as an organisation can be accessed in that organisation's annual report.
4. It is recommended that the contents of this report are for approved.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

5. Wiltshire Council's Adoption Service contributes to a central priority as set out in Council's Business Plan 2022-2032; namely to protect those who are most vulnerable and provide permanent homes for children in care.
6. Wiltshire Council remains an adoption agency because it retains responsibility for children requiring adoption. Adoption West has responsibility for the recruitment, assessment and approval of adoptive families, family finding and adoption support.

Background

7. Adoption is a route to provide permanence for children who are no longer able to live safely with their parents or other family members. This is achieved through the provision of quality adoptive placements for Wiltshire's children where a decision has been made that adoption is in their best interest.
8. The fundamental requirement is that children are placed with families who have been assessed as being suitable to adopt. A recommendation of suitability is made by the Adoption West Panel, and this is ratified as a decision by that organisation's Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Through this process, there is rigorous assurance that approved adopters can provide safe, secure and enduring family placements for this vulnerable group of children. In turn, this allows them to grow, develop and thrive in a nurturing, supportive and loving family environment, removed from the stigma of being looked after by the local authority. To do this, there must be an appropriate range of enduring adoption placements to meet the assessed needs of children who need permanent adoptive families. These families must promote stability, safety and positive outcomes for children by working in partnership with all agencies, as required.
9. The legislative basis of this work is the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the accompanying 2005 Regulations.
10. The Local Authority, through reporting to Cabinet, must be assured of regulatory compliance and effectiveness through performance monitoring, challenge and improvement planning.
11. Adoption West has the responsibility to recruit, assess and approve adopters for children. This includes those who can provide permanence for children who may be considered 'harder to place'. This group includes older children, sibling groups, and children with additional needs and disabilities.
12. Adoption West is a Regional Adoption Agency: a partnership of six local authorities. It provides adoption services in line with government requirements, from the point of expression of interest to adopt, through to assessment and approval at panel and beyond, to Adoption Support.

Main Considerations for the Council

13. The main consideration for the Council is to be assured about statutory compliance and the effectiveness of the Adoption Service.
14. Wiltshire has set local performance targets in addition the national scorecard data, and this is the first reported year. In Wiltshire 16 children were made subject to adoption orders in 2022/23.
15. A10: 32% (5/16) children adopted moved in with their adopters in less than 380 days from entering care.
16. A2: 69% (11/16) children adopted were matched with an adoptive family within 160 days of the Local Authority receiving authority to place a child.

17. A20: 44% (7/16) children adopted were made subject to a placement order below 230 days from the date of coming into care.
18. These children's journeys have all been reviewed and the reasons for delays are not practice related or generally within our control i.e. relate to protracted care proceedings, the impact of additional assessments being ordered within the court arena, family members coming forward to be assessed at a late stage, and positively assessed family members withdrawing prior to final orders and/or placement. Given the significance of adoption for birth families, it is understandable that when family members present late in proceedings the Court and all those involved will want to make every effort to ensure families are assessed and considered as a kinship carer for a child.
19. There remain challenges with care proceedings concluding within the 26-week timescale, due to a number of factors outside of the Local Authority's control as described above. These challenges are subject to continued scrutiny via the Wiltshire Family Justice Board and Nationally informed by research findings, National reviews and DfE innovations which Wiltshire is at the forefront of.
20. Wiltshire are the regional lead in DfE Research: The National Pre-Proceedings Data Set project which should better enable us to measure the effectiveness of Pre-Proceedings and in turn improve delivery and timeliness for children at risk of going into the court arena.
21. Wiltshire have also recently (July 2023) been successful in a bid with the DfE to involve the Childrens Guardian (CAFCASS) prior to the first Case Management hearing in a care proceedings case, with the overall aim to seek to reduce the use of experts in proceedings and the overall length of proceedings. The shortening of care proceedings will have a direct impact on the timeliness of adoptions.
22. Overall, this demonstrates continued commitment to secure permanent arrangements for all children where adoption is in their best interests, even though it could take longer to find an adoptive match. To ensure continued progress and improvement, careful attention will be given to all aspects of adoption work that remain the responsibility of Wiltshire Council Adoption Service, whilst ensuring, through governance arrangements and challenge, the effectiveness of Adoption West.
23. Management arrangements and staffing within the Council are compliant with regulation in terms of qualification and experience. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) has overall responsibility for aspects of adoption retained by the Council. Reporting to the DCS is the Director with responsibility for the Families and Children's Service. The Head of Service for Support and Safeguarding and one of their Service Managers ensure the effectiveness of overall adoption provision; this Service Manager is the designated link with Adoption West. The Service Director for Adoption West came into post in July 2018, this provides strength and clear accountability with an opportunity to develop and enhance the strategy for improvement and ensure best outcomes for children.

24. The Director of Families and Children is the Adoption West company Director and sits on the Board of Directors. Adoption West is subject to a Scrutiny Committee that reports into Children's Select Committee.
25. Only three children were placed outside of the Adoption West area, either to be placed with siblings or to ensure a cultural match; both good reasons for placing outside of the area. Adoption West have however sought support/advice from the National Adoption Recruitment team regarding the recruitment from within BME communities across the region and are developing an action plan to address the issue.
26. In 2022/23, two rescissions of ADM decisions that children should be placed for adoption were made, where the plan for the child moved away from adoption (six in the previous year).
27. During 2022-2023 there have been no adoption placement disruptions and no placement breakdowns. This demonstrates strong matching.
28. Early Permanence (EP) is one of the DfE's aims in the 2021 National strategy: Achieving Excellence Everywhere. Adoption West has taken the lead in the South West. Of the 80 household approvals in 2022/23 56% of these adopters will consider Early Permanence. Increasing EP carers should see a positive improvement for children in the timeliness of their adoption journey and achieving permanence.
29. Adoption West will be involved in a new project which is due to be implemented in June 2023 'the South West Project for children with disabilities' Working with Oxford University. The Aim of this project to look at bespoke models of recruitment for children with a disability.
30. The Adoption West Adoption Panel complies with Regulation. This is important assurance as children who are the responsibility of Wiltshire Council are matched with adopters at these panels. The panel is chaired by a suitably skilled and experienced Independent Chair who ensures that the functions of panel are delivered effectively. There are Agency Panel Advisers from Adoption West to ensure that the panel is always adequately supported. To ensure that panels are quorate, there is an Adoption West central list of panel members established which includes members with direct experience of adoption, including adopters, and those who have been adopted.
31. To comply with regulation, all Panel members, including the Chair, receive annual appraisals which consider their effectiveness as panel members and any areas for development. There is an annual training day and Chairs meet regularly with the Panel Advisers to discuss operational and developmental matters relating to the panels' work and consistency, making any changes and improvements as required. There are regular liaison meetings between Council managers and Adoption West managers and the Panel Advisor.
32. The average duration of Care Proceedings for Wiltshire 2022/23 was 33 weeks, this is an improvement from 36.9 weeks in March 2021/22; and significantly lower than the national CAFCASS figure for 2022/23 which is 44 weeks. Through robust tracking, we know that there are key factors beyond the control of the

Local authority impacting on timeliness. The Care Proceedings Case Manager (CPCM) has specific oversight of adoption from pre-proceedings.

Safeguarding Implications

33. This service is delivered in accordance with Wiltshire Children's Services Policy and Procedures. The local authority has clear and effective safeguarding procedures in place for children and vulnerable adults. The partnership with Adoption West is regulated and Adoption West has the appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. There are no safeguarding implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications

34. The risk of poor health and wellbeing outcomes is known to be greater for children looked after. Safe and high-quality environments provided by adoption placements are, therefore, an opportunity to mitigate these risks and improve long term outcomes for these children and young people.

Procurement Implications

35. There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

36. Throughout the adoption process due regard is had to the Public Sector equalities duties but as this report is for noting there are no specific equalities issues raised by this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

37. There are no implications arising from this report.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

38. The Performance and Outcomes Board will meet on 05 September 2023 to consider this report prior to the report being presented to Children's Select Committee on 21 September 2023 and the Adoption West Scrutiny Task Group on 27 September.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken.

38. This report is for approval; no decisions are being requested.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks.

39. This report is for approval; no decisions are being requested.

Financial Implications

40. The service has been managed within budget, and therefore no financial implications arise from this report.

	2022-23 Budget (£ Million)	2022-23 Year End Final Spend (£ Million)	Variance (£ Million)
Adoption Support and Allowances	0.465	0.363	(0.102)
Adoption income	-	(0.068)	(0.068)
Contractual Payment: Adoption WEST	0.806	0.845	0.039
Total	1.271	1.140	(0.131)

Legal Implications

41. It is a requirement of registration as an Adoption Agency that the Executive of the Council receive regular written reports regarding the effectiveness, compliance and management of the Agency. It is agreed that this is in the form of an annual report, ensuring that legal requirements are met. There are no additional legal implications arising.

Options Considered

42. This report is for approval; no decisions are being requested.

Conclusion

43. Recent years have seen considerable change within the sphere of adoption with the introduction of RAAs and a focus on improving adoption performance nationally. At the heart of this is the belief that, for some children, adoption is the best route to legal permanence, security and the opportunity to achieve their potential. Wiltshire Council is committed to monitoring and improving service delivery where necessary for these children, with robust local measures in place to oversight practice.
44. Adoption practice in Wiltshire is strong, as evidenced within this report; and where timeliness is impacted, the reason for this is known and scrutinised.

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30 August 2023

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

Voice and Participation Service, Children's Select Committee Update September 2023

Team Structure

The Child and Youth Voice Team is being expanded to include new and existing relevant workstreams. The team will be renamed the Voice and Participation Service and will include SEND Voice, Family Voice and also mentoring and volunteering services in addition to the work already being conducted in the Families and Children's Services arena and the Wiltshire Youth Council.

Recognition at CYPN Awards

A remarkable achievement awaits the team as we find ourselves shortlisted for the highly prestigious Children and Young People Now - Social Care Team of the Year Award. The high number of entries from across the nation makes this recognition all the more commendable. The judges' praise for our selection resonates with the immense effort put in to secure our place.

Children in Care and Care Experienced adults

In the recent quarter, our efforts have led to 20 children in care and care-experienced adults engaging with our Children in Care Council activities. Our ongoing emphasis on fostering trust and camaraderie among this cohort has yielded positive results. This approach, anchored in cultivating relationships, has emboldened participants to openly share their experiences, thus influencing positive change.

Noteworthy activities have unfolded, enhancing the lives of our young participants:

- Our annual residential experience at PGL Liddington was offered to 18 children in care, aged 13 to 17, in July.
- August saw the Children in Care Council partake in a water sports day at Oxenwood Outdoor Activity Centre.
- The upcoming October half-term promises an adventure for our members aged 8 to 13 as they embark on a 5-day Cornwall excursion with Go Beyond.
- Our CiCC Committee proudly presents two insightful CiCC Cast Podcast episodes, one delving into Corporate Parenting Priorities and the other exploring life with foster parents.

Meet the Leaders

Our leaders' session produced valuable insights into the direction our young people want to pursue. Discussions encompassed priority issues, meeting attendees' preferences, and session delivery formats. Additionally, the introduction of the SEND Voice Worker role was explored, emphasizing the support required by children with SEND in care.

Kinship and Fostering Conference

We are actively contributing to the upcoming Foster Carers Conference on September 25. By integrating care-experienced adults into the event through keynote speeches, our objective is to uplift and empower foster carers. An interactive workshop named the "rucksack exercise" will offer a unique perspective on values held by families and their interpretation in the context of children in care.

Fostering Training Initiatives

Our collaboration with the Kinship and Fostering training team continues as we work to integrate the lived experiences of care-experienced adults into foster carer training. This approach aims to foster empathy and understanding among carers by sharing insights from those who have personally navigated the care system.

Bright Spots Survey

Collaborating with Coram Voice and the University of Oxford, our involvement in the Bright Spots program signifies our ongoing dedication to enhancing well-being for children in care. A forthcoming survey, "Your Life, Your Care" and "Your Life After Care," will enable us to glean valuable insights into their perceptions, needs, and experiences. The collected information will inform service improvements and better support.

Strengthening Family Engagement

As our new Family Voice Worker prepares to join us on 02 October, exciting plans are in motion. Initial endeavours will focus on enhancing child protection conferences through an online Family Engagement Workshop and insightful surveys. Extended family support will also be explored to prevent child placement in care, bolstered by the Family Voice Worker's involvement in support groups and audit monitoring.

Showcasing Success at Community Care Live

Our participation in Community Care Live on October 11 at 11:30 AM is eagerly anticipated. This workshop will amplify the voices of our youth, parents, and supported adults, showcasing firsthand the positive impact of our work. By sharing their transformative stories, we aim to attract skilled individuals to join our workforce.

Wiltshire Youth Council

Wiltshire's Youth Councillors are nearing the conclusion of their tenure and will be recognised for their accomplishments. As we evaluate the initiative and prepare for the next elections, additional resources are earmarked to build upon our achievements. A planned incorporation of debate elements in the next election process will enrich young people's skillsets.

As the term for the Members of Youth Parliament concludes, their dedication remains unwavering. Recent participation in the Annual Conference to advocate for universal free school meals underscores their commitment to making lasting change.

Wiltshire Council

Children’s Select Committee

September 2023 (data correct at 22/08/2023)

School Ofsted Judgements

Executive summary

1. This report is a regular update for the committee focused upon Ofsted inspections in Wiltshire schools. The report shows details of schools inspected **between April 2023 and July 2023** 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

Update

2. The data is correct as of **22 August 2023** and shows the number of inspections per phase for the academic year 2022-2023. The total number of inspections recorded for the academic year 2022-2023 is **88** with most half-terms recording 11 inspections with the exception of Autumn 2, which was 30 in total and Summer 2 which was 14. Over the year, across the Council area we have had approximately 1/3 of our schools inspected. Two special schools were inspected in the Summer Term, the only Specials to be inspected in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Phase of Education	01 Sept – 31 Oct 2022	01 Nov – 31 Dec 2022	01 Jan - 28 Feb 2023	01 Mar – 17 April 2023	18 Apr – 31 May 2023	1 Jun– 31 Aug
Primary	6	25	10	9	11	10
Secondary/ Post-16	5	5	1	2	0	2
Special	0	0	0	0	0	2

Inspections explained

3. The Ofsted handbook provides information about graded, ungraded and urgent inspections of maintained schools and academies under sections 5 and 8 of the Education Act 2005.
4. Graded, ungraded and urgent inspections are all based on this handbook. Monitoring visits have a separate handbook. Please note that all inspection reports prior to September 2022 were classified as either a Section 8 or Section 5 but any post September 2022 should be seen in the context of graded and ungraded.
5. Graded inspections use the full Ofsted framework and will grade the school for its Overall Effectiveness and against the key judgements grade descriptors as described in the Executive Summary above.
6. Ungraded inspections focus on determining if the school remains at the same grade as the previous inspection. This does not result in a graded judgement. The key areas of focus in these inspections will be:
 - The Quality of Education and Safeguarding (as in a graded inspection)
 - Behaviour
 - Gaming and off-rolling
 - Pupils' wider development: breadth of curriculum (beyond academic, vocational or technical) / SMSC / careers provision (secondary schools)
 - Workload
7. Published inspection outcomes of all schools inspected since the last Children's Select Committee Report are contained below. Some of the Summer Term reports will be shared once the outcomes have been published in the Autumn.

School name (Web address to access Ofsted report below)	Status	Date of inspection	OE (previous)	Quality of education	Behaviour & attitudes	Personal development	Leadership & management	Early years provision	Sixth form provision
St Mary's CE VC Primary Purton St Mary's Church of England Primary School & Nursery, Purton - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Maintained	04/05/2023 Ungraded	G (G)						
Clarendon Junior School Clarendon Junior School (Clarendon Federation) - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Maintained	23/05/2023 Graded	G (G)	G	G	G	G		
Bemerton St John CE VC Primary School Bemerton St John Church of England Primary - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Academy	16/05/2023 Ungraded	G (G**)						

Chirton CE VC Primary School Chirton Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Academy	17/05/2023 Graded	G (G)	G	G	O	G	G	
Longford CE VC Primary School Longford CofE (VC) Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Maintained	07/06/2023 Graded	RI (G)	RI	G	G	RI	G	
Lavington Secondary School Lavington School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Academy	06/06/2023 Ungraded	G (G)						
Exeter House Special School Exeter House Special School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted	Academy	13/06/2023 Ungraded	G (G)						

* There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

** There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, there is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

*** There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

Schools inspected and awaiting published reports	Type
Bulford St Leonard's CE Primary School	Academy
Bishop Canning's CE Primary School	Academy
Bitham Brook Primary School	Maintained
The Clarendon Academy	Academy
Broad Town CE Primary School	Maintained
Rushall CE Primary School	Academy
Pembroke Park Primary Academy	Academy
Wellington Lions Primary Academy	Academy
Woodborough CE Primary School	Academy
Silverwood Special School	Maintained

Table 1: Ofsted Inspection Outcomes January 2020 to Current – National, Southwest Region and Wiltshire. Schools graded Good or Outstanding

External data: NCER Primary and secondary schools.

	England	SW	Wiltshire
August 2023	88.5	85.6	81.4
July 2023	88.5	85.6	81.5
May 2023	88.2	85.6	81.6
March 2023	88.2	85.4	83.2
January 2023	88.4	85.6	82.4
October 2022	87.7	84.3	81.5
May 2022	87.3	83.6	82

March 2022	87.1	83.4	81.6
January 2022	86.5	83.1	81.1
October 2021	86	82	81
January 2020	86	83	80

Table 2: Ofsted Inspection Outcomes October 2022 to Current – National, Southwest Region and Wiltshire. Pupils attending Good or Outstanding schools. External data: NCER Primary and secondary schools.

	England	SW	Wiltshire
August 2023	87.6	85.6	87.6
July 2023	87.6	86.1	87.7
May 2023	87.4	86.1	87.9
March 2023	87.3	85.5	88.5
January 2023	87.5	85.7	88.4
October 2022	87.1	84.7	85.5

Table 3: Ofsted Inspection Outcomes. Profile of schools by phase that are Good or Outstanding: NCER Primary and secondary schools.

August 2023	England	SW	Wiltshire
Special	Not available	Not available	100
Primary	90	86.7	79.5
Secondary	81.4	79.2	89.3

Table 4: Comparison table: OFSTED grades-maintained schools and academies in Wiltshire. (July 2023) External data: NCER Primary and secondary schools.

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
All schools	8	73	17	2
Academy	10	67	19	4
Maintained	6	80	13	1

Table 5: Schools maintaining, improving and/or declining in Ofsted performance 01 September 2022 – 19 May 2023 (Published Reports)

	Improving	Maintaining/No change	Declining
All schools	10	59	10
All schools*	12*	48	19*

*Includes ungraded inspection recommendations for a Section 5 graded inspection

Table 6: Inspection outcome analysis – key common strengths and areas of development from May-July 2023 Published Inspection Reports

There have been less inspection outcomes published in the last round of reporting and therefore less detail can be written into the established and emerging strengths. It is positive to see through a few reports that diversity and equality is coming through as a strength as this had been highlighted as an area for development previously. There were a couple of reports which highlighted leaders being over generous in their own self-evaluation of impact and this is noted as an area for improvement.

	Strengths
January – April 2023 Published Ofsted Report Analysis	<p>Established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding is judged as being effective – positive comments in relation to safeguarding culture • Development of reading/love of reading/phonics • Extra-curricular opportunities <p>Emerging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of equality and diversity • PSHE curriculum

	Areas of development
January – April 2023 Published Ofsted Report Analysis	<p>On-going</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the effective link between assessment information and teaching practice/pedagogy • Leaders identifying the precise subject knowledge they want pupils to know • Pupils’ application of knowledge <p>Emerging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over generous self-evaluation

Highlighted in this report, which hasn’t been shared in previous reports is the difference that there is between Primary and Secondary school performance, which is significant and sets a broader context. The Wiltshire Secondary School performance is above National and Regional data, but the Primary School performance is much lower and a cause for concern.

There remains a difference also between the maintained and academy sectors but there are caveats around Trusts taking on vulnerable schools which can impact on the overall data profile.

There are some Trusts that have 100% of their schools judged Good or better such as Equa and Excalibur but other trusts where performance is not as strong, for example DBAT and Magna Learning Partnership perform below the regional average.

Diocesan school performance at Good or better is also quite variable and to date, community schools currently show the strongest level of performance as shown in the table below, followed by Diocese of Bristol and then Diocese of Salisbury.

Diocese of Bristol	84%
Diocese of Clifton	58%
Diocese of Salisbury	79%
Maintained Community	90%

Conclusion

- 8. The percentage of Wiltshire schools with Good or Outstanding grades remains at a plateau having been at its highest point in March 2023 with then a decline over the following two months. The focus currently is around improving the performance in the primary sector, engaging with MATs as part of this process and the respective Diocese.

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DfE updates and changes – July to September 2023

Special educational needs in England: January 2023 **National Statistics**

1. Information from the school census on pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and SEN provision in schools [Link](#) published 22/06/23

2. Wiltshire's position: The published information is taken from the school census, completed by both state funded and independent schools. The census data indicates that nationally, the proportion of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased from 4% to 4.3%. In Wiltshire, the increase has been from 4.3% to 4.6%. The number of pupils in receipt of SEN Support has increased nationally from 12.6% to 13%. In Wiltshire, the increase has been from 13% to 14.7%. The most frequent SEND need nationally for pupils with an EHCP is ASD and for those in receipt of SEN Support it is speech, language and communication needs. This is reflected in the Wiltshire data for these pupil groups.

Home-to-school travel

3. Local authorities' responsibilities when making home-to-school travel arrangements for children of compulsory school age. Change made: The statutory guidance has been updated to help local authorities perform their functions in relation to home to school travel for children of compulsory school age [Link](#) updated 29/06/23

4. Wiltshire's position: The update was a very light touch and as such there are no significant updates to introduce. Officers will review these in the coming weeks before drafting new home to school travel policies for mainstream and SEND pupils and gaining cabinet member approval where necessary.

Local authority school places scorecards 2022 **Official Statistics**

5. The scorecards display a snapshot of the progress local authorities are making in delivering good-quality school places [Link](#) published 29/06/23

6. Wiltshire's position: The Scorecard presents data supplied by the Council as part of the annual School Capacity data collection (SCAP). This shows that the Council had 18.1% of primary school places unfilled in 2021/22, with 18% of secondary places also unfilled. By 2024/25 this is forecast to increase to 18.7% at primary level but reduce to 13.7% at secondary level.

The scorecard also reports that Wiltshire achieved higher than the national average for the number of children offered one of their preferences, or their top preference, when making school applications at both primary and secondary level.

The scorecard also reports on the accuracy of pupil forecasts that have been provided in previous years. The Wiltshire forecasts were a 2.2% overestimation at primary level and a 1.1% overestimation at secondary level.

All state secondary schools now have a life-saving defibrillator **Press Release**

7. 5,435 defibrillators have been delivered to 3,066 secondary schools in England [Link](#) published 30/06/23

8. Wiltshire's position: In line with this press release, all Wiltshire Secondary Schools have received these.

Serious youth violence research programme [Research and analysis](#)

9. Reports which explore how systems of support may protect young people from, or expose them to, involvement in serious youth violence [Link](#) published 29/06/23

10. Wiltshire's position: Local activity in this area is lead through the Serious Violence Duty and development of a focused deterrence model (FD) which is the recommended approach by Youth Endowment foundation. A Home Office bid is being prepared by the Youth Justice Service and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for submission this month.

Attainment in maths and writing SATS increases compared to 2022 [Press Release](#)

11. Key Stage 2 results show an improvement in the majority of subjects as pupils continue to catch up from the pandemic [Link](#) published 11/07/23

12. Wiltshire's position: Key Stage 2 Attainment in mathematics in Wiltshire is below National in 2023 and is a priority area of focus for 2023-2024.

Length of school week [Guidance](#)

13. Non-statutory guidance and case studies for schools in England wanting to increase the length of their school week, including those delivering below the minimum 32.5 hours, Change made: 'Minimum expectation on length of the school week: information note' has been replaced by 'Length of the school week: non-statutory guidance' and 'Length of the school week: case studies' [Link](#)
Updated 17/07/23

14. Wiltshire's position: The non-statutory guidance has been communicated to schools, a number have chosen to review their school week in light of the minimum 32.5 hours, have consulted their communities and made changes accordingly.

New plan to deliver high quality PE and sport for all pupils [Press Release](#) [Press Release](#)

15. Government confirms two-year plan to boost quality and equal access to PE and sport [Link](#) published 19/07/23

16. Wiltshire's position: This information and communication has been cascaded to schools through our regular newsletters.

Record funding for schools in England [Press Release](#)

17. Schools in England to receive highest ever funding rates in 2024-25 [Link](#) published 17/07/23

18. Wiltshire's position: The Department for Education (DfE) have increased the overall quantum of funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the 2024-25 financial year for all schools. The DSG is separate to local authority funding – being a grant which is broken down into four constituent elements.

- Schools Block - funds mainstream schools
- High Needs Block - funds special schools, Resource Bases and SEN Teams
- Central Services Block - funds statutory services such as Admissions, Place Planning
- Early Years Block - funds Nursery and Early years places

Each of the blocks is subject to a different formula to calculate the funding for the ensuing year, apart from the Early years Block which is adjusted based upon the 'take-up' of places by parents.

The table below sets out the increase in funding for each of the Blocks, (based upon consistent pupil numbers and factors for comparator purposes.)

	2023-24	2024-25	Increase	%
Schools Block	355,982,301	366,935,033	10,952,732	3.08%
High Needs Block	67,017,114	72,967,232	5,950,118	8.88%
Central Services Block	2,600,176	2,653,884	53,708	2.07%
TOTAL	425,599,591	442,556,149	16,956,558	3.98%

The increase in the Schools Block incorporates the Mainstream Schools Additional grant awarded as a separate grant in the 2023-24 year.

The increase in funding is welcomed by schools and the Council, however there are cost pressures being faced by schools which more than offset the increase in funding and include

- Teachers pay award of 6.5% (3% of this award is being centrally funded by the DfE)
- Unfunded Support Staff pay award of approx. £2,600 per FTE, (£1,925 plus on-costs)
- Contractual inflation of 9% (July 2023)
- Food Inflation of 17.4% (June 2023)

Impact for One-Form Entry Primary School

The net impact of the increased funding for 2024-25 does not present a positive picture and leaves schools with an underlying cost pressure. A generic small (one-form entry) primary school can be used to demonstrate the position.

	Cost Base	% Unfunded	Cost Pressure
Teachers Pay Award	£500,000	3.5%	£17,500
Support Staff Pay Award	£2,600	9 FTE's	£23,400
Non-Pay Costs	£200,000	9%	£18,000
Approx cost pressure			£58,900
Income Uplift	£1,070,000	3.08%	£32,956
Gap			£25,944

School Reserves

Maintained schools are required to submit three-year budget plans to the Council. The budget plans set out the level of reserves being held by schools. The projected cumulative reserves of schools are set to fall from **£6m to £2.5m in two years' time** and falling to a cumulative deficit in three-years' time.

Officers will continue to work with maintained school leaders on their strategic financial plans to mitigate this position, on an individual school basis however it is important to raise awareness of the cost pressures being faced by schools.

Families first for children (FFC pathfinder programme **Policy Paper)**

19. Information about the FFC pathfinder and family networks pilot (FNP) that will work with local authorities to deliver children's social care reform [Link](#) published 26/07/23

20. Wiltshire's position: We continue to be involved in the development of the new reforms, Dorset being a pathfinder from the South West, with our Corporate Director and DCS being the regional ADCS chair will ensure we have close links with the progress and learning.

Improving multi-agency information sharing **Policy Paper**

21. Change made: Updated information about the delivery of the Operation Encompass scheme. The correction slip details the amends [Link](#) updated 10/08/23

22. Wiltshire's position: We are pleased the pursuit of a unique ID for every child is gathering momentum to help unlock barriers to effective and safe information sharing. Through our integrated Liquid Logic case management solution we have made great strides in ensuring practitioners and managers have access to information they need to perform their duties. Our mature level of information sharing informs strategic decision making and scrutiny via, for example, our Performance & Outcomes Board, and includes multi-agency activity such as through our successful Supporting Families Programme. We are currently reviewing the example innovations provided in the report to identify any further opportunities in this area.

School land: decisions about disposals **Transparency Data**

23. Change made: Added 22 schools to the list of approved applications for the disposal of school land. Added 1 school to list of applications not approved for disposal [Link](#) updated 11/08/23

24. Wiltshire's position: No Wiltshire schools were added to list of approved/not approved applications for the disposal of school land.

Parental responsibility measures attendance census **Guidance**

25. How local authorities should collect and submit data for the annual attendance measures census, change made Updated with dates for 2023 census and a link to the guidance [Link](#) update 15/08/23

26. Wiltshire's position: As in previous years, the Education Welfare Service and the Performance & Insights team will collate and submit data to DfE on the parental responsibility measures for attendance used in Wiltshire to improve attendance in schools. The DfE will publish the full England data set in December 2023, and the subsequent regular attendance report to the children's select committee will include data on penalty notices, attendance case management, parenting orders, parenting contracts and education supervision orders

Government praises students as grading systems return to normal [Press Release](#)

27. Grades this summer are expected to be lower than last year due to the way they were assessed [Link](#) published 17/08/23

28. Wiltshire's position: Wiltshire Council has congratulated students for their dedication and hard work as secondary schools and colleges open early for results day

There is a dedicated results day page on the Work Wiltshire website at <https://workwiltshire.co.uk/results-day/> with details of the support and advice available. For those thinking about starting an apprenticeship after A Levels, information and registration details can be found <https://workwiltshire.co.uk/home/apprenticeships/>.

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