

## **WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Children's Services Select Committee**  
**26 January 2012**

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### **OFSTED RATING OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2011**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Ofsted assessment of the performance of the children's services within Wiltshire.

#### **Background**

2. This is the third year when Ofsted has produced a rating for each local authority area. It derives from an Ofsted performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local authority area. The information used takes account of the following data groups with an emphasis on A and B:

- A. inspected and regulated services and settings eg childminders, preschools, schools and colleges
- B. inspections of safeguarding and services for looked after children; annual unannounced inspections; relevant joint area review inspection findings in relation to safeguarding and looked after children; findings from any triggered inspection; and serious case review evaluation findings
- C. Performance indicators

3. A single rating is given and there are 4 possible outcomes:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Performs excellently | - an organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements |
| Performs well        | - an organisation that exceeds minimum requirements               |
| Performs adequately  | - an organisation that meets only minimum requirements            |
| Performs poorly      | - an organisation that does not meet minimum requirements         |

4. Ratings were published by Ofsted in November, together with a brief commentary.

#### **Main Considerations for the Council**

5. The Wiltshire rating is "Performs well". The commentary is included as appendix 1 of this report.

6. The letter identifies key area for further development. Work is ongoing to:

- **Improve contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection**

In most respects the unannounced inspection in 2011 found arrangements to be satisfactory but highlighted that three areas for development remained unresolved from the 2010 inspection and additional areas for development were identified in 2011. The three 2010 areas were:

- Assessments should not be approved without the child being seen
- Voice of the child and family needs to be explicitly recognised in assessments
- Assessments should consistently address ethnicity and diversity issues.

Additional actions to improve have been identified and implemented, and are now being monitored through management supervision. Additionally, all staff are completing on-line equality and diversity training.

An inspection action plan has been put in place, incorporating the outstanding areas identified from 2010 and those from 2011, which is actively being worked through and reviewed on a regular basis. The majority of actions are now complete with two 2011 actions remaining to be finished. These are:

- Strategy discussions should include at least 3 agencies including Health – discussions are underway with strategic managers in health to improve this.
- Referral form to be reviewed to help improve quality of referrals – this is underway and will be shared with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

A piece of research has been commissioned from Overbeck research led by Dr Suzanne Regan and Dr David Thorpe to work with us to help us to further develop our “front door” services and to promote earlier intervention with children and families through the development of a multi agency, referral and assessment duty suite. This has strong synergies with the work already under way with key partners across Wiltshire notably Police, health and education to explore the development of a Multi Agency Safeguarding hub (MASH).

In terms of timeliness of completion of initial and core assessments we are currently performing well.

- **Improve achievement of young people aged 16 and 19 who come from low-income backgrounds and/or have special education needs**

The validated outcomes referred to in the Children’s services rating report primarily relate to the summer of 2010. The validated outcomes for young people aged 16 and 19 from the summer of 2011 are not yet available. The report does make reference to the provisional outcomes from the summer 2011 at Key Stage 4 (aged 16) and acknowledges that the un-validated data

suggests that the outcomes relating to x5 A\*-C including English and maths have improved and that the outcome gap has subsequently narrowed for those eligible for free school meals (indicator of low-income) and their peers. This reduction is currently 4.2%, although could be subject to change when validated outcomes are known. The un-validated data for those pupils with special educational needs at aged 16 indicates that performance has improved on previous years. However because of the improved performance of all pupils, closing the gap in performance for those with special educational needs in relation to their peers remains a priority.

The Pupil Premium provides targeted support for those people in receipt of free school meals and is a welcome investment. The “ Achievement for All “ programmes support pupils with SEN and are being implemented in those schools where there is a particular need to raise attainment for the lowest 20% attaining pupils including these groups. Members are also exploring SEN issues in the SEN Task Group.

Post 16, work is underway with the Further Education, Training Provider and Independent Special School sectors as well as maintained schools to implement new and flexible programmes in order to improve outcomes for these groups of young people. Co-ordinated work with the Young People’s Learning Agency (who fund post 16 provision) is ensuring the highest possible level of funding to support transition and curriculum work.

- **Reduce secondary school persistent absence rates**

In September 2011, the DfE changed the threshold for measuring persistent absence (PA) in schools, lowering it from 20% of available sessions to 15%. This Children’s services rating report is based on the old threshold and using this measure Wiltshire was above both our statistical neighbour and national average. Using the new threshold Wiltshire is significantly better than the national average; 9.0% compared to 9.5% and ranked 5<sup>th</sup> of 11 statistical neighbours.

Through Wiltshire Secondary Heads Association (WASSH) and their three area federations we continue to work with all schools including academies by sharing school and LA data and promoting strategies to improve attendance as well as continuing to support all schools with the prosecution process where all other approaches to improve attendance have proved unsuccessful. With LA maintained schools the Education Welfare Service has recently reviewed and strengthened their processes regarding the use of attendance data and is targeting PA as a key priority of their work, to further improve performance.

- **Improve Ofsted judgements of provision so that more are judged good or better**

Childminders: There are 645 childminders in Wiltshire. The aim is to reduce the number of childminders graded as satisfactory and improve the quality of their service. Newly registered childminders are being targeted for additional support, advice and training to improve outcomes of their first

graded inspection. The Introduction to Childminding Practice Course they complete includes more relevant assignments to help towards better inspection. The course to prepare for accreditation for those childminders working at a higher level has proved popular with the established childminders as a way of improving their inspection results. During 2011 the percentage of childminders receiving a good or better judgement has risen from 64% to 68% which shows that this additional support is having an impact

Children's Centres: Three children's centres have been inspected out of Wiltshire's portfolio of 30. They were judged to be satisfactory with good features. All 30 children's centres were re-commissioned in 2011, and four new contract holders took over the running of the children's centres from 1 April. Reducing the number of contract holders from 13 to 4 has enabled far greater accountability under new performance management arrangements.

The percentage of schools achieving good or better outcomes at inspection has seen a steady improvement in recent years and currently stands at 71%. This improvement reflects the extensive and ongoing work related to both leadership succession and development alongside wider school improvement work. A wide range of well supported programmes are in place to support governors, school senior and middle leaders to ensure schools are effectively lead and managed. Wiltshire College is awaiting inspection and is currently rated as satisfactory by Ofsted. The College has undergone significant change in recent years following the merger with Salisbury College and this has lead to improved outcomes for its students.

The committee received a report at its November meeting which outlined the plans to change the arrangements for young people supported through the Young People's Support Service (Pupil Referral Unit).

## **Conclusions**

14. The Committee is asked to note the content of the report.

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## **Appendices**

Rating Letter from Ofsted dated 8 November 2011