AGENDA

Meeting: **Children's Select Committee**

Place: **Council Chamber - County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN**

Date: **Wednesday 15 January 2025**

Time: **10.30 am**

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

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

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Pre-meeting information briefing

There will be a briefing session starting at 09:30am, immediately before the meeting. Its focus will be on **Affordable Schools Strategy**

Membership:

Cllr Jon Hubbard (Chairman)
Cllr Jacqui Lay (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Helen Belcher OBE
Cllr Mary Champion
Cllr Caroline Corbin
Cllr Carole King
Cllr Kathryn MacDermid

Cllr Kelvin Nash
Cllr Antonio Piazza
Cllr Jo Trigg
Cllr Mark Verbinnen
Cllr Bridget Wayman
Cllr Caroline Thomas

Substitutes:

Cllr Trevor Carbin
Cllr Daniel Cave
Cllr Adrian Foster
Cllr Johnny Kidney
Cllr Jack Oatley

Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney
Cllr Ricky Rogers
Cllr Martin Smith
Cllr Iain Wallis

Non-Elected Voting Members:

Non-Elected Non-Voting Members:

John Hawkins	School Teacher Representative
Nikki Barnett	Further Education Representative
Maisy Humphrey	Children & Young People's Representative
Declan Kiely	Children & Young People's Representative - Substitute

Recording and Broadcasting Information

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

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

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Parking

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

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

County Hall and Monkton Park have some limited visitor parking. For meetings at County Hall there will be two-hour parking. If you may be attending a meeting for more than 2 hours, please provide your registration details to the Democratic Services Officer, who will arrange for your stay to be extended. For Monkton Park, please contact reception upon arrival.

Public Participation

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

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

The full constitution can be found at this link.

Our privacy policy is found here.

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

AGENDA

Affordable Schools (Children's Select Pre Briefing) *(Pages 9 - 30)*

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

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

Scrutiny Question Sheet *(Pages 31 - 32)*

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 33 - 40)*

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2024.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

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

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chairman.

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

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

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

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Wednesday 8th January** 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 **Friday 10ᵗʰ January.** 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   **Wiltshire Youth Framework** *(Pages 41 - 70)*

To receive the draft Wiltshire Youth Framework. The development of a county wide strategy was recommended by committee in Sept 2023, and agreed by the Executive, CSC Jan 2024.

7   **SEND Alternative Provision Ofsted Inspection Outcome** *(Pages 71 - 82)*

To receive a summary of the findings of the Ofsted Report on Canon's House children's home which provides short breaks for children with disabilities or sensory impairment.

8   **Affordable Schools Strategy** *(Pages 83 - 180)*

To consider the Affordable Schools Strategy for primary and secondary schools to reduce inequalities. This item is deferred from 26 November 2024.

9   **Rapid Scrutiny Report - Out of County Education** *(Pages 181 - 188)*

To review the report of the rapid scrutiny into Out of County Education.

10   **Rapid Scrutiny Report - Educational Performance Outcomes**

To review the report of the rapid scrutiny into Education Performance outcomes.

Report to follow as an agenda supplement.

11   **Regular updates**

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

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

11a   **Safety Valve update**

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

11b   **School Ofsted Judgements** *(Pages 189 - 194)*

An update including information regarding the most recent Ofsted Inspection reports,

presenting an ongoing view of the effectiveness of schools as seen by Ofsted Inspection.

11c   DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education *(Pages 195 - 204)*

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

11d   Schools Forum *(Pages 205 - 206)*

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

11e   Corporate Parenting Panel *(Pages 207 - 210)*

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.

11f   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.

11g   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.

11h   Chair's update

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

12   Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates

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

A report by the Senior Scrutiny Officers providing an update on Task Group

activity since the last meeting is attached.

13   **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.

14   **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next scheduled meeting is due to be held on 11 March 2025.

15   **Urgent Items**

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

16   **Glossary**

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Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Wiltshire Council

WILTSHIRE AFFORDABLE SCHOOLS STRATEGY

The **Affordable Schools Strategy** recognises that cost of living can affect us all and poverty related pressures will impact on pupil behaviour, attendance, relationships, attainment, health and wellbeing.

By taking time to develop a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty, we can make well informed universal, positive changes to school culture, policies and practice that will improve the experience of all, especially the most vulnerable.

The **Affordable Schools Strategy** offers an insight into the world of disadvantaged pupils and practical measures to ensure every child can participate, learn and thrive.

Much more than affordability, the strategy is a hearts and minds approach which puts our most vulnerable pupils at the centre of our decision making and ensures every day we take effective action to meet their needs.

Kate Wilkins – Disadvantaged Learners & School Leadership

SAME SPACE, DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE

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Affordable Schools Strategy

The Affordable Schools Strategy primarily aims to support schools enhance vision, culture and leadership by:

- adopting a highly inclusive strategy which ensures all pupils have the opportunity to participate, learn and thrive

- receiving a full range of resources to support delivery including Affordable Schools Strategy and Toolkit, implementation plans, surveys (staff, parent, pupils), whole school training materials, website templates and content, wealth of ideas and support for development areas, resources and signposting

- understanding strategic improvement links to school vision, culture and values, SIAMS, Pupil Premium strategy and statement, key policy links and support, Healthy Schools, health and wellbeing

- being eligible to apply for an incremental Affordable Schools Award (Bronze, Silver and Gold) to evidence successful practice and whole school commitment

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Co-produced with Wiltshire schools

School	Number on roll	% FSM	% SEN
Ashton Keynes CE Primary	216	7.9%	16.2%
St Michael's CE Primary	199	9.5%	14.1%
Manor Fields Primary	219	16.4%	25.1%
Greentrees Primary	430	18.4%	15.8%
Pembroke Park Primary	238	30.3%	37.0%
Westbury Infant School	208	30.8%	24.5%
The Stonehenge School	1012	13.5%	23.5%
Kingsbury Green Academy	951	21.3%	26.5%
St Joseph's Catholic School	597	20.8%	26.1%
The John of Gaunt School	1253	20.5%	17.9%
Abbeyfield School	910	18.8%	16.8%

*National average DLs 27.0%, Wiltshire average DLs 17.9%

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Aims of the 'Affordable Schools' strategy

Wiltshire **Affordable Schools**

- Develop a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty

- Make universal, positive changes to policies and practices that will improve the experience of all, especially the most vulnerable
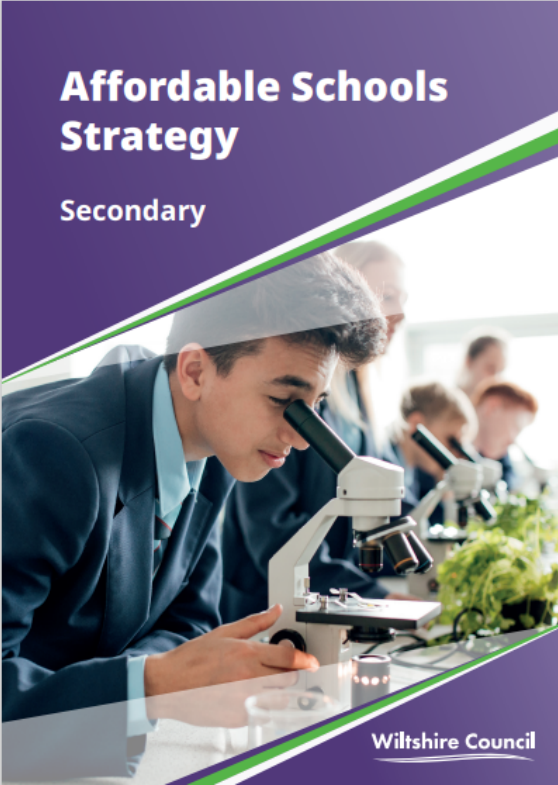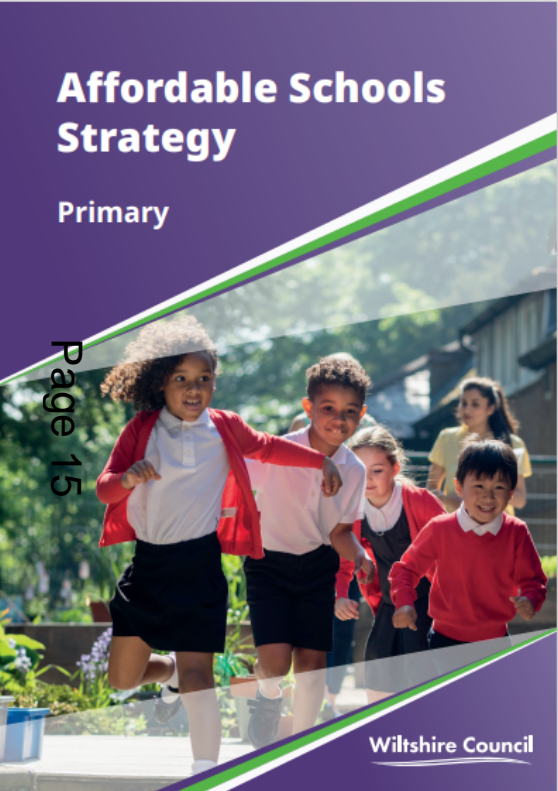
'AFFORDABLE SCHOOLS' STRATEGY

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Guiding principles

1. An Affordable School is committed to **reducing poverty related stigma** by deliberately making positive changes to every aspect of school policy and practice through the lens of affordability.

2. Any 'affordable' provision is a **universal provision**: we cannot be certain at any one-time which families, or members of the school community, are experiencing financial hardship so our policies and practice should not identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions.

3. Being 'affordable' means being creative, and **solutions focused**, to ensure our curriculum offer is always easily accessible to all students, without limiting the quality of education.

4. **Relationships** are key to the success of the Affordable Schools strategy.

5. **Strong leadership and positive action** will make a difference to our school communities.

Affordable Schools Strategy and Toolkit

Strategic Leadership

- Affordable Schools Strategy (handbook)

- Affordable Schools Implementation Plan

- Staff, Pupil & Parents Survey

- Letter to accompany survey for parents

- Affordable Schools Audit

- Cost of the school day calculator

- Website template and info link

- Affordable Schools Training

- Affordable Schools Award and Criteria

Affordable Schools toolkit and resources

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

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Ability to explore affordability practice

- How affordable is your school? How confident are you that children and families feel that they will be met with understanding and empathy if in need of support?

- How effective is your Charging and Remissions policy in acknowledging poverty related stigma and highlighting your commitment to support lower income families?

- How effectively are financial entitlements like Free School Meals and support grants for families on low incomes being promoted to families? Do all families in the school know what is available if it is needed? Are there processes in place to support families to apply for and benefit from extra help?

- How are you communicating with families to find out what resources are needed for children to learn? What processes are in place to provide resources for all children who need them?

- To what extent are school policies and practices designed to reduce financial pressure on families and include children and young people on low incomes? Are there particular practices or policies that could be established or reinstated that have clear benefits for low-income families, for example extended school services such as after school clubs?

- Is there a shared and assumption free culture which understands differing home circumstances and how they may impact on pupils' attitudes and learning

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Affordable Schools Bronze Award

The Affordable Schools Strategy has been fully implemented by following the steps laid out in the '**Implementation Plan**' to include:

- Baseline surveys and questionnaires complete (pupils, parents, staff)
- Results from surveys collated to inform plans
- Affordable Schools working group established and active
- Affordable Schools approach visible in PP strategy statement (intent) with an action plan in place for development of one themed area (Resourcing the School Day, Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Enrichment and Opportunities or Securing Positive Partnerships)
- Staff training for Affordable Schools delivered (after survey)
- Affordable Schools parent survey feedback given with prominent and easily accessible 'Affordable Schools' information displayed on the school website
- Regular referral to Affordable Schools Strategy and development in staff meetings and decision making
- A leadership report to Governors evidencing progress and implementation of the Affordable Schools Strategy

Impact of Affordable Schools

- Overall, 103 Wiltshire schools have been introduced to a comprehensive strategy which enables leaders to strategically create a climate for tackling disadvantage and meet the needs of the school community

- Enabled Hubs and MATs to unite around a strategy which improves outcomes for those experiencing disadvantage

- Participating schools gave a feedback score of 4.89 out of 5.0 for anticipated impact of the training.

- 20 schools signed up to attend the termly 2023/24 network meetings with a feedback score of 5/5.

- Recognises the importance of parent, staff and pupil voice and builds plans around accurately identified needs of the school community (Parent survey feedback – *'Add more help for people not on qualifying benefits as those people struggle too.', Give more notice on upcoming trips. The deposits required have been at short notice.'*). Assessment not assumptions.

- School leader comments: *"The turnaround in culture has been quite remarkable. It feels like you are making no progress but then you look back at where you started and realise how far you have come as a community!" ; 'It feels so rewarding to be helping children and families via a strategy rather than firefighting and dealing with the daily needs. Building it into the curriculum and ethos of the school makes us all aware, mindful and ensures it is actioned.''*

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Impact of Affordable Schools

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

- Contributed to One Cornwall Attendance Conference (October 2023) to share the principles and activities of the Affordable Schools Strategy at the launch of their attendance project.

- Widely shared across our own service areas, such as with Education & Skills, Public Health. Healthy Schools, Education Welfare Service, Governor Services

- Meaningfully connected with organisations such as the team at the Devizes District Foodbank (with their Affordable Uniform Pledge) and Hampshire County Council who are keen to learn from our Affordable Schools approach.

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How does this strategy link to reducing food bank need?

- In 2016-17, Devizes and District Foodbank supported 445 children as part of households receiving emergency food parcels. In 2023-24, this number was 1181, which was the highest number of children supported compared to previous years.

- The Community Organising Team spoke to many families needing to use a food bank due to insufficient income, and one of the factors affecting finances was the cost of school uniform.

- A group of parents and guardians came together and used tactics such as an Affordable Uniform Pledge, setting up pre-loved uniform swaps, and engaging with schools and the council.

- Change was won at a local school around uniform affordability, and we were delighted to see the launch of this strategy last year!

- Other challenges families face are around affording school trips and equipment, accessibility of free school meals, and feeling understood and supported if they are struggling to make ends meet.

Mum tells of struggle to afford school uniform in Devizes

15th June 2023

EDUCATION   LOCAL GOVERNMENT

By Jude Holden
Local Democracy Reporter
X @JudeHoldenNews

Share   5 Comments

Families in a Wiltshire town struggling to find the money to pay for school uniform are being offered help.

the trussell trust
Stop UK Hunger

"I think schools should join the Affordable Schools Strategy because...

It would be helpful for schools who have children with parents that don't have that much money to support their children who are hungry. Schools should join the food bank to help them support families that are struggling with living costs.

Affordable benefits for everyone!"

[It] provides a better future for the pupils."

This helps families with financial problems by helping or donating school uniform to people struggling with living costs. This will help families to not go into more financial crisis due to paying too much for uniform and equipment which would be needed every term because of children growing and losing their equipment."

I was told I wasn't eligible for any support, and I had to take out a benefit advance on my universal credit to get my kids school uniform, which I'm now paying back. **– Quote from parent experiencing hardship at start of local campaign**

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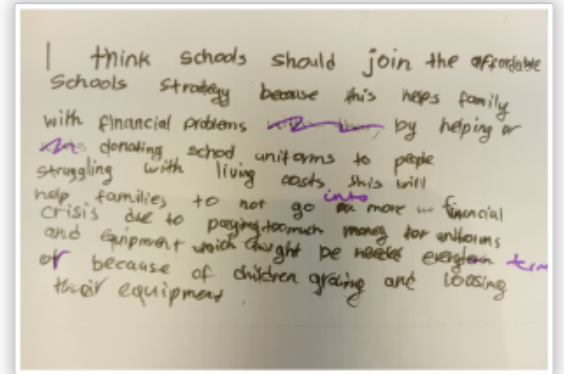
Affordable Schools Impact

- Strong contribution to inclusion agenda embedded during training, projects and CPD opportunities (e.g. DL network – primary/secondary/Governor, Improving School Attendance Programme (ISAP), Improving Pupil Premium Outcomes Programme etc)

- The comprehensive toolkit has provided schools with high quality materials to use which support busy school leaders with effective implementation, *'The power point and video on Right Choice were used for staff training. It was incredibly useful as it highlighted that everyone could be in the position of needing financial or mental assistance'*

- Levels of engagement vary from school to school but, where the strategy is being effectively implemented, there is notable impact on outcomes such as attendance, parental engagement, inclusion (see case studies)

- Participating schools are eligible to apply for an Affordable Schools Award (Bronze, Silver and Gold) which has been open for the first round of school applications and hosted on the same platform as Wiltshire Healthy Schools Award and Young Carers Award. 8 schools have successfully applied and achieved the award (1 Gold, 2 Silver and 5 Bronze).

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Affordable Schools Award

Schools	Affordable Schools Award
Ashton Keynes CE Primary School	Gold
Winterslow Primary	Silver
Wootton Bassett Infants	Silver
The Stonehenge	Bronze
John of Gaunt	Bronze
Harnham Infants School	Bronze
Sarum St Pauls Primary	Bronze
St Mary's Purton	Bronze

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Primary School Impact

Oct 2022

Whole school attendance 92.4%

FSM6 attendance 88.9%

Persistent absence 27.2%

Year 6 20% combined (July 2022)

Year 6 progress bottom 10% nationally

EYFS 44% GLD (July 2022)

55% parents would recommend the school

July 2023

Whole school attendance 94.3%

Ever6 attendance 92.3%

Persistent absence 14.4%

Year 6 48% combined (July 2023)

Year 6 progress much improved

EYFS 69% GLD (July 2023)

88% parents would recommend the school

Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

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Primary School Impact

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| | 2023/24 | | | | | | |

End goal / Success criteria
1. Whole school community commitment to affordable schools' strategy, evidence of impact; leaders are visibly committed to making their school 'affordable'
2. Established parent to school link to share concerns about affordability
3. Cost calculator shared with parents to outline cost of the school year
4. School uniform expectations reviewed in-line with affordable schools; affordable uniform accessible for all; revamp of 'sustainability shop'
5. Regular information shared with community about support and local offers to help cost of living
6. School providing snacks and breakfast for those who do not arrive 'school ready' therefore hunger is not a barrier to school

	End goal / success criteria	Actions	Responsible person (inc Governor)	Resources / CPD	Monitoring / milestones – where we expect to be, who will monitor, how and when		
					End AUTUMN	**End SPRING**	**End SUMMER**
Vision, Strategy and Implementation	Whole school community commitment to affordable schools' strategy, evidence of impact; leaders are visibly committed to making their school 'affordable'; achieve bronze award	• Introduce the whole school community to the principles of affordable schooling • Establish affordable schools working party • Complete staff, parent and pupil surveys • Update AS audit regularly throughout year to monitor impact • Publish information on website and via newsletters • Ensure SENCo, Family Link Partner and church are always enlisted to support participation when possible barriers to participation are identified • Weave AS strategy actions into PP strategy and raise awareness with PP governor for monitoring • AS strategy built into Headteacher's appraisal targets		PP conference	• Affordable schools lead identifed and attended conference • Baseline audit completed and informs action plan • Training for staff given and raise profile of affordable school's strategy across whole school community • Undertaking of surveys for parents, staff and children, results to feed into action plan • AS strategy built within PP Strategy • Working party held to review data and discuss action plan • Action plan written • PP governor has undertaken monitoring of AS strategy, evidence can be demonstrated	• Term 3 audit completed with evidence of progress from baseline • Spring term affordable schools meeting held to review actions, evidence of impact • PP governor has undertaken monitoring of AS strategy, evidence can be demonstrated	• End of year audit completed, evidence of further progress • Summer term affordable schools meeting held to review actions, evidence of impact • Evidence submitted to bronze award • PP governor has undertaken monitoring of AS strategy, evidence can be demonstrated

Primary School Impact

Develop *a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty*	Make *universal, positive changes to policies and practices that will improve the experience of all, especially the most vulnerable*	An Affordable School is committed to *reducing poverty related stigma*
'Removing the logo would help – we could buy uniform from anywhere.' 'Trainers would make much more sense – school shoes get wrecked on the playground.' 'Black trainers look just like school shoes anyway.' 'Why insist on a Greentrees PE shirt when they wear a tracksuit over the top?' Trainers are fine for indoors and outdoors – school shoes aren't.' 'The P.E. t-shirts are a waste of time – you can't see them anyway!'	Remove the requirement of an embroidered logo on uniform items Allow black trainers to be worn Remove the requirement for school P.E. kit – any t-shirt and shorts are fine. Clear communication before the end of term 6	High quality, used items Well presented Widely promoted Reminders given to vulnerable families *Best of Intentions: Always give detailed consideration to potential consequences of decisions you make*

Secondary School Impact

Aim: To ensure that every child in school has access to enrichment activities, regardless of their financial situation.

Enrichment and opportunities		
Reducing poverty related stigma	**Universal provision**	**Solutions focused so that all our curriculum is accessible**
• Half price to FSM and 17% places reserved for them • Removed brown paper bags • Pre-ordering of FSM trip lunches • Lunches collected by students • Commitment to 25% reduction for residential and foreign trips	• Removed 'first come, first served' • 'Expression of interest' introduced • All families have access to 'affordable schools' e-mail address • Working with outside providers • Communication to all students and parents about after school provision	• Clear procedures for trip, and calendar planning • Collaboration with finance and admin teams • Transparency with parents about the support available • A pastoral manager especially for the disadvantaged

IMPACT

- More diverse range of students experiencing school trips; students are aware of opportunities and ask for help to access them
- Parents know what opportunities are available throughout the year and can plan accordingly, including ownership over how they pay.
- Staff feel more confident/have clarity about how to run an inclusive trip and admin/finance teams know how to support the school's vision and staff with their activities positively.
- A general sense of fairness.
- Staff now have an understanding of why time limits and calendar requests are in place.
- More opportunities provided in school time.

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Secondary School Impact

Action: Making uniform more affordable for all

1. We changed our policy. We allowed parents to purchase non branded uniform with the only compulsory item of a school jumper
2. We were sensible about what we allowed students to have. Black shoes/trainers – case by case
3. We started to look at how we could make as much uniform as possible, FREE!
4. We appealed for used uniform and once prepped recycled it.
5. We have helped 157 families to date and the number keeps growing.
6. We now have a yearly trip calendar. This now gives parents plenty of time to cost and budget for trips.
7. We increased our school contribution
8. We ensured that trips were not bunched together
9. We offer payment plans for all

Step	Time frame	Staff
1. SLT buy in and understanding of the 'Affordable Schools agenda'.	T1 Sept – Oct 23	
2. Establish a working group. This needs to include a governor.	T2 Nov 23	
3. Add Affordable Schools plans to school improvement plan and PP strategy.	T2 Nov 23	
4. Send out staff survey and evaluate the results Appendix 2	T2 Nov -Dec 23	
5. Send out school survey and evaluate the results Appendix 3	T2 Nov -Dec 23	
6. Organise pupil voice Appendix 1	T2 Nov -Dec 23	
7. Adjust whole school plans to reflect the findings of the surveys. Select a priority based on outcome for year 1.	T3 Jan – Feb 24	
8. Write to parents re the information gathered and plans moving forward.	T4 April - May	
9. Deliver staff training based on outcomes and strategy	T4/5 May	
10. Evaluate success and submit an application for 'Affordable Schools Year 1 Bronze Award.'	July 2024	

Exploring the 'cost of living' demands of the school day and evaluating what we could do to support this.

Step 1: Evaluating what was needed

More Details

Uniform	29
Travelling to school	8
Breakfast club	0
Learning (e.g. materials, subject ...	17
Break time	10
Clubs and activities	3
Spending time with friends	3
Trips	25
Lunch	22
Fun events (e.g. discos, fundraisi...	15
Homework	1

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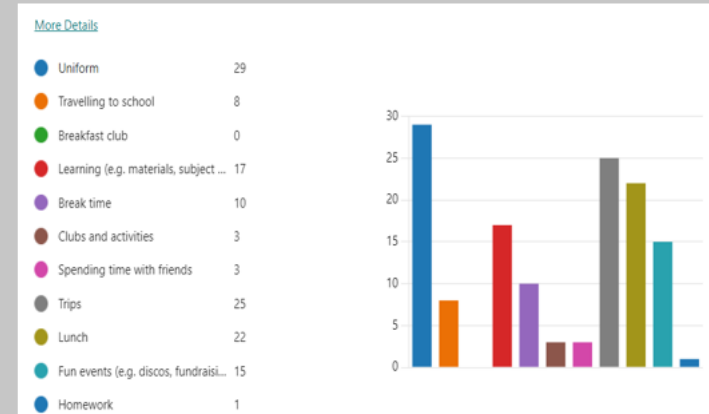
Sample Scrutiny Questions

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

Area of Enquiry	Sample Scrutiny Questions
Customers	• Who will benefit? Is there a demographic breakdown of those eligible for the service? • Has the proposal's impact on different groups been considered? • How has customer experience informed the proposal? • How can service users give feedback or get involved in designing or reviewing the service?
Purpose	• What evidence of need is there for the actions proposed? • How has the need been identified?
Link with wider objectives	• How does the proposal support the delivery of the council's Business Plan or other relevant strategies?
Resources	• What assurances can you give that the proposal can be delivered on time / within budget? • Is there a clear action plan for delivery? • What resources are in place to meet the identified need?
Workforce	• What staff development will be needed and how will this be achieved? • How will the staff be recruited and retained?
Performance	• What system is in place to monitor performance? • What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)? • How will performance indicators be used to inform planning and decision-making?

Area of Enquiry	Sample Scrutiny Questions
	• To what extent is the service meeting the needs of Wiltshire residents? • Is performance improving or dipping?
Impact	• What are the expected outcomes of the proposal? • What would success look like? • What would failure look like? • How will you measure the difference the service/change will make?
Risk Management	• Is there a framework in place for risk management? • What are the key risks and what actions will mitigate/reduce these risks? • At what point would the risk be unmanageable? Is there an exit strategy?
Efficiency	• How will efficiency be measured? • How will processes be reviewed and improvements identified?
Compliance	• How will you ensure compliance with regulatory standards? • Do the service standards meet external standards?
Public awareness	• How will you raise awareness of the service/changes proposed?
Benchmarking	• How well does the council perform compared to comparator authorities? • How well do service users do in comparison to those in other areas?

Children's Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2024 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:
Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cllr Mark Verbinnen, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Jo Trigg, Cllr Helen Belcher OBE, Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cllr Adrian Foster (substitute) and John Hawkins

Also Present:
Cllr Stewart Palmen, Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr Laura Mayes and Cllr Suzanne Wickham

98   **Apologies**

        Apologies were received from:

        Cllr Caroline Corbin
        Cllr Kelvin Nash
        Cllr Mary Champion
        Cllr Kathryn MacDermid (Substituted by Cllr Adrian Foster)

99   **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

        Resolved

        To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 05 September 2024, as a true and correct record.

100   **Declarations of Interest**

        There were no declarations of interest.

101   **Chairman's Announcements**

        The Chair was sad to announce that in October, Dr Mike Thompson resigned as the Clifton Diocese Co-opted Member of the Children's Select Committee. Dr Mike Thompson had been a member of this committee (and its predecessors) since 2002. He also chaired the Schools Organisation Committee and the strategic working group on Further Education and has been a school and college governor.

        On behalf of the Committee, Cllr Hubbard thanked him for his unwavering commitment to ensuring the best educational opportunities for children and young people in this county.

Dr Mike Thompson also passed his best wishes to the committee and its future activities.

The Chair was also extremely sorry to announce that Marie Gondlach would also be leaving Wiltshire Council. Marie was described as a great support to the Chair and Vice-Chair who was always passionate about the work of the Children's Select Committee. Further described as professional, diligent and focused on scrutiny and outcomes for children and young people, the Chair wished Marie all the best for the future on behalf of the Committee.

Lastly, the Chair informed the Committee that there would be a Chair's briefing on Childcare sufficiency on 3 December 2024 and that all committee members were welcome.

102 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

103 **Alternative Provision Update**

John Spring, Head of Service Targeted Education introduced the report.

The Committee thanked officers for the report and expressed frustration at the actions of certain schools that have withdrawn from county-wide Alternative Provision schemes and have high numbers of students being permanently excluded. Councillors questioned why these schools were not being publicly named to allow parents to make more informed decisions on school choice.

During debate, the following was clarified for the committee:

- The directory was considered really important to uphold standards and sustain communication with all providers. Officers meet regularly with school leaders to explore any gaps in AP.

- Schools have been excellent at responding to requests for statistics on how many children are accessing AP, meaning officers have a really good situational picture.

- Schools outside of Wiltshire who have children from a Wiltshire address on role do provide statistics and remain in contact in officers meaning both the school and students can be supported.

- There is strong collaboration from all types of schools to accommodating SEND students.

- If officers feel that parents may have been "encouraged" to off roll their child, sufficient challenges and frameworks are in place to communicate with both the school and parents.

- A new team of secondary behaviour support teachers was being established as a traded service running with a 100% subsidy for two years for all secondary schools. The numbers were given as two behavioural support teachers (for which it was a requirement that they were qualified teachers) and five mentors.

- Wiltshire Council monitor closely the SEND status of children who are permanently excluded, and further information would be provided regarding the statistics of young carers who are permanently excluded.

Cllr Suzanne Wickham reminded Councillors that Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, an Alternative Provision provider, had an open invitation for Councillors to visit.

Resolved

To receive an annual report on Alternative Provision. To be next scheduled for 5 November 2025.

To note the report.

104 **Affordable Schools Strategy**

This item was deferred.

105 **Early Years, Childcare and Entitlement Strategy**

The Chair informed the Committee that they were being asked to consider and approve the proposed Early Years, Childcare and Entitlement Strategy.

Emma Cooke – Early Years Manager, delivered a short presentation, which was included in the minutes and invited questions and comments on the strategy.

Councillors welcomed the strategy and thanked officers for their work. Councillors raised concerns at the level of EHCPs given the national context and Wiltshire Council's Safety Valve program.

During debate, the following was clarified for the committee:

- It was assured that a small missing section of the report would be circulated to Councillors.

- More provision was currently being built to support new houses, with section 106 agreements in place.

- There is a big focus on retaining staff to avoid high turnovers.

- A report which was requested at a previous meeting was being finalised and would be shared with Councillors in December.

Resolved

To endorse the strategy.

To receive an annual update on the progress of the action plan of the Early Years and Childcare strategy. To be next scheduled for 3 September 2025.

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

The Chair stated that this report had been circulated in the Agenda Supplement. It was proposed that given the number of items and restricted time, that the standing task group be tasked with considering the annual report and report their findings in January's meeting.

Resolved

For the Children Select Committee Standing Task Group to review the sections of the SVPP Annual Report relating to children and young people and report its findings to committee at its meeting on 15 January 2025.

107 **Families and Children's Services Roadmap 2024-2026**

Gary Norton-Sanders, Service Manager, Quality Outcomes for Children and Families briefly introduced the report and invited questions and comments.

The 9 priorities were specifically highlighted:

1. *Children in Safe, Loving Homes* – *Our ambition is for all children to grow up in homes filled with love, care, and security.*
2. *Protecting the Most Vulnerable* – *We will do everything in our power to protect the most vulnerable children from harm.*
3. *Supporting Families Early* – *Our focus is on preventing problems before they start, ensuring children have the best start in life.*
4. *Improving Care for Children in Care* – *We are committed to providing the highest quality care for children in care and ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed.*
5. *Listening to Children and Families* – *We will listen to the voices of children and families, making sure they are heard and their needs are met.*
6. *Supporting Mental and Emotional Wellbeing* – *We will ensure every child has the emotional support they need to succeed, fostering resilience and confidence.*
7. *Protecting from Exploitation* – *We will provide safe spaces for children and protect them from harm, including exploitation and abuse.*

*8. **A Skilled and Compassionate Workforce** – Our workforce will be skilled, compassionate, and committed to supporting every child and family to achieve their best.*
*9. **Quality Services for All** – We will make sure that every child and family receives the highest quality support, every time.*

Councillors thanked officers for a "fantastic, proactive and ambitious" plan that is very clear. Councillors requested a data set to sit alongside parts of the plan to allow cross-referencing.

It was clarified that it was a purposeful choice to communicate a front facing sheet without lots of heavy data, but that feedback was welcomed.

Resolved

To receive an update evidencing progress against the 9 priorities of the Roadmap, to be scheduled for 5 November 2025.

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

The Chair reminded the Committee that the Youth Strategy would be an agenda item in January 2025. Members were invited to ask questions relating to the upcoming update which could be fed back for answers in January.

Resolved

To forward questions raised by members concerning the update and request that these are addressed under the Youth Strategy agenda item at committee on 5 January 2025.

109 **Regular updates**
109a Update from Wiltshire Youth Voice Representative

The Chair thanked officers for providing the report, however proposed that an annual report may be more appropriate than at every meeting.

Resolved

To note the report and consider outside the meeting whether to move to an annual report instead of regular updates.

109b School Ofsted Judgements

The written report was noted.

109c DfE Changes - Update from Department for Education

The written report was noted.

109d   Working together to improve school attendance

The written report was noted.

109e   Schools Forum

The written report was noted.

109f   Corporate Parenting Panel

The written report was noted.

109g   Safety Valve update

Ben Stevens briefly introduced and summarised the report.

Councillors requested that where possible the dataset was shared with the Committee in advance of the meeting, as it had been incredibly useful in past meetings.

Resolved

To note the report.

To set up a member briefing on new interventions as proposed in the report.

109h   Directors' update

There was no significant update.

109i   Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holders' update

Cllr Suzanne Wickham wanted to draw attention to the Reverse Careers fair and hailed it as a great success.

109j   Chair's update

There was no update.

109k   Overview and Scrutiny Activities Updates

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to the need for members for the vacancies on the Homelessness and Young people rapid scrutiny and stated that the other vacancies had now been filled.

Resolved

To note the update on task group and rapid scrutiny activities provided

To seek members for the vacancies on the Homelessness and Young people rapid scrutiny – the other vacancies have now been filled.

110 **Forward Work Programme**

Resolved

To note the updates from the meeting and approve the Children's Select Committee Forward Work Programme.

111 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Children's Select Committee will be on 15 January 2025.

112 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

113 **Glossary**

(Duration of meeting: 10:30am – 13:15pm)

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

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

6 January 2025

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

Purpose of report

1. To update the committee on the development of the Wiltshire Youth Framework and progress on the recommendations made by the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group.

Background

1. On 21 September 2023 the Children's Select Committee endorsed the Final Report of the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group. The Committee resolved to refer the following Task Group's recommendations to the relevant Cabinet member for response at the Committee's next meeting on 31 October 2023.

2. In January 2024 the Executive delivered an initial response to the 9 recommendations and advised that a progress update would be provided in late 2024. A written briefing of the action taken against each recommendation was provided in November 2024, with agreement to attend the January 2025 meeting to provide a more comprehensive update.

3. This report is accompanied by the draft Wiltshire Youth Framework, which responds to recommendation 1 from the OS Task Group. Additional updates to recommendations 2, 4 and 6 can be found within this report and will be presented to the committee.

Main considerations for the committee

1. The Wiltshire Youth Framework sits within the partnership Family Help Strategy (2022-2027) and the collective commitment in Wiltshire to its principles. It addresses how Wiltshire Council is delivering its duty under s507b of the Education Act (1996). The responsibility of which is owned in Wiltshire by the Director of Children's Services (DCS), however, the Communities Directorate take a leading role in its delivery.

2. The framework looks at how partners work collaboratively to provide educational and recreational leisure-time activities, that support the development and wellbeing of young people aged 13 – 19 years (up to 25 years with special educational needs and disability, SEND) outside of the school environment.

3. The Wiltshire Youth Framework has been developed in a partnership and consultative manner. Using the National Youth Agency (NYA) and Department

of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) guidance as the guiding principles, lead officers from the Communities and Children's Services have engaged widely to develop the evidence base and vision statements.

4. A number of consultation discussions have been held with key groups, including the FACT Steering Group, Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network, Wiltshire Youth Partnership and Wiltshire Youth Council. The document has had additional contributions from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Families and Children's teams and Leisure, Culture and Communities. Additionally, a representative working group of contributors from Voluntary and Community Sector Youth providers have been key to the final development of the framework.

5. The framework sets out the scope, an overarching aim, the role of local partners and 3 high-level vision statements that set the future focus. An operational delivery plan with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timeframe) objectives will be developed following the adoption of this framework, that will set out the detail of how each vision statement will be delivered and monitored. This will be completed by April 2025, with the delivery plan jointly owned by Wiltshire Council and local partners. Progress to this delivery plan will be reported back to Children's Select on an annual basis.

6. Appendix A immediately follows the framework and provides the evidence of current delivery within Wiltshire against the NYA toolkit headings. It showcases the existing excellent work taking place within Wiltshire by a wide range of partners and identifies areas that require further focus.

7. In relation to recommendations 2 and 4 of the OS Task Group and in respect of the updated DCMS guidance, it is proposed that there are two amendments to the Area Board grant funding criteria as follows:

    a. "Area Boards will prioritise funding to youth projects that provide recreational or educational leisure time activities outside of hours spent in school and formal education. Applications cannot be considered for projects which form part of a school curriculum or statutory provision, however projects delivered during school hours may be considered if their purpose is to enable young people to better engage with and enjoy leisure time activities out of school. Further guidance on recreational and leisure time activities can be found here. Any application for youth funding to deliver a project within an educational establishment will be subject to Grant Assessment Panel review".

    b. In addition, the current wording of 'applications are for one-off funding and not recurring costs', will be removed from the criteria. This will enable successful youth projects that meet the needs of young people to apply in consecutive years.

8. In relation to recommendation 6 of the OS Task Group, a XX year funding agreement has been reached between Wiltshire Council and the Wiltshire Youth Partnership. This is additional funding investment into the Voluntary and Community Sector Youth in Wiltshire.

David Redfern, Director of Leisure Culture and Communities

Darryl Freeman, Corporate Director, Children and Education

Report author: Rhys Schell, Head of Community Engagement and Partnerships

Date of report: January 2025

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Wiltshire Youth Framework 2025

1. Overview and scope

This framework sets out the current local youth offer in Wiltshire and considers how partners work collaboratively to provide educational and recreational leisure-time activities, that support the development and wellbeing of young people aged 13 – 19 years (up to 25 years with special educational needs and disability, SEND) outside of the school environment. It also proposes strategic objectives for future development.

Under Section 507b of the Education Act (1996), all young people aged 13 to 19 years (and up to 25 years for those with SEND) have the right to access youth work activities which are for the improvement of their wellbeing and promote their personal and social development. This framework focuses on the statutory delivery to this duty, evaluates the current practices within the county and provides a clear steer for future improvements. It considers the critical role positive leisure-time activities has in providing engaging opportunities for young people, as well as its pivotal function in delivering early intervention and support. The responsibility for delivery to S507b duty is owned in Wiltshire by the Director of Children's Services (DCS), however, the Communities Directorate take a leading role in its delivery.

The framework considers this type of provision that is delivered by a wide range of partners, alongside more targeted youth support services. It is important to recognise that this work links directly with the partnership Family Help Strategy (2022-2027) and the collective commitment in Wiltshire to its principles. This includes taking a trauma informed approach when working with young people and "for children and families to have the best chance of achieving what they want in life, they need to have their core needs of health, wealth and wellbeing met; and for them to be in balance." The role and contribution of voluntary and community youth groups and activities are a central component of the Family Help model in Wiltshire: "As well as drawing in existing and new elements delivered by 'formal' organisations, our model also integrates those who contribute to and provide 'Ordinary or Everyday Help'; families, communities and other individuals and networks.

Whilst the framework has a clear focus on holistic family support, this explicitly reaches outside of the traditional model of focus on symptoms. Evidence consistently shows that it is the 'wider conditions of people's lives – their homes, financial resources, opportunities for education and employment, access to public services, and the environments in which they live, that exert the greatest impact on health and well-being'.

The comprehensive evidence to support the Wiltshire Youth Framework can be found in appendix A.

2. Aim

The overall aim of the framework is for Wiltshire to have a comprehensive and inclusive local youth offer that enables all young people to engage in positive activities, access support services and enhances their ability to contribute to their communities.

This offer and the associated support helps all young people to successfully navigate the journey from adolescence into young adulthood, giving them access to new opportunities and experiences and providing information and guidance that will support their personal and social development and well-being. It enables young people to access safe places with suitably trained and resourced personnel via facilities such as Family Hubs, Youth Clubs/Centres, leisure centres and other community settings. It raises their aspirations, builds resilience and enables them to make informed decisions that are right for

them as well as enabling them to have meaningful voice and influence regarding the activities and services available to them.

3. Key partners

The framework focuses predominately on the main deliverers and commissioners of youth engagement, provision and support and how they work collaboratively to support young people in Wiltshire. Their role in this delivery is set out as follows:

- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Wiltshire Youth Partnership
- Wiltshire Council
- Services commissioned by WC and the Integrated Care Board
- Wiltshire Police/ Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The VCS offers a diverse range of support programmes and positive opportunities to young people in the county, that enable them to reach their full potential and overcome challenges and contribute positively to their community. These includes youth development programmes, targeted and open access youth work, detached youth work, mentoring schemes, peer support, sports clubs, uniformed groups, social action, employment support, creative and cultural engagement, youth advocacy, voice and representation.

Since 2020, to respond to a need and an appetite for closer collaboration between local VCS youth organisations in the county, the Wiltshire Community Foundation has been convening the Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network (WSYWN). The WSYWN has created the opportunity for local youth workers to connect with their peers, share good practice and explore opportunities for closer collaboration, reduce duplication and improve partnership working.

The role of the Wiltshire Youth Partnership (WYP)

The WYP brings together VCS organisations and statutory partners involved in delivering and supporting youth work provision in the county, to improve the local youth offer. Established in late 2022, the WYP's aim is to be a positive, collaborative, county-wide partnership which raises the profile of youth work, highlighting the difference local youth organisations make to the young people they support. The partnership has ambitions to increase the capacity of youth work activities across the county, to improve and increase impact and to make a difference to the lives of local young people.

WC has agreed a two-year funding model alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Wiltshire Youth Partnership, hosted by Wiltshire Community Foundation across the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.

The role of Wiltshire Council (WC)

WC has a statutory duty under s507b of the Education Act to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, leisure-time activities and facilities for young people aged 13 to 19 and those with learning difficulties or disabilities aged 20 to 24. To achieve this WC oversees the delivery of the community led youth model through its 18 Area Boards and the Engagement and Partnerships Service. This model involves funding VCS organisations to deliver leisure-time activities, the coordination of local youth networks and engagement with young people. WC ensures a comprehensive delivery of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people via oversight provided through its Communities and Children's Services as well as commissioning the provision of Family Hubs that enable young people to access information, advice and support through a network of community locations and online provision.

There are a wide range of leisure-time activity opportunities delivered through the library, culture and leisure services. The Voice and Participation team provides a quality assurance and engagement function for children and their families involved in statutory services. While universal services are sufficient for many young people, a significant minority of teenagers will experience specific challenges during adolescence or will have more entrenched problems, which mean that additional support is required. WC provides targeted support through services such as Youth Justice, as well as commissioning specific targeted services that responds to local needs.

The role of the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

The Police and Crime Plan outlines the Police and Crime Commissioners priorities for the area and how work with partners will be delivered to achieve them. The Making Wiltshire Safer - Wiltshire and Swindon's Police and Crime Plan sets out the direction for policing focus and priorities. The OPCC manages the Youth Voice Commission, encouraging and engaging representation from all youth communities. In addition to this the OPCC commissions detached youth work and activities across Wiltshire, as well as specific provision for young victims of crime.

4. Agreed vision statements

Following a collective review of the Wiltshire local youth offer (found in appendix A), the following vision statements have been agreed. An operational delivery plan with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timeframe) objectives will be developed following the adoption of this framework, that will set out the detail of how each vision statement will be delivered and monitored. This will be completed by April 2025, with the delivery plan jointly owned by Wiltshire Council and local partners. Progress to this delivery plan will be reported back to Children's Select on an annual basis.

Wiltshire Local Youth Offer (vision statement 1)

Vision statement – All young people in Wiltshire have sufficient access to safe, diverse and engaging leisure-time activities and services that supports their personal, social development and well-being.

Rationale – The availability of activities and services in Wiltshire varies significantly depending on a young person's individual circumstance. Barriers to access include, but are not limited to rurality, socioeconomic factors, special educational needs or disabilities and cultural or language barriers. Whilst partners within Wiltshire recognise these challenges and are taking steps to improve the equity of services through initiatives such as outreach, detached and mobile youth provision or cost-free holiday activities, there remains significant barriers and inequality in provision.

This framework highlights the crucial and growing role that VCS organisations play in delivering the local youth offer within Wiltshire, however, there remain considerable funding challenges for many. Direct delivers of youth activities often struggle to cover core costs or operate with financial certainty, due to the short-term nature and respectively small funding streams available. The core funding investment from Wiltshire Council and the OPCC into the Wiltshire Youth Partnership and Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network is a positive step, however, the long-term sustainability of these networks requires collaborative planning.

To deliver safe and diverse leisure-time activities for young people, there needs to be sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff and volunteers. Current challenges regarding the availability of qualified youth workers and local providers of qualifications remain prevalent.

Actions for the delivery plan

- Mapping of the current 'leisure-time' youth provision across Wiltshire and developing collaborative solutions that address gaps. A local youth offer plan.

- Partnership wide, strategic focus to attract national and regional funding investment into local youth provision in Wiltshire, whilst utilising local funding more efficiently and effectively.

- Collaborative efforts to increase and improve training and support available to increase youth work capacity. support the workforce and development? Training, support, increase in youth work capacity in terms of volume and skills of workers

Youth Engagement and Voice (vision statement 2)

Vision statement – Young people are engaged with in an effective, efficient and considerable manner, and their voice helps to shape and influence leisure-time activities and services.

Rationale – There are considerable strengths in Wiltshire in terms of facilitating youth voice and engaging effectively with young people through a range of in person and digital platforms. All partners operating within Wiltshire are keen to ensure that the voice of young people forms an integral part of their strategy and delivery. However, there is potential for greater coordination and collaboration across the system, both in terms of the development of this work and the subsequent intelligence that is gathered.

Actions for the delivery plan

- Increased future planning and coordination of surveys, consultations and youth voice activities and events to avoid duplication.
- Centralised data repository of intelligence from youth voice and engagement activities – will need to ensure GDPR compliance.
- Sharing of best practice youth voice work and inviting one another to contribute to between all partners.

Partnerships and Communication (vision statement 3)

Vision statement – Partners in Wiltshire collaborate and communicate effectively with one another, working with trust and respect for the betterment of young people.

Rationale – There are a range of partners involved in supporting the development of young people and the quality of the collaborative working within Wiltshire will have a significant bearing on the outcomes that young people achieve. There are many success stories in recent years since the COVID pandemic, with partnerships growing in strength, through increased joint initiatives, projects and working groups. However, in some quarters there remains a low level of trust and respect between parties and channels for appropriate communication remain unclear. With resources stretched and at a time of worsening mental health for many young people, the importance of effective collaborative efforts to support early intervention and prevention through leisure-time activities and services has never been more critical.

Actions for the delivery plan
- A collaborative Wiltshire Quality Standards outcomes linked to the local youth offer for young people to be developed that replaces the current Wiltshire Council version (section 7 of the appendix 1).
- Increased collaboration and involvement from wider Wiltshire Council services in identifying and delivering the priorities within the Wiltshire Youth Partnership action plan.

Appendix A

Evidence to support the Wiltshire Youth Framework

The following information has been used to support the development of the Wiltshire Youth Framework.

The document will cover the nine elements of the Local Youth Offer as set out by the National Youth Agency as key to delivering s507b Education Act as issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Figure 1: The nine 'essentials' of a local youth offer
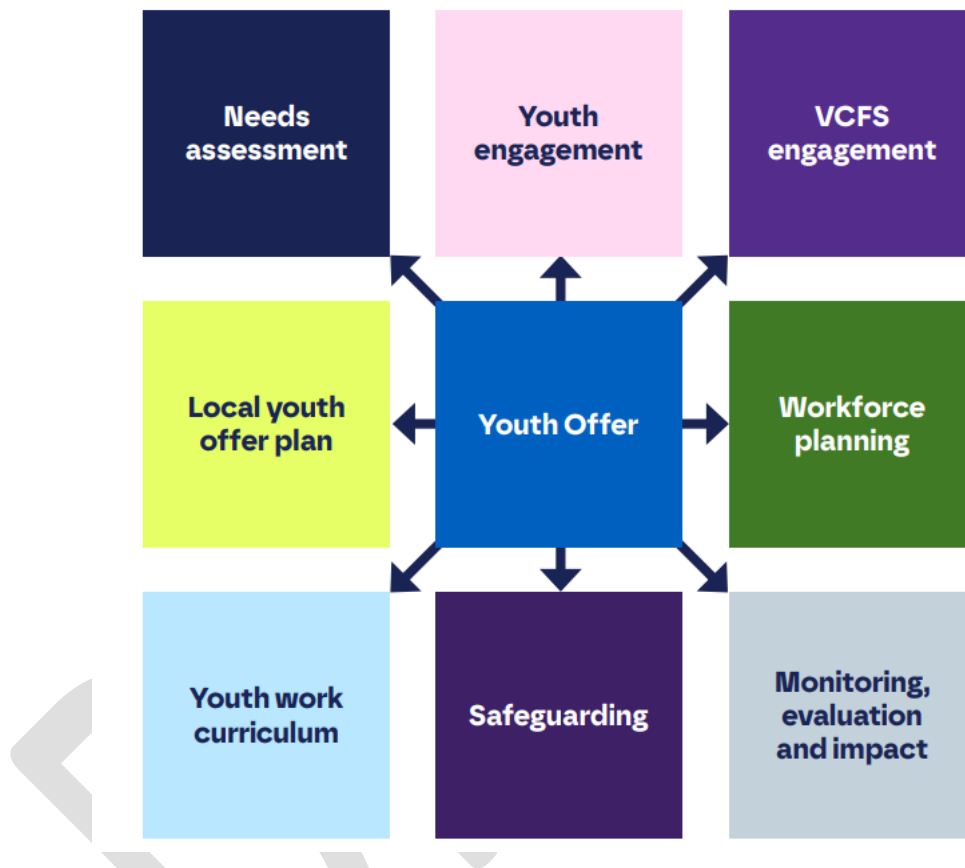
1. Life in Wiltshire for Young People

Wiltshire tends to be perceived as an affluent area and includes many prosperous communities, as a county Wiltshire ranks amongst one of the least deprived areas in England. Wiltshire Council's recent outstanding ratings for OFSTED and Children's Services show Council services are responding well. Many young people will feel well supported and connected in their communities, however, it is also important to recognise that these headlines have the potential to hide the circumstances and challenges some young people experience. The county has pockets of high deprivation, poor accessibility in many rural areas, and despite a strong local voluntary sector providing a range of youth activities, demand is higher than funding and resources allow. Some young people, especially those living in areas of greater deprivation and/ or disadvantage; those experiencing rural isolation and/or poverty with limited access to services, activities and poor local transport; those growing up in families with low incomes; those growing up in transient environments such as military families, traveller communities or young refugees or asylum seeker; those with additional needs; those suffering with poor mental or physical health; those participating in anti-social/risky behaviours, are more likely to find the everyday challenges of being a young person further exacerbated.

Some young people in Wiltshire face a range of challenges linked to socio-economic and educational inequalities, and local and national evidence shows increasing concerns about levels of poor mental health and wellbeing. While Wiltshire's overall rate of deprivation affecting children is lower than the national average, neighbourhoods in some of our towns experience significantly higher deprivation rates. Around 1 in 5 children live in poverty across the county (Source: Child Poverty Statistics 2023 - End Child Poverty), with notable variation in different areas. These realities create a difficult environment for many children and young people to thrive.

Transport links and isolation are key factors in the lives of rural young people and if not tackled have a negative impact on their emotional health and wellbeing. The cost of fuel has a greater impact in rural communities where cars are not a luxury but a necessity to access employment and often further education. For many communities a lack of local services and facilities means that families who historically may have driven their children to access positive activities are having to make tough choices on their vehicle use and often leisure opportunities are having to be forgone. Barriers to housing is an additional consideration for young people and young families in rural communities.

Educational attainment and opportunities are issues, particularly for disadvantaged young people. There is a strong link between low participation in higher education and persistent youth unemployment. Furthermore, rising numbers of children eligible for Free School Meals and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) exacerbate these disparities. SEND numbers have increased markedly in recent years both nationally and locally. In Wiltshire the numbers of children identified as SEND increased by over 2,000 between 2015 and 2021. Emotionally based school non-attendance also appears to be on the rise, potentially reflecting the growing challenges and poor emotional wellbeing experienced by many young people.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are critical concerns. According to national data, one in five children and young people now have a probable mental health disorder. Locally, the Wiltshire Emotionally Wellbeing Survey (2024) found a substantial increase in stress related to school work since 2017 - affecting over three in five secondary and post-16 students, and sleep disruption due to worry continues to be a concern for over a third of young people, having increased since 2021. For all students, just under half reported that accessing support for emotional wellbeing and mental health at their school/ setting was "Quite easy/very easy" with some variation across the ages and on the needs of young people. Identifying with multiple priority groups (of which there were 9 to select from – e.g. ethnic minority, SEND, free school meals, parent/carer in the armed forces) was seen to have an impact on how easy it is perceived to access support, with a higher proportion of those identifying with more priority finding support difficult to access.

Safety and access to services also emerge as key priorities. Youth engagement by the OPCC's Youth Commissioners highlighted serious issues such as knife crime, gang violence, hate crime, and the need for improved relationships with the police. Accessibility remains a challenge, particularly for minority communities, SEND individuals, young carers, and care-experienced young people. This feedback points to a need for co-ordinated, inclusive, youth-oriented activities and services that address these disparities while amplifying the voices and experiences of young people in the region.

The local youth offer goes some way to support young people, particularly those most in need. Young people are able to engage in local positive activities and gain additional support with the knowledge that there is somewhere to go or a youth worker to turn to when they need it. Youth work is increasingly being recognised as 'initial mental health support for young people' so is well placed to support young people to feel connected, supported, so they can develop skills and resilience, engage positively in structured activities and increase their confidence and self-worth, enabling them to be better placed to engage in education, seek training or employment.

2. Youth Engagement and Voice

Engaging with young people and actively listening to their voice is fundamental to ensuring that needs, perspectives and aspirations are reflected in the services and activities that affect them. Additionally, youth engagement fosters ownership and belonging, empowering young people to become active in shaping their communities.

Community led youth model

WC oversees the delivery of the community led youth model, using the 18 Area Boards as a vehicle to secure positive activities for young people. The Area Boards have access to delegated resources and funding for youth activities in order to develop a responsive and locally driven positive activities offer for young people. The Area Board is responsible for working with local partners, residents and young people to oversee local youth forums, the local needs assessment and undertake direct engagements with young people. Further detail on the local youth model can be found in appendix B.

VCS Youth Engagement

VCS youth organisations and their activities respond to local young people. Youth voice is integral to positive youth work and youth organisations recognise young people are experts on their own lived experience. Young people shape the activities delivered by local groups and clubs as well as undertaking voice work to understand their experiences, needs and aspirations.

Involving young people in decisions that affect them is crucial and fosters ownership and belonging. The VCS through its youth voice work ensures:

- **Relevance:** Delivery that truly address young people's needs.

- **Engagement:** Empowered young people who actively participate.

- **Impact:** Innovative solutions and positive change in Wiltshire.

It is recognised that further mapping of existing VCS youth engagement and voice work is required to better understand the width, breadth, strengths and challenges. This will also enable better collaboration and intelligence sharing into the future, will support the reduction of duplication and increasing the impact of voice work.

Wiltshire Youth Partnership

Involving young people in the next phases of development of the Youth Partnership is a key priority and will help shape the ambitions and activities of the partnership alongside the wider Local Youth Offer in the county. There is aspiration to work with local youth organisations initially to collate existing youth voice intelligence and identify needs, priorities and aspirations and then further explore and test these through future co-production with young people.

Voice and Participation Service

Voice & Participation Services sits within Families and Children's Services and provides a quality assurance and engagement function for children and their families involved in statutory services. This service is separate from operational social work provision and is focused on advocacy, support and challenge to ensure effective provision to children and their families. This enables independent scrutiny and collaboration through restorative challenge and support and independent voice.

Voice & Participation colleagues are responsible for providing independent voice to our children in care and children in need of protection, including their families. Alongside employed advocates and voice

workers the Service supports children and their families by utilizing volunteers, ambassadors and sessional workers to support a variety of activities. These include:

- Supporting and leading Children In Care Council
- Facilitating Youth Council & Youth Democracy
- Managing Mind of My Own & co-ordinating Bright Spots Annual Survey
- Family Voice & Family Advisory Board
- Youth Voice Workers and SEND Voice
- Volunteering & Mentoring – Appropriate Adults, Independent Visitors, Mentors
- Voice Ambassadors – Sessional Workers with lived experience
- Advocacy Provision
- Young Carers Voice & Advocacy
- Youth Justice Service Voice & Panel Members

School wellbeing survey

Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Surveys have been conducted through schools and colleges across Wiltshire for over 40 years. The relatively large number of respondents to recent surveys provides confidence that the findings are broadly representative of young people in Wiltshire. The purpose of the surveys is to gain a better understanding of the experience of school-aged children and young people across Wiltshire both inside and outside school in relation to, for example, healthy lifestyles, risky behaviours like smoking and drinking, and emotional wellbeing. The survey generates data for participating schools to inform their planning and Wiltshire wide reports to shared widely to inform strategic and operational decision making among key partners including local authority, education, health, police and the voluntary sector.

PCC Youth Commission

The OPCC supports the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan by managing The Youth Voice Commission. This involves the creation, facilitation and successful delivery of Youth Independent Advisory Groups (YIAGs), encouraging and engaging representation from all youth communities across Wiltshire, with a focus on 11–25-year-olds.

The Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Commission/ Independent Advisory Group enables young people to influence decisions about policing and crime prevention in Wiltshire. This is achieved by enabling the PCC and force to support young people, including those from underserved or more marginalised groups, to have an active voice and for their views to be listened to and acted on. This learning is used to influence PCC priorities, the Child Centred Policing Strategy and policing practices with the information then shared with partners for their input on the matters discussed.

3. Local Youth Offer

VCS Sector Offer

The main leisure-time youth activity and service provision is provided by a diverse range of VCS organisations, that support young people's personal, social and educational development. Services are often tailored to meet the specific needs of diverse communities, providing opportunities and resources that empower young people. The VCS offer flexible, community-driven approaches to youth engagement by working closely with local communities to ensure activities and services are tailored to the specific needs of young people.

This delivery plays a critical role in preventing young people from needing targeted support, either through the provision of positive (potentially diversionary) activities and also as a signposting service to that additional support when needed. Universal services identify those who are vulnerable or at risk and can enable them to access more opportunities or the appropriate support before reaching crisis point.

However, youth provision in Wiltshire is not consistent across the county, with many VCS organisations facing a challenging operating environment. There are ongoing issues with long-term funding, recruitment, staff training, communication and partnership working with statutory organisations. Additionally, Wiltshire is a challenging county to work within due to its scale, rurality and accessibility. Despite this, VCS organisations in Wiltshire provide a vast array of youth activities to support young people.

Youth Clubs and Youth Cafes

The VCS offer youth clubs, cafes and drop in activity spaces for young people to socialise in a safe and supportive environment, offering them a sense of belonging. Club activities and support from club leaders allow young people to develop skills and build confidence and resilience for the future.

Due to the rural nature of Wiltshire, a number of mobile youth providers additionally deliver services directly to young people through well-equipped vans and buses. Vehicles are stocked with a variety of activities and games, as well as educational materials, sports equipment and often have Wi-Fi and charging points. This provides accessible, flexible support and a safe youth space in remote parts of the county. Many VCS organisations also provide transport to and from activities for young people, who would otherwise struggle to access provision, due to rural isolation or other individual circumstances that reduce accessibility.

Detached and Outreach Youth Programmes

Many VCS organisations provide detached youth work, to engage with young people in their own environments, such as streets or parks as opposed to structured settings. This is predominately delivered in the bigger towns and the city within Wiltshire and often focuses on areas where high volumes of young people congregate. This valuable work builds trust and respect with young people who may have disengaged from traditional services. Detached youth work provides guidance and advice to the young people in a youth focused and non-judgemental way, covering topics such as safety, substance misuse, bullying, education, mental health and employment. In a similar vein, outreach youth work takes place in many parts of the county, where young people will be engaged with by youth workers in their communities and encouraged to access the local settings and local provision that is available to them.

Targeted supported

The VCS provide targeted support to young people to help vulnerable or marginalised young people facing specific challenges. These include mental health issues, SEND, being at risk of, or currently not in education, employment or training (NEET), victims of crime, young carers, homelessness, poverty discrimination or at the risk of victimisation or offending. Services are often tailored to address individual needs, such as mentoring, counselling and skill building programmes. Targeted services support groups such as young carers, young victims of crime, care leavers, LGBTQ+ young people and those with disabilities. The community driven approach empowers young people to achieve their potential, often responding to otherwise unmet needs.

Educational, Skills and Volunteering Development

Many VCS providers offer vocational training, non-formal learning and employability guidance to build career skills like CV writing and interview preparation. Additionally, youth providers often offer homework clubs, literacy programmes and support workshops.

Peer mentoring is another initiative often employed by VCS youth organisations, to place a young person with another similar aged young person who can help them to identify solutions to problems and build resilience. VCS organisations encourage young people to engage in their community & take part in & lead on social action, including elements such as youth leadership, environmental clean-ups, fundraising campaigns, or participating in advocacy initiatives on issues like climate change or social justice.

Health, Wellbeing and Cultural Initiatives

Physical and mental health activities are offered by VCS organisations that supports the wellbeing of young people. These include sports programmes, fitness activities, and wellness workshops and help to build resilience for young people. Creative initiatives such as drama, dance, and photography give young people a platform for self-expression and cultural exploration. These programs celebrate diversity and heritage, fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

The Role of Volunteer-Led Youth Groups

Recent evidence highlights the critical role that local volunteer-led youth groups play in supporting young people, particularly in rural areas like Wiltshire. These groups often operate as the backbone of youth provision, offering safe spaces for young people to engage, learn, and socialise. Despite their importance, the contribution of volunteer-led youth groups is frequently overlooked and undervalued. Research from the National Youth Agency (NYA) shows that 70% of youth work in the UK is delivered by volunteers, yet the infrastructure to support these groups remains limited.

In Wiltshire, this vital work is further challenged by the minimal resources to provide training, safeguarding support, and advocacy. Without adequate funding and recognition, these groups face risks of volunteer burnout and closure, leaving significant gaps in youth provision.

Funding/ financial sustainability

Analysis, using 360Giving, the national database of UK Grant Making, shows that a significant proportion of funding to support local VCS youth organisations and their activities comes from charitable grant making organisations and the Lottery distributing organisations. Whilst this data is not complete, it illustrates the relative scale of investment in youth work from non-statutory sources. Over the last 4 years, over £3.2M has been invested in youth activities in Wiltshire, through over 250 grants. A significant proportion (£1.8M) of this funding came from The National Lottery Community Fund, primarily large grants to larger organisations. £1.4M; including c.£1M (c.200 grants) from Wiltshire Community Foundation; was from other charitable grant-making organisations.

In addition, through the Area Board framework, Wiltshire Council has invested £1.257M into community led projects over the past four years. This funding has supported 505 projects for young people aged 13-19 or up to 25 years old with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The funding is prioritised to projects that support educational or recreational leisure-time activity including arts, sports, leisure and informal education and community based, which helps young people achieve healthy and safe lifestyle outcomes. Wiltshire Council also provides support funding to the Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum, which works across the county to bring organisations together who provide services to children and families.

Wiltshire based organisations work incredibly hard to generate methods that enable sustainability and enhancement of their local youth offer. Many organisations recruit and retain substantial volunteer hours, develop their own diverse fundraising activities, generate traded income opportunities, access central Government grants and compete for commissioned services.

WC has agreed a two-year funding model alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Wiltshire Youth Partnership, hosted by Wiltshire Community Foundation across the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.

Targeted Youth Offer

While universal services are sufficient for many young people, a significant minority of teenagers will experience more entrenched problems, such as homelessness, substance misuse, youth crime, teenage parenthood or encounter problems leading to entry into care. Whenever appropriate, targeted youth support should help these young people to settle back into and thrive in universal settings as soon as possible, avoiding a spiralling of need. Targeted youth support aims to ensure that the needs of vulnerable teenagers are identified early and met by agencies working together effectively – in ways that are shaped by the views and experiences of young people themselves.

The Young People's Service is an integrated service area which includes specialist exploitation social workers (the Emerald team), the Youth Justice Service (YJS) and an edge of care offer (the Stronger Families team). This combination of complimentary teams is key to developing our response to the contextual safeguarding and contributing to a targeted youth offer.

Along with its statutory social work functions relating to the safeguarding of vulnerable adolescents, the Emerald team has an interface with missing services, early help, youth crime and the wider partnership agenda relating to child exploitation with the service being at the vanguard of developments in this area including our innovative risk outside of the home (ROTH) framework.

Safer Young People's meetings provide multi-agency oversight of young people, families and contexts associated with extra-familial risk. These partnership meetings bring together professionals and agencies to ensure all appropriate intervention or support in relation to young people, contexts, or locations, is being undertaken and there is a cohesive multi-agency response to understanding context and therefore reducing concerns risks. The meetings are also intended to ensure sufficient management oversight on individual and group interventions, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions, support, outcomes, and impact. These mapping meetings are managed by the Contextual Safeguarding Practice Lead and are attended by multi agency partners including Education, Police, Health and voluntary sector agencies.

The Youth Justice Service is supported and delivered by a partnership made up of Wiltshire Council along with Police, Probation, the OPCC, Health agencies, and groups including the voluntary sector. These organisations come together in partnership with the Youth Justice board to support the service in its work with vulnerable children at risk of offending.

Preventative and diversionary work, using a pre-emptive and minimal intervention approach aims to promote a childhood removed from the justice system and criminogenic stigma is a central tenant of a child first youth justice service which is well embedded across the partnership.

Our prevention offer to families and children is currently funded under the Turnaround project. Turnaround is part of the Government's investment in youth justice services to intervene earlier and prevent children from entering the criminal justice system. The project has a referral pathway and triage process with the Integrated Front door (IFD) and Police early intervention team.

The Young People's Service contributes to a number of partnerships plans and strategies including:

- Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership Plan, especially in relation to anti-social behaviour

- Safeguarding Vulnerable People's Partnership in relation to safeguarding and child exploitation.

- PCC Wiltshire and Swindon's Police and Crime Plan

Key activity of the Children in Care Council (CiCC)

The Voice and Participation Service aims to support and develop the CiCC by building trust, meaningful relationships, and confidence among participants whilst actively engaging them in improving services and enhancing their overall well-being. The CiCC gives young people the chance to have their voice heard about the services that affect them. The CiCC's activities include working with those who provide their services, such as social care and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Members are encouraged to participate in activities in collaboration with council leisure facilities, community partners, and charities. Experiences are aimed to provide opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and fostering positive and meaningful relationships. Once these skills and relationships have been made this gives the participants confidence to take part in voice and co-production initiatives.

CiCC members actively contributed to improving services by participating in young person interview panels for senior leader positions, ASYE Social Workers, and applicant foster carers. CiCC Members have the chance to meet with Senior Management including Directors and Heads of Service, this occurs quarterly at our thematic 'meet your leaders' sessions. The CiCC Committee produces podcasts to amplify children in care's voices.

Family Hubs

Family Hubs are offered across a host of community venues within Wiltshire, providing support and guidance to all families and young people aged 0 to 19, as well as up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities. Family hubs offer:

- One to one support in the home.

- Parenting advice and groups led by staff and volunteer parents/carers.

- Advice around early learning and help to access services.

- Support from community based 'navigators' who can help with everything from finding sources of support, through to accessing education and returning to work.

- Our digital family hub also offers support to families 24 hours a day.

Leisure and Culture

Wiltshire Council provides a range of leisure time activity opportunities for young people through its leisure, culture and communities services.

- The Holiday Activity and Food Programme provides school children on benefits related Free School Meals access to enriching activities, nutritious meals and healthy eating information during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.
- Street Games is a provision of weekly estate-based sport and physical activity opportunities to inactive young people aged 10-25 within Wiltshire communities with high levels of deprivation.
- Ability Sports provides targeted weekly activities and events designed to engage and increase activity amongst young people with a disability.
- The Young Gallery showcases work by young people as part of the Annual Schools Exhibition and provides workshops and learning opportunities based around its historic art collection.

- The gallery additionally hosts photography workshops, ad-hoc free art workshops, offers volunteer opportunities for those over 18 and self-guided trails for younger audiences.
- The Summer Reading Challenge programme encourages children to keep reading and stop the decline in skills over the long holiday.
- Libraries operate as community spokes for the Family Hub programme. Providing access to information for those without the internet to the All Together website and space for local navigators & health visitors to engage with those most in need of support.
- 20 Leisure Centres across the County offer activities to young people through the 16 swimming pools and 18 gyms. Swimming, junior gym, and group exercise classes.
- The Aqualetes swimming lesson programme is available from parent and baby through to competitive swimmers and lifeguards of the future.
- Trampoline and Gymnastics sessions are provided at multiple sites.
- The services offer work experience, apprenticeship and employment opportunities for young people.
- Tailored volunteering and projects for neurodivergent young people e.g. Nationally recognised DigiCreative.
- Home educated & Gypsy Roma, Traveller and Boater young people activities and resources e.g. Rooted in History.
- Holiday activities are provided at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre
- National Heritage Lottery Fund projects for young people
- Explore Wiltshire App provides a wealth of family trails and hunts.

SEND Youth Offer

The Local Offer (Wiltshire Local Offer - Local Offer) includes all information available for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability. The Local Offer facilitates information regarding services, advice and support as well as leisure time activities.

The Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) coordinates a comprehensive database of social clubs, sports groups, crafts and music activities open to children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability (Signposting - Leisure & breaks - WPCC (wiltshireparentcarercouncil.co.uk). This includes the Wiltshire Short Breaks scheme that enables eligible children and young people (6-18 years old) who have special educational needs or disabilities additional support to access activities and leisure opportunities. A short break is when a child or young person who has have special educational needs and/or disabilities spends supported time apart from their main carer. It provides children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities and leisure opportunities, form friendships, become more independent and enjoy themselves.

Short breaks:

- Take place outside of school hours during the day, evening, overnight, weekends or school holidays and can last from a few hours to full days or overnight.
- Are designed to improve and promote better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. Regular consultation and feedback with children and young people, parents and carers help to guide the development and commissioning of short break activities.
- Help parent carers continue to provide the care their child needs by having a break from caring responsibilities.

4. Communication

Communication with young people, families and communities

The All Together digital platform, hosted by Wessex Community Action, acts as the site for storing and sharing information related to the Family Help Offer, including positive activities and support for young people. The platform holds information on a range of community activities, volunteering opportunities and support services available for the entire population, thus enabling young people, families and organisations to utilise one platform regardless of their enquiry. Partners are collaborating to ensure that this platform is built upon as the main communication resource for the Local Youth Offer in Wiltshire.

Communication between partners

There are multiple networks and working groups where partners come together to communicate with one another and where diverse representation is achieved. These include:

- Wiltshire Youth Partnership
- Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network
- FACT
- Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum

5. Workforce planning, training and development

Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership

In the context of the FACT Family Help Strategy, all partners will be able to access a training offer which will include the core elements of the Family Help practice framework (Five to Thrive, Trauma Informed Practice, Understanding Adolescent Development, Emotion Coaching, Motivational Interviewing) as well as more specialist inputs for identified organisations and staff roles. Such specialist inputs will include working with challenging behaviour and one-to-one and group work approaches to parenting support. The offer will also include elements related to the wider context of social mobility, including accessing benefits, financial advice and employment related support.

Role of Wiltshire Youth Partnership/ Youth Action Wiltshire

Future aspirations of the Wiltshire Youth Partnership, include the Youth Capacity Building, Training and Support fund. This has the potential to support development of a comprehensive training offer wider than the current provision, this would respond to the challenges experienced by voluntary youth clubs and groups who struggle to find experienced youth leaders and volunteers. There is also aspiration to increase skills and access to training, increase reach and enable the expansion of youth provision in the county and grow the number and skills of youth workers.

Within the aspirations of the Wiltshire Youth Partnership, is expansion of support to existing groups and support of new ones, some of this support to currently provided by Youth Action Wiltshire, though with limited capacity due to current limited funding.

6. Safeguarding

Wiltshire SVPP brings together those who lead Wiltshire's services to safeguard children, young people and adults. The new arrangements are based on the fact that children, young people and adults live in families and local communities that can be both sources of support and safety or of danger and risk and aims to bring more closely together the work of the Safeguarding Adult Board, the Community Safety

Partnership (CSP) and work to ensure the effectiveness of the systems to support and protect children and young people.

Across the system in Wiltshire there is awareness and agreement that the following needs to be in place for each individual/ organisation:

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 code of conduct policy
5. Child protection and Safeguarding training at the level appropriate to posts and roles

7. Monitoring and evaluation

A quality assurance framework is in place within the Community Led Youth Model and 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

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Wiltshire Youth Framework

Wiltshire Council
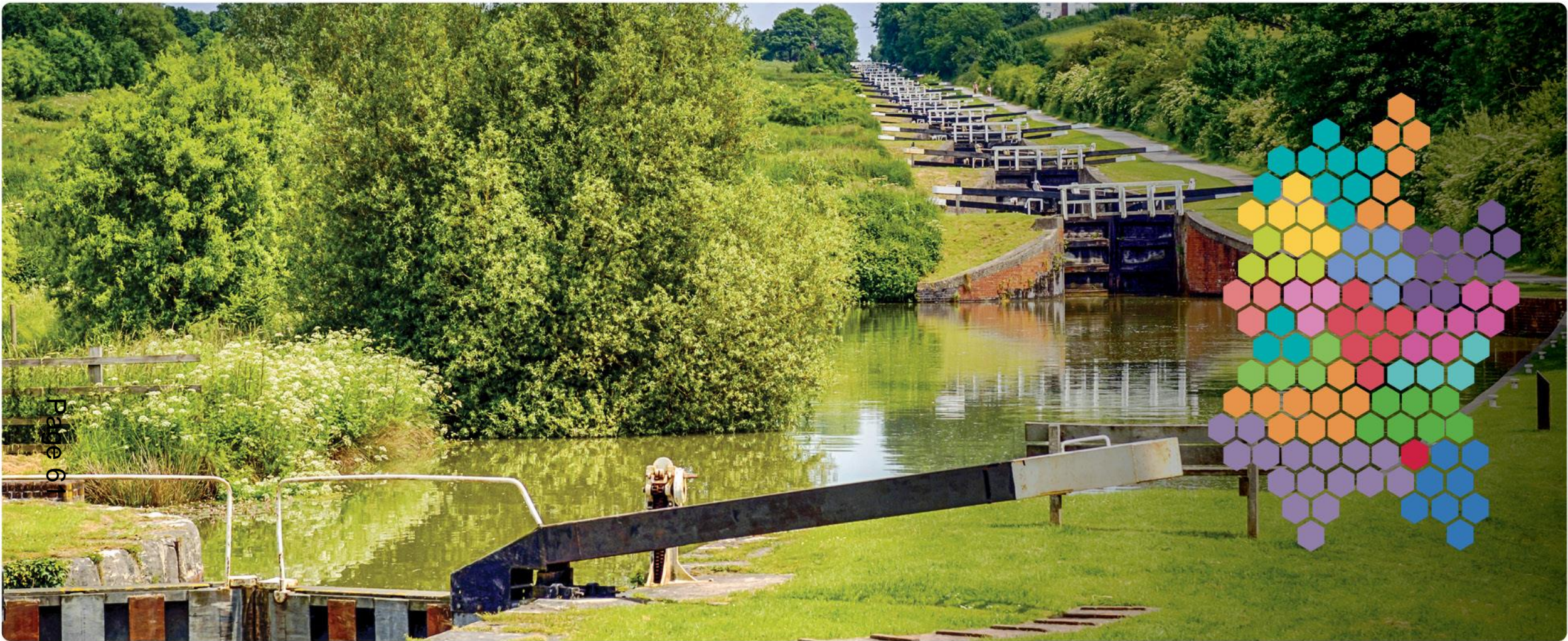
Outstanding OS Task Group Recommendations

- Positive progress to report from the past 12 months - this process emanating from the OS review has been incredibly productive and beneficial.

  Wiltshire Youth Framework update (recommendation one).

- Area Board grant criteria amendments (recommendations two and four). Single member decision to follow.

- Confirmed funding of the Wiltshire Youth Partnership (recommendation six).

Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Youth Framework Overview

- Will sit within the Family Help Strategy and is owned by the DCS.

- Looks at how all partners collaboratively provide educational and recreational leisure-time activities, that support the development and wellbeing of young people aged 13 – 19 years (up to 25 years with special educational needs and disability) outside of the school environment.

- Developed alongside the National Youth Agency (NYA) toolkit and DCMS updated guidance to s507b Education Act.

- Provides vision statements that will be transferred into a tangible, delivery plan, once the framework is agreed.

Needs assessment	Youth engagement	VCFS engagement
Local youth offer plan	Youth Offer	Workforce planning
Youth work curriculum	Safeguarding	Monitoring, evaluation and impact
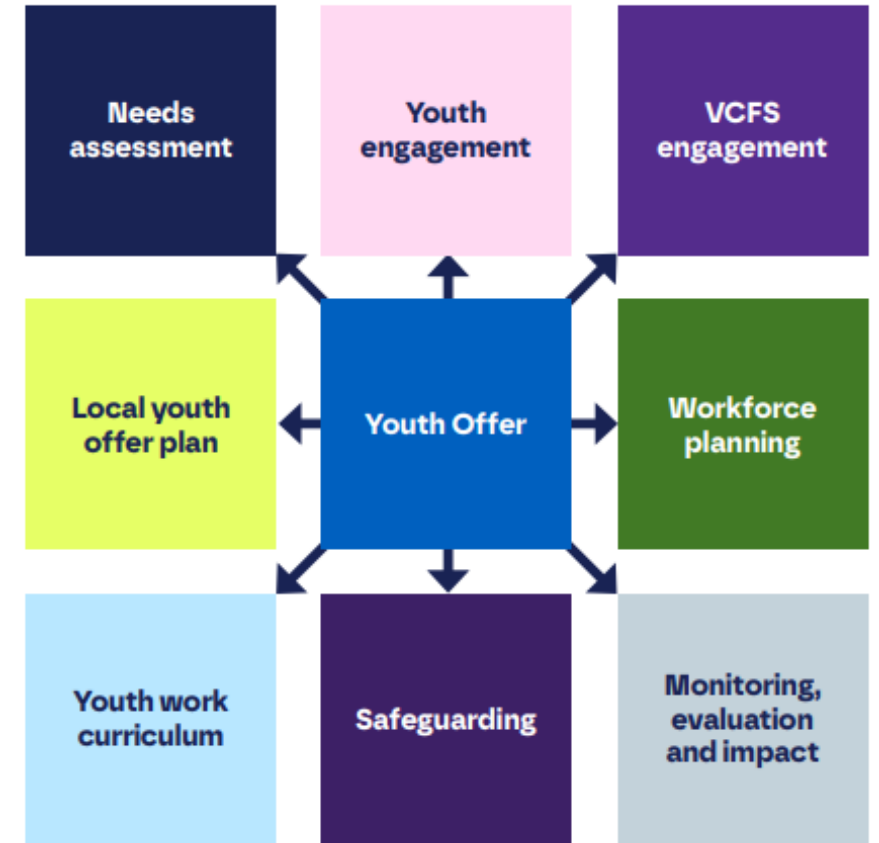
NYA– Nine Essentials of a local youth offer

Wiltshire Council

Engagement and Consultation

- Detailed consultation discussions were held with the following groups:
  - FACT Steering Group
  - Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network
  - Wiltshire Youth Partnership
  - Wiltshire Youth Council

- Contributions provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Families and Children's teams, and Leisure, Culture and Communities.

- Voluntary and Community Sector working group supported the final development of the framework, agreeing future direction and next steps.

Wiltshire Council

Supporting evidence and delivery plan

- Appendix A sets out the current leisure-time delivery and provides the evidence base for the vision statements.

- Considers the NYA's 9 essentials of a local youth offer, such as Youth Engagement, Voice, Workforce Development, Communications, Safeguarding and Monitoring and Evaluation.

- A delivery plan will be developed by April 2025, that takes each action from the vision statements and makes them SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timeframe). This will be led by Wiltshire Council, however, aspiration is for co-ownership with local partners e.g. Wiltshire Youth Partnership, OPCC etc.

- Updates on the progress to the delivery plan will be provided to Children's Select Committee on an annual basis.

- Each vision statement reflects the findings from the evidence base and is supported by a clear rationale and proposed actions.

Wiltshire Council

Vision statement 1

- *All young people in Wiltshire have sufficient access to safe, diverse and engaging leisure-time activities and services that supports their personal, social development and well-being.*

Proposed actions for the delivery plan

- Mapping of the current 'leisure-time' youth provision across Wiltshire and developing collaborative solutions that address gaps. A local youth offer plan.

- Partnership wide, strategic focus to attract national and regional funding investment into local youth provision in Wiltshire, whilst utilising local funding more efficiently and effectively.

- Collaborative effort to increase and improve training and support available to increase youth work capacity, volume and skills.

Wiltshire Council

Vision statement 2

- *Young people are engaged with in an effective, efficient and considerable manner, and their voice helps to shape and influence leisure-time activities and services.*

Proposed actions for the delivery plan

- Increase future planning and coordination of surveys, consultations and youth voice activities and events to avoid duplication.

- Build centralised data repository of intelligence from youth voice and engagement activities (note – will need to ensure GDPR compliance).

- Share of best practice youth voice work and invite partners to collaborate.

Wiltshire Council

Vision statement 3

- *Partners in Wiltshire collaborate and communicate effectively with one another, working with trust and respect for the betterment of young people.*

Proposed actions for the delivery plan

- Develop a collaborative Wiltshire Quality Standards outcomes linked to the local youth offer for young people (replaces the current Wiltshire Council version - section 7 of appendix 1).

- Increase collaboration and wider Wiltshire Council services involvement to identify and deliver priorities within the Wiltshire Youth Partnership action plan.

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Questions?

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 January 2025

Ofsted CQC Local Area SEND & AP Inspection Report

Proposal

That the committee considers the content of the Ofsted CQC Local Area Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) inspection report, with reference to the partnership's strategy and implementation plan.

Author: Kathryn Davis – Director of Education and Skills

Contact details: kathryn.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 January 2025

Ofsted CQC Local Area SEND & AP Inspection Report

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The committee is asked to consider the content of the Ofsted CQC Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision inspection report, with reference to the partnership's strategy and implementation plan.

2. Background

2.1 The Ofsted and CQC inspection of the effectiveness of the local area partnership's arrangements for children and young people with SEND took place between 30 September and 18 October 2025.

2.2 Ofsted and the CQC carry out joint inspections of local areas at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004. Inspectors assess the extent to which the local area partners are complying with relevant legal duties relating to arrangements for children and young people with SEND. Relevant legal duties may include duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.3 Inspections evaluate how well members of a local area partnership work together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND. 'Local area partnership' refers to those in education, health and care who are responsible for the strategic planning, commissioning, management, delivery and evaluation of arrangements for children and young people with SEND who live in a local area. A local area is the geographic footprint of a local authority. When evaluating the local area partnership, inspectors focus mainly on how effectively the local authority and integrated care board (ICB) jointly plan, evaluate and develop services for children and young people with SEND.

2.4 Inspections evaluate arrangements for all children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25 covered by the SEND code of practice, including those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and those who receive special educational needs (SEN) support. The scope of the inspection covers children and young people who live in the local authority area but attend education settings or receive services outside of the local authority's geographical boundaries. However, it does not cover those who live in other local areas but attend an education setting within the local authority's boundaries.

3. Main considerations

3.1 There are 3 possible full inspection outcomes, leading to different subsequent inspection activity:

Inspection outcome	Subsequent meetings and inspection activities
The local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.	Engagement meetings Full inspection usually within 5 years
The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.	Engagement meetings Full inspection usually within 3 years
There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently.	Engagement meetings Submission of priority action plan (area SEND) Monitoring inspection usually within 18 months of the publication of the full inspection report Full reinspection usually within 3 years

3.2 Wiltshire's inspection report was published on 6 December 2024, confirming that the **top inspection outcome was achieved**.

The inspection report states that "Children and young people with SEND are valued and prioritised in Wiltshire." It goes on to describe the ways in which the partnership works effectively to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, along with areas identified for improvement.

The full inspection report is included as Appendix A and the partnership's strategic plan will be updated and published in line with this report.

4. Conclusion

4.1 We are extremely proud of this inspection outcome and its recognition of the many strengths within our local area partnership, where we value and prioritise our children and young people with SEND. However, we are not complacent, and we recognise that the positive statements made in this report don't reflect the experience of every family.

4.2 Through our SEND and AP Strategy 'Meeting Needs Together – Ambitious for All' we will deliver our ongoing commitment to ensure positive experiences and outcomes for all of Wiltshire's children and young people with SEND.

Kathryn Davis
Director – Education and Skills

Date of report: 3 January 2025

Appendices

Appendix A – Area SEND Inspection of Wiltshire Local Area Partnership

Area SEND inspection of Wiltshire Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 14 to 18 October 2024

Dates of previous inspection: 29 January 2018 to 2 February 2018

Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within five years.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission ask the local area partnership to update and publish its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Information about the local area partnership

Wiltshire Council and NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (NHS BSW ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in Wiltshire.

There has been stability in the senior leadership of Wiltshire's SEND services since the last inspection. This means that, although a new director of children's services has recently been appointed, the partnership is well established.

The commissioning of health services changed across England in 2022. On 1 July 2022, NHS BSW ICB became responsible for the commissioning of health services in Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council commissions a range of alternative provision (AP). AP provides education for children or young people who cannot attend school due to their needs, or for those who have been or are at risk of being permanently excluded from school. The local authority maintains a directory of registered and unregistered alternative providers. They ensure that the quality of AP is checked regularly so they can review how well they meet the commissioning needs of the area. From this, the partnership can make informed commissioning decisions about AP rapidly when improvements are needed.

What is it like to be a child or young person with SEND in this area?

Children and young people with SEND typically benefit from personalised provision delivered by dedicated staff from across education, health and social care. They often experience early help and support from front line services, who work together very effectively to meet children and young people's needs and improve outcomes. Children and young people with SEND are valued and prioritised in Wiltshire. The local area partnership is looking to continually develop and improve how it engages with children and young people with SEND. This includes ensuring that children and young people with SEND can contribute to their own planning.

When children and young people transition into school, practitioners have a shared vision and commitment to inclusion. Schools work proactively with council staff, health professionals and social workers to find ways to meet the need they see in front of them. Where there are challenges, such as long waiting times for health assessments or shortages in specialist placements, services work together to find appropriate solutions. This includes the considered use of well-commissioned AP, which is consistently understood by practitioners and families across the local area partnership as never being a 'final destination'.

For children and young people with more complex needs, the special school and enhanced provision in Wiltshire, although stretched, is very effective. Typically, children and young people's needs are continually assessed, and provision adapted. They benefit from the strong advocacy of school staff from across the area. As a result, these children and young people with SEND typically achieve well and secure positive outcomes. Furthermore, children with SEND achieve positive outcomes more widely in Wiltshire. For example, SEND pupils typically attain well. The permanent exclusion of pupils with SEND is very low and suspensions are reducing. Most attend school regularly, reflected in the attendance of pupils with SEND being above the national average in Wiltshire.

Some children and young people can wait too long to be seen and assessed when referred to health services. This means that some children and young people must wait for as much as two years between referral and a diagnosis. For others, their plans lack up-to-date health information. And although the impact of all of this is lessened by effective partnership working and some targeted support from care navigators, developed with Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC, Wiltshire's parent carer forum), the wait can cause great anxiety for families.

Opportunities for young people with SEND post-16, although improving, are more varied. The local area partnership recognises that choice and opportunity for young people when they leave school in Wiltshire are limited for some. This includes opportunities to access paid employment, the range of post-16 educational opportunities, such as supported internships, and support packages to help young people access their communities. Nevertheless, where improvements are needed, progress is being made. For example, the proportion of young people with SEND going into sustained education, employment or training is increasing.

What is the area partnership doing that is effective?

- Ambitious leadership across Wiltshire's local area partnership has secured effective joint working. An established culture to innovate and share responsibility has put children at the centre of strategy, effective commissioning and joint working. For example, school leaders work in partnership within localities, utilising expertise and support from services within the local area partnership to meet the needs of children as soon as they present. These services have successfully worked together to improve attendance, reduce exclusions and strengthen the outcomes for children and young people with SEND in the area.

- Leaders know the area's strengths and weaknesses well. This helps services to be agile, responsive and deliver intervention early. Leaders consider the diversity of the population of the local area carefully. For example, refugees, those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and ministry of defence families benefit from tailored approaches to ensure that needs are identified and met early. As a result, children and young people with SEND typically have positive experiences and achieve well.

- Parents and carers are equal partners in co-producing and implementing strategy. WPCC have ensured that action is taken where family's experiences have been the most challenged. For example, the ICB and WPCC have worked together to support improvements to the neurodevelopmental pathway. Care navigators, who are parents, carers or young people with lived experience, are available to support children and young people and their families effectively. This has helped families to understand the process and where to find help quickly.

- Successful joint working is a great benefit to those involved in the early identification and meeting of children's needs. The healthy child programme is implemented diligently. Health visitors and engagement leads identify need early. They make timely referrals for further assessment and support. Specialist leads ensure that families receive appropriate help from health and social care practitioners. Similarly, the commissioning of district specialist centres in key localities ensure young children with SEND get rapid access to highly skilled multi-disciplinary teams, including health therapists and the commissioned specialist education home-visiting team. As a result, many children with SEND get targeted help and support from the very get go.

- The local area partnership has developed strong systems and processes to maintain oversight of children and young people with SEND in residential provisions, including those who use residential short breaks. For example, service leaders regularly check the suitability and quality of provision for children in residential special schools. This helps to ensure that placements meet need effectively, as well as that children and young people are being safeguarded. Families speak positively about the short breaks offer in the area, which has been co-produced with WPCC. This includes families whose children access residential short breaks. These families say the offer is 'excellent' and a 'real lifeline'. The local area rightly acknowledges that the residential short breaks offer is limited in its reach and there are more families who could benefit from the excellent service.

- The local area partnership has developed clear criteria for the assessment of need

within SEND early help. These are understood and applied appropriately. Early help assessments consider the extra vulnerabilities of children with SEND in order to inform child and family focused multi-agency support plans that meet need. This helps children and families to get the right help at the right time. Plans strongly focus on promoting children's independence, aspirations and confidence in addition to ensuring that support for education and health are prioritised. As a result, children and young people with SEND often receive useful support to improve their social outcomes and access to their communities.

- The local area partnership has an established and effective dynamic support register (DSR). Once referrals are received, timely assessments are undertaken. This allows the right professionals to provide holistic assessments and prevent unplanned hospital admission as much as possible. Furthermore, keyworkers work closely with children and young people and their families on the DSR, which helps coordinate individual care and support. Professionals liaise with children and young people regularly, including with key workers, to make sure that individual need is met effectively.

- Wiltshire children benefit from an inclusive education system. The development of the 'ordinarily available provision for all learners' strategy has helped secure a system-wide commitment to inclusive practice in schools. When pupils are at risk of exclusion, services work together to find solutions. This includes the creative and effective use of AP. The AP strategy, co-produced with WPCC, addresses gaps in the area for children and young people. As a result, exclusions are low and reintegration to school increasingly successful.

- The quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans is improving. For example, plans increasingly reflect children's aspirations and often now have well-planned outcomes across education, health and care. Effective processes include input from designated clinical officers and the designated social care officer. This has been key in improving the overall quality of the plans. Useful developments in co-production with children and young people mean that EHC plans are increasingly child centred. For example, the partnership co-produced with young people how they wanted their views to be collected for EHC plan assessments and reviews.

What does the area partnership need to do better?

- Some children and young people with SEND wait too long to be seen and assessed when referred to health provision. This is particularly the case in community paediatrics, occupational health and physiotherapy services, as well as the neurodevelopmental pathway. As a result, contributions from health to EHC plan reviews remains inconsistent. The variability in experience for families is difficult for the partnership to address due to a lack of robust information about exactly how long children and young people must wait. This means that where children and young people could benefit from more timely intervention, strategic leaders are not well placed to really address where the issues are.

- Some services are at capacity. The proportion of children and young people with an EHC plan is high compared to national averages. This contributes to a shortage of specialist school placements within the local area. As a result, the partnership must

rely on independent specialist schools, many of which are out of area. The local area partnership knows this and, although their checks on the quality of this provision is robust, they rightly plan to strengthen capacity in the area, particularly through the development of secondary resource bases. However, this remains in its infancy and so the experience for families is yet to feel the impact, particularly for those who cannot get a place in the appropriate type of special school near to home.

- Strategies to improve the work of the partnership in preparing children and young people for adulthood are new and need embedding. And although the overall quality of EHC plans is improving, many do not consider children and young people's long-term aspirations and needs soon enough. This means that, for some young people with SEND, the provision is not ready for them when they move into adult services. Instead, they have to wait for the provision to be built around them at the point they need it.

- Provision and opportunities for young people with SEND are more variable at post-16 and, for those who need it, in their transition to adult services and their preparation for adulthood. Some young people say that the packages they have to support them post-16 don't consistently allow them to be as independent, or near to home as they think they should be. Similarly, the range of choice in education post-16 and in employment post-18 diminishes significantly for the most complex children and young people. Overall, this means that some young people have negative experiences of the system between the ages of 19 and 25.

Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement
Some children and young people wait too long for assessment and diagnosis across several health services. The local area partnership's records lack robust information about how long some children are waiting. The local area partnership should improve how they utilise information and data for health services and work on reducing the delays that some children, young people and families currently face.
Young people's experiences are more variable post-16 and up to 25 in the area. This is because the opportunities to follow their aspirations are inhibited by limited choice, late transition planning or restrictions in support packages. The local area should continue to work in partnership to improve the education, work, health services and social integration opportunities for young people in their preparation for adulthood.

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Local area partnership details

Local authority	Integrated care board
Wiltshire Council	NHS BSW ICB
Darryl Freeman	Sue Harriman
www.wiltshire.gov.uk	bsw.icb.nhs.uk
County Hall Bythesea Road Trowbridge Wiltshire BA14 8JN	Jenner House Avon Way Langley Park Chippenham SN15 1GG

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The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors, including one of His Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted Inspectors from Education and Social Care, a lead Children's Services Inspector and a team of Children's Services Inspectors from the CQC.

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26th November 2024

Reducing Inequalities in Schools/Affordable School Strategy

Strategy Outline

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Director: Kathryn Davis, Education and Skills

Affordable Schools Strategy

Primary

Wiltshire Council

Foreword

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

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

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

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

Kate Wilkins (Wiltshire Disadvantaged Learners Lead & School Leadership)

Vicky Gordon (Wiltshire Vulnerable Pupils Advisor and SIA)

Affordable Schools: the background

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

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

What is Affordable Schools?

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

- Develop a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty

- Make universal, positive changes to policies and practices that will improve the experience of all, especially the most vulnerable.

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

- An Affordable School is committed to reducing poverty related stigma by deliberately making positive changes to every aspect of school policy and practice through the lens of affordability

- Any 'affordable' provision is a universal provision: we cannot be certain at any one time which families, or members of the school community, are experiencing financial hardship so our policies and practice should not identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions

- Being 'affordable' means being creative and solutions focused to ensure our provision and curriculum offer is always easily accessible to all students, without limiting the quality of education

- Relationships are key to the success of the Affordable Schools strategy

- Strong leadership and positive action will make a difference to our school communities.

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

The Children's Society

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

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

Child Poverty Action Group is a UK charity that works to alleviate poverty and social exclusion CPAG - Home

Children North East (Poverty Proofing)

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

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

EEF Implementation Guidance Report 2019

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

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

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnership

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

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

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

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

Groundwork

Working group identified. All staff awareness and buy in

Information gathering

Audit of costs throughout school	Staff views on costs, barriers and solutions	Pupil views on costs, barriers and solutions	Parent carer views on costs barriers and solutions

Analysis

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

Action

Actions to tackle barriers identified

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

- How affordable is your school? How confident are you that children and families feel that they will be met with understanding and empathy if in need of support?

- How effective is your Charging and Remissions policy in acknowledging poverty related stigma and highlighting your commitment to support lower income families?

- How effectively are financial entitlements like Free School Meals and support grants for families on low incomes being promoted to families? Do all families in the school know what is available if it is needed? Are there processes in place to support families to apply for and benefit from extra help?

- How are you communicating with families to find out what resources are needed for children to learn? What processes are in place to provide resources for all children who need them?

- To what extent are school policies and practices designed to reduce financial pressure on families and include children and young people on low incomes? Are there particular practices or policies that could be established or reinstated that have clear benefits for low income families, for example extended school services such as after school clubs?

- Is there a shared and assumption free culture which understands differing home circumstances and how they may impact on pupils' attitudes and learning (e.g. parents being 'time poor' due to shift working/additional hours etc rather than lack of interest)?

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

Vision, Strategy and Implemenation

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnerships

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

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

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

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

- School leaders are visibly committed to making their school 'Affordable'

- School ethos and culture
- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Pupil voice
- Staff professional development.

- Monitoring impact
- Working with parents and carers
- Targeted support

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

Year one Bronze
Adopt and implement
Affordable Schools strategy

Year two Silver
Deepen practice and
on-going evidence of impact

Year three Gold
Sustained, culturally
embedded practice with
notable impact on outcomes

Bronze

Silver

Gold

Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

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

Rationale

1. Access to the full curriculum and all learning tasks, wherever possible, is designed to require no financial outlay and reasons for non-completion of tasks/homework, and not having the correct equipment, are assessed through the lens of affordability.

2. Active measures are taken to support a student where their external circumstances present them with additional challenges that would prevent or hinder being ready to learn.

3. Parents should not have to consider the cost of a school uniform when choosing which school(s) to apply for. Therefore, schools need to ensure that their uniform is affordable. 'Where a school's uniform is too expensive it can place an unreasonable burden on families. No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to, or attend, a school of their choice, due to the cost of the uniform.' School uniforms - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

4. We are mindful of the DfE Pupil Premium guidance 'Schools may be justified in funding items not listed where this is necessary to overcome specific barriers to student attainment, for example to meet acute needs around student equipment to ensure readiness to learn' which emphasises the importance of a nuanced and robust process for identifying needs. Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk).

5. Schools should commit to an assumption free culture in order to be sure we take a personalised, relational approach. (CPAG 'Don't assume families are ok financially. Instead, show everyone that you are aware of hidden poverty and explain the support that's out there, so nobody gets missed'.)

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

7. Every child should feel like they belong – especially at school. A school's uniform can bring the school community together and create a shared identity. But when school uniforms are too expensive, this doesn't happen.

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Questions to explore

- What does it feel like to be a pupil in your school (day in the life of...)?

- Can all students access all elements of the curriculum irrespective of their financial circumstances? What does student/parent voice tell us?

- Are students required to bring in their own pencil cases or other equipment from home?

- Is uniform affordable and information readily available on your school website?

- How often do uniform sales take place?

- What pre-loved uniform provision is available at your school students and families access it?

- Can parents buy uniform from supermarkets, or do they have to go to a single, specialist supplier?

- How do we identify families who would need support?

- How easy is it for families to purchase or order?

- What resources are required for students to complete their homework currently and do we consider impact on financial circumstances?

- Have we considered what families have available on a daily basis (e.g. computers, paper etc) and are we satisfied that we keep up to date withour understanding of family circumstances to be confident of equitable access for all?

- What support is available for those who may not have these resources at home?

- Are there opportunities for students to complete their homework in school if they face barriers at home?

- How equitable is the homework policy – what prevailing culture does it communicate?

- What happens if children don't have the correct uniform? Are staff responses consistent and delivered 'through the lens of affordability'?

- Are children sanctioned if they don't have the correct uniform, shoes, PE kit etc?

- Can children take part if they don't have the correct clothing?

- Have transport costs been considered? How do pupils get to school?

- If the school offers support with transport costs, who benefits?

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Key policies to be reviewed

- Charging and Remissions

- Uniform and equipment - Statutory guidance: cost of school uniforms - GOV. UK (www.gov.uk) , non-statutory guidance School uniforms: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Home learning agreement

- Behaviour in schools (school response and sanctions).

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

Common Barriers

- Expense of compulsory school uniform

- No pre-loved uniform available

- Lack of washing facilities in the home

- Requirement to have specialist equipment for residentials or events e.g. sleeping bags

- Sanctions in place for students who do not bring their PE kit to school or do not have the correct uniform, which leads to pupils feeling disengaged

- Expense of day-to-day resources (pens, pencil cases etc) when the prevailing culture expects 'bring from home'

- Expense of resources linked to the curriculum/enrichment such as money for cookery ingredients (extras) or special kit for an after school sport activity

- Expense of text books and revision resources linked to the curriculum

- Homework requires a suitable place to work, resources from home or digital access esp. phones and competing family needs for technology

- Homework requires specific/time consuming support from an adult e.g. projects (living in poverty puts stress on a family. Parents may be holding down multiple jobs, working difficult shifts)

- Broadband issue or getting enough easy access to the Internet

- Time to complete the homework or competing family needs (caring role)

- More than one child in the family home competing for resources (multiplying cost).

Linked policies and guidance documents

- Accessibility
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour in schools
- Charging and remissions
- Health and safety
- Uniform and equipment

- Home/school agreement
- Pupil premium statement
- School travel plan
- SEND/inclusion
- Homework/home learning
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions.

Quick wins

- Establish a prominent 'Affordable Schools' space on your school website and populate using materials from the Affordable Schools toolkit (template, model wording, resources)

- Establish a dedicated email address where students and families can communicate challenges which they have around resources, uniform, equipment (e.g. affordability@aschool.co.uk). Explain that this email address will be viewed only by x member(s) of staff (someone with seniority and a visible, positive relationship with parents) and confidentiality maintained when providing support

- Ensure non-uniform events (Christmas jumper day) have minimal expectations and that these are well communicated. If there is a more specific requirement make sure this resource is available free of charge for all families (universal)

- Review the cost of the school day using the calendar and identify events and activities which could be quickly considered to align with your Affordable Schools commitment (NB there will be some quick wins here but also necessary for a longer term 'digging deeper' approach) https://children-ne. org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day-calendar-2022-23/

- Design after-school clubs through the lens of affordability and provide resources, as appropriate

- Provide easy access to digital resources for students experiencing digital poverty or with competing family needs e.g. homework/study clubs, cyber cafes during school or after school

- Use more than just online resources to communicate homework tasks

- Offer opportunities to complete homework in school through breakfast club, after school clubs or a lunchtime homework hub

- Have a clear approach and consistent response to issues regarding incomplete homework so that children who would be challenged to complete homework on time are supported (e.g. free homework club is available, support in place for young carers)

- Provide pots of pens and pencils in all classrooms, replenish regularly

- Through the 'lens of affordability', consider special occasions, such as children's birthdays and end of year gifts for teachers, and design an approach which reduces poverty related stigma (e.g. an Amazon 'wish list' where families can optionally purchase a gift for the class instead of directly giving a gift to the teacher; each child is given a piece of card and access to materials where they could make a card to say 'thank you' if they wished)

- Run fairs and events during the school day so all children can attend and help with the stalls and give every child a 'Free Go' ticket so they can go on a ride or play a game

- Review non-school uniform days and requests for donations to charities etc. Could pupils work together to make something which would raise money?

- Remove highly visible collection points – charity donations, bring something for Harvest etc – which may expose pupils who are unable to make a donation

- Provide vouchers for cake days so everyone has the same

- Consider school fun events through the lens of affordability and ensure arrangements are in place to mitigate against risk of exclusion or poverty related stigma (e.g. free entry to school discos/Christmas Fair, free refreshments, end of year celebrations etc)

- Use the Sports Premium Grant to buy kit and boots so that participation in school sports clubs is not affected by lack of resources

- Make sanitary products readily available.

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Digging deeper

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

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

Review of uniform policy to include:

- Keep use of branded uniform items to a minimum

- Ensure that uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money (including the quality and durability of the garment)

- Ensure the majority of uniform items, and PE clothes, can be purchased from affordable sources such as supermarkets e.g. remove the need for logos at all or limit to a key item

- Remove blurred lines around shoe choice e.g. commit to no brands and black but don't worry about the style (inc. black trainers)

- Fund logo items for all FSM students to match the expectations for all

- Simplify uniform requirements e.g. black leggings rather than a specific type

- Avoid parents having to duplicate items to fit with the school policy (e.g. particular bags, coats)

- Ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire and information on second-hand uniforms should be clear for parents of current and prospective pupils and published on the school's website

- Create a pre-loved uniform store in school – link to reducing environmental impact so the stigma is removed e.g. Monday school rails or hand-down uniforms at the end of year 6 – ensure uniform is clean and name labels removed

- Consider how to link with other organisations or sponsors to provide PE kit, uniforms, boots/ trainers/ swim wear & towels and other related items of equipment provided at the start of the year(or vouchers or starting school bundles).

Equipment:

- Consider how to reduce stigma and bullying associated with possessions brought into school e.g. basic equipment such as bags / pencil cases / water bottles / items associated with fashions and trends etc

- Consider how to establish a prevailing culture where stationery i.e. bags, pens/ pencils, colouring items, rulers, calculators, other mathematical equipment, pencil cases are school resources rather than bought from home

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- Explore fund-raising options that can subsidise the cost of full participation in school life for pupils living in poverty

- Review curriculum areas through the lens of affordability so cooking ingredients, dishes, carrying containers, fabrics etc are supplied

- Ensure that revision guides or additional support materials are loaned/ provided at no cost

- Establish an "equipment lending library" for residentials, forest school and LOTC activities - Collect some garments and equipment that can be loaned, such as waterproofs, hats, small rucksacks etc. This can be supported by encouraging families to speak to relatives or friends to be able to borrow equipment

- Have a readily available supply of spare coats, wellington boots, gloves, scarfs etc.

Homework:

- Profile homework/curriculum activities to understand what is being asked of pupils and parents and make reasonable adjustments (e.g. gathering together resources for projects, need for internet access and a computer, junk modelling activities)

- Establish a resource area where resources can be taken home e.g. when completing a creative homework task

- Agree a homework policy that prioritises practice or overlearning of essential skills taught in school which require limited resources (e.g. times tables, spellings and reading)

- Provide a menu of homework ideas rather than one specific task

- Assign family support workers (or similar) to build strong relationships with families around homework

- Link with other agencies to provide training for parents e.g. Wiltshire Family Learning

- Develop how pupils learn skills that allow them to work independently - link to transition projects with secondary schools and implement metacognition and self-regulation training for staff and parents/carers.

Behavior:

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

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

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- Profile pupils who are regularly wearing incorrect uniform/not having the correct equipment to understand the root causes and consider actions which can be taken to mitigate against this and the risk of poverty related stigma

- Fully establish a shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families which enables all staff to respond sensitively to individual pupil circumstances and enables flexibility of response.

Transport:

- Profile your school community to understand the geographical spread and challenges 'through the lens of affordability' which may affect attendance and punctuality or attendance at after school clubs etc

- Take a creative, solutions focused approach to address the identified challenges, on a case by case basis.

Resources

School uniform:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Period Poverty:

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

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Affordable Schools: Resourcing the school day at
Greentrees Primary School

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

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

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

The school team started by:

- Building a shared vision for Affordable Schools through surveys and staff meetings

- Building a team around Affordable Schools, and begin to unpick barriers (one of which was uniform)

- Reviewing the uniform policy in light of staff, pupil and parent voice.

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

- Removal of the requirement for pupils to wear branded items with school logo

- Removal of requirement to wear school P.E. kit

- Allowing pupils to wear black trainers.

Greentrees Primary School

Impact

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

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

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

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

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

'Such good news about the trainers. Makes perfect sense.'
Parents at Greentrees

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

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

Rationale

- Enrichment policy, practice and process should be reviewed through the lens of affordability so that it meets the needs of the wider school community and individuals

- Active measures should be taken to ensure extra-curricular activities are planned through the lens of affordability without causing embarrassment and stigma. This will ensure students can access all available activities and do not have to make choices based on price and equipment needed

- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Extra-curricular activities, including sport, outdoor activities, arts and culture, for example music lessons and school trips' Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- By thinking creatively, many enrichment opportunities and experiences can be provided free of charge and the school is committed to this approach where possible.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Enrichment/extra-curriculum activity

- Educational Visits/Learning Outside The Classroom (LOTC).

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

Questions to explore

- What do you have planned for the academic year, what are the costs involved in these activities and how much will families be asked to contribute?

- How do you communicate with families about the curriculum and enrichment offer and financial support which is available?

- How can you ensure that families have enough time to pay for school activities and events?

- Are plans for educational visits across the year mindful of overall cumulative costs to parents? i.e. balance local low / no cost activities with activities further afield that include costs?

- How do you track enrichment, take-up of clubs, and pupil participation?

- Who does and doesn't take part in clubs? Are there any patterns by income? How could you improve engagement?

- Does the school offer transport or assistance for pupils to attend extracurricular activities? (after-school clubs, supported study)

- Is there resilience within school finances to ensure that students receive the curriculum entitlement, and enrichment, through LOTC opportunities?

Common barriers

- High cost school trips which place pressures on pupils from lower income families

- Level of cost associated with after school clubs/curriculum/ enrichment/materials

- Families not given enough notice when trips, extra-curricular activities and fundraising events are organised

- Cost of travel, or travel logistics, to and from after school activities

- Parents may not have regular online access, or be time poor, so struggle to sign up for activities within allocated time frames

- Pupils may be anxious about the cost of some activities because they know this may place undue financial pressures on their family

- Families may struggle to prioritise competing needs of several family members

- Students may miss out on regular physical exercise opportunities, due to affordability

- Lack of consideration 'through the lens of affordability' about experiences and cultural capital which pupils bring to learning in the classroom (e.g. asking children to write about what they did at the weekend/during the holiday etc)

- Access to activities and enrichment experiences during the school holiday.

Policies

- Educational Visits
- Anti-bullying
- Accessibility
- Careers education
- Attendance
- Charging and remissions.

- Pupil Premium Statement
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Behaviour in schools
- Health and Safety

Quick wins

- Offer a range of clubs at lunchtimes

- Use a portion of PPG funding (wider strategies) to help vulnerable students access high-cost activities

- Spread the cost of visits and activities using Parent Pay (or similar) and payment plans

- Introduce a voucher system for spending money on residential trips e.g. all students have vouchers to spend (some students will be provided with vouchers whereas others will pay for the vouchers)

- Access the heavily subsidised music tuition service (Wiltshire Music Connect)

- Always ensure a minimum expectation of applications for a trip are taken up by vulnerable pupils (schools set own % targets)

- Consider the ease and equity of your sign-up system for clubs and activities to understand whether it advantages those who are already advantaged (e.g. if first come, first served then is it the same families who are always at the front of the queue?)

- Consider the geography of your school community and identify whether there are any pupils and families where transport may be a barrier to accessing extra-curricular activities

- Consider providing taxis or use the school mini bus to transport children home after clubs

- Engage with organisations, such as Platform who provide free workshops, train-trips, and bespoke, local resources to support schools in building cultural capital with out-of-classroom experiences

- Locality should be considered as a useful LOTC resource for frequent LOTC opportunities. Low cost and local often go together

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- Create a lending library of craft materials, board games, popular magazines, outdoor games & activities, dressing up etc and establish a system built around equitable access

- Prioritise reading, and love of reading, and make access to books readily available ('Reading can achieve something teachers and policymakers have been attempting for decades: to lessen or even eliminate the impact of early life disadvantage'. Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP)

- Ensure information and sign up to all holiday club activities (e.g. FUEL)

- Make full use of the school grounds and organise on site 'Learning Outside the Classroom' activities and residential experience opportunities (e.g. a sleep over in school).

Digging deeper

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

- Create a fully costed calendar of enrichment and extra-curricular events for each year group to help understand the cost of a year and what that would equate to on a weekly/monthly basis

- Identify cost saving measures which could be taken to reduce overall affordability (e.g. cluster/partner school collaboration, staff expertise, transport sharing, resource sharing etc)

- Clearly communicate the fully costed curriculum/enrichment offer at the start of the year and provide options for an appropriate payment schedule which spreads the cost and secures greater affordability (e.g. costed menu with option to spread into monthly instalments) or, as a minimum, ensure cost of activities is communicated with strong consideration given to providing notice (e.g. provide at least a year's notice for trips abroad or high expense activities)

- Ring-fence monies, identify charities, community groups, organisations and bursaries which can finance/supplement high cost activities

- Track take up of residentials, enrichment and extra-curricular activities to ensure equitable access to the opportunities on offer; act quickly to ensure no child is left behind (this could be linked to a pupil entitlement charter)

- Approach/offer sign up to vulnerable families first; do not rely on all parents being able to respond to systems such as a 'first come first serve' approach

- LOTC opportunities further afield will provide the support, enrichment and extension needed for students. Consider the curriculum links to LOTC and the visits that would provide cross-curricular support, life skills links and enhancement of prior learning, i.e. which visits are the most cost effective in terms of the impact gained to support student progress

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- Consider costs of an educational visit as a group issue rather than an individual participant responsibility and organise fundraising activities on a group basis to subsidise or wholly fund the visit

- Adopt an 11 by 11, or activity passport, approach with activities (many no cost) which inspire children's ability to problem-solve, see or visit new places and develop wide interests in new subjects (e.g. Get soaking wet in the rain, skim stones, build a den, see the sun rise/sun set, make a home for an insect or small creature, roll down a hill, take part in a treasure hunt etc)

- Approach the PTA / Friends of School to help access charitable trust funding.

Resources

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

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

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

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

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

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

Home - Platform (platformrail.org)

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

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

EEF enrichment tracker

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

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

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

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

- An affordability section in the family handbook, school newsletters and on the school website;

- An overview of all trips for the year available at 'Meet the Teacher' events in September – including cost and payment options;

- A thorough review of enrichment activities and their affordability.

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

- Securing PTFA commitment to subsidise agreed events

- Building a bank of resources that can be borrowed for trips and events such as sleeping bags, lunch boxes, wellies, sports kit and dressing up clothes

- Ensuring, where possible, events are combined to reduce the amount of hours parents and carers need to take off work

- Using Evolve to complete post event analysis.

Impact

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

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

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

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

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

Together, Manor Fields are making a difference.

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

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

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

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

• Surveying their staff, parents, carers and pupils

• Building a team around Affordable Schools with the specific focus on social and emotional learning interventions

• Building a deeper understanding of what was already in place and strengthen practice through the lens of affordability.

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

• Providing Forest Schools clothing

• Washing clothes for children when things get muddy

• Ensuring the Forest school cycle prioritises those children who need this experience the most, and maintaining this so these children get regular access

• Developing staff awareness around the value of Forest Schools – anxious children can't learn.

St Michael's CE Primary School

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

Impact

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

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

"Forest School gives me the chance to calm down and fix arguments."
St Michael's Pupils

"I can tell if he has been in the forest – you can physically see it in him, he is relaxed. He says, 'it is my happy place'".
Parents at St Michael's

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

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

Rationale

- An Affordable School will mitigate against the causes, barriers and challenges faced by lower income families and devise strategies to address the impact on mental health and wellbeing

- An Affordable School will operate with transparency and take active measures to address challenges presented by food poverty (e.g. availability and costings of food so pupils can make personal judgements about affordability)

- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Breakfast clubs and meal provision' Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Exploring poverty and inequality and thinking about how to make their environment more inclusive for all can also support children's participation, voice and activism around social issues.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Food and nutrition

- Anti-bullying

- PSHE & Citizenship.

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

Questions to explore

- Can students at your school identify which of their peers are in receipt of free school meals?

- What do students think of their school lunch experience?

- How do we collect insights into what students think of lunchtime at your school?

- Do students on free school meals have the same school food options as their peers, including at break times and at different times of the year?

- Do all students take up their free school meal entitlement?

- How effective is your food policy and has it been considered through the lens of affordability?

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- How can we best use foodbanks?

- How is the school providing visible senior leadership for the impact of poverty related stigma on mental health and wellbeing?

- How does the school anti-bullying policy respond to incidents which are related to poverty?

- How does the school assess the needs of students and the impact of interventions to improve wellbeing and reduce poverty related stigma?

- How does the school ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services?

- Are pupils able to access a wide range of physical activities and opportunities inside and outside of school to improve mental and physical health?

- How do we design our curriculum to enable discussion and development around:

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

Common barriers

- Mental health can be a sensitive subject to discuss, especially so in families where mental health is presenting challenges

- Mental health is seen as the cause rather than the effect (of living in poverty)

- Recognising emerging issues in the early stages

- Families not taking up entitlement to FSM because of poverty related stigma and pupils not taking up the offer of FSM on an educational visit when it is offered to them

- School systems and processes inadvertently exposing pupils who are in receipt of FSMs

- Pressures around food affordability cause stress and anxiety (mental health)

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- Families getting into arrears with school lunch payments placing additional negative pressures on the relationship between the family and the school

- Pupils display negative behaviours and lack of concentration because of lack of breakfast/feeling hungry, tired etc

- Lack of opportunity to access regular physical exercise (see enrichment)

- Home circumstances as contributing factors to pupil mental health and wellbeing (e.g. bed poverty, lack of sleep, overcrowding in houses, washing facilities, warmth, low energy due to lack of meals etc)

- Families having insufficient, timely access to services and specialist support

- School judgements about content of pupil's lunchboxes without thinking 'through the lens of affordability'.

Policies

- Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges

- PSHE/RSE

- Anti-bullying

- Health and safety

- School protocol for meeting with parents.

- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

- SEND

- Behaviour in schools

- Exam policy

Quick wins

- Consider the 'root causes' of any negative behaviours/lack of concentration and provide snacks/breakfast etc to meet basic need (e.g. if a pupil presents as angry establish whether they are hungry, if a pupil presents as tired understand whether they are able to get a good night's sleep/bed poverty etc)

- Gather student voice around meal choices, the lunchtime environment and processes, to understand the 'lived experience'

- Purchase a set of lunch boxes which can be used for FSM pupils instead of paper bags to reduce poverty related stigma

- Ensure a relational approach to contacting parents when communicating any challenges around food and eating in school

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- Provide fruit and healthy snacks to supplement food for all pupils, and encourage a healthy diet, especially for PP

- Provide 'toast for all' every morning - as a positive behaviour reinforcer and to combat hunger in the morning

- Send invites to a Breakfast Club/ early school opening/ social time with food

- Empower your catering team to play a frontline role in pastoral care/ wellbeing support and, where appropriate, communicate observations quickly to senior leaders so necessary support can be provided

- Set up a universal 'help yourself' resource for any extra food or snacks that may become available

- Add helplines, links and information about FSM eligibility for families to your website and weekly/termly newsletters (Affordable Schools section on websites)

- Make best use of CPOMS (or safeguarding systems) to regularly update information and bring together bits of the 'jigsaw' which may be an indicator of vulnerability 'through the lens of affordability' (e.g. came to school hungry etc)

- Consider the mental health and wellbeing of all members of staff 'through the lens of affordability' and make adjustments to staff activities (e.g. affordability of staff get togethers or events).

Digging deeper

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

- Review the whole lunchtime experience through the lens of affordability and the 'lived experience' of pupils from lower income families and strategically plan to bring about improvements

- Review the anti-bullying policy through the lens of affordability and understand the nature of incidents where poverty related stigma may have been a contributing factor

- Build a mental health awareness cycle across the school year so that you are regularly talking with pupils about their experiences of school life, including cost of living

- Ensure mental health and cost of living has sufficient coverage in your curriculum

- Build a common language to support cost of living discussions

- Carry out the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Schools survey and act on findings

- Use health and wellbeing data to identify health behaviour inequalities for those pupils with indices of living in poverty. e.g. annual dentist check, eye examinations, up-to-date vaccinations

- Work to achieve levels of the Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme

- Adopt Five to Thrive as a universal provision

- Build relationships with local businesses such as supermarkets who may be able to provide food vouchers, food donations and other resources to support school delivery of clubs and activities

- Carry out a curriculum review and build opportunities to explore:

- Reasons behind inequalities in society
- Causes and consequences of poverty
- The social security system and welfare reform
- Poverty and children's rights
- Food insecurity.

- In work poverty and low wages
- Attitudes towards poverty in society
- What poverty looks like globally, nationally and locally
- Media representations of poverty

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

Resources

Financial Planning

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

- How to manage money

- Becoming a critical consumer

- Managing risks and emotions associated with money

- Understanding the important role money plays in our lives.

FINANCIAL-EDUCATION-PLANNING-FRAMEWORK-3-11-ONLINE-2020.pdf (young-enterprise.org.uk)

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Young Enterprise Teachers Hub

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

Values, money and me

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

Food and Nutrition

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

Healthy weight : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Breakfast Clubs : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

School Plates | Campaign | ProVeg UK

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

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

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

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

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

https://www.neighbourly.com/Aldi

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

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

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Mental Health

Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Emotional wellbeing and mental health : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Mental Health Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

On Your Mind – We can help

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

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

https://www.skillsforschools.org.uk

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

•   Identify need beyond those children in receipt of pupil premium

•   Survey stakeholders

•   Review current approaches then develop a robust, inclusive strategy for food and nutrition in Ashton Keynes.

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

•   Wide communication of the affordable approach so that the whole school community understand about our drive to become an affordable school

•   Wide communication of the affordable approach so that the whole school community understand about our drive to become an affordable school

•   The writing of a food and nutrition policy which includes affordability PERSONAL / SOCIAL / HEALTH EDUCATION / CITIZENSHIP (akps.org.uk)

•   A review of the school's curriculum offer and teaching about food and nutrition

•   Wider engagement with families to support affordable food and nutrition at home

•   To ensure their website clearly provides information about affordable schools and any links to support available

•   The setting up page of their school website to inform and support Affordable Schools (akps.org.uk).

Ashton Keynes CE Primary School
Continues over...

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

Impact

Already, the impact has been significant:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rationale

- A positive, family centred problem solving approach, driven by data, will improve outcomes: every family is different and should be provided with support which accurately and sensitively reflects their individual circumstances

- Building strong, trusting relationships that promote a feeling of belonging with individual families is fundamental to improving student engagement: parents and carers are treated equitably and can seek support from school without stigma or stereotyping

- Effective communication of school policy, practice and support is key to success. Parents may not be aware of the support that is in place to ensure families on a low income can get the help they need

- Actively demonstrating an understanding of the financial pressures being placed on families will help to strengthen relationships and improve engagement. (CPAG advises that parents appreciate: 'An open and proactive approach; A simple and matter of fact style in communication to parents and carers, which acknowledges that any family could fall into financial hardship at any time; Discretion, confidentiality, kindness and non-judgement when having conversations with families)

- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium Grant and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Communicating with and supporting parents' Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk).

Key policies to be reviewed

- Attendance

- Home/school agreement.

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

Questions to explore

- How do we communicate with our families?

- How effective is school communication (website, letters, personalised messages, parent meetings etc) to support parents and secure wider engagement?

- How do parents feel about coming into school and asking for help or talking about their circumstances? How do we know?

- Are there links between parental engagement and attendance in our school?

- What is our school's prevailing culture about parental engagement and is there any deficit language or behaviours we may need to address?

- What is the strength of our relationship with parents, and do we have a positive mindset about engaging even the hardest to reach?

- Are educational visit letters and related communications aware of pupil home situations in compliance with the Education Act 1996 in respect to charging for educational activities.

Common barriers

- Poverty and impact on attendance and punctuality (transport, mental health, peer relationships etc)

- Poor relationships between families and schools (e.g. legacy disagreements)

- Challenges with transportation (including cost)

- Chronic & acute illness, family responsibilities or home situation, trauma

- Anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

- Housing and food insecurity

- Lack of predictable schedules for learning

- View of schooling and value placed on education due to life experiences, current challenges, type of occupation

- Parents do not like coming into school: embarrassment, poverty related stigma, previous poor experiences

- Parents not aware of support which is available

- Stigma around poverty in the community and the school lacking a whole school 'universal' approach which avoids labelling

- Parents/carers may not be readily available, or more 'hard to reach' due to work schedules e.g. shift work or holding down multiple jobs

- Relationships with parents are under developed, particularly with the most vulnerable

- Engagement with health services – sight tests, hearing, dentist, immunisations.

Linked policies

- Accessibility

- Attendance

- Anti-bullying

- Exclusion

- Pupil Premium Statement

- SEND

- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

- Behaviour in schools

- Health and Safety

- School protocol for meeting with parents.

Quick wins

- Communicate universally sharing financial information with all families, not just those who you think might need it. This universal promotion means parents don't have to ask for help and ensures information reaches the right people - even if you don't always know who that is

- Tailor communications, with careful use of language, to encourage more positive dialogue (e.g. personal text messages for families, targeted conversations, simple, clear and matter of fact, opportunities for parents to question to develop understanding)

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- Whenever possible, communicate through a mix of methods (letters, emails, texts, in person...) as wide ranging, visible and open communication opens the door to conversations and encourages any parents to come forward if they need to

- Timing of communications is important so try to communicate information at your earliest opportunity, especially around induction and transition points in the school year, beginning of each term and well ahead of any deadlines

- Be aware of language barriers and literacy issues

- Make the most of home visits as an opportunity to establish relationships, provide face to face communication around school support and services and identify vulnerabilities so the school can understand/intervene early

- Breakfast club/early bird opening

- Provide consistency at the start of the school day – for all students e.g. routines feel safe and this encourages better attendance

- Install a 'welcome to school' processes for students who struggle to make it e.g. meet and greet/arriving earlier to avoid crowds/pick-up from home/ breakfast club/use thrive as a transition activity

- Set up regular face to face meetings (informal and formal), using family link workers or by visiting the family home at the family's convenience

- Set up champions for all vulnerable students e.g. use specialist practitioners, family support workers

- Describe initiatives like uniform sales as 'green' or 'community-focused' to help increase uptake (instead of focusing on the financial aspect)

- Talking directly about poverty or financial difficulties can sometimes worry parents and carers. Try using collective words like 'us' (for example: "we want our families to get the support they're entitled to")

- In any messages that involve costs (for example, in letters home about school trips), remind families where to go to get information regarding financial entitlements and support (e.g. your dedicated email address).

Digging deeper

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

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- Refer families to affordable food providers, money advisers and other relevant outside agencies who can support them if they are struggling financially

- Use school website to signpost parents and carers to services and training

- Understand attendance issues as a symptom or barometer of health and wellbeing and have a shared understanding that commitment to the 'Affordable Schools' approach will lead to improved relationships and communication, a stronger school community and, in turn, attendance

- Any school improvement strategy to address attendance needs to understand the data and challenges, secure school systems, roles and responsibilities, take a whole school approach, target support for the whole family rather than just the individual student, work on a case by case basis for 'stuck' cases, ensure regular monitoring and feedback

- Establish a Parent Council; parents sometimes feel more comfortable talking to other parents and this will be an effective way to discuss 'Affordable Schools' and establish a network of contacts

- Build strong relationships with families and make every effort made to build trust and engagement here

- Evaluate communication systems and processes to ensure easy access for all

- Support parents/carers with making a free school meal application including providing ICT facilities for online applications and frequently promote to families

- Run specific training for staff around parental engagement e.g. use EEF guidance (see resources)

- Offer Parental training around routine and behaviour linked to the school's evidence based approaches

- Support parents with information, guidance and strategies for attendance with targeted support for individuals, as appropriate (e.g. social stories to provide information and pre-teaching which enable students and parents to be more aware)

- Set up regular parent workshops for a variety of purposes, possibly repeating each year so the community are used to this kind of connection and support (e.g. preparing your child for a residential visit or reading with your child)

- Support parents with careers advice and guidance by signposting to relevant services

Resources

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

Community Directory Interactive Community Directory - Wiltshire Council

Council tax, benefits and financial support Council tax, benefits and financial support - Wiltshire Council

Energy costs advice and guidance Energy costs advice and guidance - Wiltshire Council

Housing information and support Housing information and support - Wiltshire Council

Mental Health support Mental Health support - Wiltshire Council

Local Practical Help Local practical help - Wiltshire Council

Supporting businesses Supporting businesses through the rising cost of living - Wiltshire Council

Warm spaces Wiltshire Council warm spaces - Wiltshire Council

Grants overview Cost of Living Support (wiltshiremoney.org.uk)

Work Wiltshire case studies:

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

Wiltshire Council Parenting Support

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

Parent Champions

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

Setting up a Parent Champions scheme : Family and Childcare Trust

Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Family and Community Learning

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

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

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

https://www.turn2us.org.uk

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

https://www.gingerbread.org.uk

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

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

North Wiltshire:

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

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

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Support for families during holidays

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

Resources | Page | SLA Online (sla-online.co.uk)

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

Family Fund Services

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

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

Attendance

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

EBSA: Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) | Right Choice wiltshire.gov.uk)

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

Attendance Works: https://www.attendanceworks.org

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

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

SEND newsletter - Local Offer (wiltshire.gov.uk)

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

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

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

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

- Formed a team around 'Affordable Schools'

- Surveyed all staff, parents, governors and pupils around the barriers of affordability and day to day school life

- Shared the Affordable Schools context with staff.

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

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

- Ensuring communications to parents and carers was as varied as possible: newsletters, social media, Teachers2Parents app, emails, texts to identify best form of communication and moving to one platform (Dojo)

- Introducing weekly Pastoral DASH meetings to monitor vulnerable pupils

- Allocating 3 hours per week HLTA time to the implementation to ensure individual needs are identified and pupil-centred solutions offered or created

- Meetings booked just after drop-off or just before collection times.

Pembroke Park Primary School

Impact

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

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

"I love coming to school. It is my safe place."

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

Pupils

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

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

Parents

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

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

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

Affordable Schools

Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Affordable Schools Strategy

Secondary

Wiltshire Council

Contents

Foreword

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

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

Kate Wilkins (Wiltshire Disadvantaged Learners Lead & School Leadership)

Vicky Gordon (Wiltshire Vulnerable Pupils Advisor and SIA)

Affordable Schools: the background

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

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

What is Affordable Schools?

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

- Develop a widely shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families who are living in poverty

- Make universal, positive changes to policies and practices that will improve the experience of all, especially the most vulnerable.

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

- An Affordable School is committed to reducing poverty related stigma by deliberately making positive changes to every aspect of school policy and practice through the lens of affordability

- Any 'affordable' provision is a universal provision: we cannot be certain at any one time which families, or members of the school community, are experiencing financial hardship so our policies and practice should not identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions

- Being 'affordable' means being creative and solutions focused to ensure our provision and curriculum offer is always easily accessible to all students, without limiting the quality of education

- Relationships are key to the success of the Affordable Schools strategy

- Strong leadership and positive action will make a difference to our school communities.

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

The Children's Society

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

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

Child Poverty Action Group is a UK charity that works to alleviate poverty and social exclusion CPAG - Home

Children North East (Poverty Proofing)

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

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

EEF_Implementation_Guidance_Report_2019

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

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

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnership

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

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

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

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

Groundwork

Working group identified. All staff awareness and buy in

Information gathering

| Audit of costs throughout school | Staff views on costs, barriers and solutions | Pupil views on costs, barriers and solutions | Parent carer views on costs barriers and solutions |

Analysis

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

Action

Actions to tackle barriers identified

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

- How affordable is your school? How confident are you that children and families feel that they will be met with understanding and empathy if in need of support?

- How effective is your Charging and Remissions policy in acknowledging poverty related stigma and highlighting your commitment to support lower income families?

- How effectively are financial entitlements like Free School Meals and support grants for families on low incomes being promoted to families? Do all families in the school know what is available if it is needed? Are there processes in place to support families to apply for and benefit from extra help?

- How are you communicating with families to find out what resources are needed for children to learn? What processes are in place to provide resources for all children who need them?

- To what extent are school policies and practices designed to reduce financial pressure on families and include children and young people on low incomes? Are there particular practices or policies that could be established or reinstated that have clear benefits for low income families, for example extended school services such as after school clubs?

- Is there a shared and assumption free culture which understands differing home circumstances and how they may impact on pupils' attitudes and learning (e.g. parents being 'time poor' due to shift working/additional hours etc rather than lack of interest)?

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

Vision, Strategy and Implementation

Resourcing the School Day

Enrichment and Opportunities

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Securing Positive Partnerships

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

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

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

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

- School leaders are visibly committed to making their school 'Affordable'

- School ethos and culture
- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Pupil Voice
- Staff professional development.

- Monitoring impact
- Working with parents and carers
- Targeted support

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

Year one Bronze
Adopt and implement
Affordable Schools strategy

Year two Silver
Deepen practice and
on-going evidence of impact

Year three Gold
Sustained, culturally
embedded practice with
notable impact on outcomes

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

Rationale

1. Access to the full curriculum and all learning tasks, wherever possible, is designed to require no financial outlay and reasons for non-completion of tasks/homework, and not having the correct equipment, are assessed through the lens of affordability.

2. Active measures are taken to support a student where their external circumstances present them with additional challenges that would prevent or hinder being ready to learn.

3. Parents should not have to consider the cost of a school uniform when choosing which school(s) to apply for. Therefore, schools need to ensure that their uniform is affordable. 'Where a school's uniform is too expensive it can place an unreasonable burden on families. No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to, or attend, a school of their choice, due to the cost of the uniform.'
School uniforms - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4. We are mindful of the DfE Pupil Premium guidance 'Schools may be justified in funding items not listed where this is necessary to overcome specific barriers to student attainment, for example to meet acute needs around student equipment to ensure readiness to learn' which emphasises the importance of a nuanced and robust process for identifying needs. Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk).

5. Schools should commit to an assumption free culture in order to be sure we take a personalised, relational approach. (CPAG 'Don't assume families are ok financially. Instead, show everyone that you are aware of hidden poverty and explain the support that's out there, so nobody gets missed').

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

Questions to explore

- What does it feel like to be a pupil in your school (day in the life of...)?

- Can all students access all elements of the curriculum irrespective of their financial circumstances? What does student/parent voice tell us?

- Are students required to bring in their own pencil cases or other equipment from home?

- Is uniform affordable and information readily available on your school website?

- How do we identify families who would need support?

- How often do uniform sales take place?

- What pre-loved uniform provision is available at your school and how do students and families access it?

- What resources are required for students to complete their homework currently and do we consider impact on financial circumstances?

- Have we considered what families have available on a daily basis (e.g. computers, paper etc) and are we satisfied that we keep up to date with our understanding of family circumstances to be confident of equitable access for all?

- What support is available for those who may not have these resources at home?

- Are there opportunities for students to complete their homework in school if they face barriers at home?

- How equitable is the homework policy – what prevailing culture does it communicate?

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

- What happens if children don't have the correct uniform? Are staff responses consistent and delivered 'through the lens of affordability'?

- Are children sanctioned if they don't have the correct uniform, shoes, PE kit etc?

- Can children take part if they don't have the correct clothing?

- Have transport costs been considered? How do pupils get to school?

- If the school offers support with transport costs, who benefits?

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Key policies to be reviewed

- Uniform and equipment - Statutory guidance: cost of school uniforms - GOV. UK (www.gov.uk) , non-statutory guidance School uniforms: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Home learning agreement

- Behaviour in schools (school response and sanctions).

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

Common Barriers

- Expense of compulsory school uniform

- No pre-loved uniform available

- Lack of washing facilities in the home

- Requirement to have specialist equipment for residentials e.g. sleeping bags

- Sanctions in place for students who do not have the correct uniform/PE kit/equipment, which leads to pupils feeling disengaged and, if related to affordability, embeds poverty related stigma

- Poor school attendance because it is easier to stay at home rather than navigate the daily material and social challenges

- Expense of day-to-day resources (pens, pencil cases etc) when the prevailing culture expects 'bring from home'

- Expense of resources linked to the curriculum/enrichment such as money for cookery ingredients (extras) or special kit for an after school sport activity

- Expense of certain specific equipment that is classed as safety equipment for LOTC activities (e.g. fieldwork and / or DofE Expedition kit, such as waterproofs, warm clothing, walking boots, sleeping bags, rucksacks, stoves, etc)

- Expense of text books and revision resources linked to the curriculum and exam preparation

- Homework requires a suitable place to work, resources from home or digital access esp. phones and competing family needs for technology

- Homework requires specific/time consuming support from an adult e.g. projects (living in poverty puts stress on a family. Parents may be holding down multiple jobs, working difficult shifts)

- Broadband issue or getting enough easy access to the Internet

- Time to complete the homework or competing family needs (caring role)

- More than one child in the family home competing for resources (multiplying cost).

Linked policies and guidance documents

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

Quick wins

- Establish a prominent 'Affordable Schools' space on your school website and populate using materials from the Affordable Schools toolkit (template, model wording, resources)

- Establish a dedicated email address where students and families can communicate challenges which they have around resources, uniform, equipment (e.g. affordability@aschool.co.uk). Explain that this email address will be viewed only by x member(s) of staff (someone with seniority and a visible, positive relationship with parents) and confidentiality maintained when providing support

- Add helplines, links and information about FSM eligibility for families to your website and weekly/termly newsletters (Affordable Schools section on websites)

- Review the cost of the school day using the calendar and identify events and activities which could be quickly considered to align with your Affordable Schools commitment (NB there will be some quick wins here but also necessary for a longer term 'digging deeper' approach) https://children-ne.org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day-calendar-2022-23/

- Ensure non-uniform events (Christmas jumper day) have minimal expectations and that these are well communicated. If there is a more specific requirement make sure this resource is available free of charge for all families (universal)

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- Design after-school clubs through the lens of affordability and provide resources, as appropriate

- Provide easy access to digital resources for students experiencing digital poverty or with competing family needs e.g. homework/study clubs, cyber cafes during school or after school

- Advertise to all students where they can access computers, the internet in school or in the local community

- Offer a free study hub, at times within the school day, where students have free access to ICT, printing and library

- Offer free study/catch-up hub after school

- Use more than just online resources to communicate homework tasks

- Open the school early so some children can do their homework in school, link this to a breakfast offer

- Provide pots of pens and pencils in all classrooms, replenish regularly

- Make sanitary products readily available

- Use the Sports Premium Grant to buy kit and boots so that participation in school sports clubs and the curriculum is not affected by lack of resources

- Review curriculum areas through the lens of affordability so cooking ingredients, dishes, carrying containers, fabrics etc are supplied

- Remove visible 'ask' points where pupils have to expose themselves for not having equipment/uniform/curriculum resources etc.

Digging deeper

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

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

Review of uniform policy to include:

- Keep use of branded uniform items to a minimum

- Ensure that uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money (including the quality and durability of the garment)

- Ensure the majority of uniform items, and PE clothes, can be purchased from affordable sources such as supermarkets e.g. remove the need for logos at all or limit to a key item

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- Remove blurred lines around shoe choice e.g. commit to no brands and black but don't worry about the style (inc. black trainers)

- Fund logo items for all FSM students to match the expectations for all

- Simplify uniform requirements e.g. black leggings rather than a specific type

- Avoid parents having to duplicate items to fit with the school policy (e.g. particular bags, coats)

- Ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire and information on second-hand uniforms should be clear for parents of current and prospective pupils and published on the school's website

- Create an order form for second-hand uniform so parents don't need to identify themselves in front of peers

- Create a high quality, pre-loved uniform store in school (NB ensure uniform is clean and labels removed) – link to reducing environmental impact so the stigma is removed

- Sell new ties, or other required items, in the second-hand uniform shop to save on postage for parents buying from suppliers

- Consider how to link with other organisations or sponsors to provide PE kit, uniforms, boots/ trainers/ swim wear & towels and other related items of equipment provided at the start of the year (or vouchers or starting school bundles).

Equipment:

- Consider how to reduce stigma and bullying associated with possessions brought into school e.g. basic equipment such as bags / pencil cases / water bottles / items associated with fashions and trends etc

- Consider how to establish a prevailing culture where stationery i.e. bags, pens/ pencils, colouring items, rulers, calculators, other mathematical equipment, pencil cases are school resources rather than bought from home

- Explore fund-raising options that can subsidise the cost of full participation in school life for pupils living in poverty

- Profile homework/curriculum activities to understand what is being asked of pupils and parents and make reasonable adjustments e.g. gathering together resources for Art, Design and Technology, need for internet access and a computer

- One-page summary of ingredients required for food technology each term to allow mass purchase and advertising the support available from school.

- Create a resource library with donated/school purchased text books and revision guides (possibly donations from pupils when completed Year 11 or 13)

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- Establish an "equipment lending library" - Collect some garments and equipment that can be loaned, such as waterproofs, hats, small rucksacks etc. This can be supported by encouraging families to speak to relatives or friends to be able to borrow equipment

- Establish a community officer link/assign family support workers, pastoral manager (or similar) where children/families can go to discuss resource requirements and get support.

Homework:

- Profile homework/curriculum activities to understand what is being asked of pupils and parents and make reasonable adjustments e.g. gathering together resources for Art, Design and Technology, need for internet access and a computer

- Establish a department resource area where resources, which may be required, can be taken home to support completion e.g. when completing a creative homework task

- Consider providing a menu of homework ideas rather than one specific task

- Assign family support workers (or similar) to build strong relationships with families around homework

- Link with other agencies to provide support, through training, for parents e.g. Wiltshire Family Learning

- Develop how pupils learn skills that allow them to work independently by implementing metacognition and self-regulation training for staff and parents/carers

- Have a clear and consistent 'through the lens of affordability' approach to sanctions regarding incompletion of homework so that children who would be challenged to complete homework on time are supported (e.g. free homework club is available, support in place for young carers).

Behavior:

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

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

- Profile pupils who are regularly wearing incorrect uniform/not having the correct equipment to understand the root causes and consider actions which can be taken to mitigate against this and the risk of poverty related stigma

- Fully establish a shared understanding of the causes, barriers and challenges faced by pupils and families which enables all staff to respond sensitively to individual pupil circumstances and enables flexibility of response

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Transport:

- Profile your school community to understand the geographical spread and challenges 'through the lens of affordability' which may affect attendance and punctuality or attendance at after school clubs etc

- Take a creative, solutions focused approach to address the identified challenges, on a case by case basis.

Resources

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Period Poverty:

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

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

Rationale

- Enrichment policy, practice and process should be reviewed through the lens of affordability so that it meets the needs of the wider school community and individuals

- Active measures should be taken to ensure extra-curricular activities are planned through the lens of affordability without causing embarrassment and stigma. This will ensure students can access all available activities and do not have to make choices based on price and equipment needed

- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Extra-curricular activities, including sport, outdoor activities, arts and culture, for example music lessons and school trips' Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- By thinking creatively, many enrichment opportunities and experiences can be provided free of charge and the school is committed to this approach where possible.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Enrichment/extra-curriculum activity

- Educational Visits/Learning Outside The Classroom (LOTC)

- Careers Education.

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

Questions to explore

- Who has overall responsibility for enrichment? How is this this role developed around affordable schools principles?

- How do you address inequalities in life experiences beyond school of all your pupils when deciding what trips to offer?

- How much do staff understand about affordability and the organisation of events in their department or faculty?

- What do departments have planned for the academic year ahead? How are plans communicated to parents?

- Are plans for educational visits across the year mindful of overall cumulative costs to parents? i.e. balance local low / no cost activities with activities further afield that include costs

- How do you ensure that families have enough time to pay for school activities and events?

- How do you communicate with families about the curriculum and enrichment offer and financial support which is available?

- How do you track enrichment, take-up of clubs, participation?

- Who does and doesn't take part in clubs? Are there any patterns by income?

- Is there resilience within school finances to ensure that students receive the curriculum entitlement, and enrichment, through LOTC opportunities?

Common barriers

- High cost school trips which prohibit pupils from lower income families

- School trips which may be gap wideners (e.g. Ski trip where the barrier may be around some children not being able to ski before the trip compared to some children who will already know how to ski because of life chances beyond school. Does this make a 'ski trip' stigma inducing rather than reducing stigma?)

- Level of cost associated with after school clubs/curriculum/enrichment/materials

- Families not given enough notice when trips, extra-curricular activities and fundraising events are organised

- Cost of travel, or travel logistics, to and from after school activities

- Parents may not have regular online access, or be time poor, so struggle to sign up for activities within allocated time frames

- Students will veto an opportunity, and not share information with parents, because they know this may place undue financial pressures on their family

- Families may struggle to prioritise competing needs of several family members

- Students may miss out on careers opportunities as a result of financial cost of visits to institutions (e.g. work experience placements, universities, FE college)

- Students may miss out on regular physical exercise opportunities, due to affordability

- Lack of consideration 'through the lens of affordability' about experiences and cultural capital which pupils bring to learning in the classroom (e.g. asking children to write about what they did at the weekend/during the holiday etc)

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Policies

- LOTC/Educational visits policy
- Anti-bullying
- Accessibility
- Careers education
- Attendance
- Charging and remissions

- Pupil Premium Statement
- SEND
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Behaviour in schools
- Health and Safety
- Enrichment/extra-curriculum activity
- School protocol for meeting with parents.

Quick wins

- Careers team or external agency always prioritise vulnerable students

- Ensure all vulnerable students have a suitable placement during career's week, and get priority access to other careers opportunities

- Ensure all vulnerable students have transportation options to and from work placements

- Offer a range of clubs at lunchtimes

- Use a portion of PPG funding (wider strategies) to help vulnerable students access high-cost activities

- Spread the cost of visits and activities using Parent Pay (or similar) and payment plans

- Introduce a voucher system for spending money on residential trips e.g. all students have vouchers to spend (some students will be provided with vouchers whereas others will pay for the vouchers)

- Access the heavily subsidised music tuition service (Wiltshire Music Connect)

- Always ensure a minimum expectation of applications for a trip are taken up by vulnerable pupils (schools set own % targets)

- Consider the ease and equity of your sign-up system for clubs and activities to understand whether it advantages those who are already advantaged (e.g. if first come, first served then is it the same families who are always at the front of the queue?)

- Consider the geography of your school community and identify whether there are any pupils and families where transport may be a barrier to accessing extra-curricular activities

- Provide taxis or use the school mini-bus to transport children home after club

- Locality should be considered as a useful LOTC resource for frequent LOTC opportunities. Low cost and local often go together.

Digging deeper

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

- Create a fully costed calendar of enrichment and extra-curricular events for each year group to help understand the cost of a year and what that would equate to on a weekly/monthly basis

- Identify cost saving measures which could be taken to reduce overall affordability (e.g. cluster/partner school collaboration, staff expertise, transport sharing, resource sharing etc)

- Clearly communicate the fully costed curriculum/enrichment offer at the start of the year and provide options for an appropriate payment schedule which spreads the cost and secures greater affordability (e.g. costed menu with option to spread into monthly instalments) or, as a minimum, ensure cost of activities is communicated with strong consideration given to providing notice (e.g. provide at least a year's notice for trips abroad or high expense activities)

- Ring-fence monies, identify charities, community groups, organisations and bursaries which can finance/supplement high cost activities

- Track take up of residentials, enrichment and extra-curricular activities to ensure equitable access to the opportunities on offer; act quickly to ensure no child is left behind (this could be linked to a pupil entitlement charter)

- Approach/offer sign up to vulnerable families first; do not rely on all parents being able to respond to systems such as a 'first come first serve' approach

- Create a system which leads with expressions of interest for trips and includes indication that financial support will be required before a deposit is requested

- Consider the necessity of e.g. a 'Ski trip' by understanding this opportunity through the lens of the affordability guiding principles and take action to ensure that such an expensive, resource and skill heavy trip reduces poverty related stigma

- Ensure that any enrichment best bets include preparations for the next stage of a student's education/life e.g. include trips to visit places of work, universities, colleges etc. This could be linked to a student's entitlement charter within the school outlining where the students will be able to receive enrichment to their education and acts a monitoring tool

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- LOTC opportunities further afield will provide the support, enrichment and extension needed for students. Consider the curriculum links to LOTC and the visits that would provide cross-curricular support, life skills links and enhancement of prior learning, i.e. which visits are the most cost effective in terms of the impact gained to support student progress

- Consider costs of an educational visit as a group issue rather than an individual participant responsibility and organise fundraising activities on a group basis to subsidise or wholly fund the visit

- Approach the PTA / Friends of School to help access charitable trust funding.

Resources

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

FUEL programme - Wiltshire Council

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

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

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

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

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

Home - Platform (platformrail.org)

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

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

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

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

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

- www.moneysavingexpert.com/banking/student-money-saving
  Dedicated to helping you save money and find the best deals, based on detailed journalistic research

- www.student-finance.co.uk
  Advice on student finance

- www.118student.co.uk
  Advice on getting a loan, grant or insurance

- www.ucas.ac.uk/students/studentfinance
  UCAS site on student finance

- www.suttontrust.com
  Charity promoting social mobility through improved access to education

- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
  For a summary of how bursaries and grants work

- courses-careers.com
  Check out the bursary searcher.

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

Rationale

- An Affordable School will mitigate against the causes, barriers and challenges faced by lower income families and devise strategies to address the impact on mental health and wellbeing

- An Affordable School will operate with transparency and take active measures to address challenges presented by food poverty (e.g. availability and costings of food so pupils can make personal judgements about affordability)

- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Breakfast clubs and meal provision'
Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Exploring poverty and inequality and thinking about how to make their environment more inclusive for all can also support children's participation, voice and activism around social issues.

Key policies to be reviewed

- Food and nutrition

- Anti-bullying

- PSHE & Citizenship

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

Questions to explore

- Can students at your school identify which of their peers are in receipt of free school meals?

- What do students think of their school lunch experience?

- How do we collect insights into what students think of lunchtime at your school?

- Do students on free school meals have the same school food options as their peers, including at break times and at different times of the year?

- Do all students take up their free school meal entitlement?

- How effective is your food policy and has it been considered through the lens of affordability?

- How can we best use foodbanks?

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- How is the school providing visible senior leadership for the impact of poverty related stigma on mental health and wellbeing?

- How does the school anti-bullying policy respond to incidents which are related to poverty?

- How does the school assess the needs of students and the impact of interventions to improve wellbeing and reduce poverty related stigma?

- How does the school ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services?

- Are pupils able to access a wide range of physical activities and opportunities inside and outside of school to improve mental andphysical health?

- Are there curriculum opportunities to develop pupils' understanding within 3 key areas:

- Health and wellbeing: helping learners to explore their rights and the rights of others; how to bring about positive change at school and in the wider community; and the factors which create a more welcoming environment for all

- Social studies: exploring the impact of inequality, discrimination or prejudice on people's lives; analysing why some groups experience inequality; attitudes towards inequality; how the needs of groups within the local community can be supported and how inequality might be addressed

- Religious and moral education: thinking about values, and how they can affect actions; considering how values like honesty, respect and compassion might be applied to moral issues; and thinking about the impact moral decision making has on society.

Common barriers

- Mental health can be a sensitive subject to discuss, especially so in families where mental health is presenting challenges

- Mental health is seen as the cause rather than the effect (of living in poverty)

- Recognising emerging issues in the early stages

- Families not taking up entitlement to FSM because of poverty related stigma and pupils not taking up the offer of FSM on an educational visit when it is offered to them

- School systems and processes inadvertently exposing pupils who are in receipt of FSMs

- Students miss out on food or limit their choice because there is an insufficient range of affordable options, pricing lacks transparency or they can't afford to pay for the food they require

- Pressures around payment cards and allocation of funds to individual pupils

- Pressures around food affordability cause stress and anxiety (mental health)

- Families getting into arrears with school lunch payments placing additional negative pressures on the relationship between the family and the school

- Lack of opportunity to access regular physical exercise (see enrichment)

- Home circumstances as contributing factors to pupil mental health and wellbeing (e.g. bed poverty, lack of sleep, overcrowding in houses, washing facilities, warmth, low energy due to lack of meals etc)

- Families having insufficient, timely access to services and specialist support

Policies

- Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges

- PSHE/RSE

- Anti-bullying

- Health and safety

- School protocol for meeting with parents.

- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

- SEND

- Behaviour in schools

- Exam policy

Quick wins

- Consider the 'root causes' of any negative behaviours/lack of concentration and provide snacks/breakfast etc to meet basic need (e.g. if a pupil presents as angry establish whether they are hungry, if a pupil presents as tired understand whether they are able to get a good night's sleep/bed poverty etc)

- Gather student voice around meal choices, the lunchtime environment and processes, to understand the 'lived experience'

- Ensure food pricing is clear and visible so students understand the total cost of food being purchased and can make decisions about affordability

- Ensure students who are entitled to FSM are not inadvertently exposed at payment points by differences in the system compared to their non-FSM peers

- Ensure FSM money is available at break times as well as lunchtimes (consider some pupils may not have had breakfast) and make pupils explicitly aware how to use FSM funding in the canteen

- Use any extra funding available to 'top-up' food accounts for the canteen

- Provide guidance for purchasing food for educational visits on a group basis, in particular for example Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions or Ten Tors walks to ensure that food choices are both nutritious and cost effective

- Ensure a relational approach to contacting parents when communicating any challenges around food and eating in school

- Send invites to a Breakfast Club/ early school opening/ social time with food

- Empower your catering team to play a frontline role in pastoral care/ wellbeing support and, where appropriate, communicate observations quickly to senior leaders so necessary support can be provided

- Set up a universal 'help yourself' resource for any extra food or snacks that may become available

- Add helplines, links and information about FSM eligibility for families to your website and weekly/termly newsletters

- Make best use of CPOMS (or safeguarding systems) to regularly update information and bring together bits of the 'jigsaw' which may be an indicator of vulnerability 'through the lens of affordability' (e.g. came to school hungry etc)

- Consider the mental health and wellbeing of all members of staff 'through the lens of affordability' and make adjustments to staff activities (e.g. affordability of staff get togethers or events).

Digging deeper

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

- Review the whole lunchtime experience through the lens of affordability and the 'lived experience' of pupils from lower income families and strategically plan to bring about improvements

- Review the anti-bullying policy through the lens of affordability and understand the nature of incidents where poverty related stigma may have been a contributing factor

- Build a mental health awareness cycle across the school year so that you are regularly talking with pupils about their experiences of school life, including cost of living

- Ensure mental health and cost of living has sufficient coverage in your curriculum

- Build a common language to support cost of living discussions

- Carry out the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Schools survey and act on findings

- Work to achieve levels of the Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme

- Adopt Five to Thrive as a universal provision

- Build relationships with local businesses such as supermarkets who may be able to provide food vouchers, food donations and other resources to support school delivery of clubs and activities.

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

- Reasons behind inequalities in society

- Causes and consequences of poverty

- The social security system and welfare reform

- Poverty and children's rights

- Food insecurity

- In work poverty and low wages

- Attitudes towards poverty in society

- What poverty looks like globally, nationally and locally

- Media representations of poverty.

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

Resources

Financial Planning

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

- How to manage money

- Becoming a critical consumer

- Managing risks and emotions associated with money

- Understanding the important role money plays in our lives.

FINANCIAL-EDUCATION-PLANNING-FRAMEWORK-11-19-ONLINE-2020.pdf (young-enterprise.org.uk)

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Young Enterprise Teachers Hub

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

Health, food and nutrition

Healthy weight : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Breakfast Clubs : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

School Plates | Campaign | ProVeg UK

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

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

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

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

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

https://www.neighbourly.com/Aldi

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

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

Mental Health

Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Emotional wellbeing and mental health : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Mental Health Home : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

On Your Mind – We can help

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

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

https://www.skillsforschools.org.uk

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

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

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

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

Rationale

- A positive, family centred problem solving approach, driven by data, will improve outcomes: every family is different and should be provided with support which accurately and sensitively reflects their individual circumstances

- Building strong, trusting relationships that promote a feeling of belonging with individual families is fundamental to improving student engagement: parents and carers are treated equitably and can seek support from school without stigma or stereotyping

- Effective communication of school policy, practice and support is key to success. Parents may not be aware of the support that is in place to ensure families on a low income can get the help they need

- Actively demonstrating an understanding of the financial pressures being placed on families will help to strengthen relationships and improve engagement. (CPAG advises that parents appreciate: 'An open and proactive approach; A simple and matter of fact style in communication to parents and carers, which acknowledges that any family could fall into financial hardship at any time; Discretion, confidentiality, kindness and non-judgement when having conversations with families)

- We are mindful of the DfE Guidance for use of Pupil Premium Grant and understand that PP funding can be used for 'Communicating with and supporting parents' Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Key policies to be reviewed

- Attendance

- Home/school agreement.

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

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Questions to explore

- How do we communicate with our families?

- How effective is school communication (website, letters, personalised messages, parent meetings etc) to support parents and secure wider engagement?

- How do parents feel about coming into school and asking for help?

- Are there links between school culture, parental engagement and attendance in our school?

- Are educational visit letters and related communications aware of student home situations in compliance with the Education Act 1996 with respect to charging for educational activities

- What deficit language is used about families and parents across the school community (e.g. sometimes, negative language is used when engaged in 'staffroom talk'. Often this is used to 'defuse' but does this set your prevailing culture and how is this being addressed?)

Common barriers

- Poverty and impact on attendance and punctuality (transport, mental health, peer relationships etc)

- Poor relationships between families and schools (e.g. legacy disagreements)

- Chronic & acute illness, family responsibilities or home situation, trauma

- Anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

- Housing and food insecurity

- Lack of predictable schedules for learning

- View of schooling and value placed on education due to life experiences, current challenges, type of occupation

- Parents do not like coming into school: embarrassment, poverty related stigma, previous poor experiences

- Parents not aware of support which is available

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- Stigma around poverty in the community and the school lacking a whole school 'universal' approach which avoids labelling

- Parents/carers may not be readily available, or more 'hard to reach' due to work schedules e.g. shift work or holding down multiple jobs

- Relationships with parents are under developed, particularly with the most vulnerable

- Engagement with health services – sight tests, hearing, dentist, immunisations.

Linked policies

- Accessibility

- Attendance

- Anti-bullying

- Exclusion

- Pupil Premium Statement

- SEND

- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

- Behaviour in schools

- Health and Safety

- School protocol for meeting with parents

- Careers Education.

Quick wins

- Communicate universally sharing financial information with all families, not just those who you think might need it. This universal promotion means parents don't have to ask for help and ensures information reaches the right people - even if you don't always know who that is

- Tailor communications, with careful use of language, to encourage more positive dialogue (e.g. personal text messages for families, targeted conversations, simple, clear and matter of fact, opportunities for parents to question to develop understanding)

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- Whenever possible, communicate through a mix of methods (letters, emails, texts, in person...) as wide ranging, visible and open communication opens the door to conversations and encourages any parents to come forward if they need to

- Timing of communications is important so try to communicate information at your earliest opportunity, especially around induction and transition points in the school year, beginning of each term and well ahead of any deadlines

- Be aware of language barriers and literacy issues

- Breakfast club/early bird opening

- Provide consistency at the start of the school day – for all students e.g. routines feel safe and this encourages better attendance

- Install a 'welcome to school' processes for students who struggle to make it e.g. meet and greet/arriving earlier to avoid crowds/pick-up from home/ breakfast club/use thrive as a transition activity

- Set up regular face to face meetings (informal and formal), using family link workers or by visiting the family home at the family's convenience

- Set up champions for all vulnerable students e.g. use specialist practitioners, family support workers

- Describe initiatives like uniform sales as 'green' or 'community-focused' to help increase uptake (instead of focusing on the financial aspect)

- Talking directly about poverty or financial difficulties can sometimes worry parents and carers. Try using collective words like 'us' (for example: "we want our families to get the support they're entitled to")

- In any messages that involve costs (for example, in letters home about school trips), remind families where to go to get information regarding financial entitlements and support (e.g. your dedicated email address)

- Parent working group to explain support (e.g. in the community at the end of November to share help pre-Christmas).

Digging deeper

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

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- Refer families to affordable food providers, money advisers and other relevant outside agencies who can support them if they are struggling financially

- Use school website to signpost parents and carers to services and training

- Understand attendance issues as a symptom or barometer of health and wellbeing and have a shared understanding that commitment to the 'Affordable Schools' approach will lead to improved relationships and communication, a stronger school community and, in turn, attendance

- Any school improvement strategy to address attendance needs to understand the data and challenges, secure school systems, roles and responsibilities, take a whole school approach, target support for the whole family rather than just the individual student, work on a case by case basis for 'stuck' cases, ensure regular monitoring and feedback

- Establish a Parent Council; parents sometimes feel more comfortable talking to other parents and this will be an effective way to discuss 'Affordable Schools'/establish a network of contacts

- Build strong relationships with families and make every effort made to build trust and engagement Building positive relationships between parents and teachers (educationsupport.org.uk)

- Consider introducing home visits as an opportunity to establish relationships, provide face to face communication around school support and services and identify vulnerabilities so the school can understand/intervene early

- Evaluate communication systems and processes to ensure easy access for all

- Support parents/carers with making a free school meal application including providing ICT facilities for online applications and this is frequently promoted to families

- Run specific training for staff around parental engagement e.g. use EEF guidance (see resources)

- Offer Parental training around routine and behaviour linked to the school's evidence based approaches

- Support parents with information, guidance and strategies for attendance with targeted support for individuals, as appropriate (e.g. social stories to provide information and pre-teaching which enable students and parents to be more aware)

- Set up regular parent workshops for a variety of purposes, possibly repeating each year so the community are used to this kind of connection and support (e.g. preparing your child for a residential visit or reading with your child)

- Support parents with careers advice and guidance by signposting to relevant services.

Resources

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

Community Directory Interactive Community Directory - Wiltshire Council

Council tax, benefits and financial support Council tax, benefits and financial support - Wiltshire Council

Energy costs advice and guidance Energy costs advice and guidance - Wiltshire Council

Housing information and support Housing information and support - Wiltshire Council

Mental Health support Mental Health support - Wiltshire Council

Local Practical Help Local practical help - Wiltshire Council

Supporting businesses Supporting businesses through the rising cost of living - Wiltshire Council

Warm spaces Wiltshire Council warm spaces - Wiltshire Council

Grants overview Cost of Living Support (wiltshiremoney.org.uk)

Work Wiltshire case studies:

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

Wiltshire Council Parenting Support

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

Parent Champions

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

Setting up a Parent Champions scheme | Family and Childcare Trust

Working with parents : Wiltshire Healthy Schools

Family and Community Learning

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

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

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

https://www.turn2us.org.uk

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

https://www.gingerbread.org.uk

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

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

North Wiltshire:

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

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

Support for families during holidays

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

Resources | Page | SLA Online (sla-online.co.uk)

Family Fund Services

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

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

Attendance

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

EBSA: Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) | Right Choice (wiltshire.gov.uk)

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

Attendance Works: https://www.attendanceworks.org

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

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

SEND newsletter - Local Offer (wiltshire.gov.uk)

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

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

Affordable Schools

Affordable Schools
WILTSHIRE

Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

25 January 2025

Out of County Education – Final report

Purpose of the report

1. To present to the Children's Select Committee (CSC) the findings and recommendations from the rapid scrutiny exercise undertaken on Out of County Education (OCE).

Membership

2. Mr John Hawkins (lead), Cllr Jacqui Lay and Cllr Liz Alstrom.

Terms of reference

3. The aim of the rapid scrutiny was for the Rapid Scrutiny members to make a recommendation to Children's Select Committee on whether further scrutiny of this issue would be beneficial, based on the information received at the meeting.

Meeting

4. There was a single meeting held on Tuesday 3 December 2024.

5. The rapid scrutiny members, thereafter referred to as "members", were grateful to the following officers for their attendance and the information they provided at the meeting:
   - Kathryn Davis, Director, Education and Skills
   - Clara Davies, School Place Commissioning Lead
   - Karen Green, Team Manager, Education Welfare Service
   - Stephen Pitcher, SEND team manager
   - Karen Linaker, Strategic Engagement & Partnerships Manager Salisbury, Southern and South West Wiltshire
   - John Spring, Head of Targeted Education
   - Teresa McIllroy, Strategic Lead for alternative provision.

6. Members also received information from Jaki Farrell, Charity Director, Seeds4Success, both at the Rapid Scrutiny meeting and an additional meeting with the Lead Member for this exercise, for which they are very grateful.

Findings

7. Members received a very comprehensive report to provide them with a clearer picture of the issue around OCE (Out of County Education). Members wanted to express their thanks to all officers involved for the quality and detail of their report, which they appreciate had to be collated specifically for this purpose.

8. It must be noted that in this context OCE refers to young people for whom there is no choice but to attend an out of county school. The only school for which they are in the catchment area for is situated outside of the county of Wiltshire (please note that for the rest of this report young people / children / students / pupils will refer to those in the category described in this paragraph – unless otherwise stated).

Current situation / context

9. Members were informed that this applied to three schools attended by 486 Wiltshire children as specified in 8 above.

10. The numbers given are for children living in each Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) attending each out of area school. This was only for children who did not fall in the catchment area of any Wiltshire school. (It was noted that in one small area around Sutton Mandeville pupils are included in the catchment area for a schools in both Wiltshire and Dorset but this is the exception).

11. The LSOA boundaries do not completely align with the council's catchment area boundaries, but the information below is the council's best calculation of the number of Wiltshire children attending:
    - Shaftesbury School (Dorset), with 149 Wiltshire children attending.
    - Gilligham School (Dorset), with 325 Wiltshire children attending.
    - The Ridgeway School (Swindon), with 12 Wiltshire children attending

12. Members had expected the numbers to be higher, based on their local knowledge. It was accepted that these were best calculations. It was also recognised that it was very likely higher numbers of Wiltshire children were attending these schools, but it would include those attending based on parental preference. (*Recommendation 1*)

13. Although members received reassurance that pupils received the same services and support from Wiltshire Council up to their Year 7 "general" admission (applications for a September start in Year 7), they were concerned to learn that the pupil's record was not updated post Year 7 admission (unless the child had a social worker or was Special Educational Needs (SEND) or had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)).

14. Assurance was offered that there was tracking of Wiltshire children regardless of the county in which they attended school, in terms of Children Missing Education (CME). Schools in Wiltshire had a duty to inform the local authority of any starters and leavers. There was communication between local authorities to notify of school leavers. Any child (not only OCE) remains on Wiltshire Council's tracking system for CME until an education setting is

known or the child is no longer of compulsory school age. In answer to questions, it was confirmed that the data available did not show discrepancies / differences for CME in the geographical areas linked to this exercise.

15. It was also confirmed that there was no data on Elective Home Education of concern for the local authority for the geographical areas linked to this exercise (i.e. it was "within range" with the rest of the county).

16. The recording and monitoring of attendance was another area of concern, as this relied solely on transparency and agreements between local authorities to share that data. Members were informed that it was a national issue which officers had raised with representatives from the Department for Education (DfE). However, it was noted that Wiltshire Council's effective approach to attendance monitoring had been recognised as the DfE attendance adviser had asked Wiltshire Council officers to provide support to another local authority.

17. Reassurance was offered that Wiltshire Council had the same data for these young people in terms of free school meals, NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), and missing education. The statutory responsibilities were not duplicated between the local authorities, but they are engaging in data sharing.

18. This was questioned as the external witness reported that she had been informed in the past that the data was not available. The data had been requested as it would enable charities to demonstrate needs to support funding applications. It was agreed that officers would, outside of the meeting, reach out to Seeds4Success to discuss the data that would support charities. (*Recommendation 2*)

19. Access to support at school ("below" SEND or EHCP level) was also raised as an issue. In Wiltshire this was enabled by funding having been devolved to schools to support interventions to prevent exclusion, but this was not necessarily a model adopted by other local authorities. This meant, on occasions, children were caught between two systems that operate very differently and families who experienced being "bounced" between the two systems. (*Recommendation 1*)

20. This was reported as having also been experienced by families in the process of requesting an EHCP or asking for changes to be made to an existing EHCP. The structure / process for these were different between the local authorities and this could leave families experiencing additional delays as they did not meet "conflicting" criteria / thresholds. Anecdotal evidence was given showing a "back and forth" for a family trying to have an EHCP reviewed and amended. (*Recommendation 1*)

Communication and consultation

21. Members received reassurance that communication was undertaken through other channels than schools. One of these channels was local charities who

support and engage with young people and their families, and thanks were offered to Seeds4Success for their willingness to engage with the council and disseminate information / consultations when requested. There would be around 50 occurrences of engaging with the community in a year. Other channels included the local youth network as well as the out of county schools. (*Recommendation 1*)

22. Engagement with young people from Area Boards included youth focus group, youth events, joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) conversations, regular grant liaisons, rural youth outreach additional activities and support and using "youth voice" to influence area board decisions and work programming.

23. It was also confirmed that community-led activities were available for young people in the catchment areas for Shaftesbury and Gillingham Schools, however it could not be said if the young people attending OCE were equally accessing these. (*Recommendation 4*)

24. Officers expressed their wish to be able to spend more time developing their relationship with out-of-county schools, which was fully supported by the members as, although other avenues of communication are used successfully, schools remain a "direct" way of communicating with most young people. (*Recommendation 5*)

Data capture – NEET (not in education, employment or training)

25. It was confirmed that the team support NEET young people based on their home address (i.e. if they are a Wiltshire resident) and was not linked to where they attend school, therefore there would be no difference of service and support experience by young people attending OCE.

26. NEET data was reported monthly to the DfE and Wiltshire was performing well, so was Dorset (where two of the schools concerned are located).

27. However, no data was available to answer a question around higher NEET rates in the geographical areas considered for this exercise. Officers were looking at different ways to utilise data in 2025-26 and were also working with all schools to support young people at risk of NEET. (*Recommendation 1*)

Transition and support at school / around education

28. Members were surprised by the locations (and distances) of EHCP school placements outside of Wiltshire (including special schools and residential schools). However, this was not considered further as catchment areas did not apply, and the focus was on the school best placed to meet the young person's needs. (*Recommendation 3*)

29. Assurance was offered that Wiltshire had a robust process in place to support transition between primary and secondary school for SEND pupils and those with an EHCP.

30. It was also confirmed that it was Wiltshire's statutory duty to provide education for a pupil excluded from school who is a Wiltshire resident (regardless of where they attended school). Schools would have to manage the provision of education (can be via Alternative Provision) for suspensions. (*Recommendation 1*)

31. It was reported that no disproportionate rates of permanent exclusion had been found for the three schools linked to this exercise. It was also reported that officers were not seeing evidence that there were differences linked to exclusion for Wiltshire young people who are attending OCE.

Conclusions

32. Members of the rapid scrutiny exercise concluded that a task group, at this point in time, would be unlikely to add value when considering issues linked to Out of County Education, however they identified actions as listed below to ensure that the committee remains informed of progress (or worsening issues) and that some solutions can be put in place where possible.

33. Members also asked for their concerns over the "static" records kept for pupils after Year 7 admission to be noted.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – that the Children's Select Committee ask officers to provide the following information at a briefing for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children's Select Committee to which members of the Rapid Scrutiny would be invited

1. Confirmation of the arrangements between Wiltshire and Dorset / Swindon to ensure that ("early help") support and interventions are available for young people accessing OCE who are not SEND or with an EHCP.

2. Reassurance of the commitment of Wiltshire Council to support any EHCP processes (applications, reviews, etc.) for young people accessing OCE and evidence of the clarity of process between neighbouring authorities.

3. Confirmation of the arrangements between Wiltshire and Dorset / Swindon to ensure that there are no additional complications or delay for EHCP processes (applications and reviews, etc.) for young people accessing OCE. It does need to be absolutely clear which Local Authority is responsible for the management of all EHCP processes for young people accessing OCE.

4. Data to confirm that Wiltshire Council supports young people that have been excluded from out of county schools in accordance with legislation (especially regarding provision being in place within 6 days) and confirmation that Wiltshire Council "becomes responsible" for these young people from the day of the exclusion.

5. To see communications plan and engagement rates for the areas considered as part of the rapid scrutiny, with the engagement rates for young people compared with the rest of the county.

6. To provide the number of students getting to the three schools, considered as part of this exercise, on a free school bus (as this could be an additional way of estimating the number of students for whom the school is their catchment school).

7. To provide NEET numbers mapped across Wiltshire and highlighting the geographical areas linked to this exercise. Alternatively, this could be included in the report the committee receives on NEET.

Recommendation 2 – that the Children's Select Committee receive an update from officers on the process / system put in place to enable community groups, charities and any other providers of activities and support for young people in Wiltshire to access the data held by the council that can help them demonstrate need and support funding applications.

Recommendation 3 – that when the Children's Select Committee receives information with regards to EHCP, it includes information on school placements outside of the local area.

Recommendation 4 – that the relevant Strategic Engagement & Partnerships Managers invite and encourage community-led activities providers in the areas concerned to record the school young people are attending (to provide some measure of equality of access for those attending OCE as transport / travelling time may be a barrier).

Recommendation 5 – that the relevant Director(s) consider supporting the Strategic Engagement & Partnerships Managers in releasing some of their time to enable them to focus on engaging with, and building a working relationship with, the out of county schools.

Mr John Hawkins (Lead) – Out of County Education Rapid Scrutiny
Report dated: 13 December 2024

Report author: Marie Gondlach, Senior Scrutiny Officer,
marie.gondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 713 597

Background documents None.

Glossary
Children Missing Education (CME)
Children's Select Committee (CSC)
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
Elective Home Education (EHE)
Joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA)
Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)

Not in education, employment or training (NEET)
Out of County Education (OCE)

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15th January 2024 (data correct at 30/11/2024)

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School Ofsted Judgements

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Purpose of report

1. This report is a regular update for the Children's Select Committee and is focused upon Ofsted inspections in Wiltshire schools.

Background

2. The report shows details of school inspections and provides updates on publicised inspection judgements within the specified period based on the education inspection framework (EIF) introduced in September 2019 using the categories below:
   - Overall effectiveness (to July 2024, this has now ceased as a measure)
   - Quality of education
   - Behaviour and attitudes
   - Personal development
   - Effectiveness of leadership and management
   - Early years / Sixth form provision
   - Safeguarding is effective

3. For the current academic year 2024-2025, a new grading system has been introduced for full section 5 inspections (known as graded inspections) moving away from singular graded judgements; this came into force on 16 September 2024 School inspection handbook - GOV.UK. This change has seen the ending of the overall effectiveness grade and instead inspections will report the key judgements for quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision) against Ofsted grade descriptors within the education inspection framework.

4. Ungraded inspections are conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. These inspections are of good and outstanding schools and focus on determining whether the school has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection. The wording of judgements for ungraded inspections in 2024/25 have changed to:
   - Outcome 1 – the school has taken effective action to maintain standards identified at the previous inspection. Abbreviated as 'standards maintained'.
   - Outcome 2 – evidence gathered suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. Abbreviated as 'improved significantly'.
   - Outcome 3 - evidence gathered suggests that the school's work may not be as strong as at the previous inspection. Abbreviated as 'some aspects not as strong'.

5. Urgent inspections are also carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. They were previously known as inspections with no formal designation and unannounced behaviour inspections. These remain the same.

Main considerations for the committee

1. The table below details the published inspection outcomes of all schools inspected (graded and ungraded inspections) between 1st September 2024 and 30th November 2024. These have been inspected under the EIF as outlined in paragraphs 2,3, and 4, where there is no singular judgement.

2. Of the 4 graded (S5) inspections held between this period, 3 (75%) had a mix of good and outstanding judgements, 1 (25%) was predominantly RI.

Published inspection outcomes of all schools inspected (graded and ungraded inspections) between 1st September 2024 and 30th November 2024.

Source: State-funded school inspections and outcomes: management information - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

School name & date of inspection (web address to access Ofsted report below)	Status	Inspection type	Quality of education	Behaviour and attitudes	Personal development	Leadership and management	Safeguarding is effective	Early Years or post-16
Marden Vale C of E Academy [Marden Vale C of E Academy - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted]	Primary Academy	RI monitoring visit		Taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement				
Downland School [Downland School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted]	Maintained Special	Section 8 *(ungraded)*		Standards maintained				
Devizes School [Devizes School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted]	Academy	Section 5	2	2	2	2	Yes	n/a
Kiwi Primary School [Kiwi Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted]	Maintained	Section 5	3	3	2	3	Yes	3
River Mead School [River Mead School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted]	Primary Academy	Section 5	2	2	2	1	Yes	2
Bulford St Leonard's C of E (VA) Primary School [Bulford St Leonard's C of E (VA) Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted]	Academy	RI monitoring visit		Taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement				
Heddington Church of England Primary School [Heddington Church of England Primary School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted]	Maintained	Section 5	2	1	1	2	Yes	2

4

Published Ofsted outcomes as of 1 September 2024 to 30 November 2024 – Wiltshire compared to national and regional for graded:

- **Graded inspections** – Table 1 for all schools in Wiltshire compared to national and Southwest. Subsequent reports for Children's Select will break these outcomes into primary, secondary, and special school outcomes and will show progress across time as per previous reports for Ofsted outcomes. Due to the change to reporting across several inspected areas not a singular grade, outcomes are not now comparable and trends across time not able to be produced until a wider dataset is produced.
- **Ungraded inspections –** Table 2 for all schools in Wiltshire compared to national and Southwest. Also includes monitoring inspection outcomes.

Table 1: **Published Ofsted outcomes as of 1 September 2024 to 30 November 2024 - % of ALL schools SECTION 5 GRADED INSPECTIONS**

Source: State-funded school inspections and outcomes: management information - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

NB: percentages below for Wiltshire schools should be read with caution as there have only been 4 S5 graded published inspections during this period so figures look disproportionately higher. There have been 78 S5 inspections in the SW.

Inspection judgement	Outstanding			Good			Requires Improvement			Inadequate		
ALL Schools	Nat.	SW	Wilts	Nat.	SW	Wilts	Nat.	SW	Wilts	Nat.	SW	Wilts
Quality of education	15%	15%	0%	70%	76%	75%	14%	22%	25%	1%	0%	0%
Behaviour and attitudes	26%	24%	25%	69%	66%	50%	5%	9%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Personal development	31%	29%	25%	66%	66%	75%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Effectiveness of leadership and management	19%	18%	25%	71%	64%	50%	9%	17%	25%	1%	1%	0%
Early years provision (where applicable)	21%	14%	0%	72%	56%	66%	6%	8%	33%	1%	0%	0%
Sixth form provision (where applicable)	38%	40%	0%	54%	50%	100%	7%	10%	0%	1%	0%	0%

Due to the limited number of inspections at this point in Wiltshire comparisons to national are difficult to draw. The three inspections that were a combination of good and outstanding judgements were a mix of judgements across the categories without any trends. Monitoring of the categories across time against national and SW data will allow for a better understanding of Wiltshire schools' strengths and areas for development.

Table 2: **Published Ofsted outcomes as of 1 September 2024 to 30 November 2024 - % of ALL schools SECTION 8 UNGRADED INSPECTIONS**

NB: percentages below for Wiltshire schools should be read with caution as there have only been 1 S8 ungraded published inspections during this period and 2 Requires Improvement monitoring visits, so figures look disproportionately higher. There have been 13 S8 inspections and 4 monitoring visits in the SW.

Inspection judgement	Improved significantly	Standards maintained	Some aspects not as strong	Converted to a full inspection	Taking effective action (monitoring

	Nat.	SW	Wilts	Nat.	SW	Wilts	Nat.	SW	Wilts	Nat.	SW	Wilts	SW	Wilts
													visits)	
ALL Schools	9%	8%	0%	86%	84%	100%	4%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Primary	8%	16%	n/a	86%	83%	n/a	6%	0%	n/a	0%	0%	n/a		
Secondary	7%	0%	n/a	88%	66%	n/a	5%	33%	n/a	0%	0%	n/a		
Special	20%	0%	0%	80%	100	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		

Again, with so few ungraded inspections at this point, comparisons and trends are not able to be made however the three inspections have all found favourably that either the schools are taking effective action to improve standards or have at least maintained standards from the previous graded inspection.

Conclusion

This academic year is a time of transition as Ofsted inspections report across a number of categories and move to a new framework based upon an as yet unknown scorecard system for the judgement of the effectiveness of schools. We continue to work closely with schools in Wiltshire, understanding their strengths and supporting improvement where required; the inspection outcomes that have taken place thus far this academic year have been as expected.

Name: Kathryn Davis

Director – Education and Skills

Report author(s): Louise Lewis

Head of School Effectiveness

Date of report: 15th January 2025

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Wiltshire Council
Children's Select Committee
January 2025

DfE updates and changes – November to January

Kinship care: framework for local authorities – Statutory guidance

1. How local authorities should support children who are cared for by extended family, friends, or connected individuals Kinship care: framework for local authorities - GOV.UK published 11/10/24

2. Wiltshire's position:

Where children are unable to remain in the care of their parents we always ensure that family members and connected adults are fully explored with the child and their families at the earliest opportunity and utilise Family Group Conferences within child in need as well as child protection and pre-proceedings to ensure that potential family members are identified at the earliest opportunity.

Wiltshire have a dedicated Kinship Team within the families and children's service who supports both connected-person foster carers and those who are caring for children through other arrangements such as Special Guardians and Private Fostering. All Kinship carers can access the same level of support, advice, guidance and training which includes financial support as mainstream foster carers.

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges – Guidance

3. How schools and colleges can meet IT service and digital equipment standards Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK Updated 22/10/24

4. Wiltshire's position:

This guidance is welcomed for schools as it will support them to effectively manage and plan for IT use and development within curriculum delivery. This information will be shared with schools through Headteacher and School Business Manager briefings.

National Apprenticeship week 2025 website and toolkit launched – Press release

5. New website and toolkit launched ahead of next annual celebration of skills and apprenticeships National Apprenticeship Week 2025 website and toolkit launched - GOV.UK published 25/10/24

6. Wiltshire's position:

Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub, a partnership between Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and the Careers and Enterprise Company, supports schools in Wiltshire with their National Apprenticeship Week events. Before, during and after National Apprenticeship Week, the Careers Hub also works with partners to deliver a series of Appren-T-Fest branded events attended by local schools. The events comprise a careers fair showcasing apprenticeship employers and workshops exploring post-16 and post-18 options. In 2024 events took place in Salisbury, Trowbridge and Swindon. In partnership with Apprenticeships in Salisbury, the Salisbury Appren-T-Fest took place on 24th January and was attended by 900 Students from 11 schools/college in the day and by 300 students and parent/carers in the evening. In partnership with Wiltshire College and University Centre, the Trowbridge Appren-T-Fest took place on 2nd

February and was attended by 500 Students from 4 schools/college in the day and by 100 students and parent/carers in the evening. Appren-T-Fest events are taking place in Salisbury, Trowbridge, Chippenham and Swindon in and around National Apprenticeship Week 2025.

Government protects education priorities in face of inherited £22 billion blackhole – News story

7. Chancellor confirms steps to protect education and early years priorities as part of her first Budget [Government protects education priorities in face of inherited £22 billion blackhole - GOV.UK](#) published 27/10/24

8. Wiltshire's position:

   The Government has reaffirmed their commitment to projects that had already been approved as part of the School Rebuilding Programme. For Wiltshire, there are three approved schemes, one in a maintained school and two academy projects.

   We are awaiting confirmation of the actual budget for Early Years Entitlements and the rates will be discussed at the Early Years Reference Group in January. Information on Free Breakfast Clubs and school-based nurseries has been shared with schools.

Senior mental health led training – Guidance

9. Apply for a grant to train a senior mental health lead to develop your school or college's approach to mental health and wellbeing [Senior mental health lead training - GOV.UK](#) updated 29/10/24

10. Wiltshire's position:

    From 2021 – 2023 Wiltshire Council delivered a programme of DfE assured Senior Mental Health Lead training to 4 cohorts of schools. Most Wiltshire schools and colleges (232) have now received the training and 213 of those trained have claimed a national grant of £1,200. Not all schools trained were eligible for the grant and some schools have been able to claim more than one grant. For the small number of schools that have not yet received this offer or wish to train a new school lead, the CPD is still available from a range of national providers.

    Wiltshire schools, and those from neighbouring LAs, are supported by an ongoing series of local network meetings to help embed this work facilitated by the Healthy Schools leads in B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire. The DfE report that successful grant applications are significantly higher in Wiltshire compared with the southwest and national. The Wiltshire Healthy Schools Programme, engaging 134 schools provides a framework for schools to implement a whole school approach to mental health.

Children looked after in England including adoption: 2023 to 2024 – Official Statistics

11. Information on looked after children at both national and local authority levels for the financial year 2023 to 2024 Children looked after in England including adoption: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK published 14/11/24

12. Wiltshire's position:

The publication of the data set is from the 903 annual census which all Local Authorities submit. The updated national figures for 2023-24 will be reflected in our ChAT and Safeguarding Datasets from Q3.

Biggest overhaul in a generation to children's social care – Press release

13. New powers handed to Ofsted to crack down on exploitative children's care providers and transparency to be increased around their finances Biggest overhaul in a generation to children's social care - GOV.UK published 18/11/24

14. Wiltshire's position:

We welcome the move by the government to give new powers to OFSTED to crackdown on exploitative children's care providers. It's good to see that the government is taking the next step towards reforming the children's social care market. The move will be positive for Wiltshire as it will help reduce the ever-increasing placement budget.

Keeping children safe, helping families thrive – Policy paper

15. A policy statement setting out the government's commitment to whole system reform of the children's social care system Keeping children safe, helping families thrive - GOV.UK published 18/11/24

16. Wiltshire's position:
Background
On 18 November 2024, the Department for Education published a policy position statement on children's social care, outlining its commitment to and plans for whole system reform.

The actions will be guided by four key reform principles, which are:
- **Prevent.** Firstly, wherever possible, children should remain with their families and be safely prevented from entering the care system in the first place.
- **Support.** Where children cannot remain at home and it is in their best interests, we should support children to live with kinship carers or in fostering families, rather than in residential care.
- **Fix the Market.** Next, it is vital that we fix the broken care market.
- **Key enablers.** Finally, we need to invest in the key enablers which underpin the children's social care system

The vision set out in the policy paper is built around creating a system which:

- Works with the whole family so more children and young people can thrive in their family
- Prioritises kinship care for children who cannot live safely with their parents
- Supports children in care and care leavers to live healthy and happy lives
- Provides a high quality of care, which all children deserve
- Takes action to end excessive profit-making by care providers
- Works effectively across agencies and empowers professionals working within it.

Main Considerations
We do not yet have the detail behind many of these proposals and will require this before considering what (if any) changes need to be made to current Wiltshire Council services or systems. Currently there is no firm commitment to funding any additional costs for Service or system changes (although this was indicated by DfE officials at the recent National Conference).

Supporting Families
Councils will be mandated to offer family group decision-making to all families at the pre-proceedings stage, except where this is not in the best interests of the child.

Wiltshire position: Wiltshire already offering this in pre-proceedings, and it is discussed at every initial pre-proceedings meeting. We also offer this earlier at Initial Child Protection Conferences and in some cases for children subject to Child in Need Planning.

Multi-agency safeguarding
The government will introduce a Single Unique Identifier (likely to be the NHS number) to enable agencies to link child data. This will be piloted first to identify challenges and ensure that it is delivered proportionately and where it will have impact.

Wiltshire position: We do not record children's NHS number in Liquid Logic as a routine. We are implementing the Integrated Care Record for children subject to Child Protection Plans or Children Looked After which requires the NHS number, and we are exploring ways of doing this for this data cohort. We anticipate that providers of case recording systems will make required changes and will consider potential resource implications when further detail is published.

Enhancing clarity on information sharing, introducing a duty that "provides absolute clarity on the legal basis to share information for the purposes of safeguarding children." This will recognise the challenges that currently exist whereby practitioners are confident to share information where there is clear evidence of harm, but less confident where risk is unknown or unclear.

Wiltshire position: We already have an established professional consultation helpline within our Integrated Front Door where professionals can contact us to discuss concerns anonymously and are advised as to whether to refer in and without consent if needed. Our multi agency threshold guidance has been updated in the last 12 months. We have increased the number of our MASH tours for professionals due to increased requests for the tour. Our SVPP website has clear links to what to do if you are concerned about a child.

Strengthening the role of education within multi-agency safeguarding arrangements-
this will include all education settings (including early years) being named as 'relevant agencies' by default in local arrangements and legislating for local safeguarding

arrangements to include representation from education at both operational and strategic decision-making levels. It will not make education the fourth statutory safeguarding partner.

Wiltshire position: Wiltshire has a well-established Education Safeguarding Committee which representation from school leaders across all phases and schools of all status, as well as relevant service leads and partners within Wiltshire council. This provides a forum for sharing and developing safeguarding practice and policy. Although education has not been made a fourth statutory safeguarding partner, we have adopted a 'best practice' approach in Wiltshire, and now have Head Teacher representation at SVPP executive and the Family and Children's System Assurance group in a non-statutory capacity.

Every (upper tier) local authority area must establish a multi-agency child protection unit, integrated local authority-led teams staffed with multi-agency, experienced child protection practitioners from agencies including councils, police, health and education. Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will have strategic oversight of these units.

Wiltshire position: Wiltshire has an Integrated Front Door with a MASH which has partnership representation. We have a partnership MASH Board that feeds into Families and Children's Assurance group. As to the specifics of this proposal we await the publication of further detail together with the learning from the Pathfinder authorities before considering what (if any) changes to existing arrangements need to be made.

Education
A duty will be placed on councils to have and maintain Children Not In School registers and to provide support to families where it is requested by the parent.

Wiltshire position: Currently there is an established caseload of named learners who are electively home educated with advice/support/signposting already in place. This is not a formal register, but it does include every known EHE Wiltshire resident child. This will form the basis of an EHE register. We welcome the new requirement for a register to strengthen this locally managed approach.

There is an established Children Absent From Education (CAFE) strategic group comprising managers and heads of service from Children and Families teams and Education and Skills teams. There are subgroups that meet with focus on specific service areas (e.g. EHE/CME) to review an action plan for individual cases of children not in school. A dashboard has been developed which captures data for learners who fall within the CAFE remit across different service areas. This would be the basis for the Children not in School register.

Under s19 Education Act 1996 the local authority must make arrangements for children to receive suitable education where they are prevented from attending school by reason of illness, exclusion or for any other reason. The s19 Group meets to consider cases where pupils may not be accessing full-time education to determine whether the local authority has a duty to make education provision available.

If a child in school is subject to a s47 enquiry or is on a child protection plan, their parent will need local authority consent to home educate that child. If a child in those categories is already being home educated, the council will have a power to require them to attend school.

Wiltshire position: All current EHE learners subject to s47 or on CP plans have EWOs who support and attend all relevant strategy discussions, conferences, reviews and core group meetings. The number of EHE learners subject to s47 or on CP plans is consistently very low. Where there is no evidence of suitable education in place, the LA already uses enforcement measures by way of School Attendance Orders to require parents to register their children at a school.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 prescribe the grounds on which a pupil can be removed from the school register. These will need to be amended to reflect proposed changes. We await further detail.

Extending the role of the virtual school head to place a statutory duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children on child in need plans, child protection plans and in kinship arrangements. Consideration will also be given to including children leaving custody in this extension.

Wiltshire position: The Wiltshire Virtual School has utilised the additional funding for children in kinship care arrangements to develop an existing role that provides information and advice to the professional network in support of children in kinship care. The Virtual School Officer role commenced on 1st July 2024 (in advance of the VSH extension from September 2024) and works closely with schools/settings, kinship carers, Social Care, SEND and key stakeholders within kinship care. This mirrors the offer of information and advice to children previously looked after (PCLA) and includes elements of strategic oversight that mirrors the offer for children with a social worker. The Virtual School strategy includes a specific strand for children in kinship care.

The Wiltshire Virtual School has clear expectations in place in support of all the children within its remit. However, where this duty is currently statutory (CLA/PCLA), there are fewer barriers to implementation of strategic priorities as well as greater avenues of funding support (e.g. using pupil premium plus).

We recognise the potential significant challenges facing children who leave custody. Where the child has care status, the Wiltshire Virtual School already provides support for these cases and therefore is well placed to understand the barriers that exist and implement effective plans to improve educational outcomes. We also work closely with colleagues across Social Care including the youth justice service and can therefore utilise existing links to implement any changes to legislation at pace.

Support for children in care and care leavers
Corporate parenting responsibilities will be extended to government departments and relevant public bodies to drive a culture change in which the public sector realises a shared ambition to support children in care and care leavers. Government departments will be expected to produce three-year plans to set out how they will support children in care and care leavers.

Wiltshire position: We welcome the proposal to see Government Departments and other public bodies produce 3-year plans and will consider what (if any) changes and developments we might consider regarding our own corporate parenting strategy when further details are announced.

Placements for children in care.

Work will be carried out to make it easier to open the right kinds of homes which meet children's needs. This includes working with Ofsted on fast-track routes to register selected new children's homes; simplifying the planning process for children's homes; strengthening the location assessment in Ofsted's registration assessment for new provision, to ensure endorsement from the relevant children's services team to confirm that there is local need for the home; consideration of measures to require any new provider to be owned and domiciled in the UK, including corporate owners and majority shareholders.

Wiltshire position: We welcome this proposal and will await the detail in due course.

A new form of community-based provision for children that can be deprived of their liberty will be introduced via primary legislation. This provision will not be explicitly designed in accordance with the current Secure Children's Homes design specification but will instead be able to respond more flexibly to children's changing and fluctuating needs, for example, being able to reduce or increase restrictions according to the lowest level necessary to keep the child safe. DfE will be working with NHS England to pilot a new, community-based approach which provides treatment and care.

Wiltshire position: We welcome this proposal and will await the detail in due course.

Ofsted will be given powers to issue civil penalties against providers of unregistered settings, in particular for those who persistently refuse to register.

Wiltshire position: We await detail but no direct impact on council services anticipated.

Ofsted will also be given powers to hold provider groups to account, including by being able to request improvement plans where there are quality issues across several settings in the same group.

Wiltshire position: We await detail but no direct impact on council services anticipated.

Legislation will enable groups of councils to set up Regional Care Cooperatives, learning from the experience of the RCC pathfinders. Government will have the power to direct councils to establish RCCs if 'necessary', and to intervene if an RCC is not delivering services to a required standard. The legislation will also include powers for Ofsted to inspect RCCs.

Wiltshire position: We currently work closely with regional colleagues in the South West to support with sufficiency challenges and shared learning. However, we are not currently engaged as a regional care co-operative and therefore careful consideration needs to be given to the learning from pilot areas and the options available to us and regional partners once details are announced.

The DfE will work with the sector to bring about greater cost and price transparency in the placements market.

Wiltshire position: We welcome this proposal and will await the detail in due course.

A new financial oversight scheme will be introduced for the most 'difficult to replace' providers. As part of this, the DfE will consider introducing a new requirement for all

providers to give both hosting and placing local authorities sufficient notice if they make a commercial decision to exit the market.

Wiltshire position: We welcome this proposal and will await the detail in due course.

Legislation will include powers for the Secretary of State to cap the level of profit which can be made from children's social care placements via secondary legislation in the future.

Wiltshire position: We welcome this proposal and will await the detail in due course.

Multiplication tables check attainment: 2024

17. Information on the 2024 multiplication tables check, including breakdowns by pupil characteristics, at national and local authority level Multiplication tables check attainment: 2024 - GOV.UK published 21/11/24

18. Wiltshire's position:

		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Wiltshire	Average attainment score of all pupils	19.6	20.2	20.1
	Percentage of pupils scored 25	24%	28%	29%
South West	Average attainment score of all pupils	19.1	19.7	20.3
	Percentage of pupils scored 25	22%	26%	30%
England	Average attainment score of all pupils	19.8	20.2	20.6
	Percentage of pupils scored 25	27%	29%	34%

The percentage of Year 4 pupils in Wiltshire attaining full marks in the Multiplication Tables Check continues to increase each year. The average score achieved is broadly in line with both the national and the South West figure. Specific training in the teaching of times tables has been provided for Year 3/Year 4 teachers and maths continues to be an area of focus for the School Effectiveness team this academic year.

New specialist places to be created in mainstream schools – Press release

19. Major reforms to SEND system kicked off with £740 million capital investment to create more specialist places in mainstream schools New specialist places to be created in mainstream schools - GOV.UK published 04/12/24

20. Wiltshire's position:

We welcome this additional investment and await further detail on conditions of funding. Once we have this information, we will allocate spend in line with our specialist place planning strategy.

Improving support for children missing education – Consultation Outcome

21. We are seeking evidence to improve the way children missing education are identified and supported. Change made, added a summary of responses received and the government's response to the call for evidence Improving support for children missing education - GOV.UK updated 12/12/24

22. Wiltshire's position:

    Wiltshire contributed to this call for evidence with our views on how to improve support for children missing education. Some of these steps are set out in the newly proposed 'children not in school' register.

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 January 2025

Schools Forum update

Key discussion points/issues from meeting of Schools Forum – 12 December 2024.

- Updates from the joint meeting of the School Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group and from the meeting of the Early Years Reference Group
- Dedicated Schools Budget Monitoring update for quarter 2 - 2024-25
- Dedicated Schools Grant Consultations 2025-26
- Allocation of Funding for Pupil Growth 2025-26
- National Funding Formulae for Schools 2025-26
- Schools Block Transfer 2025-26 – Consultation Outcome report
- Updates from SEND Transformation Programme

The next meeting of Schools Forum will be held on 23 January 2025 and Children's Select will receive an update at their meeting on 11 March 2025.

Agendas and minutes for Schools Forum can be accessed on: Browse meetings - Schools Forum | Wiltshire Council

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 January 2025

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Corporate Parenting Panel update

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Key points/issues from meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel – 26 November 2024.

- Voice and Participation Team Update

  The Panel were given details of the consultations and activities that the team, Voice Ambassadors and the Children in Care Council had been involved with since the last meeting. The Dragons Den event held on 30 October 2024 was a positive opportunity to listen to the young people, respond to their questions posed and look at ways to make improvements. The focus of the event related to strategic priority 4 - (to have positive relationships with people who are important to me and for me to be part of my local community where I am trusted, respected, accepted and feel included). There had been 61 referrals to the new in house advocacy since October 2024 which was positive. The four Voice Ambassadors at the meeting gave an update on what they had been working on/involved with.

- Strategic Priority 3 Highlight – Ensuring my physical and emotional wellbeing is supported and at a time and place that suits me

  Sally-Anne Harrison (Designated Nurse for CLA) highlighted that the BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB) were looking at ways of how to improve health assessments for children looked after and that they are written up in a child friendly way. The ICB had also commissioned a new pathway for expressions of interest for dentists to provide protected slots for children looked after who cannot currently access an NHS dentist when living in the BSW footprint. They were also looking at ways to secure funding for some care experienced young people to be able to access free prescriptions as they were aware that there was a small group that are in employment and so not eligible for free prescriptions but struggling to afford the prescription charges.

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Update

  The Panel received a children looked after update including the details of referrals between May and October 2024, the development of CAMHS wide guidance for children looked after, details of the new NHS indicators around performance and wait times, planned service development and recruitment.

- Annual report on the health of Children Looked After and Care Experienced Young People 2023-24

  The Panel were given details of the work of the Designated Doctors and Nurses who support the children looked after and care experience young people. A children and young person version of the report would be shared with the young people via the Participation Team. There were also updates on physical, dental and emotional

health. The year's key achievements were highlighted as well as the planned work for Wiltshire improvements in 2024-25

- Adoption Service Year End Report 2023-24 and Adoption West Ofsted Report

  The Panel were given an overview of the Adoption West performance for 2023-24 including numbers of adopters, national and regional comparators and that Officers had recently been involved in the DfE pilot to involve the Children's Guardians (CAFCASS Officers) earlier with the overall aim to seek to reduce the use of experts in proceedings and the overall length of proceedings.

  It was also noted that the Adoption West Ofsted inspection had taken place in August 2024 and the rating was Good for the overall experiences and progress of service users, taking into account how well children and young people and adults are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

- Update on Staying Close Project

  The Panel were reminded that this was a DfE funded project to support those young people who had lived in a residential setting to move on and reduce the 'cliff edge' for them with the aim to increase the chances of them entering suitable, further education, employment or training, gaining independent live skills and having mental health and wellbeing. There was an ongoing review of the current funding a decision on DfE grant funding for 2025 and beyond and a business as usual proposal had been written and shared including a request for budget allocation from the Full Council budget meeting in February 2025. The Panel highlighted that they supported the proposal for the Staying Close project to continue and that appropriate funding be allocated in order to allow this.

- Data Spotlight – Missing Children Update

  The Panel received an overview of the Children Looked After missing episodes from April to September 2024, information about the return home interviews, and the findings of the SWAP audit which was carried out to provide assurance that data sharing for Missing Children is efficient and effective. The assurance opinion grading was substantial and there was only one low priority action relating to the escalation process for data sharing delays.

- Placement Sufficiency Update

  The Panel received an update that the tender for a provider to deliver complex care in Wiltshire owned properties was due to be made in January 2025 and this would mean the provision of additional placements for those aged 16-25 who had a need for more specialist care. There had also been a capital investment approved to provide housing for care experienced young people and unaccompanied young people seeking asylum. The opening of the Southwest Recruitment and Retention Hub had had a positive impact and the fostering team had seen increasing levels of those interested in becoming a foster carer.

- Update on progressing Care Experience as Protected Characteristic

  The Panel were updated that an options paper had been drafted on whether the Council should progress having care experience as a protected characteristic and that

they would like to incorporate the views of young people and have a few further conversations internally before presenting a recommendation to the Panel and have further time to process the possible ramifications of going forward as it would affect more than just Children's Services – it would also be other teams within the Council and that it needed careful consideration. There was also the view that it needed a whole partnership response with partners such as health and the Police to also consider doing the same for it to have a really meaningful impact.

- Updates from other Council Teams and other Representatives

  The Panel received an update from the Engagement and Partnerships Team in relation to Area Board youth initiatives relating to children looked after and/or care experienced young people for 2023-24 and it was noted that there were 21 projects with at least 52 young people involved.

  The quarterly newsletter from the Care Leaver Covenant was also noted by the Panel.

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 28 January 2025 and Children's Select will receive an update at their meeting on 11 March 2025.

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