

Joint area review

Wiltshire Children's Services Authority Area

Review of services for children and young people

Audit Commission
Healthcare Commission
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
Ofsted

Age group: All

Published: 18 November 2008

Reference no: 865



© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the local authority or at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction	2
Context	2
Main findings	4
Grades	5
Recommendations	6
Areas for investigation through fieldwork during the joint area review	
1. Safeguarding	7
2. Looked after children and young people	12
3. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	15
4. Additional investigations	19
5. Service management	25
6. Capacity to improve	25
Annex A: The APA letter	30
Annex B: Summary of the enhanced youth inspection report	31
Annex C: Summary of joint area review and annual performance assessment arrangements	33

Introduction

1. The most recent annual performance assessment for Wiltshire judged the council's children's services as adequate, a judgement that was also applied to its capacity to improve.
2. This report assesses the contribution of local services in ensuring that children and young people:
 - at risk or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
 - who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
 - with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.
3. The following investigations were also carried out:
 - the impact of the partners' strategy on reducing the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training
 - the impact of the partners' strategy in reducing the teenage pregnancy rate.

Context

4. Wiltshire is a county located in the south-west of England. There are currently no areas in Wiltshire within the most deprived 10% nationally in terms of overall deprivation (Indices of Deprivation 2007). However, there are pockets of deprivation often caused by rural isolation – that is, geographic distances to services. There are some areas of the county with a high number of military families, such as Tidworth garrison. The total population is estimated to be 448,700, with 25% in the 0 to 19 age group. Around 4.7% of the population is aged 20–24 years, compared with 6.6% across England and Wales. In contrast, 22.9% of the population is aged over 60, compared with 21.4% in England and Wales (ONS 2006 mid-year estimates). Since 1982 the percentage of young people (0–14 years old) has declined, whilst the percentage of older people has increased. This trend is set to continue in the longer term. The minority ethnic population is dispersed across the area and comprises 3% of the total.
5. Children's social care services are provided through:
 - prevention services that support children and their families within the community
 - a fostering service with 179 mainstream and specialist carers
 - residential placements purchased from independent agencies
 - placements purchased from independent fostering agencies.

6. There are seven locality social work teams and three teams for children with disabilities. Other specialist and social work posts and services are located in established multi-disciplinary and integrated teams, such as the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). March 2008 data shows there are 109 children on the child protection register, of whom 105 are the formal responsibility of the council, with the remaining four children supervised by other local councils in accordance with the statutory Working Together guidance. There are 334 children and young people looked after by the local authority.

7. Pre-16 education is provided by:

- 11 designated nursery units attached to primary schools providing 390 part-time equivalent places, and a further 291 settings (childminders, playgroups, full day-care and nursery units in independent schools) providing 9,100 nursery education places for three and four year olds
- 20 designated children's centres
- 203 primary schools
- 29 secondary schools
- six special schools, 13 secondary and 33 primary designated special units within mainstream provision and four pupil referral units.

8. Post-16 education and training is provided by:

- 20 mainstream schools with sixth forms (providing for 49% of 16–18 year olds in education)
- four schools for young people with severe learning difficulties
- one further education (FE) college with four sites (providing for 38% of 16–18 year olds in education)
- a number of other FE colleges in the surrounding area (accounting for 22% of all Year 11 leavers into education)
- additionally, a number of young people attend sixth forms out of the county (5% of Year 11 leavers into education).

9. Wiltshire County Council provides family and adult learning opportunities for 2,817 adults, of which 25 are young people aged 14–19, with Urchfont Manor College providing 1,829 day and residential opportunities for adult learners. Thirteen work-based training providers have a contract with the local Learning and Skills Council which deliver in Wiltshire, in addition to national providers delivering locally.

10. Entry to Employment (E2E) provision is delivered by three providers offering approximately 280 places.

11. Educational and recreational leisure time activities, including youth work, are provided by the council's Children and Education Department in conjunction with a range of partners. A range of other support services to schools is provided by the local authority and Connexions.

12. The Wiltshire Personal, Community and Development Learning Strategy Partnership is chaired by Wiltshire County Council and includes representation from the FE college and voluntary and community sector organisations. The county council directly provides a wide range of adult and family learning provision. The Family Learning provision is fully integrated within extended services and children's centres.

13. Primary care is provided by the Wiltshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) and acute hospital services are provided by Salisbury Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Swindon and Marlborough Hospital NHS Trust and Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust. Specialist CAHMS are provided by Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, Salisbury Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and Swindon and Marlborough Hospital NHS Trust.

14. There are no young offender institutions in the county.

15. Local government in Wiltshire currently comprises the county, four district, and over 250 parish councils. In April 2009, the county and district councils will be replaced by a single Wiltshire Council. The preparations for the new council are led by an implementation executive comprising Members of the five councils and chaired by the Leader of the county council, supported by a joint implementation team chaired by the Chief Executive.

Main findings

16. The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:

- Safeguarding arrangements are adequate. Children and young people say they feel safe and receive good quality information to inform them of potential dangers. Despite this, too few are benefiting from early intervention and prevention services as a result of insufficient use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). There is too much variability in the timely identification and completion of initial and core assessments. Good work is undertaken to prevent or divert children and young people from offending.
- Services for looked after children are adequate. There is a lack of placement choice for children and young people who become looked after and too many are in residential care. Whilst effective work with foster carers and adopters has improved the stability of placements some children are waiting too long to be adopted because of delays in the courts. Good quality advice is offered to looked after children from the Children's Rights Service.
- Services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are adequate. Although some services, such as those for early years and schools, are inclusive, impacting well and improving outcomes, in others, the lack of, or undeveloped local

provision for some children and young people with the highest levels of need, inhibits the impact of the service as a whole.

- The impact of local services in reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training is good. Effective early intervention work and projects aimed at re-engaging young people at risk of exclusion have assisted the partnership in achieving a significant reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. The range of post-16 vocational provision, although improving, is insufficient to meet the needs of all young people.
- The impact of the partners' strategy to reduce teenage conceptions is good. A strong commitment across the partnership and effective joint working has ensured that services are well targeted upon specific geographical areas and vulnerable young people. This has resulted in year-on-year reductions, although the 50% reduction in teenage pregnancy by 2010 remains a challenging target based on current trends.
- Service management and the capacity to improve further are adequate. Although the council, the Children's Trust and its partners have strong and well-founded ambitions for children's services and have been effective in engaging with parents and children and other stakeholders to help shape services, current management capacity, although developing, is insufficient to ensure successful delivery. Some key strategies are not supported by delivery plans and planning is not consistently applied at service level.

Grades

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	2
Looked after children	2
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2
Service management	2
Capacity to improve	2

Recommendations

For immediate action

The local partnership should:

- ensure that an appropriate way is found for the successful dissemination of the findings of this report to children and young people in the area
- secure value for money in services for children with special educational needs and for looked after children.

The council should:

- improve variations between area social care teams in relation to the volume and timeliness of initial and core assessments
- liaise with the courts managers to secure a speedy resolution to delayed adoption proceedings
- ensure all agencies are fully implementing the CAF to achieve better early intervention outcomes for children and their families.

For action over the next six months

The local partnership should:

- finalise and implement the transition strategy and embed person-centred planning for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the partnership
- strengthen performance management arrangements by ensuring that all service plans have specific, measurable and timely objectives and are consistent with the priorities of the CYPP
- take action to improve understanding and use of special guardianship
- ensure all statutory reviews for looked after children are held on time and children and young people contribute to them.

For action in the longer term

The local partnership should:

- map, plan and extend the range of provision from Key Stage 4 to post-16, to meet the needs of all young people, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Equality and diversity

17. The CYPP demonstrates an increasing commitment to equality and diversity and an intention to fully consider how policies, procedures and practices will affect all sectors of the Wiltshire community through the use of equality impact assessments. In addition, each team plan is required to contain an equality and diversity statement. The commitment to identify needs and to respond to groups vulnerable to poor outcomes has resulted in major initiatives such as the anti-bullying and domestic violence strategies and the launch of the diversity action plan, which particularly addresses the needs to children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. The introduction of advanced information technology infrastructure has been accompanied by a requirement to collect detailed data that can be used for planning and performance managing and monitoring purposes. Effective action is also being taken to improve the life chances of hard to reach groups, such as Traveller children and their families, by affording them greater information about, and easier access to, a range of culturally sensitive and flexible services. Systematic action is being taken to ensure equality of access to services so that those living in rural and isolated areas are not disadvantaged.

Safeguarding



18. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding is adequate.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Effective LSCB.</p> <p>Good multi-agency action in response to domestic violence incidents.</p> <p>The support provided to military families.</p> <p>Strong multi-agency action to identify, target and reduce anti-social behaviour across Wiltshire.</p>	<p>Variation in the timeliness and volume of initial and core assessments across social care teams.</p> <p>Weak implementation and use of the CAF.</p> <p>Variations in the accessibility and provision of services to vulnerable groups by CAMHS.</p>

Low levels of offending and re-offending through an effective youth offending team and youth inclusion programme.

Strong and effective multi-agency arrangements to track and monitor missing children.

Secure arrangements for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff in council services and schools.

19. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well. Sexual health education and provision are well targeted and a specific programme has been effective in promoting teenage sexual health. A good drugs treatment service for children and young people offers very timely and effective interventions to young offenders. All other referrals for assessment are offered an appointment within five working days; 84% of young people entering treatment did so within the same time period, rising to 94% within 10 working days. Although the number of referrals from some key partner agencies remains low the service is playing a full part in reviewing these referral pathways and in enabling treatment rates to rise.

20. The CAMHS provide adequate provision for children and young people. Known variations in service provision are being addressed by the PCT and partners through the creation of a single CAMHS provider, although access to services for some vulnerable groups has been limited. There is no specialist provision for children with learning disabilities and, whilst there is direct access for looked after children, waiting lists are too long. However, the creation of a pathway referral service for children and young people has improved access to CAMHS through effective triage and signposting and has contributed to a reduction in waiting lists for tier 3 and 4 services.

21. Most children and young people responding to the Tellus2 survey say they feel safe and receive good quality information about keeping safe. Services work well together to provide children and young people with a safe environment. Children and parents affected by domestic violence are identified well and supported by good partnership work and services, including targeted action with military families that has contributed to a significant reduction in repeat episodes of domestic violence. A successful programme of theatre and education workshops has been run in schools to inform children about domestic violence and substance misuse.

22. The council has successfully agreed and implemented a joint road safety strategy with the police and PCT covering a wide range of activities to tackle the causes of road traffic accidents and to improve road safety. Road safety

officers provide children with the skills to deal with traffic, both as pedestrians and cyclists, and schemes to provide safer routes to school and the provision of formal crossing facilities contribute to the safety of children.

23. Clear policies, advice and guidance are provided on the prevention of bullying with evidence of good targeted action taken by schools and the local council. Ofsted inspection judgements on the quality of care, guidance and support found that almost all schools were good or better in ensuring children and young people stay safe. The fostering service inspected this year, and the adoption service last inspected in January 2007 were judged to be good in safeguarding matters. The quality of early years settings is good and is monitored very well.

24. Children and young people are supported well in developing socially and emotionally. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme has been implemented in all primary schools and is being rolled out into secondary schools. Good support is provided for parents to maintain positive relationships with their children through a wide range of multi-agency parenting support programmes provided by children's centres, family centres and the family information service (ASK).

25. Very good and effective action is taken to identify and reduce anti-social behaviour through well-targeted multi-agency prevention activities and initiatives. Comparatively high numbers of young people aged between 13 and 19 years are reached by the Youth Service. Good systems are in place for identifying and responding to those young people at risk of anti-social behaviour through effective local multi-disciplinary panels and the provision of a wide range of targeted activity, including restorative justice systems in schools, good mentoring opportunities and diversionary activities run for young people during the school holidays through the 'Splash' programme. The Youth Inclusion Support Programme (YISP) has been particularly successful in diverting young people from crime with only four of the 134 children worked with over the last two years having subsequently committed an offence. The YISP has also been particularly successful in supporting improvements in young people's behaviour at school, thereby reversing some established patterns of temporary exclusions. Action has been taken with parish councils to identify safe places where young people can gather in their communities. Good early intervention and support is provided by youth workers for young people, with acceptable behaviour contracts contributing to the low use of anti-social behaviour orders. Action to reduce the level of offending and re-offending has been vigorous. Rates of first-time offending and re-offending have fallen. Access to education, employment or training for young offenders is good and the youth offending team has exceeded its target of 95% of young people living in suitable accommodation in 2007–08.

26. Good protocols and strong tracking processes are in place for missing children and those missing education. These are well targeted at vulnerable groups, including Traveller children who benefit from a variety of services that are culturally sensitive and effective.

27. School attendance is better than the national average and is monitored rigorously. The council has worked well to reduce fixed-term and permanent exclusions through the actions of an effective multi-agency behaviour strategy group. For example, the Young People Support Service works effectively with schools to reduce exclusion and contributes well to the secondary behaviour inclusion working group, which has a clear remit to improve attendance and behaviour. Education is provided for children who do not attend school or may have been excluded and this provision is monitored effectively. Children who are educated at home achieve well through good use of e-learning support.

28. The partnership's commitment to the development and provision of a wide range of early intervention and preventative services to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people has been evident through the work of children's centres, schools and youth services. The use of family group conferencing and the work of the highly regarded crisis intervention service have been effective in preventing family breakdown and reducing its impact on children and young people. Staff are committed, child centred, increasingly well supported (especially in schools) and have good skills in working directly and effectively with children. Despite this there has been insufficient focus on the implementation and use of the CAF in reducing the requirement for formal referral to social care services. At the time of the inspection only 76 CAFs had been registered, and although this may under-represent the totality of the work, it was acknowledged by the council that the CAF had not yet been widely or consistently used across all agencies. The council has provided a good level of multi-agency training and has additionally supported the implementation process through the appointment of five locally-based information sharing and assessment coordinators. However, there has been insufficient managerial coordination and focus at all levels and across agencies to support and consolidate the implementation of CAF and sustain the momentum provided by earlier training initiatives.

29. There are adequate systems in place to manage referral processes across social care duty teams. Referral rates of children in need are below those of comparator local authorities and re-referrals are comparatively low. Performance on the timeliness of the completion of initial and core assessments improved in 2006–07, with 72% of initial assessments and 80% of core assessments completed on time. However, significant variations in performance exist between area social care teams with the outliers currently completing at best 49% of initial assessments and 42% of core assessments on time. These variations have largely resulted from managers and staff giving insufficient priority to this area of their work. However, they are now being monitored closely to improve performance against challenging targets set this year. Significant variations also exist between areas in the volume of core

assessments undertaken and managers agree there is inconsistency in deciding when to commission a core assessment. The inspection of the private fostering service in 2007, however, found no major shortfalls in the service.

30. The number of children who became the subject of a child protection plan is comparatively low. More child protection conferences were held within 15 working days of a strategy discussion compared to similar authorities in 2006–07 and deregistration rates are good. Re-registration of children on the child protection register was high but is now reported by the council to have reduced to 13%, which is in line with similar authorities. This has been attributed to increased focus on monitoring and managerial oversight of the children in need plan following de-registration. All children with child protection plans have reviews that are carried out within the required timescales and are allocated to qualified social workers who are well trained and supported to understand and meet their needs. Core group meetings are held regularly to review and monitor child protection plans. Quality assurance arrangements are effective; cases are regularly monitored through good supervision and the rigorous, independent chairing of child protection conferences. Children and families are supported well to make a positive contribution at case conferences. A good independent children's advocacy service is commissioned from Barnardos to support children through this process.

31. The arrangements for agencies to collaborate in safeguarding children are good. The LSCB works well to ensure that actions are in place to safeguard children and young people and the accountabilities and responsibilities of partner agencies are well understood. The board carries out an annual review of its functions against *Working Together to Safeguard Children* requirements both internally and externally. Leadership is effective and meetings are well attended by partners who provide effective challenge and monitoring. The multi-agency action plans arising from the one serious case review completed prior to June 2008 have been monitored well, although the wider dissemination of lessons learnt is not recalled by staff interviewed during the course of this joint area review. Excellent multi-agency training is provided for all staff, for example the very good programme and subsequent professional support for school based staff which is well regarded.

32. Criminal Records Bureau and other staff vetting checks are carried out rigorously by the council, and schools' procedures are robustly monitored. Clear procedures and systems are in place for managing allegations against staff. Staff recruitment processes are thorough and progress is being made to ensure that photographs of all staff members are retained in their personnel records.

33. Recent inspection in May 2008 by HM Inspectorate of Probation found the various aspects of offender management to be at least satisfactorily met. The screening of the level of harm in cases supervised in the community was reported to be strong and recommendations for improvement are being addressed.

Looked after children and young people



34. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is adequate.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>The adoption service.</p> <p>The fostering service.</p> <p>Good quality training available to foster carers.</p> <p>Good levels of placement stability.</p> <p>The work with children and young people with psychological attachment difficulties.</p> <p>The quality of advice to looked after children on drugs, alcohol and sexual health.</p> <p>Good Children's Rights Service.</p>	<p>The overspend on the looked after children placement budget.</p> <p>The lack of placement choice and the disproportionate numbers of children and young people in residential care.</p> <p>The high number of children awaiting adoption hearings at court.</p> <p>Timeliness of statutory reviews and the numbers of children who contribute to them.</p> <p>Capacity of the aftercare team.</p>

35. Placement stability is generally good and most children experience a responsive service once they become looked after. All pre-school and school age looked after children and young people are allocated to a named qualified social worker but insufficient capacity in the aftercare service means that allocation becomes more variable for those aged 16 and above.

36. The council has a clear priority to reduce the number of children needing to be accommodated. Historically, the numbers needing to be looked after have been consistently lower than in comparator councils and the national average. However, in 2007/08 there has been an increase in the numbers which has contributed to the creation of a significant and unsustainable £1.33m overspend on the placement budget.

37. The partnership is committed to securing children and young people in permanent placements when this is entirely in their best interests. Adoption is a key strand in the authority's plan to reduce numbers in the care system and the creation of a discrete adoption team, separate from the fostering service, is proposed. This is a positive step forward and will enable the focus on permanent family finding and placement to build on recent progress which has seen the number of children adopted during the year as a percentage of looked

after children rise from 3.9% to 7.3%. This reflects good progress but remains below the levels of performance seen within comparator authorities. Delays in the court process, affecting some 40 children and young people, hinder the smooth progression of the adoption process. However, opportunities to consider alternative courses of action to speed the process with those responsible for courts management have not been fully exploited. Work to secure children through special guardianship is underdeveloped and only three such placements have been made in the year to end of March 2008. However, progress has been made using fostering arrangements to secure placements with relatives or friends and the area's performance in this regard is now only marginally below that of comparator authorities and national averages, reflecting significant advances over the last two years.

38. A positive element of the council's commitment to improving their service to looked after children is to reduce their reliance on residential care except in those cases when it is the best option for the child or young person. A key strand of this strategy has been to appropriately outsource two residential care homes to an independent agency and to improve the quality of service by creating greater placement choice. Although there has been some progress, currently 19.6% of the looked after population are placed in residential provision (down from 22.8% in the previous year), this figure remains significantly above that of comparators (14.4%).

39. The percentage of looked after children who are placed more than 20 miles from their home address is high and this unsatisfactory situation has been exacerbated by the increased demand for placements. Children and young people recognise the authority makes efforts to help them maintain relationships with key family members and friends as well as stability of school and college placements. However, they also experience the logistical and emotional problems of trying to maintain 'long distance' relationships.

40. The authority is striving to increase the number of in-house foster carers as a complementary strand of the looked after children strategy. Recent efforts to contract with an independent sector provider foundered when the company went into administration with only three of the 30 placements secured. This has left the authority with insufficient numbers (190 carers) and too limited a choice of foster placements to meet the demands on the service. This situation has contributed to the increased, and in the circumstances necessary, use of expensive independent fostering agency placements as well as some out of county residential provision. The recently implemented placement commissioning strategy has been developed to address these issues. Although some progress has been made its full impact has yet to be realised and significant financial pressures are currently continuing to impact upon the viability of the service. In 2006-07, the average gross weekly expenditure per looked after child in foster care or in a children's home was £1054 compared to the national average of £753.

41. The Children and Young People's Trust Board has put in place a senior group to develop a multi-agency and overarching commissioning strategy and framework for the partnership and, alongside the work being undertaken in the residential sector, concerted efforts are being made to recruit foster carers to expand the complement to 210 within the current financial year. Good efforts are also being made to retain, formally train and develop existing foster carers and to support them through group work and easily accessible consultation with psychologists and psychiatrists. This work is having a positive impact and there is good placement stability both in the short and longer terms. There is also evidence of good outcomes from particular strands of work to enable foster carers to develop the skills necessary for them to assist children and young people in forming or reforming psychological attachments. This is helping children and young people to manage and to settle in secure family placements. Ofsted's most recent inspections of adoption and fostering services has found them both to be providing good services.

42. The timeliness of reviews of looked after children improved from 78% to 83% but this remains significantly below the performance of comparators (90%). The number of children and young people who communicated their views to their reviews has also increased (to 78%) but remains low and significantly below the performance of comparator authorities (90%). There has been a concerted effort on the part of Independent Reviewing Officers to improve these outcomes but their success has been limited. Unvalidated data drawn from the council's own records shows strong evidence of significant improvement in this area.

43. Good action is taken by partners to provide a range of health and other forms of advice to looked after children and young people on the topics of drugs, alcohol and teenage pregnancy. Though numbers are small there has been a decline in the number of teenage conceptions in the last year. Focused work in this area targeted at all young men and women has had significant impact. The percentage of looked after children and young people receiving health and dental checks in a year has improved significantly over the last year from 73% to 84% and is targeted correctly and realistically for further improvement. Looked after children and young people have not been so affected by the difficulties within CAMHS and they are benefiting currently from improved and more equitable access to specialist services. Further work to refocus provision at tiers 1 and 2 is also impacting positively.

44. A very good children's rights service is offering high levels of engagement and advocacy to looked after children and young people. Groups for all age ranges are offering opportunities to develop new skills and increase self-esteem and resilience in line with the partnership's priorities. Good degrees of trust exist between the service and young people, with one person commenting 'I would trust (my advocate) with my life'. Care leavers have been trained to participate appropriately in training and staff interviews, for example the 'Total Respect' event that was delivered to councillors and the recruitment process of the Director of Children's Services.

45. The Looked After Children Education Service is central to the council's drive to improve the educational progress and attainment of looked after children and young people. The service is managed by a relatively newly appointed "virtual head teacher" who has a service coordinating function and access to specialist support, for example from the educational psychology service. Supplementary educational support is also available. Personal Education Plans are completed for each looked after child and young person and these are quality assured and updated at each statutory review. School attendance is monitored but 14.1% of looked after children and young people missed at least 25 days' schooling in 2006/07, a figure that is above comparators and national averages and does not match the council's aspirations for looked after children and young people.

46. Current attainment and progress of looked after children and young people is barely satisfactory, particularly in the numbers of young people gaining at least five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics. However, numbers of children and young people in each cohort are small, which results in significant variations from one year to the next. GCSE targets set in the corporate plan for the current cohort have not been met. Only 5.88% achieved grades A to C against a target of 10%. A high proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which has had a severe impact on the numbers taking the national tests and examinations. However, there is a good rate of care leavers in education, employment or training, which is increasing faster than average. Nine young people are at universities and two are pursuing masters degrees supported by the council.

47. The looked after young people's aftercare service has been reviewed and several recommendations made to improve service quality. However, some key areas around capacity have not yet been implemented and there are deficits in service provision. Too many (50) young people are not allocated to social work staff and are dealt with by a duty system. All young people have pathway plans and there are close working relationships with Connexions. Concerted efforts are being made to improve the quality of housing provision to care leavers and a commitment to end the already limited use of bed and breakfast accommodation has been made. A service level agreement with a housing association is in place to increase the choice and provision of supported lodgings, but a housing worker recommended by the review to coordinate this area of work has not yet been appointed thus threatening the success of the initiative.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Inadequate Adequate Good Outstanding

48. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>The embedded ethos of inclusion within the early years sector.</p> <p>The well-established Early Support Programme.</p> <p>The overall good quality of special schools.</p> <p>Effective early identification and intervention.</p> <p>The highly valued parent partnership service (SENSS) and the parents forum.</p> <p>The good reduction in the number of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities not in education, employment or training.</p> <p>The good opportunities for children and young people to contribute their views and engage in decision-making.</p>	<p>Inequities in the delivery of therapeutic services across the county.</p> <p>The lack of a coherent strategy regarding transition at all stages.</p> <p>Underdeveloped person-centred planning within children's services.</p> <p>The lack of provision for those with high-level needs.</p> <p>The lack of a specialist CAMHS.</p> <p>The lack of post-16 opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p>

49. Partnership working between health, social care, the voluntary sector and education services, including schools, has developed considerably over the last 18 months, both at strategic and operational levels. Management action has galvanised services and improved the pace of change.

50. Community child health specialist services provide a wide range of medical, screening and health promotion services for children aged from birth to school leaving age. The proposed new structure of the specialist service is addressing the identified current inequities in targeted services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as staff shortages in speech and language therapists and learning disability nurses. A new service model for speech and language therapy is currently being implemented and joint funding has been agreed, but some children and young people do not receive a timely and consistent service.

51. Lifetime nurses provide effective support and training to those working with children with complex health needs. The sharing of expertise by community paediatricians is highly valued by parents, health professionals and special schools and is good. However, there is no specialist CAMHS for children

and young people with learning disabilities. A specialist nurse is attached to the YOT and case tracking reveals that this has led to previously undiagnosed learning difficulties being positively addressed, albeit at a late stage.

52. The council has been a pathfinder for the Early Support Programme for families with pre-school children with complex needs and disabilities. All pre-school children access early years settings that are of better overall quality than that found nationally. There is therefore a strong ethos of inclusion within the early years services. The four district specialist centres for pre-school children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provide a good level of support to mainstream settings. Portage services provide a high level of support for parents, and this service will be available across the whole of the county from September 2008. A wide range of training opportunities is available to all early years workers, special educational needs coordinators and parents.

53. Effective new procedures for the early identification of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are in place. Positive outcomes from multi-agency meetings include the full engagement and empowerment of parents in their children's development and early education. Early years trends indicate that there are fewer children under five years of age with statements than in previous years (19.8% compared to 24.6% nationally in 2007). However, the use of CAF is underdeveloped across the county and undermines the stated commitment to deliver early intervention and prevention services.

54. Transition between schools is a key issue for parents, who state there is further work required to ensure the process is smooth. Work on the transition strategy has been too slow, but the recent work of the transition sub-group has ensured current satisfactory progress. Transition into primary and from primary to secondary is improving. Schools are encountering fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose needs are not identified prior to transition and an earlier, shared approach to meeting need means that specialist equipment and/or training is in place before the child enters school in most cases. However, the introduction of enhanced learning provision for pupils with high-level learning needs into all mainstream secondary schools in September 2008 has hindered smooth transition from primaries as some parents have not been able to gather clear information on what provision will be available.

55. All statements of special educational need are completed within the required timescales and there is good written guidance for parents on aspects of special educational need available online. However, communication with council officers via the customer care service remains a concern for some parents who report slow response rates. The parent partnership, SENSS, is highly valued and provides high quality support to parents of pupils with special educational needs.

56. The progress of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been judged to be good in 67% of the mainstream schools inspected by Ofsted in 2008. The quality of the six special schools is generally good overall, with

some outstanding provision. Contextual value added data across all key stages demonstrates that pupils' progress is broadly in line with that found nationally.

57. There is adequate provision to meet most needs across a range of abilities. In-reach and outreach support is available and special schools and specialist learning centres share their professional expertise well, for example through the highly valued social communication inclusion teams. The introduction of enhanced learning provision aims to ensure most pupils with a high-level learning need are taught within mainstream secondary schools, although it is acknowledged that some schools will require time to build up the necessary skill levels. Currently, pupils with high-level needs, including those on the autistic spectrum and those with behavioural difficulties, are often placed in schools outside of Wiltshire due to a lack of educational and residential provision within the county. This is a major contributory factor to the council's current high costs in providing special educational needs services.

58. The reduction in the number of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are not in education, employment or training from 17% to 10% over the year to December 2007 is good. Some high-quality targeted work such as that found at Springfield special school is making an excellent contribution to preventing young people with additional needs becoming not in education, employment or training.

59. A high proportion of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 14 and over has a transition plan to support their move to adult services. However, the council acknowledges that further work is needed to embed person-centred planning, although work is already ongoing in this area. Adult services are funding a full-time dedicated transition manager to implement the developing transition policy and embed the currently underdeveloped person-centred planning across the partnership.

60. The opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities post-16 are limited because work-based learning opportunities are insufficient to meet the level of need. As a result a significant number of young people with complex needs are funded in out-of-county provision as their needs cannot be met within Wiltshire.

61. Specialist personal advisors work with some special schools and there is a range of training opportunities to ensure that generic advisors have the expertise and knowledge to advise young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, some parents report that the information they receive regarding possible options is limited.

62. The children with disability teams (CDTs) have improved consistency in working practices and relations between them and the children and family's generic teams are sound. Allocation of work is dependent on level of specialist knowledge required and is well managed. The DISM system means that referrals for assessment to the CDTs are now better evidenced and meet the necessary criteria. Short break provision is of good quality and criteria for

accessing the service are reasonable. Parents praise the quality of the short break care at Canon's House, whose staff work well with adult short break providers to ensure smooth transition. Adaptations to living accommodation for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well managed and meeting current demand.

63. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who participated in the inspection stated they felt safe within their schools and generally safe within their local area. Professionals working with them are well trained in safeguarding and child protection. Procedures for disabled children are compatible with the statutory government guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and the LSCB has conducted an effective audit of cases involving children with disabilities.

64. Opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to attend out-of-school activities and holiday provision are satisfactory overall, although parents report that access is hampered by transport issues. Provision in some rural areas is insufficient. The council has been successful in their extended school pathfinder bid for provision for vulnerable groups, including children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. *Special find it* is a guide currently being developed through ASK to improve parents' and carers' knowledge of what provision is available across the county.

65. The youth service provides good opportunities for some young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through the bridging projects and Spark radio. They are able to engage in decision-making through the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth. However, it is acknowledged that there is scope to develop the engagement of vulnerable groups, including children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, further. There are effective examples of enabling young people with communication difficulties to make a positive contribution, for example at Canons House, Rowdeford special school and John of Gaunt secondary school. Young people from four special schools have worked together to produce a DVD about their transition experiences, which will be used by other children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the county to build their confidence.

Other issues identified for further investigation

The impact of the partners' strategy on reducing the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training

66. **The impact of the partners' strategy on reducing the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training is good.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Very good reduction in the proportion not in education, employment or training.</p> <p>Effective early intervention work.</p> <p>The targeted and diversionary projects to re-engage and challenge young people at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>The partnership's management of risks.</p>	<p>Limited range of post-16 vocational provision to meet the needs of young people.</p> <p>Underdeveloped mapping, planning and range of provision for the future needs of young people.</p>

67. The council and partners have a strong strategic focus on reducing the incidence of children and young people not in education, employment or training and have identified this as a key strategic priority within the CYPP. An increasingly effective 'not in education, employment or training' sub-group has given appropriate strategic direction and developed an effective framework to support good local initiatives. Communication between key partners is improving, leading to effective joint working. The support offered by children's services, especially to vulnerable young people, is valued by young people and partners.

68. The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training is now above both national and comparator councils and increasing faster. The percentage of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are not in education, employment or training has reduced significantly from 17% to 10% over the year to December 2007. Some 5.8% of young people were not in education, employment or training in January 2008 (down from 6% at the same period the previous year). However, a slightly higher rate of children and young people not in education, employment or training in West Wiltshire is reducing at a slower pace. Overall, the Wiltshire rate is significantly lower than the 6.7% national rate. The partnership has set a challenging target of 4.1% by 2010. The rate of young people whose destination after leaving school is not known is low at 4.8% which is well below the national average of 6.9%.

69. Early intervention is good and begins when children enter nursery. Timely identification of children and young people with the potential to become not in education, employment or training is tackled rigorously through monitoring attendance. Partnership work between schools and education welfare officers is having a significant impact on improving the attendance of persistent absentees who are disengaged. Well-considered intervention strategies and stringent actions involving legal procedures are leading to improved attendance in schools where it is not consistently satisfactory or better.

70. Detailed analyses of the needs of children and young people have contributed to schools knowing the next steps needed to dismantle barriers that lead to young people leaving education or training. Three consortia have made a good start in developing rigorous and preventative strategies to tackle potential problems. Provision is serving the communities well.

71. Schools are increasingly developing a more flexible curriculum that is tailored to the needs of young people who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training. Different curriculum pathways ensure that students have good access to a wide range of provision as exemplified in Kingdown School, where students can access a personalised curriculum that is outstanding. Pre-emptive actions involving multi-agencies have been a key factor in reducing significantly the numbers of fixed and permanent exclusions of vulnerable groups, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Other positive actions designed to capture and sustain vulnerable young people's interests in learning include the successful introductory annual careers festival, run jointly by the council, Connexions and Wiltshire College.

72. The SEAL programme has provided a strong foundation to develop children and young people's confidence and well-being; in effect, their resilience to overcome barriers likely to affect their achievement. Recent survey findings show the SEAL programme is being used in most primary and secondary schools and is having a positive impact on promoting good attitudes to learning. Good joint work between the youth service and rural communities with younger children is also helping to reduce exclusions.

73. The council has introduced procedures to ensure all young people have equal access to resources and support to encourage them to attend school and college. In response to the needs of minority ethnic groups, the council has effectively improved the performance of different groups of children and young people. For example, there is a lower percentage of 16–19 year olds from minority ethnic groups who are not in education, employment or training than in comparator authorities, and the VIBES programme, which offers targeted support for African and Caribbean children, has been successful in engaging with potentially excluded children and young people. There is commitment to tracking the progress of vulnerable young people and good systems have been established to assess and celebrate their achievements.

74. The children's service has commissioned a range of effective projects to engage and reintroduce young people to education, employment or training. Good examples of targeted provision to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training include innovative programmes with the voluntary and community sector and the Resolve pre-E2E programme, as well as schools working with their local communities. However, the lack of communication about future funding is undermining some of these projects.

75. The council and partners recognise that there are areas for improvement which, if not addressed, pose a risk to the good existing progress and continued reduction of the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. The range of post-16 vocational provision, although improving, is insufficient to meet the needs of all young people. For example, there are too few apprenticeships; not enough vocational provision at Level 1; insufficient specialist provision supporting young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; too little flexibility within college programmes to engage young people throughout the year and relevant vocational diploma lines are underdeveloped. Suitable plans are in place to remedy these issues, for example extensive developments in the college, but it is too early to evaluate their impact. Partners also acknowledge the need to strengthen and increase links with employers. Appropriate planning through an employer engagement group and some good initiatives are in place, for example the deployment of specialist employer engagement staff in Connexions local offices.

76. The partners also recognise that further development is required in mapping provision and planning for the future needs of young people from Key Stage 4 to post-16. Pathway planning is underdeveloped and, although there is significant work with the most vulnerable children and young people to explore available opportunities, planning is often insufficient to take account of future progression. Too many young people were not offered an appropriate learning opportunity by September 2007; however, stronger systems are now in place to meet the 2008 September guarantee. For example, all 16–17 year old young people are recorded on the database.

The impact of the partners' strategy in reducing the teenage pregnancy rate

77. The impact of partners' strategy in reducing the teenage pregnancy rate is good.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Historically low rates of teenage pregnancy.</p> <p>The strong partnership commitment and joint working to address sexual health promotion and to reduce teenage pregnancy levels.</p> <p>The <i>No Worries</i> programme of services.</p> <p>Impressive reduction in teenage pregnancy in areas of most need.</p>	<p>The outdated baseline strategy document.</p> <p>The under-developed governance arrangements for joint working between health and district councils.</p>

<p>The linking of the teenage pregnancy agenda to the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) approaches within primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>Senior staff in their role as promotional champions for the joined-up teenage sexual health and PSHEE agendas.</p>	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

78. Wiltshire's teenage pregnancy rates generally compare well with national rates, although the rate of decline continues to make the national target for 2010 – halving the under-18 conception rate from the 1998 baseline rate – challenging. The Wiltshire Teenage Pregnancy Board (TPB) has good representation and commitment from partners. In 2007, a major review of progress on the strategy resulted in a useful action plan, which in turn was updated earlier this year to lay the basis for this year's progressive round of developments. However, the baseline teenage pregnancy strategy document is now seven years old and, although still useful, has not been updated with current national guidance, organisational, policy and practice changes.

79. The TPB, now chaired by a senior manager, is one of a number of sub-groups reporting to the Wiltshire's Children and Young People's Trust Board reflecting its status as one of the county's key priority areas. Governance arrangements for joint working arrangements with health and district councils in the forthcoming unitary council are in development. However, the teenage pregnancy strategy now benefits from improved organisational relationships to sit alongside longstanding and productive relationships with education colleagues with responsibilities for Healthy Schools and the personal, social and health education curriculum so that teenage sexual health messages are well-embedded within a broader curriculum context. Schools are supported well by the strong continuous professional development personal, social, health and education programme for teachers, school nurses and police which, from September 2008, is being extended to include staff in the youth service, the YOT and teaching assistants.

80. The core of Wiltshire's community sexual health service for young people is its *No Worries* programme, which has been shaped by the county's 2005 young people's charter for good sex and relationships education. It supports access to advice, services and contraceptives in many, but not all, settings. The *No Worries* programme has encouraged productive collaboration across organisational and professional boundaries and it has been successful in reaching young people: for example, almost 70% of young people surveyed knew that doctors' surgeries displaying the *No Worries* poster provide free contraception and advice on sexual health and are aware that the *No Worries* card acts as a rapid passport to local services across the county.

81. Young people have been engaged well in the planning and delivery of activities within the programme: some acting as peer mentors supporting fellow students and referring on to specialist services where necessary, others involved in the recruitment and selection of the chlamydia screening coordinator and in the design of the boxes containing postal kits for self-administered swab and urine sample collection.

82. The PCT is promoting the use of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) methods within the *No Worries* programme. Early evidence has caused local clinicians to believe that the increasing LARC take-up within Wiltshire is already having an impact in reducing the number of teenage conceptions but they acknowledge that in the absence of validated data they are unable to confirm this.

83. The TPB and its predecessor have successfully overseen the growth and increasing effectiveness of multi-agency work in geographical 'hotspots': areas with teenage conception rates of over 60 per 1,000 young women under 18. The most recent pair of three year comparisons in terms of numbers, for 2003-05 compared with 2005-07, shows that for the six ward hotspots there had been an overall reduction from 140 to 114 conceptions in each three year period. Some targeted schools in hot-spot areas include drop-in services involving school pastoral staff and school nurses and these drop-ins also benefit from the additional flexibilities of extended school initiatives in some schools. Young people valued the confidentiality and expertise of the drop-in service as well as the openness and approachability of the staff.

84. Most Wiltshire primary schools have already successfully integrated personal and social and sex and relationships education (SRE) into their school curriculum. Secondary schools are now following suit, prompted by Wiltshire's recent launch of a self-evaluation tool for SRE, which drew on the young people's charter for good sex and relationships education. These developments have firmly rooted teenage pregnancy and sexual health within the wider context of personal relationships, strengthening the strong messages about delaying sexual behaviour and promoting children and young people's self-esteem, in line with current government guidance *Teenage Pregnancy Next Steps* (2006) and the council's drive to build the resilience of all children and young people in the county.

85. Some good targeted work has been undertaken with vulnerable groups. For example, the youth service and the Children's Rights Officer are supporting three groups of looked after children and young people: a mixed group of younger children and two separate groups for older young men and women. They have raised self-esteem as part of a longer-term approach to young people's sexual health and behaviours, linked with the promotion of delaying sexual activities. Those attending valued the groups and have demonstrably learnt from them.

Service management



Capacity to improve



86. **The management of services for children and young people is adequate. Capacity to improve further is adequate.**

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Committed and pro-active leadership and management of the Director of Children and Education, supported by politicians and the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Challenging ambitions within the CYPP 2008–11.</p> <p>Engagement and consultation with parents and children and young people in shaping services and the partnership strategy.</p> <p>Good partnership working and use of the voluntary sector.</p>	<p>The current capacity of management to secure delivery of an ambitious agenda.</p> <p>Some key strategies are not supported by delivery plans, that is, smart action plans.</p> <p>Planning is not consistently applied at the service level.</p> <p>Slow progress in responding to value for money issues in aspects of social care and special educational needs.</p>

87. The ambitions of the council and its partners for children and young people are good. The children and young people's partnership is now being effectively led by the council and partners who have developed clear and consensual priorities for children and young people. The PCT has been fully re-engaged and is committed to the partnership, following a period of significant financial difficulty that restricted their capacity for some aspects of joint working in 2005. Successful joint work is ongoing regarding reducing teenage pregnancy and work is underway to reconfigure specific services for children to meet joint priorities, for example in CAMHS. Partnerships have also been effectively rebuilt with the schools, and further strengthened with the college and the voluntary sector. The partnership therefore now benefits from strong relationships and has sufficiently wide representation. Ambitions reflect the involvement and contribution from the local community, parents, children and key stakeholders. The partnership has produced a good CYPP which outlines a clearly stated and

challenging vision for children and young people. The CYPP demonstrates links and alignment of targets between the new Local Area Agreement and the council corporate plan and is integrated into the plans for Wiltshire becoming a unitary authority.

88. The council has made significant and rapid progress in its development of children's centres and extended schools facilities. There is good engagement with children, young people, their families and carers in developing ambitions through the various youth forums and targeted surveys and in reviewing the performance of the CYPP. The partnership has a strong commitment to developing preventative services and is committed to the devolution of responsibility for allocating resources to local collaborative partnerships to ensure earlier intervention and prevention, improve the targeting of services and to foster greater community engagement. The council and its partners, however, have not sufficiently developed capacity to effectively meet these ambitions and there has been a poor track record in delivering improvement in some key service priority areas, most notably services for pupils with special educational needs. The ambitions of the council are not sufficiently underscored by SMART delivery plans in all areas with milestones that are fully understood by all of those involved.

89. Prioritisation is adequate. There is clear commitment from officers and members to improve the outcomes for children and young people who are given prominence within the priorities of the council plans. There is a good balance between national and local priorities, for example the work in reducing teenage pregnancy. Priorities are largely based on local needs assessment, but comprehensive local needs data is not yet fully developed to secure consistent alignment of priority to local need. The partnership has acknowledged this as an area for improvement and is currently developing local area profiles.

90. The partnership has successfully improved access to services for vulnerable and hard to reach groups, most notably for Travellers and army families. There are examples where the Directorate for Children and Education has shifted resources within specific service areas to improve delivery; for example, in the school improvement service, but examples of disinvestment of services and resource shifting between non-priority areas and priority areas are limited. This reduces the scope for service managers to financially plan effectively and prioritise for the future. The partnership has embarked on an exercise to map costs for services for children and young people, but this is at a very early stage.

91. The capacity of the council and its partners to deliver better outcomes for children and young people is adequate. There is strong leadership from the Director of Children and Education supported by the Chief Executive, politicians and a strong children and young people's trust board. Front-line staff are committed to delivering the partnership's ambitions. The council is building capacity to meet the children's agenda, but there is a significant shortfall in developed management capacity to deliver the required service improvements

and secure the necessary momentum for delivering an ambitious agenda. However, work has begun to address this and, although it is early in the process, some results can already be seen, particularly at middle management levels where existing skills are being used to develop further new service arrangements. Progress in developing an overarching workforce plan setting out how the council and partners will meet the objectives and priorities of the CYPP has been too slow, and a systematic workforce skills/gap analysis has not been fully completed. The council has, however, adopted a range of actions in order to tackle capacity issues in relation to the retention and recruitment of social workers, teachers and some support staff. Measures have included the use of targeted recruitment campaigns, a strong focus on in-house professional training and market enhancements for specific key posts. The council therefore does not currently have any serious staff shortages that could affect service delivery, although within the wider partnership shortages of occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and specialist nurses for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provide a challenge.

92. Capacity is being enhanced through good partnership working, including closer and more formalised arrangements with the voluntary sector. There are some examples of effective partnership and inter-agency working, including, the *Resolve* initiative, the multi-agency approach to domestic violence and the *No Worries* scheme for reducing teenage pregnancy. The relationship with schools has improved significantly. Staff are trained in the use of the CAF, but progress towards implementation has been slow and has been insufficiently used to jointly plan service delivery. The voluntary sector is being used well to build capacity in its role in managing the children's centres, the residential children's homes and the family centres and there is now very good involvement and representation. The partnership has been proactive in involving children and parents in designing new services, most notably the design of a youth centre in Warminster and the development of a website and an online radio station 'Sparksite' run by young people.

93. Current arrangements for service commissioning for children and young people are being developed. The children's trust partners plan to produce a commissioning framework for the trust board in January 2009 and it has embarked on re-commissioning tiers 3 and 4 CAMHS. There are limited examples of alignment or the pooling of budgets. The Children's Trust Board has made this the core activity of the children's partnership from autumn 2008.

94. The robustness of budget management and control is not consistent across the Department for Children and Education. Corrective action is being taken to deal with the projected overspends, for example to meet the high cost of independent placements; however, the council has significantly overspent in the social care placement budget for a number of years and there is a projected overspend on placements in 2007–08. These high spending services are limiting children's services' ability to divert resources to its emerging priorities and to respond to identified need, and are therefore a significant threat to the objectives of the partnership.

95. Services for children and young people represent adequate value for money. Costs are relatively low in most areas and in some key areas, such as reducing the numbers of schools causing concerns, investment has resulted in improved performance. However, improvements in service delivery and performance within some of the priority areas have been mixed and there are some services where the disparity between cost and performance has not been fully addressed. The council has delivered some improvement in cost and efficiencies in back office functions, but has been slow in taking action to improve value for money in areas of higher expenditure such as out-of-county and independent social care placements and services for pupils with special educational needs. There are a considerable number of schools carrying significant deficits and there has been some variability in the recovery planning process for schools in deficit. There also continues to be a large number of schools with surpluses. However, the council is taking the appropriate steps for schools with significant budget surpluses, most notably through its claw-back process. Benchmarking is used and comparative cost benchmarking through the LEAN review programme is becoming more widely applied. However, the culture of comparison is not fully embedded.

96. Performance management is adequate. There is an established corporate performance management and planning framework. The Department for Children and Education collects and analyses data on the services it provides and monitors its service performance against clearly identified performance indicators, through the quarterly reporting review process. Scrutiny arrangements within the partnership are developing with some good outcomes. There are examples of the partnership dealing with areas of underperformance, for example a reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training, but the rigour and robustness of the performance management by managers is inconsistent. The ownership and a wider understanding of performance management have not yet been achieved. There is variability in the quality of service plans and connections between service planning and financial planning are not yet fully integrated in all areas. This means that the Department for Children and Education cannot be sure that all staff are equally focused on delivering service, corporate and community priorities. The Director is currently and appropriately strengthening service planning objectives and targets to improve the rigour and challenge of the monitoring arrangements. There are examples of complaints and user feedback being used to inform and improve service delivery, but these are not systematic. Management information is not used consistently to manage performance and varies in quality.

97. Adequate progress is being made in developing performance management arrangements for the Children and Young People's Trust. However, SMART delivery plans are not consistently in place to enable the trust board to effectively project manage, for example the formulation of the partnerships workforce strategy.

98. The capacity to improve is currently adequate, with clear evidence that recent management action is galvanising services and increasing the pace of change. The Children and Young People's Partnership has made significant and rapid progress over the last 18 months and is working effectively with a clear commitment from all partners to deliver improvement for children and young people. It has successfully re-engaged with the health sector, following the severe financial crisis experienced by the three PCTs in 2005 and, from a very low base, the partnership has effectively rebuilt or strengthened its relationships with schools, the college and the voluntary sector. Wiltshire's impending move to unitary status coupled with a good children's plan that provides a clear vision and consensual aims and objectives has given the council the opportunity to introduce a new impetus to leadership and management and secured new momentum. The Director for Children and Education provides coherent and effective leadership. Political and corporate leadership are unequivocally supportive of the Director and are committed to improving outcomes for children and young people. Work is proceeding in a managed and measured way to ensure that best management and operational practice is firmly embedded, and there is a clear intention to strengthen the current shortfalls in management capacity and capability. The transformation of services for children and young people is an integral part of the work being undertaken to change structures and frameworks within the council as a whole. The Lead Member's roles and responsibilities are clear and there is a collective ownership by members, partners and the Director for Children and Education for the ambitious change agenda.

Annex A

MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN WILTSHIRE

Summary

Wiltshire County Council delivers services for children and young people which are above minimum requirements in four of the five outcome areas. The gap between the outcomes for most children and young people and those who are more vulnerable is decreasing in a number of areas. However, weaknesses in enjoying and achieving and the council's capacity to improve, including service management, mean that overall effectiveness is adequate. In these areas, the council is taking steps to improve provision and outcomes but some actions are at an early stage of implementation and others have yet to bring about desired improvements.

The full annual performance assessment can be found at:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=3131&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\apa_2007_865.pdf

Annex B: Summary of the enhanced youth inspection report

Main findings

1. The quality of youth provision in Wiltshire is adequate. Standards of young people's achievement are adequate as is the quality of practice. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well as do those involved in various strategic decision-making structures. The curriculum provides a balanced range of learning opportunities and is augmented through partnership working with statutory and voluntary organisations which contribute well to increasing the range of opportunities available. Premises are generally satisfactory and accessible. The youth development service has influenced the planning and delivery of other services for young people ensuring that more vulnerable young people receive appropriate support. A significant investment in mobile provision is helping engage more effectively young people in rural area. Opportunities provided for young people to be involved in decision-making at a strategic level are outstanding but this is not reflected in youth work locally where they are insufficiently involved in its planning and evaluation. Leadership and management are good; the local authority sufficiently secures provision for youth work. Strategic managers support youth work well and have established good performance measures which are regularly reviewed. Service planning is good overall but the pace of change is being impeded by weaknesses in the assessment of need and the largely historical allocation of resources. Young people and staff are provided with safe and healthy environments. At a time of increased expectations on the service there is no strategy to manage competing priorities. This, compounded by a budget which is below average, is putting pressure on the service's ability to carry out the local authority's' expectations in respect of its universal youth work provision.

Key aspect inspection grades

Key Aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	2
	Quality of youth work practice	2
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	2
3	Leadership and management	3

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale
4: excellent / outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate/satisfactory; 1: inadequate*

Strengths

- Opportunities for young people to engage in decision-making are outstanding.
- Provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.
- The good range of curriculum opportunities.
- Good partnership working contributes to improving opportunities for young people.
- Service planning is linked well to corporate priorities.

Areas for development

- Improve standards of achievement and quality of practice.
- Enable full-time workers to more effectively mentor and support front-line workers.
- Apply needs analysis more effectively in planning provision and in allocating resources.
- Put in place strategies to manage competing priorities in respect of short and long-term planning.

Annex C

SUMMARY OF JOINT AREA REVIEW AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors from Ofsted, the Healthcare Commission and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services*.

2. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Together with the annual performance assessment of children's services, joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being. This review explores these issues by focusing on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children who are looked after and children at risk or requiring safeguarding and a few additional investigations. It evaluates the collective contribution made by all relevant children's services to outcomes for these children and young people.

3. The review took place in two stages consisting of an analysis stage (where recorded evidence was scrutinised) and a two-week fieldwork stage (where inspectors met children and young people and those who deliver services for them).