

Support for Children's Services – Isle of Wight – Stage 2

Background

During January 2006, Mouchel Parkman and Outcomes UK carried out an initial investigation of the key issues facing the Council in terms of children's services. As agreed, this scoping work specifically focused on the following key areas:

1. Raising Educational Standards
2. Preparation for the Joint Area Review

The findings from the investigation will be shared with Cabinet during February. However, in order to maintain the momentum for change and to minimise the risk of further decline, there is some work which we believe should be undertaken immediately. This is as follows:

Work required

- a. Child protection and safeguarding vulnerable children
 - Capacity and morale issues in the team
 - Increased number of children on at risk register particularly children with disability
 - Critical area for the Council as identified through its risk management processes

There are issues around each of these bullet points and we will give further information on these in our final report. We believe the urgent and immediate issue is:

To ensure that child protection processes and procedures (including re-registrations) are robust and that the authority knows all of its vulnerable children, who they are and where they are.

Key outcomes

An audit which has made sure that the systems and processes are robust and that the Council knows who the children are, where they are and that all appropriate steps have been taken to ensure their safety and that such children are receiving at least the minimum support. This will be provided through five days professional support from Outcomes UK.

- b. School improvement and support for vulnerable schools
 - How robust school improvement procedures and systems are
 - Tools and skills to challenge schools appropriately
 - Support for governors

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We believe there are issues around all of these bullet points. More details will be given in final report. We believe the urgent and immediate issue is:

To support the Council to secure the attainment of year 11 pupils taking examinations in year 2006 and to ensure that all schools vulnerable to an immediate inspection are well prepared and that all schools causing concern have appropriate robust plans in place.

Key outcomes

Each high school would receive one visit to ensure that all strategies have been put in place to support year 11 performance (eg Easter schools, revision classes)

All schools who are vulnerable to inspection would have been visited to ensure that the self evaluation form is in place and is appropriate in terms of the schools assessment of its performance

This work would be completed alongside the Council's link inspectors thus supporting the internal capacity of the Council

A report will be available on each of the schools visited identifying any key issues and what steps need to be taken to resolve these

Ensuring that the Council has a complete and robust list of schools vulnerable to being at risk of being placed in either special measures or notice to improve categories

This support will be provided through 17 days professional support from Mouchel Parkman.

c. Data management

- How coherence is the approach across the directorate and council
- Whether this is based on a systematic analysis of requirement of needs
- Project management for the inscope project

We believe that there are issues around all of the above bullet points. More details will be given in the final report. We believe the urgent and immediate issue is:

To support the Council in ensuring that the data for the forthcoming Joint Area Review is robust and that suitable systems are in place to enable accurate data to be available on the performance of the schools and the directorate.

Key outcomes

An audit of data requirements of the Children's Services directorate will be completed. This will show any gaps in data that will need to be addressed to

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enable the Council to challenge its schools effectively and to ensure data is robust for the forthcoming joint area review.

This support will be provided through five days professional support from Mouchel Parkman.

Work during February- fees and costs

Type of work	Potential person	Number of days	Cost
Project Direction	Sally Withington	1	1300
Securing of child protection team	Seamus Jennings, Outcomes UK	5	5500
Support for vulnerable schools	Ian Gamble and Helen Cox	17	9800
Data Management – step one	Data analyst	5	4625
Project Management	Kate Reynolds	2	1175
Total (and average daily cost)	£975	30	£29260

Existing terms and conditions will apply as per the signed contract. Fees are based on the assumption that the Council will provide us with working accommodation and administrative support to set up, accommodate and facilitate a range of meetings with appropriate stakeholders and will provide us with the documents and data required to undertake our work at all stages.

The fee for the second phase will be £29,260 plus VAT with expenses charged in addition and at cost. Typically this is equivalent to 6-10% of costs.