

**REPORT FROM THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL ON
WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2015**

The last meeting of the children's select committee was held on 16 July 2015. The key areas examined were Early Years and Primary Places on the Island, safeguarding in relation to Language schools and an update on Children's Social Care Performance.

The information provided regarding Early Years and Primary Places suggested there were challenges in certain areas in relation to surplus capacity in primary Schools, but the situation was being monitored and there were no primary school closures being discussed. Concerns were raised surrounding the impact of turbulence on education and safeguarding but this resulted from national policy and there is little we can do. On the positive side, clear plans are in place to improve the take-up of eligible two-year old places as part of the Barnardos contract and progress is expected in this area.

Previously, the committee sought reassurance regarding concerns over safeguarding in language schools. These concerns were shared with the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) sub group of the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board (IOWSCB). The safeguarding arrangements of the four providers identified have now been investigated and whilst the single provider who responded was found to be compliant, the committee agreed further action was required in regard to the remaining three providers who cannot be contacted. These actions included supporting the Independent Chair of the IOWSCB in raising these safeguarding concerns with the Department of Education and seeking the assistance of the local MP in raising the issue at a national level. The independent school inspector, local authorities and any other relevant bodies where the schools headquarters were based would also be notified of the situation and asked for support.

Safeguarding remained a key theme and whilst members were satisfied there were robust protocols relating to babies and small children, they are currently reviewing information relating to the children themselves being able to raise concerns. Information relating to safeguarding training levels in Islands schools was also requested.

There was a positive update on the continued progress in children's services social care performance. The service had been upgraded from "inadequate" to "requires improvement" by Ofsted which is a substantial improvement and the department of education has stepped down the improvement board.

Finally, members were updated on the positive meeting between the committee and members of the schools forum which generated a number of discussion topics for the committees work plan.

The next meeting is on 19 November 2015. An initial performance report relating to the Barnardos 0-19 contract is expected and it is hoped there will have been positive progress in relation to safeguarding in Island language schools.

**Councillor Conrad Gauntlett
Chairman of Children's Services Select Committee**