

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 May 2007

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Children's Services Issues, SEN, Special Schools, Youth Service and Youth Offending Team)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PATMORE

Review of the Children and Young People's Plan and APA submission to Ofsted.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board was advised at its meeting in March about changes to the scope and purpose of the CYPP's review introduced by the DfES and OfSTED. The changes take immediate effect and combine the CYPP review with the Annual Performance Assessment (APA).

The CYPP is a partnership plan which was developed in accordance with statutory guidance as a local plan. It was underpinned by substantial Needs Analysis, out of which improvement objectives were identified. The plan sets out the Key Activities through which improvement will be pursued over the three year period, and set three year targets against which progress could be measured. It also included Year 1 Milestones for 2006 – 07 and specified the strategic plans maintained by a range of partners which provide the underpinning implementation strategies.

The APA is the process through which the Children's Service Authority (NYCC) is inspected and graded annually by OfSTED. The process involves externally validated self-assessment. The last APA for our area was done in 2005, followed by the Joint Area Review (JAR) for all partners last year. The APA takes account of exactly the same Key Judgements, PIs and Grade Descriptors as the JAR, but it makes judgements only about the CSA.

It was not a requirement for CYPPs to be co-terminous with the prescriptions for APA and JAR. Now that the revised plan and review document are to comprise the evidence base for the APA it has been necessary to align the two to a greater extent.

For APA purposes the revised CYPP and its review document must go to OFSTED by June 14. For our local partnership purposes, the review of progress and agreement to priorities for 2007–08 need to be signed off by the Executive of the Council in that timescale.

Missing Children

The Local Authority has in place procedures and systems to identify and track all children of statutory school age who are educated in the maintained sector, in order to ensure that children do not go missing from education. This information is coordinated with the national database in order to identify children who have moved from the county.

Other agencies working with children have been notified of the LA procedures and provided with a contact point for notification of children who do not have any educational provision.

Further development will link this work to the proposed 'Contact Point' national database, ensuring that educational information is maintained on all children and young people, including those in early years in the independent sector and in further education.

Safeguarding in Education

The LA Education Services are represented on the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Board at both county and local levels and have been fully involved in the transitional arrangements which have seen the board adapt to its new role from the earlier Area Child Protection Committee.

Training and support for all schools and settings is provided by the Education Social Work Service. This has included specific training for; Designated Teachers, whole school staff and independent settings and has included recruitment and selection, dealing with allegations and safe practice. The basic knowledge required by all staff has been addressed by the production of on line training, available through the NYSCB website, which is available to all members of staff and public and will be used as part of all staff induction. A Safeguarding in Education Group has undertaken an audit of safeguarding requirements across all areas of work and policy.

Inspection of Children's Homes

A report was presented to Executive Members on May 4th which provided an overview of the regulatory inspection of our children homes. The report highlights that five of six homes were given an overall service rating of Good, within a rating framework of poor, adequate, good or excellent. The remaining home received a

rating of Adequate which reflected a period where it worked outside its statement of purpose to meet the short term urgent needs of a young person. The positive messages from the inspections were that we provide a good quality service to children with positive outcomes. The homes are well managed, provide safe environments and have staff who are well qualified. Identified areas for development were to tackle some inadequacies within two buildings to meet specific functions. Overall the inspection reports reflected a service area which was well-regarded by the inspectorate.

YOT Inspection & Action Improvement Plan

North Yorkshire YOT was subject to a Joint Inspection led by HMI Probation in July 2006, the findings of which informed the Joint Area Review and Corporate Performance Assessment. The final report was published in December 2006. The Inspection focussed on 5 core areas of Youth Offending Team work, and the scoring in all 5 areas was 2, which judged the YOT as 'Adequate'. However, the report recognised that the YOT was going through a period of reshaping, that many required changes had already been identified and improvements implemented, and the Inspectors judged that the YOT overall was well placed to address the issues raised by the inspection.

In March 2007 the YOT Action Plan was approved by HMI Probation and progress will now be monitored by the Regional Youth Justice Board Manager. The Action Plan addresses key recommendations, including:

- improve staff training and development, including safeguarding awareness, assessment skills, induction;
- establish comprehensive policies, procedures and Service Level Agreements;
- address the current lack of Reparation and restorative justice opportunities;
- improve partnership working at an operational level;
- improve referral and access to mainstream and specialist provision, including Education, Training and Employment, CAMHS, satisfactory accommodation, and parenting interventions.

Each of the key recommendations is currently being progressed, supported by additional funding from NYCC and the Police.

Integrated Youth Support & Connexions Transition

There are currently two things taking place simultaneously - the development of Integrated Youth Support (IYS) and the transition of Connexions into the Local

Authority. Both of these need to take place within the context of the Integrated Services Strategy.

The key components of integrated youth support and development are:

- The delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) for all young people that meets the national IAG standards (not yet published).
- The provision of integrated targeted support for the most vulnerable young people referred to as Targeted Youth Support.
- The provision of positive activities related to the Education Act 2006 which places a duty on Local Authorities to provide sufficient positive leisure time activities in their area.

Whilst many of the organisations that will contribute to IYS have to target their resources at the 13 -19 age range it is felt that in North Yorkshire IYS should be targeted at 11-21 year olds (25 for those with special needs) who require additional support to that provided in the universal setting.

Furthermore, IYS should operate predominantly at the tier 2 (early intervention) level with overlap into tier 1 (universal services) as part of the preventative agenda and into tier 3 for the targeted youth support aspect of the service.

The delivery model will need to reflect the scope and principles set out above, relate to the Integrated Services' Strategy, maintain the work currently carried out by Connexions and meet the targets and performance measures set for IYS by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board.

The proposal currently being consulted on is to establish a mixed economy approach to the delivery of IYS across North Yorkshire. Some aspects would become directly delivered by North Yorkshire County Council and the remainder would be contracted out through a tendering and commissioning process.

The proposal is for there to be young people's centres located in each of the six Integrated Service Manager areas that will act as 'hubs' for the delivery of IYS. It is intended that where possible these young people's centres will be located in existing Connexions centres where these are deemed to be 'fit for purpose'. Where this is not possible alternative facilities will be sought, in partnership with other providers of IYS.

The young people's centres would be part of the direct delivery component of IYS and a resource for the provision of IYS by a wide range of partners. This change would have an impact on staffing arrangements with some staff being offered the opportunity to become directly employed by NYCC.

Connexions currently has a number of additional service level agreements and contracts with partners including the voluntary sector for the employment and

management of Personal Advisers. It is anticipated that these arrangements would be retained and strengthened to ensure that IYS is available to all communities not just where there are the IYS young people's centres.

The proposals and stakeholder responses to them will be reported to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board on 14 May 2007. Thereafter, detailed proposals will be taken to the Executive for formal approvals.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore
Executive Member for Children's Services

8 May 2007