

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 July 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

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN/
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

I explained in my last statement to County Council that OFSTED and the DfES had introduced new arrangements to combine the review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) with this year's Annual Performance Assessment (APA). This was a large and complicated task, but was delivered well and in good time, with good support from partners.

The review shows significant progress across the CYPP objectives for 2006/07, and it has tracked the impact of work, not just the activity. In particular, it shows good progress made since last year's Joint Area Review. This includes major improvement in Performance Management for Children's Social Care, with related improvements on a number of key indicators. We have also come a long way with implementation of the strategy for local, integrated services. We think that this may merit improved grades for Staying Safe (Grade 2 last year) and Capacity for Improvement (Grade 3 last year).

There has also been substantial work to maintain and improve further across all the outcomes because we know that this is essential if we are to retain a top grade in Enjoy and Achieve, and good grades elsewhere. Our aim over the next couple of years must clearly be to lift some of our current Grade 3s to Grade 4s so that we can become an outstanding Children and Young People's Service overall. At present we assess ourselves as a Good Children's Service overall (Grade 3).

We expect initial feedback from OFSTED in September, but final judgements will not be confirmed until November.

The revised CYPP sets out a positive set of priorities for 2007/08. It is a challenging workload, but there is good support from partners.

CARE MATTERS WHITE PAPER

The White Paper has been published recently for consultation. It sets out an ambitious agenda to improve services further for Looked After Children and to strengthen services to prevent children needing to become Looked After. We will be considering the issues in detail over the next few weeks and I will report to Members further.

PARENTING SUPPORT STRATEGY

At its meeting on 12 June 2007, the Executive agreed the terms of the Parenting Support Strategy for North Yorkshire and the process by which Improvement Plans will be developed across the county facilitated by Integrated Service Managers.

The strategy, prepared after full multi-agency consultation and consideration by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board (CYPSPB), defines purposes and principles and sets the work in a national and local context. It then defines an entitlement to services for parents within four different levels of need (which have previously been agreed by the CYPSPB and used to develop integrated locality teams and preventative work). Following audits of current activity, Improvement Plans will now be developed locally (facilitated by Integrated Service Managers) to ensure that eventually the entitlements are being delivered all across the county.

DEVELOPING INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT

At its meeting on the 12th June the Executive agreed the proposal for the development of Integrated Youth Support (IYS) which includes the transition of the Connexions Service into the Local Authority by April 2008. The proposed delivery model for IYS was established following consultation with key stakeholders including young people. It fits with the local integrated services strategy and meets national requirements for the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance, Targeted Youth Support and Positive Activities. The Executive supported the proposal with the recommendation that a further report be submitted at the end of July including financial information and further details of how statutory responsibilities will be met.

YOUTH SERVICE PLAN 2007-08 AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION 2006-07

The Youth Work Plan for 2007-08 sets out a very positive Programme to extend Youth Work opportunities more consistently across the County. We are similarly concerned to ensure comparable quality of Youth Work countywide. With this in mind we have looked carefully at the improvements in the management information systems and practice which is now in place. This is a very promising step forward. It will enable us to target our improvement work and investment in a well-informed way. This includes being clear about performance under the BVPIs by which performance is assessed nationally.

INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S HOMES

Following National Care Standards our six Children's Homes are inspected twice a year, previously by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and now by OFSTED. The inspections report on, and score our services in categories following the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

Within the last twelve months all our homes have received an overall quality rating of good, within a framework of poor, adequate, good or excellent. Further to this there were a number of specific areas of practice which were judged to be excellent. Those areas included the number of staff qualified to NVQ 3 and relationships between staff and young people. We understand that this gives us a positive comparative rating.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY TRIBUNAL MONITORING

We have considered our annual report on the monitoring of appeals to the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) for the academic year 2005-06.

The total number of appeals to SENDIST has increased substantially from 13 in 2004-05 to 30 in 2005-06. However, the level of appeals in North Yorkshire remains below the national average.

Due to regular monitoring of the number of tribunals lodged, the increase in appeals registered was identified mid-way through the year and discussed with all the various services involved.

The rate of increase has subsequently settled down and a careful eye is being kept on the numbers for this year which to date number 18 but could rise to 20 by August.

Detailed analysis of the cases shows no predominant or single pattern in the types of issues involved.

PRIVATE FOSTERING

Concern has been raised nationally about the numbers of children who are privately fostered. Due to the large number of Forces families in North Yorkshire, we believe there may be a number of children in private care. We are working with our partners in health, schools and social care to locate these children. He will be reporting to Children and Young People's Executive in due course.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DATABASE

Good progress is being made in North Yorkshire on arrangements for commissioning the systems needed to support this national requirement. We are also making good progress with the inter-agency agreements to share information on which the system depends. Staff training programmes are also well-developed, although it is a big task and will continue for some time.

**County Councillor Caroline Patmore
Executive Member for Children's Services**

9 July 2007