

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 February 2008

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

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PATMORE

Special Educational Needs Policy Access to Education for Children with Medical Needs Policy

Both policies are statutory requirements. They have been drafted following consultation with interested parties and have been approved by the Executive.

The SEN Policy updates the previous document and is in line with the principles which already underpin the SEN and Behaviour Review. It also incorporates the principles and expectations which apply to the work of mainstream schools on Special Educational Needs. The Policy breaks no new ground, therefore, but it is an important part of our accountability framework.

The Policy on Access to Education for Children with Medical Needs is new as a formal policy statement, though it reflects existing practice and levels of entitlement to provision. Its purpose is to provide greater clarity about children's entitlements to support when they are ill, and about where responsibilities lie. This is important because individual cases are very varied. It provides greater transparency for parents and carers.

Progress on Implementation of Phase 1 of the SEN/Behaviour Review

Most of the new specialist mainstream provisions have been identified. Work is being undertaken with them to determine requirements and to ensure that all preparations are made. The 3 year capital programme 2008-2011 will include the Review as a priority area for allocation. The Local Authority's staffing structures for the 4 Networks of provision are currently out to consultation with affected staff. The intention is to have senior staff in post by September 2008. Work continues to locate a second residential special school for Behaviour. Sites in Northallerton and Skipton have been ear marked for Pupil Referral Units and resources have been allocated to them with the agreement of the Schools Forum. A site for the Selby PRU has yet to be located, but work continues on that.

Awarding of the contract for the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance to schools and colleges.

Following stakeholder consultation and a rigorous procurement process the contract for the delivery of information, advice and guidance to schools and colleges as part of the wider Integrated Youth Support service provision has been awarded to igen.

igen is a 'not for profit' company delivering public services for young people and adults, including Connexions services in Leeds and Northumberland, and Learning and Skills Council programmes such as e2e across the north of England.

The contract will commence on 1st April 2008 with the current service provision being maintained throughout the remainder of the school year. Further to consultation with schools and colleges service changes that are agreed will be implemented in September 2008.

Children and Young People's Bill

The Bill is taking forward the proposals in "Care Matters" to improve services and outcomes for children and young people in local authority care and for those on the edge of care. I am grateful to Members who attended the seminar on 11 February which looked in more detail at the proposals in the North Yorkshire context. The implications for policies, practice and provision will be considered in the next few months and will inform the new Children and Young People's Plan as our strategy for improvement.

Proposals to strengthen the voice and influence of young people in care are central to the Bill. We are working closely with young people to assist them in developing proposals for their Children in Care Council, which will need strong and direct links to myself as Lead Member, to the Director and to both the Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. The young people see this as a very positive development for them, and it will enhance our work on their behalf.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore
Executive Member for Children's Services

CW/BAW
7 February 2008

CCbriefcpFeb2008/1