

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 May 2010

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Children's Services Issues, children's services, special educational needs, and youth justice)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PATMORE

Safeguarding and Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan

We continue to make good progress on all aspects of the Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan. Members will know from another item on the agenda that new arrangements for Corporate Parenting have been established in the form of the Members Group for Looked After Children, and it will be reporting to Council annually about its work and the work of the Council and partners in pursuit of better outcomes for this group of young people.

We have an active recruitment campaign to fill vacancies for Assessment and Safeguarding Social Workers, most of which are posts newly created last year and this year to increase our frontline capacity. Members know that there is a national shortage of such staff and every possible avenue is being explored to increase our chances of securing good quality, newly qualified or experienced staff. These measures include regional cooperation with other Local Authorities.

Pressure on frontline services continues, with continued increased numbers of children with Child Protection Plans and those coming through into the Looked After system. The latter continues to put pressure on relevant budgets though these are very carefully and actively managed.

Good progress is being made to improve the reliability of the Integrated Children's System and also to make changes to the programme so that it is a more useful tool for frontline practitioners.

Review of Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs and Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

The County Council consulted on the future of specialist provision for children and young people with special educational needs and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties during summer 2006. This included proposals to close Netherside Hall School from July 2010.

The Governing Body of Netherside Hall School wrote to the Local Authority in December 2009 supporting, in principle, the closure of the school with effect from August 2011. Given the extent of refurbishment work required at Forest Moor to adapt the site, it is unlikely that this work will be completed by that time. The timescale for the proposed closure for Netherside Hall School has therefore been moved to August 2012 as the new school will be likely to be the alternative provision for some displaced pupils. The proposals are now out to public consultation, which will close on 18 June 2010. Responses to the consultation will be considered by Executive later that month.

As part of the Review of SEN/BESD provision, the County Council also consulted on proposals to make new provision for:

- 5 enhanced primary schools for Communication and Interaction
- 7 enhanced primary schools for Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
- 7 enhanced secondary schools for Specific Learning Difficulties
- 5 enhanced secondary schools for High Functioning Autism/Asperger Syndrome

From January 2010 most of these Enhanced Mainstream Schools have begun to accept referrals from neighbouring mainstream schools and to provide outreach support for high need pupils.

The County Council is currently consulting on proposals to offer “in-reach” support for some children from local schools. This could be by taking pupils onto the roll of the school or by providing a temporary placement where the child will remain on roll at his or her local school but receive support for a fixed period at the Enhanced Mainstream School.

Consultation on these proposals was due to end in April but this consultation period has been extended to 18 June in order that a wider range of organisations, particularly those voluntary organisations representing the special educational needs that the Enhanced Mainstream Schools will serve, can express their views.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore
Executive Member for Children’s Services