

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**18 FEBRUARY 2015****STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER****COUNTY COUNCILLOR TONY HALL****Medium Term Financial Strategy & 2020 North Yorkshire**

The Children and Young People's Service has continued to meet its savings targets. The scale of budget savings required – and achieved to date, whilst maintaining and on occasions enhancing service delivery, has been a significant challenge. The objective has been to protect front-line services as much as possible, thus enabling a restructured Directorate to operate effectively across its universal, preventative, targeted and acute service responsibilities, in line with legislation.

We are now coming to the end of the original MTFs a period of four years in which, the Directorate will have made savings of over £20m. As members will be aware, the Council faces continuing work to deliver a balanced budget over the period 2015-19 and the Directorate has made a robust start to delivering its part of the collective programme. 2015-16 will see the implementation of some major transformation programmes, as are outlined in the budget report, including the review of Preventative Services and a new way of delivering school improvement.

This information appears in the Statements to Council for both Executive Members for the Children and Young People's Service as this reflects our joint responsibility for all relevant resources.

Looked After Children

At the end of quarter three there were 446 looked after children, 27 (6%) lower than at the same time the previous year. This is the sixth consecutive quarter in which the number of looked after children has decreased. The number of looked after children over the last nine months has been consistently lower than at any time in the period April 2011 to December 2013. This reflects the intention of the service and directorate safely to reduce the care population to below 400. Historically, the rate of looked after children is much lower in North Yorkshire than that observed nationally, or across similar authorities. At March 2014, North Yorkshire had the 22nd lowest rate of looked after children across 152 local authorities and, given the continued reduction in the number of looked after children, it is likely that similar performance will be reported at the end of the current year.

At the end of quarter three, 178 young people had been looked after for more than two and a half years, of which 117 (65.7%) had been in the same placement for two years or more. This is broadly in line with similar authorities and national performance. Performance over the last three quarters may indicate an emerging trend of improving performance. In quarter three, 37 out of 446 looked after children (8.3%) had three or more placements in the previous year, which is better than the last known national and statistical neighbours' performance.

In the year to date 91% of reviews for looked after children have been conducted on time with 82% of looked after children participating in that review. 91% of LAC children have had their immunisations completed with 89.4% having had an eye test completed. Performance against these important indicators continues to improve quarter on quarter.

Children's Social Care Performance

In Quarter three, the number of referrals to Children's Social Care has decreased for the second consecutive quarter, reflecting the introduction of the new multi-agency screening team which is based in the Contact Centre. All contacts are now screened by this team and only those meeting the Children's Social Care threshold progress to a referral. Contacts not meeting the threshold are either picked up by Early Help services or receive immediate advice and guidance.

The impact of this new team is reflected in the performance around referrals progressing to initial assessments with almost 97% of referrals now progressed to an initial assessment in Quarter three. This represents a significant improvement in performance, when compared against previous quarters and is in excess of the 80% agreed target. Fifty per cent more initial assessments were completed in quarter three than in the same quarter last year and this is the third quarter that assessment work in social care has significantly increased. Despite the increase in demand in initial assessments, the timeliness of completion of both Initial and Core assessments remains above that of the national average and the average for similar authorities.

The number of children with a child protection plan has risen for the fourth successive quarter. This represents the highest number of children subject to a child protection plan observed in the last 24 months and is 28% higher than the same quarter last year. Again despite the increase in the number of plans, 98% of reviews have taken place on time. This is excellent performance and is above both national and similar authorities' performance.

Children being placed on a repeat child protection plan has again fallen and represents the lowest rate of second or subsequent plans since the end of quarter one 2013/14. This reflects improving practice in terms of ensuring effective planning and intervention to deliver positive, sustainable change for children.

DfE Innovation Project – No Wrong Door launch

The "No Wrong Door" Project, which secured £2.15 million of additional funding through the Department for Education innovation fund, is now working towards implementing two 'No Wrong Door hubs', with our two children's homes at the centre. They will improve and increase targeted edge of care interventions (maintaining more young people and adolescents at home) and improve stability in care for our hardest to reach and engage young people.

A multi-agency strategic project board will support the delivery, success and long-term sustainability of the project. Key current areas of work include designing new ways of working, recruitment of key staff, community families, identifying supported lodgings and putting in place the structures and training to support managers and staff within the new model. The Children's Minister, Edward Timpson MP, continues to champion the project and will launch the local programme on 26 February. Further information on the project can be found by contacting Martin Kelly, Head of Residential/Leaving Care Provision.

Celebrating success

I am sure you will all join me in congratulating the children's social care service, who recently won "Best Social Work Employer of the Year" at the Social Worker of the Year awards. The judges were particularly impressed with the way the team have transformed a service into one that is recognised as excellent and a benchmark for others to follow. The service has changed their social work practice, putting in place an ambitious new workforce strategy, with the focus very much around the needs of young people and their frontline social workers in North Yorkshire. This involved investment in new social work teams and roles, including the employment of more senior professionals to support newly qualified staff, a real

investment in staff development. This award builds on the success of the Ofsted inspection last year where services were rated as 'Good' in all judgements.

Implementation of the Prevention Service

Progress has continued well with the implementation of the new Prevention Service, one of the largest 2020 savings proposals, which will deliver £3.2million savings from April 2015 whilst providing an all-age, local area based service alongside our newly commissioned Healthy Child teams. Most appointments have now been made and teams are now starting to form. There is much to do in very practical ways to establish the teams across the county and I am confident the service is fully engaged with this. Because many staff have moved out of posts in the service during the course of the review period, some universal youth work has already migrated naturally to being supported by the voluntary sector, and we are working closely with North Yorkshire Youth on a case by case basis, involving local Members as appropriate.

Developing Stronger Families update

As at 31st December 2014, North Yorkshire had worked with a total of 879 families under DSF, exceeding the 845 families to be engaged under this initiative and we had successfully "turned around" 76.6% of our 845 target.

Due to its success in Phase 1, North Yorkshire has been selected by DCLG as an early starter for Phase 2 of the Troubled Families programme. Under phase 2 we have a target of 2830 families during the five years of this next phase. The new expanded programme retains the current programme's focus on school attendance, youth crime, anti-social behaviour and unemployment. However, it will also reach out to families with a broader range of problems, including those affected by domestic violence and abuse, with younger children who need help, those with young people who are Not in Education or Training (NEET) or at risk of NEET and households with a range of physical, substance misuse and mental health problems.

The new programme also brings in an HM Treasury approved cost savings calculator which will show the effectiveness of interventions and the benefits of this work to local services, partners and the taxpayer.

Consultation on a draft strategy to meet the social care needs of disabled children, young people and their families.

Approval has been given to public consultation on a draft strategy. The consultation will conclude on 11 March, 2015. It will be considered by the Executive in May following consideration by the Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April.

The Council has a 2020 NY target saving for budgets relating to disabled children and young people and their families of £887k. The draft strategy emphasises support and provision which is personalised; a reduction in bureaucracy; greater targeting of provision and reductions in the cost of some individual packages of social care support; significant improvements in preparation for adulthood, and within a budget which would be reduced by 16.6%.

The draft strategy proposes additional investment for a fixed period in some parts of social care provision in order to build capacity to make significant changes and improvements, and also to achieve longer term sustainable savings. In particular, there would be investment in the recruitment of more foster carers to provide overnight short breaks for families, which would enable the closure of one of the children's resource centres in three years' time, either The Ghyll at Skipton or Morton-on Swale, Northallerton.

The draft strategy highlights the need for the community and voluntary sector, with some support from the Council, to further develop local support for families across all parts of the county.

Adult Learning and Skills Service

The Adult Learning and Skills Service was inspected by Ofsted under the Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills w/c 3rd November 2014. The overall outcome was a grade 2 (good). This outcome reflects the work that has been undertaken over the previous 18 months to move the service from a grade 3 (requires improvement). There are actions which need to be undertaken to further improve the service and these are primarily to improve the apprenticeship and employer engagement offer and to continue to support and develop teachers and assessors.

County Councillor Tony Hall, Executive Member for Children's Services

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – MEMBERS GROUP
ANNUAL STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN

31 January 2015

Purpose of the Report

1. This report is the Annual Statement (2014) from the Chairman of the Looked After Children's Members Group (LACMG).

Background and Context

2. Corporate parenting places a collective responsibility and accountability on Local Authorities to achieve good parenting for all children and young people in their care.
3. Good corporate parenting means that all the needs of children in care are met to the highest standard possible. It requires ownership and leadership at a senior level with a central principle that every elected member and every employee within North Yorkshire along with partner agencies should seek the same outcomes for the children in our care as they would for their own children.

The LACMG

4. The LACMG comprises 9 County Councillors and a representative from the voluntary sector. It acts as a reference group and "sounding board" to the Lead Member for Children & Young Peoples Service; County Councillor Tony Hall. As a group we not only monitor and analyse all aspects of the Council's responsibilities as a corporate parent but also champion the role and the responsibilities of elected Members as corporate parents.
5. During 2014 we met on 4 occasions.
6. The beginning of the year thrust us into the hurly burly of an Ofsted inspection. We were delighted that the overall result was "Good", not least because there was a uniform grading of "Good" throughout all areas. This placed us as one of the highest achieving authorities in the country.
7. We were pleased to see that the contribution made by Elected Members was noted by the Inspector and a regular topic on our agenda – issues surrounding health and dental checks, had also been mentioned in the report as being improved.

8. Members of the group attended a 45 minute interview with the Inspector. The difficult question was “what difference has the LAC MG made”? The almost impossible question was “what evidence do you have to identify that you have made this difference”?
9. Mindful that to make a difference takes time and to evidence this takes even longer, we were keen to build on this result and asked for a post inspection debriefing so that we could put in place the seeds to reap at the next Ofsted inspection.
10. Health reports have shown a marked improvement but we felt that we could improve this further if we asked for a report on why looked after children were unwilling to undergo health and dental checks. This was set as a task for the Young People’s Council (YPC) however on scrutinising the results; it drew attention to the low numbers completing the survey and membership of YPC in general. The Group received an interesting report on membership of the YPC and we explored the possibilities of Members feeding into the YPC through electronic communication methods to overcome problems which mainly revolved around transport issues and time required out of school or work.
11. Members continue to be involved in Regulation 33 Inspections with officers across the five North Yorkshire County Council residential children’s Homes. At every meeting we discuss and share ideas on what we have learned from our inspections with a view to promoting best practice across homes. Members noted improvements this year after some turbulent incidents during 2013/14.
12. The LAC MG supported the bid for the innovative funding for “no wrong door” and were very pleased to see the £2m grant secured. Hand in hand with the policy to reduce numbers of looked after children comes the aim to increase numbers of foster carers and reduce care home placement. We saw “no wrong door” being a vital piece in this policy direction.
13. The LACMG regularly receives “pen pictures” of individual cases as a way of really understanding what it feels like to be a looked after young person and living within a complex family situations.
14. Key issues we are currently looking at include:
 - Educational attainment of looked after children.
 - Management of the Pupil Premium.
 - Quarterly statistics.
 - Education and training given to Councillors so we can be even more effective as corporate parents.
 - Ways to improve Member reporting of Regulation 33 visits so that best practice can be shared more easily.

Conclusions

15. We intend to continue our work in monitoring the service provision and outcomes for looked after children highlighting any areas for improvement to relevant officers and the Executive Member whilst also raising the profile of the role of the corporate parent. At every opportunity we will remind County Councillors that it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure our looked after children and young people have the best possible care and are given the best possible life chances. It is not just the responsibility of the LAC Members Group.
16. It was extremely encouraging that Ofsted was able to conclude last year that "Council Members show an improved and good understanding of their corporate parenting responsibilities including for children placed out of area".
17. This is a clear recognition of the efforts of all County Councillors and I am confident that the LACMG can help us to improve even further.

County Councillor Janet Sanderson
Chairman – Looked After Children – Members Group

January 2015

REPORT FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHAMPION FOR 2014/15

Responsible Councillor Janet Sanderson

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Annual Report for North Yorkshire County Council on the activities of the Young People's Champion for the year 2014/15.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note and approve the report and request a further report in 12 months on the activities of the Young People's Champion.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The County Council appointed me to the role of Young People's Champion at their council meeting on 15th May 2013. This is my second annual report.
- 3.2 Last year I involved myself in a wide variety of activities concerning young people to familiarise myself with what as a council we delivered and how it was done. This year I have continued to support, champion and follow all aspects of work involving young people.

4.0 Activities of the Young Person's Champion over the last year

- 4.1 Despite the difficult budget situation, I have a very positive outlook on the services we provide to young people. There is a lot of excellent work taking place, for example, the very user friendly plan "Young and Yorkshire" was launched in September, and "The Promise" which gives us the delivery mechanism for the plan, is undergoing its finishing touches and will follow in the very near future.
- 4.2 A golden thread running through "Young and Yorkshire" is the importance of the voice of young people feeding into all aspects of the Council's work. Our young people today are masters of communication and following on from my report last year I have made it something of a mission to ensure that the way we enable young people to feed into policy making is where possible, in ways that suit them.

4.3 In July 2012 a task group drawn from the Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (YP O&SC) published its report on Youth Participation. My work over the last year set against key themes identified in the report is as follows:

- **Communication**

Nothing beats a face to face meeting and for young people in very rural areas this interaction is an important aspect of youth work. Transport for young people in a rural area is a problem and I have been concerned that this affects numbers attending meetings. To overcome this issue, we have experimented with electronic link-ups. This has not been an immediate success but in this electronic age it is clear that we are on the cusp of a breakthrough – young people are of course there ahead of us, but we must take the security aspects of electronic communication very seriously and unfortunately for the moment, this can present us with more problems than it solves.

I have also experimented with a community facebook forum to encourage the interaction of young people with council and community work at ward level. This is in its infancy but gathering momentum. It has drawn to my attention a whole new cyber speak scenario. I regularly meet a young volunteer but she is hardly able to speak to me in person; however several times a week she drops me a line through Facebook. I have so far managed without a translator, but this is difficult when messages read “K” “KK” “ows u”! Ultimately, I have a young person communicating with me in a way she is comfortable with and I consider this to be a result. She has found a channel through which she is able to make her views known to the council and work very successfully as a volunteer within the community. Perhaps this also went some way towards giving her the confidence to speak on Radio York last December.

- **Internet safety**

Internet safety follows on from many of the issues I have discussed above under Communications. At the beginning of the year I was involved with the YP O&SC when it looked at on-line safety. The report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed the work which linked into the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board (NYSCB). The Annual E safety day at Newby Wiske was an excellent collaboration between NYCC, NYSCB, Police and of course the stars were the presentations given by pupils attending our North Yorkshire schools. A follow up was given by Will Shaw (NYSCB) at the YP O&SC mid cycle briefing in December.

- **Voice of the vulnerable**

These powerful communication tools are very valuable to some of our vulnerable young people. In October I saw this to full effect when I had lunch with the Flying High group. One of the topics discussed was regarding the adaption of the NYCC web site to accommodate the needs of young people with problems. This was an inspirational group full of creative ideas which offered us simple effective solutions to the challenges they faced.

As chairman of the Looked After Children Members Group (LAC MG), I have continued to work closely with our children in care and the Young Peoples Council. I have continued to visit our residential homes and completed Regulation 33 visits. The C-Days have also been a very relaxed way of picking up feedback from this group.

- **Yorkshire's Young Champions**

2014 was a record breaking year for young people taking up official positions on our North Yorkshire councils. Ryedale District Council elected Luke Ives aged 22 to be Chairman of the Council and later, Rosie Corrigan became mayor of Selby.

I saw this as an opportunity and began work with Luke to revive the Ryedale Youth Council and to open a dialogue with Rosie about the Selby Youth Council. Later this year we will see the restructuring of the youth service and if our youth councils are to continue to thrive, it is essential that they move into this phase from a strong position.

- **District Youth Debates**

2014 also saw the second year of our District Youth Debates. We were able to move them up a notch to end in a grand "Debate Off" in the NYCC council chamber. These debates are a useful tool for raising awareness of council issues, bringing our young people into our district as well as county council and feeding the young people's voice back into council work. I am delighted that we now have the support of Pete Dwyer and our chairman to continue and progress these debates.

- **Safeguarding / Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

The Young People's Champion has a useful role to play as an intermediary in dealing with Safeguarding issues and this year I have had a small number of incidents raised.

Of course the Jay report detailing CSE in Rotherham has been at the forefront of everyone's mind and we have all watched the unfolding of similar situations in other authorities with great concern.

And so, I finish where I began with "communication" and my facebook friend that starts her texts with "KK". If we do not give children and young people the mechanism to communicate within their comfort zone, what hope do we have of understanding the traumas they may be trying to relate to us?

5.0 Future developments

- 5.1 The future of services to young people and in particular the Youth Service is undergoing considerable change and I would like to see the remit of the Young Peoples Champion adapt to this change.

5.2 The champion roles have no directorate boundary so enable us to look at the grey areas and seams joining services which are always the places to watch when the council is put under financial pressure.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 North Yorkshire has seen a huge payback this year for our investment in young people. It takes time as well as investment to enable our young people to reach positions held by the likes of Luke and Rosie. Along with championing the cause of our vulnerable young people, I will do all that is possible to ensure there are future opportunities for our gifted children to pursue their talents in whatever discipline they show aptitude.

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