

North Yorkshire County Council**18 February 2015****Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Chairman's Statement**

My Chairman's statement for this full Council includes details of the Committee meeting on 30 January 2015. The main points I would like to highlight from the meeting are as follows.

Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey 2014

We received a comprehensive report on the outcomes of the Growing Up in North Yorkshire Survey 2014. There are clearly areas where the statistics are encouraging and indicate improvement from the last survey two years ago; for example the findings from Years 6, 8 and 10 pupils which show an increase in the number of pupils reporting that they never drink alcohol and the high numbers of Year 2 children (72%) who report that they know how to stay safe online.

However, some areas revealed less positive findings. These included a sharp increase in low-level negative behaviour (such as name calling and pushing) experienced at school by Year 6 pupils both in and out of the classroom. Additionally, Members were concerned that students in Years 8 and 10 do not feel they are given enough information and guidance to help them in their transition to further or higher education or on to the world of work. We heard that since careers advisory provision has only been in schools for 2 years, insufficient focus has as yet been put on this important work. We understand that further work will be undertaken to improve the situation. It was reassuring to hear that further work will be done through CYPS to target this important area of provision.

Members were keen to emphasise the importance of momentum and moving forward as a result of the survey findings, particularly in areas such as e-safety, drug and alcohol-taking where the survey highlighted some worrying trends but where there is also much effective partnership underway to tackle such issues and where improvements can be seen.

Growing Up as a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender Young Person in North Yorkshire

This report drew on data taken from the above survey (see also above) around the particular experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people in North Yorkshire, as well as those of the Harrogate LGBT youth group.

This was an illuminating but very stark report, highlighting that the majority of LGBT young people are having a more negative experience in the county than their peers. This relates to their time at school, ability to achieve, their engagement in risky behaviours and their emotional and mental health. For example, 41% of LGBT young people in Year 10 have been bullied at or near school in the last year as against 17% of other young people in the same age bracket. Additionally, 54% of Year 10 LGB girls have self-harmed in the last year as opposed to 16% of other Year 10 girls.

Maintaining LGBT youth support groups, such as those in Harrogate and Scarborough, is clearly vital for these young people and it was reassuring to hear from both senior officers in

CYPS and from the voluntary sector representatives to the Committee that there is a commitment to continue working in partnership to offer targeted provision. It was also highlighted that there is work underway through CYPS which is looking at self-harm and engaging with schools to ensure that appropriate support is provided through mental health services.

We agreed key recommendations for raising awareness in schools and with professionals, ensuring that LGBT young people continue to have a 'voice' and that their views form part of broader strategic planning for young people. In addition, though, Members agreed to set up a smaller task and finish group to work closely with CYPS officers to see if any additional value can be brought by Members of the Committee to this important issue. We look forward to hearing how the work of the group develops over the coming months.

Prevention Service Review

We received a progress update on the prevention service review.

We heard that the appointment process to the new staffing structures is well advanced. There have, unfortunately, also been 120 redundancies as part of this process although not all of these are full-time staff and this has been a necessary part of coming out of direct provision of universal youth services and bringing about a more targeted way of working.

We also heard about the consultations that have been underway and that are yet to take place across the county around reducing Children's Centre services available.

The Healthy Child Programme has been re-commissioned and we noted that Harrogate and District Foundation Trust has been awarded the main contract. Unfortunately a provider of appropriate quality has not been found for provision of the healthy lifestyle service so CYPS are developing a specialist in-house service to take this forward. NYCC is working closely with the Department of Health on the move of the 0 to 5-year Healthy Child Programme to NYCC in October 2017.

It was pleasing to hear that the excellent work done by staff within the service in re-commissioning the Healthy Child Programme has earned them a place on the shortlist for the Local Government Chronicle awards.

We look forward to receiving a further detailed report at the next meeting when the service is fully operational.

Draft Strategy for Meeting the Social Care Needs of Disabled Children, Young People and their Families

We were presented with details of the consultation currently underway on a draft strategy to meet the care needs of disabled children, young people and their families. The strategy is a response to the £887k target saving to be met within the 2020 North Yorkshire programme. We heard that the strategy aims to be forward-looking for disabled children, whilst still reducing costs and managing within reduced resources.

We discussed in some detail the proposal to reduce residential short breaks for families and increase family-based overnight accommodation through domiciliary care or with foster carers. It was acknowledged that there would be a need to increase the number of foster carers available to support the particular needs of disabled children. It was reassuring to hear that the CYPS have changed the spending profile for the Fostering Service to help

respond to this need and to ensure that there are sufficient carers in place to deal with this increased provision.

The consultation will end on 11th March and we have asked to receive a further report at our next meeting on 17th April 2015 to share its results.

Home to School and College Transport: Savings Proposals

We also received a report on another consultation underway to remove two areas of discretionary provision from the home to school and college transport policy. This aims to meet a target saving for the 2020 programme by focussing in on statutory provision.

The proposals focus on limiting free transport for children aged 8 to 11 who live more than 3 miles from their normal or catchment school. It appears that free transport will be removed for those pupils who are at a critical stage of their secondary education, who move house, but wish to remain at the same school at which they started GCSE courses.

All Members expressed concerns about the potential impact of these proposals, particularly on those families who had previously been able to rely on the free provision. I personally believe that cuts which threaten the ability of any child or young person to get to school or college for her/his education are unacceptable.

We look forward to a report on the situation at our next meeting.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

There has been some comprehensive scoping work done on this issue within CYPS which was presented to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) in September 2014 and also shared at the mid-cycle briefing meeting of the Committee in December 2014. The practice of FGM is generally hidden and as such is difficult to identify or estimate accurately. However, estimates based on Yorkshire and Humber figures would suggest that between 0.4% and 2.8% of children under 18 years of age are at risk of FGM within the county.

FGM has been identified as a priority for the LSCB who have set up a task and finish group to take some further work forward around this. This will include increasing awareness of FGM and improving guidance for professionals. We will continue to monitor this issue and the work being taken forward at future meetings of the Committee.

County Councillor Elizabeth Shields

Chairman Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

February 2015