

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****11 NOVEMBER 2015****STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER****COUNTY COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON****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 cuts required – and achieved to date, whilst maintaining service levels, 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. Although the Directorate is facing emerging pressures in some of the higher need budgets, such as Special Home to School Transport and Disabled Children's Services, we are on track to achieve the savings and transformation projects agreed by Council.

2015-16 sees the implementation of some major transformation programmes, 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.

**Children in Care - No Wrong Door**

The No Wrong Door service commenced in April 2015, after being the first nationally to successfully bid for and receive DfE funding around 'rethinking care for adolescents'. Since then the service has recruited to almost all of its roles and has a range of placements, services and support in place for the hardest to reach, engage and place. The model was developed to provide effective support through wrapping services around the young person with a seamlessly coordinated and responsive approach. It aims to reduce vulnerabilities and risky behaviours and in doing so gives young people a significantly improved chance for their future. In its first year the programme is clearly showing improved outcomes for young people, with improved relationships, stable care placements and reduced offending. The service helps break the cycle for this group of vulnerable young people and has now locally established nationally-recognised expertise in this field of adolescent care. It benefits from strong leadership and has been approached by many other local authorities indicating real interest in replicating the service. The service is being evaluated by Loughborough University who are keen to develop a national cost calculator for edge of care work from the service we are delivering.

The model is centred on two hubs in the county (one in Scarborough and one based in Harrogate) which are designed to replace all traditional council run children's homes in North Yorkshire. Support can continue past that in traditional residential models with keyworkers 'sticking with' young people up to 25 if need be. This affords them better security and support as they move into independence. The programme is already contributing towards the reduction of looked after children reducing from 468 to 445 in the last quarter. No Wrong Door has recently attracted the praise of Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner, when she visited North Yorkshire, saying our model was ambitious and pioneering.

## **North Yorkshire in finals for the Children & Young People Now and Social Worker of the Year awards**

The transformational approach to residential and edge of care work described above has been shortlisted in the Social Work of the Year Awards for creative and innovative social work practice. As well as the “No Wrong Door” programme, North Yorkshire County Council have also been nominated for Children and Young People Now Awards in these key areas:

- Youth Justice Award (Youth Justice Service Youth Communications Team - a radical approach to provide all-round support for young people with Speech, Language & Communication Needs within YJS, residential schools and Pupil Referral Units.)
- Partnership Working Award (North Yorkshire Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) Delivery Group - a multi-agency LGBT delivery group established to ensure the needs of LGBT young people are being met.)
- Family Support Award and Partnership Working Award (School to School Transfer: Army Drawdown Support through a multi-agency project working with pupils, parents and school leaders as Europe’s largest garrison undergoes massive troop movement due to the Army Basing Plan).

We wish them all well at the awards ceremonies in London on 26 and 27 November.

### **Children’s Social Care Performance**

Children’s Social Care performance continues to be impressive across the entire range of indicators as we seek to ensure children are kept safe and families are given wherever possible access to the help they need.

In the context of continued high numbers of contacts, 4,080 in quarter two, performance shows that they have been rapidly screened in order that families are receiving the right support, at the right time. The increased number of new cases opened by the new 0-19 Prevention Service, alongside more effective screening of contacts, has led to the number of referrals to Children’s Social Care falling to the lowest level for at least the last four years in two quarters (1,057). The effectiveness of the initial screening processes is demonstrated by the fact that 94.9% of referrals then go on to now have an initial assessment completed. .

In quarter two, the number of children in care fell to 445 this is the lowest level in at least four years. North Yorkshire now has the 19<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of children in care across 152 local authorities. A culture of ‘driving out drift’ to ensure that plans are managed in a timely way has enabled the authority to safely reduce number of children in care to this level, while also facing continued relatively high levels of new admissions to care- 51 in quarter two. Strong performance can be observed across all the main children in care indicators and performance in relation to completed health assessments (84.7%); under 5 year development checks (100%); eye tests (90%); dental checks (85.4%) and immunisations (95%) remain very good with significant progress in these areas being demonstrated and maintained. Continued high levels of up to date Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are particularly striking as the introduction of PEPs for post compulsory school age young people up until the age of 18 has resulted in approximately a further 100 young people having had PEPs completed than in previous years.

### **Fostering Conference 2015**

The fourth annual Fostering Conference was held recently with key note speaker Dr Margot Sunderland, award winning author and expert in child development and psychology and input from the Young Peoples Council, County Foster Carers Group and “Signs of Safety” lead officers. The successful event was attended by 170 delegates and

long service awards were presented by the Executive Member to 32 carers in recognition of their significant input. The Council recognises the need to provide continued professional development to our foster carers which includes the latest theories and practices and provides an inclusive environment for learning. At the same time, the conference also provided an opportunity for the children in placements to enjoy a day full of activities with other children of a similar age. The activities for the young people this year included felt making, vinyl art, banner making and rock school!

### **Youth Voice Summit**

The Children's Commissioner for England, Anne Longfield, took time out of her busy schedule recently to spend a day with Children's Services in North Yorkshire. As part of her programme Anne made a keynote address to the county council's fifth annual Youth Voice Summit, which has grown year on year, and spoke about the importance of listening to and acting on young people's views.

North Yorkshire County Council has been at the forefront of authorities nationally in its engagement of young people to improve services. The Commissioner's attendance marked the increasing significance of the Youth Voice summit, which attracts members of youth organisations and school councils from across the county. Around 150 delegates attended from school councils; the Young People's Council, which represents looked after children and young people; young carers groups; youth councils; the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender) voice group and the Flying high Group, which represents young people with disabilities.

### **Prevention Service – Progress and Feedback**

The new Prevention Service for the 0-19 age range was launched in April 2015. The first six months of the new service have seen encouragingly strong performance, across a range of indicators. In the first quarter of 2015 (April – June), the new service saw the highest number of new early help cases ever recorded at 1048. In quarter 2 this has increased slightly to 1083. At the end of September the new service had a total of 2298 open cases. Children young people and their families receiving the targeted support and early intervention always envisaged in the designing of the service. Feedback on the new service from schools is also greatly encouraging.

Work has now been completed on the development of a Prevention Service Core Offer. This is a document that clearly and simply sets out what areas of need the new service works on, how we work to address this need and importantly what outcome is expected. The Core Offer, along with a version for children, young people and families, will be published towards the end of November.

### **Adoption**

The importance of achieving increases in both the numbers of children placed for adoption and the speed by which such placements are made has been the subject of renewed national and ministerial commentary. As Ofsted described when they inspected North Yorkshire in 2014 the work in this area is a significant local strength and we saw an increase to some 50 children last year successfully adopted from care. Whilst not pre-empting either the outcome of assessments or court decision making processes, we will continue to explore opportunities to increase the numbers of "fostering to adoption" placements in order to ensure earlier attachments are formed with their potential permanent carers.

### **County Councillor Janet Sanderson, Executive Member for Children's Services**