

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

24 FEBRUARY 2016

### STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

#### COUNTY COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON

##### **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.

This past year has seen 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.

##### **LGC Awards 2016**

The Children and Young People's Service has been shortlisted for two Local Government Chronicle Awards this year. The Service has been nominated in the prestigious category of Children's Services Team of the Year whilst the "No Wrong Door" project has also been shortlisted in the Innovation Category. The LGC Awards is the leading event of the year in the local government awards calendar and is designed to identify, celebrate and help spread the best examples of innovation and quality delivered by councils on a daily basis. The awards ceremony takes place on 16 March in London and I am sure you will wish to join me in wishing them good luck.

##### **Department for Education "Partners in Practice"**

DfE has announced that North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Service has been appointed as one of nine 'Partners in Practice' authorities for the Department which means we will support and work alongside other authorities to share best practice and as a result, develop more sustainable high performance across the country.

This is great recognition of the quality of our work at a national following the successful Ofsted inspection in 2014 when children's services was judged as "good" across the board. Since 2010, the county council has transformed children's services, including social work practice, for children and young people so that it has become one of the top performing authorities in the country.

Officers will be meeting with Department of Education officials in the very near future to discuss the detail of this development.

## **Visit of the Chief Social Worker**

Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for England is visiting the Children and Families Management Day on 22 April. She will meet with Richard Flinton, Pete Dwyer, Judith Hay and senior managers to take forward our role as Partners in Practice. She will then spend the afternoon with the managers across Social Care and Prevention.

## **Children and Families Performance**

The number of new cases being managed within the new 0-19 Prevention Service has seen the highest number in a single quarter being recorded in quarter three (1,384) and a significant increase in the total number of cases open at the end of the quarter (2,717).

The multi-agency customer contact screening team has introduced new procedures to ensure that agencies now have one referral process into the Children and Families Service. The team consists of staff from Children's Social Care, Prevention, Police and Health. They will shortly be joined by a mental health worker. Requests for help are quickly referred to the right team in the right agency.

Since its launch in April 2015 the new Prevention Service has seen a rise in cases to its service and a significant decrease in cases going to Social Care. This is very good news as families receive the right support as early as possible. The new improved procedures have also resulted in continuous increases in the percentage of referrals that now result in an assessment (99%). This is a significant improvement and is a much more effective use of resources.

The total number of Child Protection Plans in North Yorkshire this quarter was equivalent to the lowest number for five years (298) and the overall rate of Child Protection Plans (25.2) is now well below the national and statistical neighbour benchmarking averages. The percentage of Child Protection Plans that were reviewed on time this quarter was 100% which is outstanding performance.

## **Children in Care**

The number of looked after children fell this quarter to its lowest number for six years 432 (in sharp contrast to the national trend of continued increases in the care population).

The vast majority of looked after children in North Yorkshire continue to live in a stable family home environment. Based on a range of health measures the rate of looked after children with health and dental checks that are up to date remains high and highlights the continued good performance in this area of service which is partly attributable to improved collaborative working with colleagues in Health. The quantity and quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for looked after children have improved significantly in the past year. Likewise, the rate of children who have completed their Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is also high and children's scores which are derived from the survey show higher levels of emotional resilience and mental wellbeing. At the end of Q3 the rate of short term placement stability in North Yorkshire stood at 7.4%, the same as at Q2, which is significantly lower (better) than both the national rate (11%) and the percentage for North Yorkshire's nearest statistical neighbours (11.1%). In spite of a slight improvement this quarter the current rate of long term placement stability in North Yorkshire is at 61.2% which is still below the England average of 67% and the average rate for our statistical neighbours at 63.4%.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy Update**

In the summer of 2015 the local authority commissioned ISOS to carry out a fast-paced diagnostic review to inform the future SEND strategic approach in North Yorkshire to meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disability, involving a wide range of schools, partner organisations and families.

The review identified several key strengths of the current approach to SEND in North Yorkshire, recognising that the local authority was highly inclusive with a good proportion of children with SEND being educated in mainstream provision. In addition the report identified a strong ethos for partnership approaches and collaborative working to ensure high quality services and personalised approaches to meeting the needs of children and young people.

The review also identified some particular themes for continued development including:

- Integrated assessment and decision making
- Greater control to young people, parents and carers
- Enhancing local provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
- Preparing for adulthood
- Integration of services

The SEND Strategy Group are working closely to develop the new SEND strategy taking into account the findings from the review and will be carrying out further consultation with key partners on the draft strategy before it is finalised in April.

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