

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 MAY 2016

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.

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.

Although this information appears in my Statement to Council it should be noted that both Executive Members for the Children and Young People's Service have joint responsibility for all relevant resources.

Visit of the Chief Social Worker

Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for England, visited North Yorkshire on 22nd April. She addressed an audience of social workers and managers and spoke very highly of the work of the Children and Families Service. She said she was proved wrong in believing that early intervention doesn't show impact as she had seen the statistics for North Yorkshire which showed an increased number of cases open to prevention and reduction in cases requiring higher needs of child protection and looked after. Isabelle spoke about our exemplar service and why we have been chosen to be Partners in Practice with the Department for Education in helping other authorities improve. There was also an interesting discussion about the potential of technology with one of our social workers in engaging young people.

Children and Families Performance

Performance for the work of Children's Social Care and the Prevention Service continues to impress. The service, which for the last year has been a joining up of Prevention and Social Care, has one referral pathway through the Customer Contact Centre. Through that process we have seen that more cases are routed to the Prevention Service with 2750 cases now being open. This is the highest number of cases recorded. Conversely there has been a reduction in the number of cases being worked with in Child Protection and Looked After categories. This is very good news for families showing that by intervening early we are reducing the need for high level interventions.

Children in Care

The number of children in North Yorkshire's care continues to reduce as we work with young people earlier to prevent family breakdown. The number of children and young people in our care is now 409 - a reduction of 20%. This success is bucking the national trend as we see a

rise in children in care across the country with some authorities having double the number per 10,000 that we look after.

In addition, 73 Authorities took part in a recent CIPFA Benchmarking Club report. North Yorkshire performs exceptionally well in the comparisons with other authorities and is the -

- Highest ranking for looking after children placed in our own foster care placements
- Lowest user of independent placements (Independent Fostering Agencies)
- Second lowest costs

In addition our performance continues to show great outturn, with children having completed health checks now at 86% and dental checks at 88%. Short term stability (children having less than three moves in one year) is well below the national average. We are currently looking at our long term stability which is 6% behind the England average.

Staying put is now a government priority and North Yorkshire performs very well - we recently celebrated our 100th staying put placement. Individually many care leavers achieve against the odds and we are proud of every one of them. One of the notable stories this week has been the news that one of our care leavers has been awarded a scholarship to study for her Master's Degree in Beijing.

MJ Awards Finalists - No Wrong Door

No Wrong Door continues to attract national and international interest. The project recently won the Local Government Chronicle Award for the Best Innovation in Local Government and is also a finalist in the Municipal Journal Awards taking place on 16 May. The judges summed up the entry by saying "No Wrong Door is an innovative multi agency model that rethinks care for adolescents ... it is improving the chance of vulnerable adolescent's. Evidence of intelligence sharing is very positive".

Improving health outcomes for children and young people

A workshop event "Reimagining Health for all Children in North Yorkshire" took place on 25 April. The event, the first of its kind, was commissioned by the Children's Trust Board following consideration of detailed analysis of Children's Health across the County, one of the three priority areas in our Children & Young People's Plan, Young and Yorkshire.

The event brought together leaders and practitioners with responsibility for children's wellbeing to debate some of the biggest health challenges, in particular inequalities in children's health across the county. Eustace de Sousa (National Lead- Children, Young People & Families, Public Health England) and internationally acclaimed academic Kate Pickett (University of York and co-author of the Spirit Level) were keynote speakers, addressing inequalities in children's health at a National and local level.

Through focused workshops, leaders and practitioners were asked to challenge themselves, coming up with new and innovation solutions to ensure that all children in North Yorkshire are as healthy as they can be. Outcomes and feedback from the event will be taken to the next meeting of the Children's Trust Board for their consideration in June, and using the evidence from the event to inform priorities in the next iteration of our Young & Yorkshire plan.

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