

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 JULY 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 remain on track to achieve the savings and transformation projects agreed by Council.

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.

Partners in Practice

As one of only eight authorities awarded "Partners in Practice" status by the government, in recognition of the exemplary work in children's services in North Yorkshire, we have submitted a bid to the DfE for £8.2 million. The bid will enable us to assist other authorities to improve practice and to improve our own services even further. We have submitted plans to extend the No Wrong door methodology to care leavers and children and young people with social emotional and mental health issues in the special schools and pupil referral centres and for clinicians in social work teams. As mentioned above, North Yorkshire has had many visits from local authorities who are keen to mirror our transformation journey.

Local area inspection of arrangements for children and young people with SEND

North Yorkshire children's services, along with health providers, have just undergone a five day Ofsted inspection of arrangements for assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The inspection, which took place from 27 June to 1 July inclusive, included focus group meetings with providers, settings and children, young people and their families, and analysis of data and evidence as to how services in the local area were meeting the needs of young people and working towards the delivery of national SEND Reform. The team of inspectors included representatives from Ofsted and Care Quality Commission and the outcome of the inspection will be published in around the middle of August.

Children and Families Service Performance

Performance for the work of Children's Social Care and the Prevention Service continues to impress. The service continues to have very positive feedback about one referral pathway through the Customer Contact Centre. This is particularly so from head teachers who report very high satisfaction with the process. In the last quarter we have seen the same trend as the previous year with more cases being referred to the Prevention Service 3349 (0-19 children and young people), open to the service. 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 bucking the trend from many other authorities where Ofsted have seen increases in both looked after children and child protection have been reported. The Ofsted annual report 2016 cites that investment in early help and prevention is a significant correlation with good outcomes in inspection.

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 406 - a reduction of 20%. This success is again 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 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.

No wrong Door continues to attract national attention and is a feature in the forthcoming review by Sir Martin Narey where he recommends the model to other Local Authorities. We have also had around 30 local authorities contact North Yorkshire and/or visit North Yorkshire to discuss the model further.

We continue to listen to children and young people who have experienced the care system. In June Rachel Malik spoke to managers from across children's services about her experience through care in the last 14 years, the support she received and the incredible achievements. She now had a 2:1 master's degree and is shortly going to Beijing to study with the highest scholarship awarded by the Chinese government. Only 72 young people in the world have been awarded this prize.

Children's health outcomes – progress with Future in Mind implementation

Following commissioning of programmes within the Future in Mind delivery plan, there are two projects about to start. From September 2016 around 30 schools will be testing an early identification and assessment tool to support staff to spot any emerging difficulties young people may be having. The schools will also be provided with a toolkit to use should interventions be needed. From January 2017 the Schools Emotional Wellbeing project will build capacity in schools to implement whole school approaches to promote emotional wellbeing as well as provide some specific individual and group work interventions. Alongside the project work there are a number of work streams looking at transformation within the current emotional wellbeing offer to ensure all services are working effectively together.

This is welcome investment in schools to help them identify and support young people with emotional and mental health needs. It is important to identify emerging difficulties as early as possible and these developments should help schools do that.

Schools Debating Competition

The annual School Debating Competition proved once again to be an excellent forum for discussion. On the day that Britain learned the outcome of one of the biggest debates in its history, primary school children from across North Yorkshire gathered in the County Council's council chamber in Northallerton to present their arguments in the final of a county-wide debating competition. The debating competition was started four years ago by the County Council's then chairman, County Councillor Cliff Trotter. In the first year, only six schools took part, but this year 34 have been involved, with heats in each district of the county. This year's finalists were Easingwold Community Primary School, Hambleton; Richmond Church of England Primary School, Richmondshire; Rossett Acre Primary School, Harrogate; Amotherby Community Primary School, Ryedale; Newby and Scalby Primary School, Scarborough; Chapel Haddlesey Church of England Primary School, Selby; Green Hammerton Church of England Primary School, Harrogate. The winner of the Craven heat, Cononley Primary School, was unable to attend the final.

The topic of debate was "Do you think our climate is changing?" and the winning school was Rossett Acre Primary School. Once again the standard of the debating was extremely high and all the children taking part are to be commended for the liveliness of their presentations and questioning.

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