

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 FEBRUARY 2020

## STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

**Medium Term Financial Strategy & 2020 North Yorkshire – February 2020**

The local authority welcomes the additional £5.4m funding for High Needs within the funding settlement however this will leave a funding gap of c.£5.1m in 2020/21; this is set in the context of unprecedented increases in the number of children and young people assessed as requiring Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). In addition, there is an impact on the cost of SEN Transport. In the absence of future funding increases, further measures will need to be identified to address the accumulating and in-year deficit.

Funding from the Department for Education for the Opportunity Areas and Partners in Practice programmes currently remains uncertain and plans are in development for different scenarios. 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.

**Children & Families and Children in Care**

Performance in North Yorkshire's Children & Families Service remains strong. Over the past Quarter we have seen stability from last Quarter in terms of the number of contacts being received by the Multi Agency Screening Team (Q2 = 5,371 / Q3 = 5,328). Compared to Quarter 3 2018/19, we have seen a 12% reduction in the number of contacts received, indicating a decrease in demand. Referrals to Children's Social Care have reduced over Quarter 3, down by 17% from Quarter 2, with the year to date figure being 13% lower than for the same period last year. Although demand has reduced, performance in regard to timeliness has continued to excel, with 98.5% of assessments being completed within 45 days (against a national average of 83.1%). We are continuing to see stability with regards to the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan at 354, down slightly from last Quarter. Our LAC rate (37.9 per 10k) is considerably lower than the latest national average (65 per 10k). It is worth noting that since 2013, whilst the national number of children in care has increased by 15%, North Yorkshire has seen a 13% decrease in complete opposition to the national trend.

**North Yorkshire Partners in Practice**

North Yorkshire continues to support Local Authorities with an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' to share best practice in areas such as Looked After Children and No Wrong Door through the Partners in Practice Programme. The Programme also provides 'Understanding Excellence' funding which enables NYCC to invest in improvements such as our Single View of a Child Project which aims to combine information across systems to one place. As I mention above, the DfE Partners in Practice funding is due to come to an end in March 2020 and, as such, arrangements are in place to permanently adopt learning which has shown benefit across No Wrong Door, Leaving Care, Restorative Practice and Psychology.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON