

**BRIEFING NOTES for the Children & Young Peoples' Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007** issues considered over the last annual quarter.

**Inspection of Children's Homes** has been completed by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The homes were inspected against 36 standards and will in future be given a quality rating. The overall conclusion is that our Children's Homes are highly rated by the Inspectorate and I would like to congratulate all our front line staff on this service.

**Integrated Youth Services & Connexions.** This report was presented to the Executive on the 12<sup>th</sup> June, having first been considered at the C&YP Executive on the 4<sup>th</sup> May. The report covered the work to date on the transition of Connexions into this Council which has to be completed April 2008.

**Children & Young Peoples Plan.** The Plan 2006 – 2009 has now been revised to incorporate all the recommendations from the Joint Area Review and thus improve the work of the Directorate.

**Children & Young Peoples Safeguarding Board.** This is a wholly professional body that meets approximately quarterly to consider the work going on in the County to safeguard our vulnerable young people and to make sure the systems we have in place are as robust as they can be. It is the responsibility of the Lead Member, and I have agreed that I will attend at least one of the meetings a year to observe how it is progressing. I will be attending the August Meeting.

**Visits to all NYCC Residential Homes and Offices.** Over the summer months I will be visiting all our residential homes and as many of our service's offices as possible with Paul Nixon to meet and talk to the residents and staff.

**Customer Relations Units (CRUs).** The CRUs provide the first point of contact for social care enquiries for both Adults' and Children's Services and have in the past received three Charter Mark awards in 1998, 2002 and 2005. They have again this year been assessed on behalf of the Government by the EMQC.

This service is due to be transferred into the County Council's Contact Centre from September/October 2007 and the CRU staff are formally in a redundancy position. Despite this the assessment found that their front line delivery service - "provides a very high level of service to its customers". The levels of complaints and satisfaction with the service – "There have been no (formal) complaints" and "an equally high level of satisfaction from internal partners and customers." "That there is a positive commitment to continuous improvement."

The Assessor expressed his concerns about the ability of a centralised Contact Centre to deliver the service to the same high standards, however the Management Team was able to provide some reassurances that the corporate Public Access Strategy includes the development of 33 local public access points across the County, although the degree of specialism available at the venues is still under discussion.

**Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal Monitoring.** The C&YP Executive received a report on the monitoring of appeals to the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal (SPENDIST) for the academic year 2005-6.

The total number of appeals to SPENDIST has increased substantially from 13 in 2004-5 to 30 in 2005-6. The level of appeals in North Yorkshire remains below the national average.

Due to regular monitoring of the number of tribunals lodged, the increase in appeals registered was identified mid way through the year and discussed with all the various services involve including the Assistant Director and myself.

The number of new statements being made by the Authority remains stable at the 2004/5 figure of around 120 per year, the number of requests for statutory assessment increased by 17% in 2005/6.

Reasons for this increase were rigorously discussed and a careful eye is being kept on the numbers for this year which to date number 18 but could rise to 20 by August.

**Numbers of Looked After Children.** At present we have 444 LAC.

**Talking to Looked After children.** I was asked to give a paper on this subject to the I&DeA run group of Yorkshire & Humberside Lead Members of Children's Services.

**Transition of Young Disabled People to Adult Care.** I attended a conference run by the Local Government Association on this topic. It seems most authorities are struggling with how to improve transition and although it was interesting to hear how other authorities manage the service, it seems that until funding is increased and better links forged between directorates, no improvement will be made.

**Private Fostering.** Concern has been raised nationally about the numbers of children who are privately fostered. Due to the large number of forces families in North Yorkshire, we believe there may be a number of children in private care. David Molesworth is doing work with our partners in health, schools and social care to locate these children. He will be reporting to C&YP Executive in due course.