

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
16th March 2012**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

NYCC Children's Centre Update

1. Purpose of Report

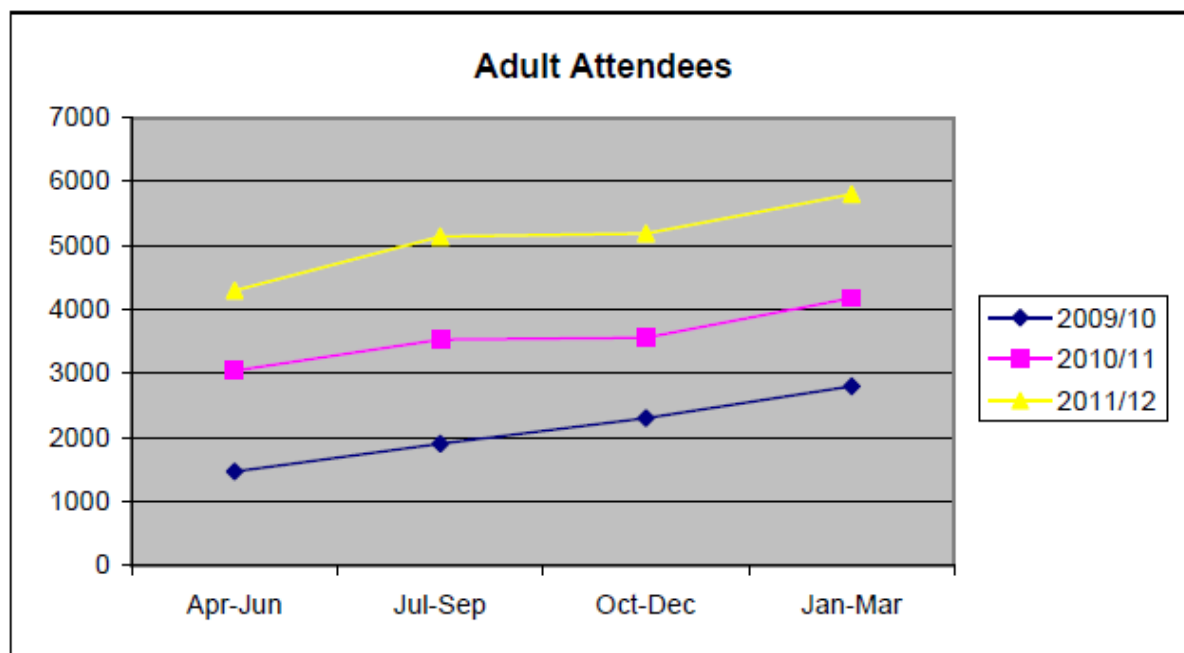
The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members in response to tabled questions regarding:

- Developments to make greater use of Children's Centres
- Lessons learned from the recent Ofsted Inspections of Children's Centres and how these are being taken forward
- Future funding arrangements for Children's Centres.

2. Background

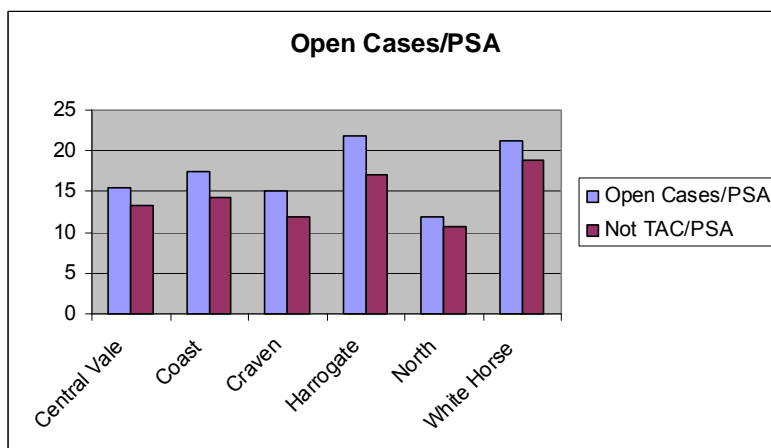
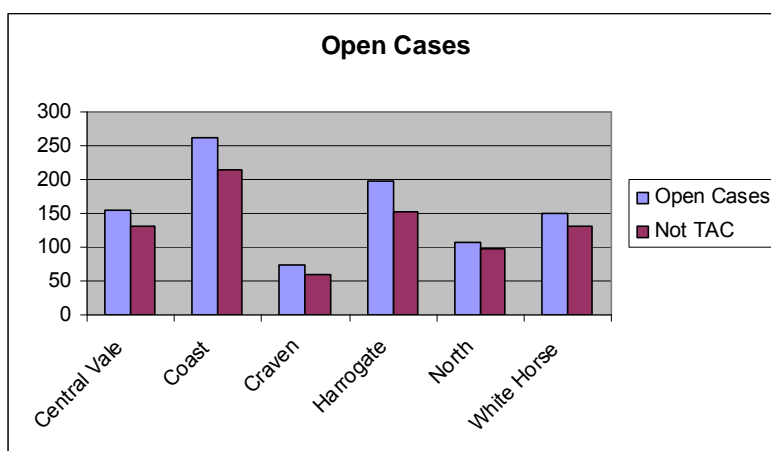
2.1 The development of NYCC Children's Centres began in 2004 with eight phase 1 centres including three Surestart Local Programmes in Colburn, Scarborough, Selby and North Craven. These were mainstreamed in 2008, alongside the development of 22 phase 2 centres. The Authority portfolio of 37 centres was completed in 2009 by the opening of the final seven phase 3 centres. The development of a 'core offer' of services was undertaken by NYCC Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS) staff and partners through the Children's Centres for all communities across these three phases and all centres were fully designated by Autumn 2009.

2.2 There has been year on year growth in the use of the centres illustrated through user attendances.



2.3 The year on year increase in engagement and participation reflects the seven year developmental journey. The provision is now seen as an established service and there is an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the Children’s Centre offer and the integral role which Centres hold in the landscape of services for expectant and new parents and those with children under 5, amongst both parents and partners.

2.4 Children’s’ Centres support for families is led by Parent Support Advisers. Their work is evidenced in the graphs below. The first graph shows how many cases that are open and how many of these involve multi-agency Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings. As the number of Parent Support Advisers varies within Integrated Service areas an average number of cases has been calculated for each area. This is shown in the second graph.



2.5 The figures show a large number of families being supported by Parent Support Advisers without the use of a Team Around the Child meeting, i.e. the case is being managed with no multi-agency meetings. This can be attributed to the Parent Support Advisers becoming more skilled in their work, as they are trained in tools such as home inventories, and developing their networks, so the need for meetings is reduced. This is a positive development for the families as solutions tend to be found quicker and the intervention period is reduced. The differences in the number of cases between areas shows the differential need across the county and the average number of cases shows we are deploying staff appropriately to meet that need.

3. Developments to make greater use of Children's Centres

3.1 We are committed to make more use of Children's Centres by their local communities. This is in line with the new Common Purpose for Children's Centres that will be introduced nationally in September and will be the basis for future Ofsted inspections.

3.2 We have a variety of initiatives that are contributing to ensuring Children's Centres are recognised as a key resource within local communities.

- Developmental and outreach work with community partners and local community groups has increased the frequency of use of some Children's Centres for their activities, with better evening and weekend use.
- Development work with the Yorkshire Rural Support Network has been undertaken in order to promote Children's Centre services and to outreach to farming communities across the County.
- Co-ordination of the expansion of 2 year old provision by the Children's Centres has increased outreach to parents who were not previously engaging with services
- The use of the Children's Centres as the venue for early years practitioner training, cluster meetings and outreach to settings has embedded the position of the Children's Centres as the professionals' hub in each locality, resulting in increasing use as the first point of reference for family support referrals, advice, guidance and signposting.
- Established reach to more parents with new births through the 'Tell Us Once' programme managed in conjunction with the Families Information Service and NYCC Registrars has secured a greater number of early contacts.
- Enhanced working agreements with midwives and health visitors through the Healthy Child Programme to identify and jointly support all new parents – particularly the most vulnerable, ensures that more of those families in 'greatest need' receive timely and well-co-ordinated provision. Improvements to the numbers for whom 'sustained contact' is established in the first six months through the ante-natal to post-natal care pathway, is embedding engagement with Children's Centre services.

4. Lessons learned from the recent Ofsted Inspections of Children's Centres and how these are being taken forward

4.1 To date there have been eight Ofsted inspections of North Yorkshire Children's Centres:

Centre	Overall Outcome	Judgements
Colburn	Good	5 Outstanding, 12 Good
Briercliffe	Satisfactory	8 Good, 9 Satisfactory
Boroughbridge	Good	13 Good, 4 Satisfactory
'Refreshed' framework introduced September 2011		
Filey	Satisfactory	5 Good, 12 Satisfactory

Selby North	Satisfactory	1 Good, 16 Satisfactory
East Whitby	Satisfactory	5 Good, 12 Satisfactory
Harrogate Town	Satisfactory	17 Satisfactory
Central Ryedale	Satisfactory	3 Good, 14 Satisfactory

4.2 The 'refreshed' Ofsted framework sharpened the critical lens of children's centre inspections as an assessment of the quality and effectiveness, and of the impact and outcomes of all Children's Services for under fives and their families. There is a much greater requirement to account for co-ordinated strategic management at Children's Centre reach area level; and also to demonstrate joint target-setting and performance monitoring of services to affect improved outcomes for target groups in each community.

4.3 A new performance framework was required as measurements and judgements are against 'raised bar' percentages. Our performance framework has been reviewed and amended by the CYPS Performance and Outcomes team, agreed with the CYPS Quality and Improvement Service and has recently been populated by the Performance and Outcomes team and the children's centre data and information officers for each centre. This facilitates monitoring against the nationally defined 'Key Performance Indicators' and an analysis of the outcomes for defined 'vulnerable groups' over a three year period. In order to identify the trends which contribute to the 'Capacity to Improve' judgement, information is required from a range of NYCC service teams and from partners.

4.4 Performance clinics have been introduced and the first round held with each Integrated Services Manager. These are chaired by the Assistant Director Strategic Services, and supported by the Performance and Outcomes Manager. They are to be held quarterly. As an outcome of this regular scrutiny, performance targets are being set and monitored through Children's Centre Services Manager's supervision and appraisal processes and data and impact evidence will be sought from colleagues as required.

4.5 The summary Ofsted judgements for children are defined by the health and educational outcomes at the end of their Reception Year in school; and for adults by their educational achievement, qualifications and employment status. Work is being undertaken across NYCC service teams, and with partners to respond to the challenge of quantifying achievement pathways, employment destinations and tracking progress in order to meet this requirement at each Children's Centre reach area level – particularly for vulnerable groups.

The importance of tracking the progress of young children through their two, three and four year old provision in order to identify the 'intermediate outcomes' attributable to each phase of provision has now been recognised. An amendment to the Early Years Contract is being considered to enable the Authority to require the private, voluntary and independent settings who deliver this provision to report children's progress to us. This is already working successfully in the areas where two year old provision is being made.

4.6 A paper outlining opportunities for Further Education Colleges to work in more effective partnerships with Children's Centres was circulated in December and is being followed up by the Integrated Services Manager and Children's Centre Services Managers in each locality. This will enable a more comprehensive picture of adult learning and development to be reported for Inspection.

- 4.7 The process and documentation of Children's Centre self evaluation has been reviewed. The process is now aligned to the new Ofsted requirements and revised grade descriptors, and enables strategic lead officers to present the work of all NYCC children's services more comprehensively.
- 4.8 Revised guidance for partners has been produced in order to inform their preparations for interviews with inspectors and to clarify the nature of evidence which is required.
- 4.9 'Categories of Support' for Children's Centres are being discussed with the Quality and Improvement Service in order to prioritise activity to address identified differential support required for individual Centres. The potential contributions which colleagues from Access and Inclusion, the Adult Learning Service, Children's Social Care teams and Health partners might make to a proactive intervention strategy to improve Children's Centre reach area performance where it is a cause for concern, in advance of Inspection is currently being considered.

5 Future funding arrangements for Children's Centres.

- 5.1 Unlike some other Local Authorities, North Yorkshire has not reduced the number of Children's Centres, and we have retained the full complement of Children's Centre Service Manager posts through two phases of the Savings and Transformation Strategy for Strategic Services.
- 5.2 The levels of revenue funding to define the funding formula for Children's Centres has been maintained, and all buildings and outreach sites have been maintained.
- 5.3 The 'Payment by Results' funding arrangements proposed by the DfE are still to be determined nationally. North Yorkshire was successful in a bid to undertake a trial of the 'Payment By Results' scheme and we are currently working in conjunction with East Riding Council on this work.

6 Recommendation

The Committee is invited to note the information in this paper and comment on the matters raised.

Cynthia Welbourn
Corporate Director, Children & Young Peoples Service

Author: Marc Mason, Strategic Development and Commissioning Manager

Contact Details: Tel 01609 532151

E-mail: marc.mason@northyorks.gov.uk

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Background Documents: none