

## North Yorkshire County Council

### Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2017 at 11am at County Hall, Northallerton.

**Present:** County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the Chair.

Councillors: Val Arnold, Lindsay Burr MBE, Stephanie Duckett, Keane Duncan, Mel Hobson, Cliff Lunn, Zoe Metcalfe, Joe Plant, Gill Quinn, Angus Thompson and Annabel Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members: Paul Bircumshaw.

In attendance: Executive Member: County Councillor Janet Sanderson

Officers: Ray Busby (Corporate Development Officer (Central Services)). Pete Dwyer (Corporate Director of CYPS), Jane le Sage (Assistant Director Inclusion, Inclusion (CYPS)), Cerys Townend (Lead advisor for social emotional mental health, Inclusion (CYPS)), Claire Tiffany (Education Development Adviser – Behaviour & Attendance)

Apologies for absence were received from: Louise Alder, Pam Crabtree, Dr Tom Cavell-Taylor and Cllr Stuart Martin MBE

#### Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

#### 111. Minutes

##### Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2017 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 112. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

#### 113. Public Questions

The Committee was advised that no notice had been received of any public questions or statements to be made at the meeting.

#### 114. Exclusions of Pupils from Schools

Prior to the formal meeting members held group sessions with a number of young people who had been excluded and the PRU staff accompanying them.

These sessions covered what those pupils had been excluded for; their reaction to the exclusion; the impact on their family; how and what had changed for them; and how things might be different.

Members were impressed at the way pupils had responded to their experiences and with the support they had received from the staff concerned.

Considered –

- a) Report of the Scrutiny Team leader to providing Members with an introduction to the topic of Exclusions of Pupils in North Yorkshire.
- b) A presentation relating to pupil views/parent views and school views of exclusion, LA provision and future plans.

The presentation covered the statutory basis to exclusions and the options that were available to schools, and what could be made different in schools to stop exclusions or to make things better for pupils who might be at risk of exclusion.

The rise in the number of fixed term exclusions in the county was a worrying development - as the NYCC Executive had identified – albeit the increase locally very much reflected a national trend.

Members were struck by the high percentage of pupils excluded for persistent, disruptive behaviour in 2016/17. In this context, members remarked upon the significance of the following evidence:

- There is one primary school (in the west of the county) that is issuing fixed term exclusions at a far higher rate than any other for a higher proportion of pupils
- 62% of all fixed-term exclusions and 52% of all children fixed-term excluded are from 15 schools
- Of the highest excluding secondary schools 5 are Requires Improvement and 3 are Academies

Members liked:

- Compass wellbeing Service as an Innovative project strengthening the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people across NYCC.
- The Thrive approach, which helps manage the emotional development of children, especially vulnerable children with disruptive and troubling behaviour, and that it helps to re-engage them with life and learning. The early results from these interventions were indeed promising.

The committee thanked the young people and support staff for their honest and clear account of their experiences.

After discussion, Members reached the following main conclusions:

1. Members agreed that the directorate had demonstrated that the issues raised - for example in the initial engagement session, from parent voice and from the directorates own engagement with young people - were recognised and were being used effectively to improve pupils lives and direct service change and improvement
2. Exclusions is clearly a national, regional and local issue - highlighted by the figures shown in the performance monitoring report to Executive and by the information presented to the meeting. The directorate was right to afford the issue a high priority.
3. From the information presented to it regarding the action being taken, the committee believes the directorate clearly understands the prevalence of exclusions in the county, and some areas in particular, and that priority action is needed

4. It was appropriate, and reassuring for members, that the reasons for exclusions, and their rise in number, was being properly unpicked and analysed.
5. The evidence showed that the most important factors were being addressed with the right level of resources, and in a way that will make a very real difference to people's lives.
6. The current and proposed range of service delivery of improvements had been well thought through; it was especially reassuring that the issue of exclusions was being tackled on all fronts

**Resolved –**

- a) Taking all the above into account, and recognising that work undertaken is something of a pilot, the committee decided there was no need for more detailed group work whilst the directorate has set a clear agenda of improvement. But the committee looks forward to receiving an update on progress and developments at a future meeting.
- b) In the meantime, the group spokespersons would be kept updated at their mid-cycle briefings so that they could maintain a weather-eye on developments, and take a view whether the matter needed to be referred to committee at any time soon.
- c) The Portfolio Holder be advised of the committee's findings and conclusions, and the Chair report the committee's deliberations in her regular statement to Council

**115. Work Programme**

Considered -

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader inviting comments from Members on the content of the Committee's Programme of Work scheduled for future meetings.

Ray Busby reported that Mr Jeremy Noot had submitted his resignation as Co-opted member-Governing Body representative. The process of finding his replacement would be started. Ray added that the election process for appointing the two voluntary sector representatives for the new county council term would be completed in time for the September meeting. Community First were carrying out the arrangements.

**Resolved -**

- d) That the content of the Work Programme report and the Work Programme schedule are noted.
- e) This safeguarding item be broadened out using the NY Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report as the centrepiece for a wider dialogue about partnership commitment and activity, and more generally about how we keep North Yorkshire's children safe.
- f) That the proposal that Nick Frost, Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board, attend the meeting on the 8 September 2017 to present the Board's Annual Report be agreed

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

RB