

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
THE YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29th June 2018

UPDATE ON EARLY YEARS PROVISION

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the Committee with an overview of the service profile for Early Years Provision, to provide an overview of recent Statutory Guidance and our delivery against place sufficiency and other duties, and to describe the challenges and opportunities of service delivery across North Yorkshire

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Early years policy, particularly relating to childcare has continued to be a focus for all recent governments with twin policy objectives – to give all children the best start in life and to enhance social mobility through support for working families.

2.2 In addition to proven benefits of high quality early years provision in educational and overall lifetime outcomes, the provision of early education and childcare also links to government priorities for school readiness, economic growth, and tackling poverty.

3.0 STATUTORY DUTIES

3.1 A range of Statutory Duties set out in the Childcare Act, are placed upon all Local Authorities in order to achieve these policy objectives:

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need. And, so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.
- To monitor, support and challenge safeguarding procedures and processes in settings and with childminders, working closely with the Children's Safeguarding Board and the Local Authority Designated Officer where there are allegations against staff.
- To improve the well-being of children under five and reduce inequalities.
- To have regard to the importance of parents and carers in improving children's wellbeing.
- To improve the outcomes of all children under 5 and close the gaps between groups with the poorest outcomes and the rest by ensuring early years' services are accessible to all families.
- Encourage take-up of funded places for eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds and undertake outreach activities to identify disadvantaged children and children who are not taking up their entitlement or their full hours and support them to do so
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015) places a duty on LAs to 'ensure that there is sufficient expertise and experience amongst local early years providers to support children with SEN and to ensure that all providers delivering funded early education places meet the needs of children with SEN and disabled children.
- To promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- To make arrangements to ensure integrated provision of early years services; take steps to identify parents not using services and to encourage them to do so; take reasonable steps to encourage the involvement of various interested parties in the making and implementation of arrangements; have regard to such information about the views of young children as is available; and have regard to statutory guidance.

- Duty to secure sufficient children's centres to meet local need, so far as this is reasonably practicable and to consider whether early childhood services should be delivered through one of the children's centres in the area
- Duty to secure that each children's centre is within the remit of an advisory board
- Duty to make arrangements to work with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Job Centre Plus in performance of the local authority's duties.
- Duty to provide information, advice and assistance - to ensure that local authorities establish and maintain a service providing information, advice and assistance for parents and prospective parents with information on the provision of childcare and on other services or facilities or publications, that may benefit them or children or young people. They should also provide particular help to parents from groups likely to find it more difficult to access suitable childcare, e.g. parents of disabled children.
- Duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents (or parents in education/training) - to ensure there is childcare available to enable parents to take up or remain in work or to undertake education or training to assist them in obtaining work.

Ensure the availability of 15 hours of high quality early education for all 3 and 4 year olds, for 20 per cent of the most disadvantaged 2 year olds, and 30 hours for working families who meet the eligibility criteria for the 'extended entitlement' (which came into effect from September 2017).

- Duty to assess childcare provision - to ensure local authorities undertake an assessment of childcare provision in their area to enable them to meet their duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents
- Duty to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers, and prospective providers - to ensure that local authorities give local childcare providers and would-be providers in their area the necessary support to help deliver sustainable affordable and high quality childcare that meets the needs of the community.
- Duty to secure prescribed early years entitlements free of charge - to ensure that all children under school age, as described in regulations or in guidance from the Secretary of State, can access funded nursery education.
- Annual collection of Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data and the Early Years Census returns gives power to local authorities to collect information about individual children receiving early years provision, but also places a duty on local authorities to supply that information to the Secretary of State if requested. They are required to provide information to parents and families in their areas about provision.
- Duty to make provision to ensure that early years foundation profile assessments made by providers in their areas are accurate and consistent, and have regard to any guidance given by the Department for Education.
- Ensure that an Early Years provider takes any measures identified in an Ofsted report to improve the overall effectiveness of provision
- The Director of Children's Services is responsible for educational excellence for all children by working with Headteachers, Governors, and Multi-Academy Trusts to develop robust school improvement strategies. Promote high standards in schools and other providers so that children achieve well and fulfil their potential.
- Take action over concerns with regard to 'British Values'

4.0 SERVICE OFFER

4.1 Early Education and childcare is currently delivered across the county by:

- 387 childminders (232 of which offer parents funded entitlement places)
- 135 private business day nurseries
- 104 community pre-schools
- 104 nursery classes attached to primary schools and 3 nursery schools
- 350 primary schools delivering reception class provision
- 15 independent schools

In addition 131 before and after school 'clubs' provide wraparound care to school hours to meet the needs of working parents, and 39 of these provide holiday childcare.

All NYCC service teams provide services to schools and early years settings. Centralised early years services provide strategic planning and infrastructure to support locality teams working with children, families and communities across the county.

5.0 SERVICE PROFILE

5.1 Policy and Strategy work across CYPS, corporate teams and with health partners is co-ordinated by the Under 5's Strategy Group. An annual implementation plan captures shared priorities and sets out work on joint projects and initiatives. Currently these priorities include

- Raising Achievement for all
- School readiness
- Cross service support for children with SEND
- Voice of the Under 5
- Customer Journey analysis and enhancement (corporate communication strategy)
- Integrated health and education reviews for 2 year olds.

Our practice and strategic developments are well-informed; they draw on national and regional expertise and are built on research evidence. Colleagues working in schools and early years settings along with CYPS and wider corporate colleagues are regularly informed about new policy initiatives in early years and childcare, and their implications. Each year consultation about strategic early years work is undertaken with a range of decision-making bodies. This has included the Education Partnership, Early Years Improvement Partnership, the JDP, the Corporate Management Board, the All Party Parliamentary Group considering the future of Nursery Schools, NYCC Primary and Early Years Leadership networks and Childminder Forums. Information and responses are provided as required so that NYCC is accurately represented in press and media coverage. We work to ensure that the requirement upon the LA to respond to Freedom of Information requests are met. We provide information and report on our performance to the DfE and other bodies including the Family and Childcare Trust, the Early Years sector professional organisations: Pre-school Learning Alliance, National Day Nurseries Association, the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years and to Childcare Works – the organisation contracted by the DfE to monitor the work of Local Authorities in delivering legislative requirements and new national policy initiatives.

5.2 An annual assessment of the sufficiency of places is undertaken, informed by market analysis of the supply of, and demand for, places in each locality. A summary report is published each September and profiling is shared with sector providers to inform their practice and business modelling. Detailed termly locality assessments identify any gaps and surplus of places which are then used to inform market facilitation through work with PVI providers and schools considering making new or different early years provision. Reports are made available on cyps.info : <http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/childcare-sufficiency>

Currently 74% of places for 3 and 4 year olds are delivered in the private, voluntary and independent sector (PVI), and 26% of places in schools. 94% of the 2 year old provision is delivered by the PVI sector.

The take up of places by two year olds in the spring term 2018, was 1095 of 1287 potentially eligible children, ie. 85% of those identified to the LA by HMRC as potentially eligible for a funded place. Of the 4689 validated codes from applications for funded 30 hours places, 4453 children accessed their place – 93% of the codes issued. 10,740 three year olds are accessing a universal 15 hour place this term which equates to over 1,611,062 hours.

5.3 The Funding and Payments Team manage the termly headcount process which collects the data required for the funding of the 9000 (termly average) early years children and the associated monthly payments (c.£2.2 million per month). The team manages the annual census return to the DfE which determines the overall level of early years funding received by the Local Authority. The team advises and supports new providers to access funding and responds to payment and funding queries from providers. Advice to parents is provided on accessing their funded entitlement including eligibility criteria. The team also provides input to the development of the Synergy system in order to provide the data required for the funding process. The team undertake provider audits in order to ensure that the financial requirements of the DfE Statutory Guidance are met.

The Business Support Team provide advice to early years providers including childminders, schools and out of school clubs which covers business sustainability, cashflow and financial projections. The support is delivered through bespoke consultancy to individual providers or through group workshops. The advice focuses on the short, medium and long term business requirements of the provider. The team supports providers with the implementation of legislative changes associated with financial and business management. The team undertakes early identification of providers facing financial difficulties in order to support the sufficiency duty of the Local Authority. This support includes financial reviews and business remodelling advice, as well as managing the allocation of the Sparsity Fund including a financial assessment process and the development and monitoring of associated action plans.

The Strategic Financial Management Service oversees the management and distribution of the £28 million Early Years Grant funding received by North Yorkshire County Council from the DfE. This includes the management, maintenance and development of the early years funding formula arrangements, the provision of statutory financial returns to the DfE, formal reporting to the North Yorkshire Education Partnership and the North Yorkshire Early Years Improvement Partnership, and responses to Freedom of Information requests. Support is provided for the setting and strategic monitoring of the early years centrally managed service budgets. The service develops the local authority funding agreement with providers in line with statutory guidance. Regular funding and financial management briefings are delivered to providers and schools through leadership and childminder forums, school networks and conferences.

5.4 The School and Early Years Improvement Team work with schools, settings and childminders judged as 'Requires Improvement', 'Inadequate' and 'Special Measures' by Ofsted. Early Years Advisers diagnose need, write support plans, support or broker support from Specialist Leads of Education, Early Years leads and Early Years Consultants. In doing so, the team work closely with the Primary Lead Advisers and Teaching School Alliances. The team prioritise and target their work by undertaking risk assessments and quality assurance visits and following Ofsted alerts. Progress back to good and back to basic support is rapid therefore minimising the risk to children's education and development. Support is delivered by the team to achieve progress against Quality Improvement Action Plans and Ofsted targets - in order to secure and embed improved quality of provision, enhanced learning experiences, better outcomes and progress for children; and improved inspection judgements.

Raising educational attainment and closing the gap for vulnerable learners is a key priority of the work of the team. Early Years Advisers undertake Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) and Two Year Old progress assessment data analysis across the County. These are shared with Children Centre Service Leads (CCSLs) to support their targeted work through children's centres with vulnerable families; with adult learning and other partners to

target their work; and in developing and facilitating training /CPD by the team in localities in areas where vulnerable groups attain less well than their peers. For example work has focused on boys' writing, children's language delay and poverty, children who are eligible for free school meals/ pupil premium, looked after children and early mathematics. The data analysis highlights trends of closing the gap for vulnerable groups and show the impact over time of the Early Years Closing the Gap Strategy work.

Termly visits with Early Years providers and childminders are undertaken by Early Years Consultants, in order to support early identification of vulnerable learners and additional needs. This support has helped to ensure that providers are able to make appropriate provision, track progress and implement timely interventions. These visits also help to ensure that links between providers and NYCC support teams, Children's Centres and voluntary sector agencies can be made to ensure access to support as needed for children and families. This work contributes to the achievement of the outcomes of the NYCC Early Years Closing the Gap Strategy.

North Yorkshire is marginally above the national performance for pupils achieving a 'Good level of development' at the end of the Foundation Stage, at 71.7%. Performance has improved steadily over the last 3 years from 66%. There are some locality variations, Selby has the highest percentage of pupils achieving a GLD at 76% and Scarborough the lowest at 66.4%. Comparison with statistical neighbours shows that NY ranked 9th in 2015 and 8th in 2016. In the highest achieving authority in the country (Lewisham) 77.5% achieved a GLD in 2015 and 78.7% in 2016.

The team monitor and support safeguarding practice improvements to ensure that providers meet their statutory obligations regarding children's safety and well-being. The Early Years Adviser team work closely with the Primary team and Local Authority Designated Officers to carry out school safeguarding reviews and offer support and guidance on practice improvement. Support plans written for settings, schools and childminders judged RI and inadequate often focus on safeguarding improvement requirements. The Early Years Advisers facilitate the support, which is delivered by the Early Years Consultants to make the required improvements. The Early Years Advisers undertake risk assessments and deliver support for Early Years providers and childminders following Ofsted alerts, allegations against staff and complaints to ensure that providers meet their statutory obligations regarding children's safety and well-being. Responses to requests for IAG are made by the team and by FIS to ensure that practitioners can fulfil their duties knowledgeably. In the case of allegations against staff, complaints and welfare notices the Early Years improvement lead adviser liaises closely with Ofsted and the LADO.

5.5 The Educational Psychology and Early Years' Service comprises two teams – The Educational Psychology (EP) Team and the Early Years (EY) Team which is made up of Early Years Advisory Teachers (EYATs) and Portage Home Visitors (PHVs). Children are referred into the team by both Health and Education, as these children are those with the most complex needs. The service ensures clear and timely transitions, including joint visits so that families understand the roles of the different professionals. EYATs and PHVs work closely together as all PHV cases are supervised by an EYAT and are also on the EYAT caseload. The Early Years Advisory Teachers (EYATs) and Portage Home Visitors (PHVs) work together to provide a continuum of specialist support for children under 5 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in their homes and in Early Years settings. The Early Years Advisory Teachers are a small team of specialist teachers with high levels of expertise and training in working with children with a wide range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. They offer support, advice and training to parents/carers and practitioners in early years settings to help them meet children's additional and SEND needs. The Portage Home Visitors (PHVs) offer weekly or fortnightly home visits to children and families, providing intervention, modelling and advice for families to support children's development. The teams work with: individual children with a high level of Special Educational Needs. The team works flexibly according to the needs of the child and their individual context/ arrangements and work takes place in EY settings, with Childminders or

with parents/ carers, as appropriate to each child and family. The EYATs and PHVs work closely with families, settings and other professionals to support with decision-making, application and transition processes into schools (mainstream and special), including support with statutory processes (EHCAR, CAN-DO, EHCP reports) where needed. Professional reports, liaison and advice, including attendance at clinics, is provided for those children with whom we have involvement who are going through diagnostic assessment processes, for example for Autism.

In addition to work around individual children, the team deliver a range of training for EY practitioners and parents/ carers. The team also deliver bespoke training and consultation in early child development and SEND.

The Early Years Consultants provide support for SENCOs working in early years settings and act as 'Area SENCOs' for childminders across North Yorkshire. This support helps to ensure that providers make timely referrals supported by appropriate evidence to secure early intervention support for our youngest learners with additional needs. The team provide practical help to co-produce the documentation required for the first stage of the graduated response of the SEN Code of Practice. The team also provide support to newly trained SENCOs to ensure that they can fulfil their responsibilities, understand and are able to use processes independently.

5.6 The Prevention Service works with the 0-19 (up to 25 for SEND) age range, offering early help for children, young people and families in North Yorkshire. They work closely with other partner agencies and professionals to ensure that support is there at the right time and in a way that best meets the needs of children and families.

The Prevention Service work with targeted families to ensure they are able to take full and positive part in activities that give their children the best start in life. The Prevention Service look to make their interventions as early as possible. By supporting the family and the child, the Prevention Service ease access into early years provision and ensure, through continuous support, that attendance is maintained and barriers to learning that arise from the home environment are specifically reduced. The core offer of Prevention Service includes a dedicated worker to work with the family to look at building on strengths and addressing any identified risks. This means one worker for the family and one plan. For families with children under five, support can start in the ante-natal period. Holistic assessment of child and family's needs including child development tracking, early attachment and communication, signposting to universal services and joint working with health visiting teams ensure the rigour of the service.

The service deliver a range of activities which are targeted to effectively meet need:

- parenting courses
- small talk sessions for children where delay in speech, language and communication has been identified
- building blocks for language programme where Speech and Language Therapists, health visitors of EY providers have identified a delay in speech, language and communication
- liaising with childcare providers and following up attendance of vulnerable learners.
- monthly childminder drop-in 'surgeries' hosted in children's centres
- delivery of Book Start corner activities and early words - for children and families who need support to access early literacy.
- Breastfeeding support - we work jointly with Health on the UNICEF breast feeding support programme. There is support for expectant parents either 1:1 or in group sessions.
- Teenage parenting pathway – joint delivery of a programme with specialist health visitors.
- Baby massage - to support early attachment and bonding - supporting early emotional well-beings of parent and child.

5.7 The Performance and Intelligence team work with the management information system (Synergy) to create and run reports to inform service planning - receiving and processing the data feed from the DfE.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 High quality early learning experiences are essential in order to improve lifelong outcomes, but are closely interlinked with home environments, parental health and local community support for young families. Our strategies and the alignment of initiatives and complimentary workstreams ensure that work to support, enrich and secure these elements are well-co-ordinated, and that efficient and best-value services are delivered

6.2 Co-ordinated work across CYPS with health partners and the NYCC Stronger Communities team provides oversight of local needs and a clear role in shaping the lived experiences of children and families in all communities across the County. The infrastructure support provided by Central services teams ensure that frontline staff are equipped and supported to deliver the highest quality services to children and families.

6.3 Targeted early interventions in health, early learning and early help services for children and families ensure that vulnerable learners, families and disadvantaged communities ensure that we don't miss the opportunity to improve things for the under 5's population.

7.0 CHALLENGES

7.1 The current structure and governance of early years provision provides the capacity and expertise to respond to challenges as they arise.

7.2 Our main areas of challenge include:

- the rural nature of the county and the challenges of scale for delivering early years services through settings and schools.
- the coastal and military community issues for families and service delivery
- the implications of Early Years National Finding Formula settlement on North Yorkshire for schools and early years settings
- the implications for parents of early years providers setting additional charges for their services in order to sustain business income and the compromise to the national message of 'free' entitlements
- 2nd year delivery challenges as the early years market recalibrates, for example the impact on sufficiency of 2 year old places as more 3 year olds with 30 hour entitlements fill places
- recruitment and retention difficulties faced by early years providers
- ensuring early years provision aligns to current and future national policy, for example through the Social Mobility Action Plan
- maintaining service quality and outcomes through the reduced staff capacity of the early years re-structure

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the information in this report.

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