



Agenda

Meeting Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To: Councillors Barbara Brodigan (Chair), Caroline Goodrick (Vice-Chair), Alyson Baker, Stephanie Duckett, Nathan Hull, David Jeffels, Janet Jefferson, Tom Jones, Cliff Lunn, John Mann, Andy Paraskos, Yvonne Peacock, Kirsty Poskitt, John Ritchie, Monika Slater, Andrew Timothy, and Co-Optees Tom Cavell-Taylor, Stephen Jennings, Martin Macaulay, Yvonne Methley, Gary McVeigh-Kaye, David Sharp and David Watson.

Date: Wednesday, 17 September 2025

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Grand - County Hall

Business

1. **Welcome by the Chair**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2025** (Pages 5 - 10)
4. **Declarations of interest**
5. **Public questions/statements**

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to (to include the text of the question/statement) to Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer (contact details below) by midday on Friday 12 September, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes on any item. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak:-

 - at this point in the meeting if their questions/statements relate to matters which are not otherwise on the Agenda (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes);
 - when the relevant Agenda item is being considered if they wish to speak on a matter which is on the Agenda for this meeting.

If you are exercising your right to speak at this meeting, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Chair who will instruct anyone who may be taking a recording to cease while you speak.
6. **Chair's remarks**

Any correspondence, communication or other business brought forward by the direction of the Chair of the Committee.

7. **Progress on issues raised by the Committee** (Pages 11 - 24)
Report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer, updating the Committee on progress made against matters arising at the previous meeting.
8. **Briefing relating to the Post Implementation Review of the Home to School Travel Policy** (Pages 25 - 30)
9. **Performance Report for Quarter 1 2025-26** (Pages 31 - 66)
Summary of the latest Children and Families performance report.
10. **Fostering Service Update** (Pages 67 - 88)
11. **North Yorkshire Council Adoption Service** (Pages 89 - 110)
12. **Work programme 2025-2026** (Pages 111 - 114)
13. **Any other items**
Any other items which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances
14. **Date of next meeting**
Wednesday 17 December 2025 at 10am

Members are reminded that in order to expedite business at the meeting and enable Officers to adapt their presentations to address areas causing difficulty, they are encouraged to contact Officers prior to the meeting with questions on technical issues in reports

Contact details

For enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer. Tel: 01756 706226 or email alice.fox@northyorks.gov.uk

Website: www.northyorks.gov.uk

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting as observers for all those items taken in open session. You may be interested in [subscribing to updates](#) about this or any other North Yorkshire Council committee.

Recording is allowed at Council, committee and sub-committee meetings which are open to the public. Please give due regard to the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at public meetings. We ask that any recording is clearly visible to anyone at the meeting and that it is non-disruptive.

Anyone wishing to record is asked to contact the Democratic Services Officer (details below) prior to the start of the meeting.

Contact Details

For enquiries relating to this agenda and meeting please contact:

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Website: www.northyorks.gov.uk

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive
Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton

Tuesday, 9 September 2025

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North Yorkshire Council

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 18 June 2025 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor Caroline Goodrick in the Chair plus Councillors Stephanie Duckett (via Teams), Nathan Hull (via Teams), David Jeffels, Cliff Lunn, John Mann, Andy Paraskos, Yvonne Peacock, Kirsty Poskitt, John Ritchie and Andrew Timothy and Co-optees Stephen Jennings (via Teams), Yvonne Methley (via Teams) and David Sharp.

Officers present: Barbara Merrygold (Head of Early Help), Stuart Carlton (Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service), Alice Fox (Senior Scrutiny Officer).

Other Attendees: Councillor Annabel Wilkinson (via Teams).

Apologies: Councillors Barbara Brodigan (Chair), Alyson Baker, Janet Jefferson and Monika Slater and Co-optee Martin Macaulay

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

72 Welcome by the Vice-Chair

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

73 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barbara Brodigan, Alyson Baker and Monika Slater and from Co-optee Martin Macaulay.

74 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2025

Resolved

That, the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chair as a correct record.

75 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

76 Public questions/statements

No public questions or statements had been received.

77 Chair's remarks

The Vice-Chair read out the Chair's remarks.

The Chair attended Executive on 27 May and asked 3 questions of Councillor Janet Sanderson regarding the Quarter 4 Performance Report data for referrals to Children's Social Care (CSC), the number of Children in Care and Child Protection Plans.

Question 1. Regarding CSC, it was noted that the numbers have plateaued but that the average per quarter is still 15% higher than in 2022/23. What is the forecast for the next 12 months and what plans are being put in place to respond to forecast levels of demand, particularly if they are going to increase.

Response

The numbers have been higher due to improvements in the Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST). Also, it has been noted that nationally there has been a change due to the Family First programme which has led to improvements in social care work. Nationally there has been large increase in child poverty and those deemed "just about managing". Hopefully referrals will continue to plateau or reduce.

Question 2. The number of children in care continues to increase to an exceptional level of 568 in Quarter 4. It was noted that 2023/24 saw rates lower than the regional and national rates. How does the current data for North Yorkshire compare with regional and national rates for Q4?

Response

The national data is down and North Yorkshire rates continue to be lower. A watch will be kept on the next quarterly data to see if this remains so.

Question 3. The number of Child Protection Plans are the highest in 10 years and higher than our statistical neighbours, with a forecast increase that will significantly impact on resources. What plans are in place to cope with this expected impact in resources?

Response

There has been a knock-on effect of social workers increasing the number of child protection visits to 63 per day. NYC doesn't use agency staff and needs to recruit more social workers, although this is a challenge. The authority is confident that the numbers requiring child protection plans will plateau and decrease, in line with statistical neighbours.

78 Progress on issues raised by the Committee

Considered

A report by Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer.

It was noted that data regarding the number of children at risk of modern day slavery in North Yorkshire will be provided by the next committee meeting.

Resolved

- 1) That, the report is noted.
- 2) That, data on children at risk of modern day slavery is provided by the next committee meeting.

79 Young People's Champion Annual Report 2024/2025

Considered

A report by Councillor Alyson Baker, Chair of the Young People's Champion.

Members welcomed the report and felt that it provided a detailed account of the meetings and activities that Councillor Baker has attended over the last 12 months. They were pleased to hear that she is involved with the [North Yorkshire Autism all age Strategy 2025-2030](#) and agreed that schools now have a better understanding of autism and special educational needs and disability (SEND) than they did 10 years. It was highlighted that the voluntary sector has recruited volunteers to support young people with autism and SEND. This includes working closely with employers to help them better understand what simple steps they can put in place to support them with basic things, such as getting to work on time. A discussion followed around whether there should be an additional Member Champion to focus solely on neurodiverse / SEND children and young people. It was agreed that this would require further investigation.

The Director of Children and Families clarified the reason that adoption numbers have declined is because a lot of work takes place to help children remain within their family networks.

Resolved

- 1) That, the report is noted.
- 2) That, the Senior Scrutiny Officer to carry out further research regarding proposals to introduce a Neurodivergent/SEND Children and Young People's Member Champion.

80 Information Considered

A report presented by Barbara Merrygold, Head of Early Help.

Barbara gave a brief overview of MIST and how they work in partnership with a wide range of services and organisations. She explained that 75% of the team are people from a black and minority ethnic background with lived experience and have been in post since 2024 on fixed term contracts. Members agreed that it was of huge benefit to recruit staff from the communities that they are supporting.

The social work team carry out age assessments so that they can offer the most appropriate age-related support for individuals.

Funding for MIST is through government grants and there is no indication that the funding will stop.

Young people are supported up to the age of 25, and the care leaving team is on hand to help them move into care leaving accommodation. The transition to one unitary authority has made it easier to find accommodation across the county as the team only have to work with one housing department.

The Vice-Chair asked Barbara to clarify the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee. Barbara will send a brief summary to Alice Fox to circulate.

Resolved

- 1) That, Barbara provides a brief summary to Alice Fox clarifying the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee.
- 2) That, an update is provided at a future meeting.

81 Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill - Key Reforms

Considered

A summary presented by Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services.

Stuart explained that the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is subject to changes as it works its way through Parliament and the final version may look different to the one summarised today. It is expected to be passed sometime this year.

The Bill proposes establishing Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams which aims to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. NYC already have strong safeguarding practices and the resources in place, but other agencies may find this a challenge, especially as they will be expected to increase staffing. The Bill recommends that multi-agency teams should physically sit together. Considering that North Yorkshire is so widespread, this could mean that potentially, several teams would have to be introduced, and there is no reference to how these would be funded.

Unique Child ID's were welcomed, especially as there is a growing number of children moving around local authority areas.

Proposals around removing an automatic right to home educate would offer better protection to children with a child protection plan as there would be a mandate for them to attend school. It was commented that proposals around home education could go further, for example, it doesn't provide a definition of what is considered "suitable education", and home educators are not required to be inspected by Ofsted. The proposal to maintain a register of children not in school will also create financial implications if the Council is expected to fund this.

It was noted that the proposals to support care leavers does not include recognising care leavers as a protected characteristic. Councillor Timothy informed the Committee that letters asking for support to recognise care experienced as a characteristic have been signed by himself and colleagues in the Liberal Democratic and Liberal Group and sent to The Rt. Hon. Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State for Skills and for Women and Equalities; The Rt. Hon. Baroness Stedman-Scott, Shadow Minister for Equalities; The Rt. Hon. Lord Newby, Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords; The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Lord Archbishop of York; and The Rt. Hon. Earl of Kinnoull, Convener of the Crossbench Peers. The Vice-Chair also explained that she has contacted the Local Government Association on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Members' Group urging a re-evaluation of the Care Review's recommendations to make care experience a protected characteristic.

The Bill's proposals aim to improve co-operation between schools and local authorities and will enable LA's to direct admissions. Academies would be expected to follow the national curriculum.

The Committee acknowledged there whilst they welcomed many of the proposals, there is not enough information provided by the Government at this stage about how these would be funded.

Resolved

- 1) That, the summary is noted.
- 2) That, once the Bill has been passed, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services updates the Committee.

82 Work programme

Considered

The work programme for 2025/2026.

Resolved

That, the work programme is noted.

83 Any other items

Councillor Hull asked if the Committee could receive more information about the Council's taxi and transport safeguarding procedures for transporting children and young people. The Vice-Chair asked the Senior Scrutiny Officer to contact the relevant teams.

Resolved

- 1) That, the Senior Scrutiny Officer liaises with officers in Taxi Licensing, Transport Services and Children's Services.
- 2) That, an update is brought to the next Committee meeting.

84 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 17 September 2025, County Hall, Northallerton, commencing at 10.00am

AF

The meeting concluded at 12.10 pm.

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North Yorkshire Council

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2025

Progress on Issues Raised by the Committee

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of progress on issues which the Committee has raised at previous meetings.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report will be submitted to the Committee as required, listing the Committee's previous resolutions and/or when it requested further information to be submitted to future meetings. The table below provides a list of issues which were identified at previous Committee meetings, and which have not yet been resolved. The table also indicates where the issues are regarded as completed and will therefore not be carried forward to this agenda item at the next committee meeting.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to consider whether any further follow-up is required.

	Date	Minute number and subject (if applicable)	Committee resolution or issue raised	Comment or date required	Complete?
1	19 March 2025	67 – Criminal Exploitation	Request for data regarding the number of children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation in North Yorkshire.	By next committee meeting	Completed - see Appendix A
2	25 June 2025	79 - Young People's Champion Annual Report 2024/2025	For Members to receive the North Yorkshire Autism all age Strategy 2025-2030	By next committee meeting	Completed - link to the Strategy has been included in the committee minutes
3	25 June 2025	79 - Young People's Champion Annual Report 2024/2025	For the Senior Scrutiny Officer to carry out further research regarding proposals to introduce a Neurodivergent/ SEND Children and Young People's Member Champion.	By next committee meeting	Completed - see Appendix B

4	25 June 2025	80 - Minority Inclusion Support Team (MIST)	Request for a summary to clarify the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee.	By next committee meeting	Completed - see Appendix C
5	25 June 2025	83 – Any other items	Request for Councillors to receive information on safeguarding procedures for transporting children and young people.	By next committee meeting	Completed – Members Seminar 2 July 2025

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no significant legal implications arising from this report.

5.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no significant equalities implications arising from this report.

6.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no significant climate change implications arising from this report.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the committee:

- a) notes the report;
- b) considers whether any of the points highlighted in this report require further follow-up.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Child Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation data

Appendix B: Consideration to appointing a Neurodivergent Young People's Member Champion

Appendix C: Legal definitions of an asylum seeker and a refugee.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton
2 September 2025

Report Author: Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer.

Appendix A: Child Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation Data

Over the past two years, we have seen an increase in the numbers of children being identified as being at risk of Child Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation. The reasons for this increase are complex and multi-faceted. It includes an increase in awareness and identification of exploitation, as well as an increase in specialist resources to tackle these challenges, particularly in the establishment of a dedicated Police Missing and Exploitation team. It also reflects increases in complexity and the ways in which children are being exploited within communities, both locally and nationally. We know nationally from research from the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) who released their [strategic threat assessment](#) in November 24, that county lines and gangs are utilising a more localised model of exploiting children, with fewer lines running outside force boundaries. Similarly, continued development of social media networks enabling children to link together quickly and increasing accessibility of them by those who may pose a risk of harm both at home and abroad presents ongoing challenges.

Table 1: Children and Young People assessed as being at risk of Child Sexual and/or Child Criminal Exploitation across North Yorkshire.

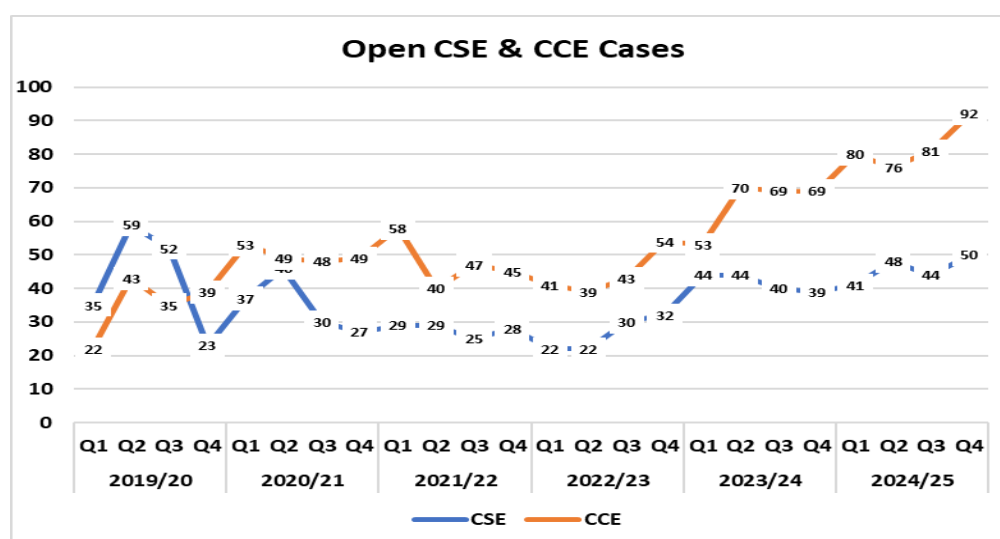


Table 1 above outlines the increase that we have seen since 2019. From the beginning of 2023, we started to see increases in the numbers of children identified as being at risk. This increase was particularly apparent for child criminal exploitation. We know COVID has influenced these numbers, as many children returned back to school and built relationships back in communities. We therefore saw increased confidence in children and young people disclosing what was happening for them. As a result, we now have nearly double the number of children identified as being at risk of exploitation than we did two years ago¹.

¹ Of note, increased of identification of children at risk of exploitation can be as a result of better identification and professional curiosity by frontline practitioner in identifying risk factors for children.

Our MACE Strategic and Operational groups regularly review and monitor this data to seek assurance regarding our current arrangements to support families whose children are being exploited, as well as our disruption plans for those who exploit children and the places and spaces where that harm occurs. For some children, sadly they can be at risk of both sexual, as well as criminal exploitation. Currently we know that 87% of children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation are female and 13% are male. The ages of those who are at risk range from 8 – 17 years with the most common age being between the ages of 15 – 17. Whereas with Child Criminal Exploitation, 81% of children and young people at risk are male and 19% are female. The ages range between 11 – 17 with the most common age being 16 years. The majority of children white British with 10% of children at risk of sexual exploitation coming from an ethnic minority background and 13% of children at risk of child criminal exploitation.

Across the county, we see the localities of Harrogate, Scarborough and Selby with the highest numbers of children who are at risk of exploitation which largely mirrors our more densely populated towns and cities. However, we do see children exploited across our geographical borders into other counties requiring us to have good links to other MACEs in our bordering Local Authority and Force areas.

Table 2 Children and young people at risk of Child Sexual and Child Criminal Exploitation by locality area

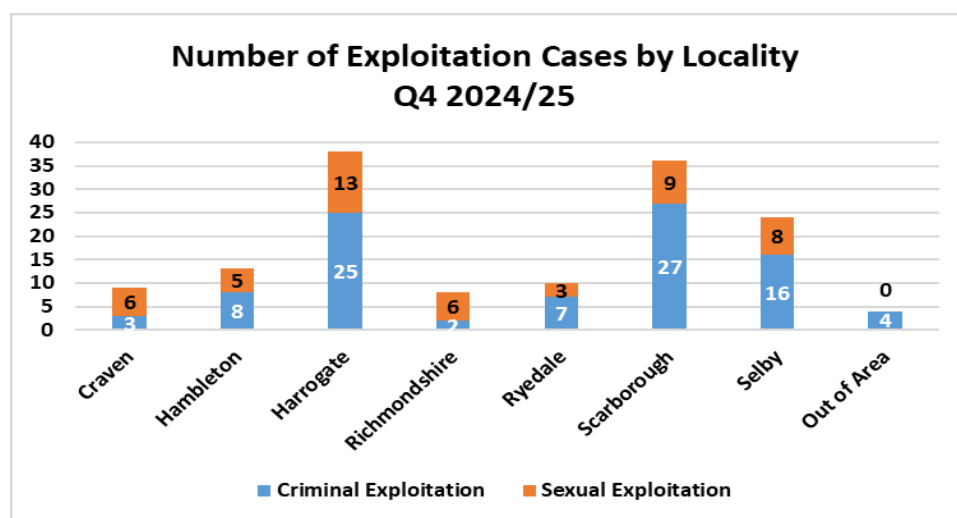


Table 2 above outlines the breakdown of children at risk of both sexual and criminal exploitation by locality. This is correct as at the end of Q4 for 24/25. Not all children who are at risk of child exploitation will be identified as potentially being a victim of modern slavery and human trafficking. Ensuring children are appropriately safeguarded is covered through Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and is a statutory duty placed on our partners. However, the [National Referral Mechanism](#) places a duty on Local Authority and Police, as well as other ‘first responders’ to refer into this framework where there is a suspicion that a child may be a victim of trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. In North Yorkshire, we are one of

the pilot areas for the Home Office’s devolved decision-making panel overseen by the Single Competent Authority (SCA). The North Yorkshire NRM panel is an independently chaired multi-agency panel who meet twice a month to consider cases where there are concerns that a child has been a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking and examine the circumstances to determine if they meet the legal definition as outlined in the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Table 3: Children and Young People referred to the National Referral Mechanism across North Yorkshire

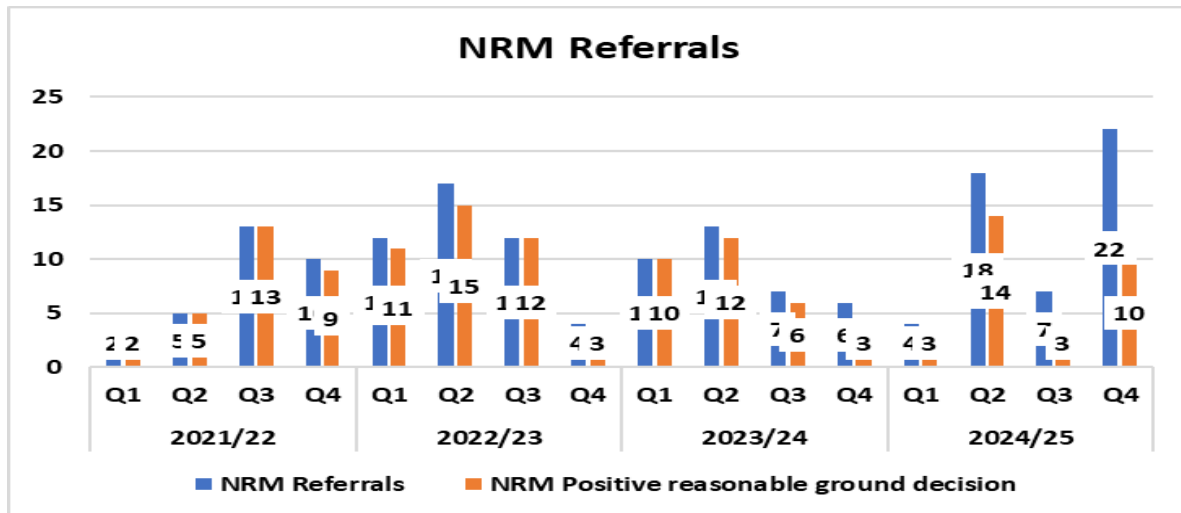


Table 3 above outlines the data which is correct as at the end of 2024/25 Q4. Once a child is referred into the NRM, the initial panel meeting will determine is whether there is sufficient information available to suspect that a child has been subject to modern slavery or human trafficking. This is referred to as the total number of referrals to the NRM (shown on the graph in blue). Those children whose cases have then met the threshold to receive positive reasonable grounds are then highlighted in orange. Please note the criteria for referral into the NRM is on each and every occasion whereby we suspect a child may have been subjected to modern slavery and human trafficking. Therefore, a child may be referred into the NRM more than once. Referral to the NRM is important in recognising a child as being a victim of modern slavery and human trafficking and enabling the potential for them to use what is known as a Section 45 defence in any criminal prosecution, they may be subjected to which may have been as a result of their exploitation. Regular oversight of this data is provided to the MACE Strategic and Operational Groups within North Yorkshire as well as reported back to the Home Office through the NRM Panel Quality Assurance processes.

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North Yorkshire Council

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2025

Consideration to Appointing a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To outline the key factors to consider if a Member Champion for Neurodivergent Young People was appointed.
- 1.2 For the Committee to review the issues presented within this report to help determine whether to recommend the appointment of a Member Champion role to focus on supporting Neurodivergent Young People.

2.0 Background

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 June 2025, members received the Young People's Champion Annual Report. The committee recognised the significant contributions and ongoing commitment of the Young People's Champion. During the discussion, it was suggested that an additional member champion with specific experience of supporting or working with neurodivergent, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and autistic individuals and families could complement the support already being provided by the Young People's Champion.
- 3.2 It was agreed that the Senior Scrutiny Officer would undertake research and present a report at the next committee meeting to help members decide whether to recommend that the Council appoint a Member Champion for Neurodivergent Young People.

4.0 Factors to consider

- 4.1 As stated in the Council Constitution (Appendix A), Member Champions are elected Members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business. The main responsibility of each Member Champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent. There are three Member Champion positions that receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA): Young People's Champion, Older People's Champion and Climate Change Champion. The Leader may, from time to time, in cases where no SRA is to be payable, designate an elected Member as a Champion for a particular issue. There are currently five Member Champions not in receipt of a SRA. Should a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion be appointed, there will be no SRA attached to it. However, discussions could take place around splitting the allowance with the Young People's Champion, as this may be considered appropriate once the remit of the role has been agreed. There is no legal requirement to apply the political balance rules when appointing Member Champions, and they will be made based on their skills, knowledge and suitability for the role.

4.2 The Young People's Champion is fully committed to the role and amongst other obligations, is engaged in discussions around the [2025-2030 North Yorkshire Autism All Age Strategy](#). The aim of the Strategy is to respond to feedback from consulting with the North Yorkshire autistic community, and a set of priorities have been developed to improve the lives of autistic people and their families and carers. Although the Strategy comes under the portfolio of Public Health, all services within the Council played a key role in the development of the strategy, as well as partner agencies such as Autism diagnostic providers and individuals with lived experience.

The Young People's Champion is also a member of the Corporate Parenting Members' Group, where neurodivergent issues are often raised. When required, she escalates queries to Executive Members and senior council officers. The workload is manageable, though there is the possibility that it could increase in the future. Members are therefore invited to consider the merits of an additional Champion appointment in the context of there already being an established Champion role covering a range of cross-cutting issues for children and young people.

4.3 Should a new champion be appointed that also has the scope of supporting young people, a clear remit outlining the distinction in roles and responsibilities between the two will have to be developed so that there is no crossover.

4.4 Member Champions do not have authority to commit the Council in any way that could be interpreted as conflicting with established policy and practice. However, they can endorse and promote positions that are explicitly set out in published Council policies and ensure that lived experiences are reflected.

4.5 Whilst other local authorities have appointed Autism Champions, their remits and responsibilities vary. For example, Cumbria County Council have 6 Autism Champions made up of councillors from each Local Area Committee. They are supported by Community Development Officers and the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor. Whilst their aim is to raise awareness and advocate for autistic adults and children and their families, they focus on community cohesion, inclusion and integration, rather than service delivery.

4.6 Although local authorities and partnerships are actively developing and implementing autism and neurodiversity strategies, few have formally appointed elected member champions specifically for autistic or neurodivergent individuals that focus on service improvement and delivery. These roles may exist informally or be embedded within broader responsibilities.

4.7 Appointing a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion could be considered to be primarily a health issue and therefore be the responsibility of the Scrutiny of Health Committee, and not Children and Families.

4.8 A request to appoint a new Member Champion would, in the first instance, go to the Leader of the Council, followed by the Executive and Full Council.

5.0 Consultation undertaken and responses

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Contribution to Council Priorities

- Safe, healthy and living well.
- Maximise the potential.

7.0 Alternative options considered

7.1 Options include:

- To recommend that the leader of the Council considers appointing a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion, with clear terms of reference outlining the role and responsibilities.
- For the Committee to agree that a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion is not required.
- For the Committee to review in 12 months whether a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion is required.

8.0 Impact on other services/organisations

8.1 There will be no impact on other services/organisations.

9.0 Financial implications

9.1 There are no financial implications. If a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion is appointed, the options will be to either a) not allocate a SRA to the post, or b) to allocate some of the Young People's Champion SRA.

10.0 Legal implications

10.1 There are no legal implications.

11.0 Equalities implications

11.1 Appointing a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion will complement the equality considerations that the Council is already giving.

12.0 Climate change implications

12.1 Not applicable.

13.0 Performance implications

13.1 Not applicable.

14.0 Policy implications

14.1 Not applicable.

15.0 Risk management implications

15.1 Not applicable.

16.0 Human Resource implications

16.1 Not applicable.

17.0 ICT implications

17.1 Not applicable.

18.0 Community safety implications

18.1 Not applicable.

19.0 Recommendations

19.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i. For the Committee to note the report and consider the information provided to help decide if a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion is required.
- ii. If the Committee agree that a Neurodivergent Young People's Champion is required, to decide if this is the responsibility of Children and Families or Scrutiny of Health.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Excerpt from the Council Constitution re: Role and Responsibilities of a Member Champion.

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton
4 August 2025

Report Author: Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer.

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendix A: Role and Responsibilities of a Member Champion

Member Champion Role

Member Champions are elected Members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business. The main responsibility of each Member Champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.

Appointment of Member Champions

The Council may, from time to time, in cases where a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) is to be paid, appoint an elected Member as a Champion for a particular issue. Currently, such Member Champion positions attracting an SRA are:

- Young People's Champion
- Older People's Champion
- Climate Change Champion

The SRA based Member Champions are members of Scrutiny Board and take an annual report to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader may, from time to time, in cases where no SRA is to be payable, designate an elected Member as a Champion for a particular issue. Currently, such Member Champions not attracting an SRA are:

- Armed Forces Champion – Councillor Kevin Foster
- Digital Champion – Councillor Gareth Dadd
- Flooding – Councillor David Jeffels
- Cycling/Active Travel – Councillor Keane Duncan
- Road Safety – Councillor Steve Watson

A register of Member Champions will be kept by the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services.

There is no legal requirement to apply the political balance rules to the appointment of Member Champions and as such they will be made based on skills, knowledge and suitability for the role.

Should such Member Champions wish to issue a press release on matters relevant to their role, they should do so in accordance with the Council's Protocol for Official Press Releases in the Constitution.

Responsibilities of each Member Champion

Each Member Champion will:

- a) represent their area of interest both within and outside the Council in line with Council policy;
- b) contribute to the review and development of policies pertaining to their area of interest;
- c) challenge and question the Council, the Executive Members and the Chairs of Committees on issues relevant to their area of responsibility;
- d) monitor the Forward Plan and seek information from the Leader, Committee Chairs and Officers about forthcoming business and exert influence on behalf of the interest;
- e) keep Members of all parties up to date with activities in relevant to the area of interest;
- f) provide positive support and on occasions constructive challenge to Officers on relevant issues; and
- g) act as the Council's representative on relevant external bodies where appointed to by the Council.

Scope of Member Champion role

Member Champions are entitled to have appropriate access to information held by the Council relating to the interest being championed and also have access to support from senior Officers.

Officers will ensure there is appropriate engagement or consultation with the relevant Member Champion where the issue clearly relates to the interest.

The Member Champion's programme of activities should reflect the Council's overall priorities.

A Member Champion cannot make decisions which bind the Council and must not commit the Council in any way or in a manner that could be interpreted as being contrary to established policy and practice. They may however confirm a position as stated in a published policy.

The Council, Executive, Committee Chairs and Officers will take account of any views offered by the Member Champions prior to making decisions relating to their area of interest.

Appendix C: Legal definitions of an asylum seeker and a refugee.

The legal definition of an asylum seeker is a person who has applied for protection from persecution under the UN Convention in a country that has signed up to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and is awaiting a decision from that country.

The legal definition of a refugee is a person who has been given permission to stay in a country because of a process which began with a claim and/or assessment for protection under the UN Convention

The asylum system sits alongside the two resettlement programmes in the UK (UKRS and ARP), as a route to receiving the right to remain in the UK. However, those arriving through a resettlement route are given the right to remain in the UK *before* their arrival, whereas asylum seekers *must* arrive in the UK *before* making their claim.

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North Yorkshire Council

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2025

Briefing relating to the Post Implementation Review of the Home to School Travel Policy

Report of the Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the committee about the proposed Post Implementation Review to be undertaken in July 2026.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an outline of the structure and proposed content of the Post Implementation Review (PIR). The review requires evidence of the impacts of the revised home to school travel policy (2024) and will therefore take place at the end of the school year after the initial policy implementation. Although adopted in September 2024, the change mainly affects the cohort of children starting or changing schools in September 2025. Undertaking the review at the end of the academic year 2025-26 will enable full analysis of data relating to this cohort of pupils as well as the council's arrangements for supporting travel to school, including the implementation of all elements of the policy from admissions processes to transport eligibility assessments and appeals, to the delivery and oversight of the contracted travel arrangements. It allows services to monitor and report on the assumptions used in the policy development and to report on these using a whole year data set.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The council consulted on and subsequently adopted the current home to school travel policy in July 2024. A post implementation review of the policy was offered during the democratic decision-making process, and it was determined that this would take place one academic year after the policy was fully implemented so it could consider the whole year data relating to the 2025-26 bulk admissions round.
- 3.2 There is no duty for the council to undertake a formal PIR. However, the council does undertake PIRs following other changes where there are legal duties to undertake one, or where it would be beneficial to undertake one. PIRs are undertaken in order to ensure the principles of accountability and good governance are met and to review the impact of policy changes in order to retrospectively evaluate whether the policy development aims align with the initial cost saving assumptions, and whether there are unforeseen impacts upon the community or whether mitigations identified are working to minimise these impacts.
- 3.3 The Council does not have a standard PIR format and has utilised a template from central government whose departments are required to undertake PIRs after secondary law or regulation changes.

- 3.4 Officers involved in the policy review and delivery of the policy will work together to carry out the review. This includes colleagues in finance, integrated passenger transport, admissions and transport, inclusion, transformation, legal and democratic services and business support. The final report will be presented to the Executive Committee.
- 3.5 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also have the opportunity to review the report and any findings in autumn 2026.
- 3.6 It must be noted that the purpose of the PIR is to review the *implementation* of the 2024 policy, not the policy itself.

4.0 FORMAT OF THE POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

- 4.1 The report will be arranged in six sections:
- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Section 1 | What were the objectives of the policy? |
| Section 2 | PIR methodology |
| Section 3 | What were the original assumptions and identified risks? |
| Section 4 | Has the policy met its objectives? |
| Section 5 | What can we learn from the first full year of implementation? |
| Section 6 | Are there any opportunities for the Council to improve in relation to this policy? |
- 4.2 **Section 1** will set out the legal basis for the policy and the rationale for the policy change. This includes the updated guidance from DfE, the need to address the increased costs relating to the delivery of home to school transport and the review of the discretionary provision. Within this section, we will also set out the programme of non-policy savings and efficiencies relating to the delivery of home to school transport arrangements.
- 4.3 **Section 2** will explain, through a set of performance indicators, the context of the Council's policy prior to the policy change and during the initial implementation year. This will provide comparisons of 2023-24 and 2024-25 information with 2025-26 data. In this part of the report, we will present high level 2025-26 data alongside the assumptions used in the policy development stage, including within the model used to forecast the savings potential.
- 4.4 Numerical data will be extracted from a number of sources, which include, but are not limited to:
- School census information
 - School admissions information
 - Transport eligibility assessment outcomes
 - Transport contract information
 - Financial records and forecasts
- 4.5 We will also gather and report on other quantitative and qualitative data, including relating to the impacts seen through the complaints and appeals processes.
- 4.6 In **Section 3**, we will summarise the elements of the 2024 policy which were unchanged from 2019, and we will describe some of the assumptions that underpinned the policy implementation, for example, that eligibility for transport provision under the previous policy would continue for most pupils and that the admissions process would be unchanged and would be carried out first, before eligibility for transport could be assessed.
- 4.7 Other assumptions and risks that will be reported on include, but are not limited to, possible confusion between admissions and transport policies, increased appeal rates in the first few years, the potential for uneven impact of the policy across the county, the range of savings identified in the policy proposal, and the assumption that the savings would only be realised if the reduction in the number of eligible pupils results in a reduction in the size or number of

vehicles required and the costs associated with any given route. The equalities and climate impact assessments will be reviewed as part of the PIR activity.

- 4.8 In **Section 4**, the success of the policy against its original objectives will be considered. The report will set out whether, since the adoption of the policy, there have been any national changes to law, and we will report on compliance using the checklist in annex 5 of the DfE's 'travel to school for children of compulsory school age - statutory guidance for local authorities' document.
- 4.9 In this section, in order to understand the savings benefits of the policy change we will provide cohort information, transport operation information and budget information and comparing the previous, current and forecast information. We will look at each discretionary element of the policy and report on the differences seen since the 2024 policy implementation. This will include a detailed analysis of the effect of the removal of the discretionary catchment eligibility criterion.
- 4.10 **Section 4** will also include performance information relating to some of the non-policy related savings for example, contract savings such as the use of solo travel arrangements, the use of passenger assistants, and the use of small vehicles with <8 seats.
- 4.11 **Section 5** will describe the aspects of policy implementation that have led to learning for the Council over the implementation year. This section will describe, for example, any unintended consequences arising in the first year. We will report on the administration of the new policy including a summary of the enquiries, complaints, appeals and the Council's responses to these. We aim to estimate the resources used in this aspect of the policy implementation. We will highlight the main issues occurring in media and describe how these have changed over time, reflecting stages in the policy implementation cycle.
- 4.12 To conclude, in **Section 6** the report will reflect on the learning in **Section 5** and propose areas of further analysis or potential policy revision that the Council may wish to take forward into future revisions of the policy, subject to the requirements of the annual policy cycle. There are three parts to this section:
1. Potential recommendations for clarification of the policy – without changing the policy intent
 2. Potential recommendations for the practical implementation of this policy – specifically in the administration and delivery of the policy
 3. Potential for any costed recommendations for future policy change – for example changes to the eligibility criteria

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The policy implementation review process is not mandatory, but the Council has asked for this to be undertaken to support transparent monitoring of the policy change.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 6.1 The review activity will be undertaken alongside normal business operations and, wherever possible, using internal resources. This will require capacity from within the teams listed in section 3.4.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. As described in this report, the PIR will include an assessment of the savings achieved from the implementation of the policy during one school year. This assessment will consider the performance indicators

and savings attributable to the policy. This will also inform any potential changes to the budgeted assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for consideration by Full Council in February 2027, noting that the financial impact of the policy was anticipated to accrue over seven academic years.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct legal implications from this report. The Council is not under a mandatory legal duty to undertake a PIR in respect of home to school travel policy. The Council was satisfied that the policy is legally compliant during the policy development, decision making and implementation stages. The Council remains satisfied that the policy is legally compliant. If the PIR identifies any proposed changes to the policy, the Council would need to undertake further consultation and decision making in order to change the policy.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Equalities impacts will be considered as part of the PIR activity.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Climate change impacts will be considered as part of the PIR activity.

11.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Any recommendations resulting from the post implementation review will need to be fully costed and presented to the Executive for consideration in line with the policy review cycle. This requires that changes are determined by 31st July, prior to implementation from September of any year.

11.2 Depending on the nature of any recommendations, it is too early to say whether a consultation would be required. However a consultation period would need to be taken into account in the development of a timeline should changes to the policy be required.

11.3 Indicative timeline for next steps

September 2025	Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny
Spring 2026	Members' seminar
July 2026	Final data extract for PIR
September 2026	Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny
Oct/Nov 2026	Executive Committee
Spring 2027	Consultation, if required
Summer 2027 (by 31 st July)	Executive and Full Council, if policy revision is required
September 2027	Revised policy, if required

12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 This report is to inform the committee about the proposed Post Implementation Review to be undertaken in July 2026 and provides an outline of the content that will be covered in the PIR.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

i) The committee are asked to note and comment on the outline structure and content for the post implementation review of the home to school travel policy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Executive Committee item 499a

[Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 16 July 2024, 11.00 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Full Council item 101

[Agenda for Full Council on Wednesday, 24 July 2024, 10.30 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)

DfE guidance

[Travel to school for children of compulsory school age](#)

Sir Stuart Carlton

Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Services

County Hall

Northallerton

8th September 2025

Report Author – Amanda Fielding, AD Inclusion

Presenter of Report – Amanda Fielding, AD Inclusion

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

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North Yorkshire Council

Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2025

Performance Report for Quarter 1 2025/26

Report of the Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review a summary of the relevant thematic performance data that forms part of the quarterly reports to the Executive.
- 1.2 For the committee to consider whether there are any lines of enquiry arising from the information provided to follow up on, for example issues to request further information on or to be put forward for the future work programme.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 North Yorkshire Council is ambitious to provide the best possible services to residents, communities and businesses. Understanding how we are performing is a critical step in identifying how we can continue to improve and achieve the best outcomes. As noted in the North Yorkshire Council Performance Management Framework 2025-26: “As an organisation going through a huge amount of change, monitoring performance, understanding it and learning from that insight is crucial to keep us on track.”
- 2.2 A key part of the corporate performance management arrangements is the ‘Quarterly Performance and Budget Monitoring Report’, considered by the Executive to show progress against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identified against the Council Plan. The report is organised under the five Council Plan themes: Place and Environment, Economy, Health and Wellbeing, People and Organisation, to aid in the monitoring of the overall Council Plan.
- 2.3 As part of the consideration of this report at the quarterly Performance Monitoring Executive meetings, members of the Scrutiny Board, made up of the Chairs of each of the six Overview and Scrutiny committees, are invited to ask questions to hold Executive members to account, based on the data, trends and narrative presented in the report of any performance challenges or opportunities.
- 2.4 As part of ensuring that this Overview and Scrutiny committee plays its role in analysing the performance of the relevant directorate within the Council, a summary of the performance information is presented as an appendix to this report for consideration at this meeting. It is intended that performance information is presented to the committee on a bi-annual basis.
- 2.5 The appendix provides all committee members an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments, as well as to identify and interrogate trends in the data presented and identify key lines of enquiry. This scrutiny process of performance could lead to follow up actions from the committee, such as requests for follow-up reports to the committee at a future meeting, informal briefings on particular areas of interest and/or requests for further information to be collated from the directorate to develop the knowledge and understanding of the committee.

3.0 PERFORMANCE REPORT

3.1 The Executive Performance Report for Q1 2025-26 is presented at Appendix A and B. It sets out a summary of the KPIs and narrative that details the directorate performance and forms part of the overall quarterly reports considered by the Executive.

3.2 At the latest Performance Monitoring meeting of the Executive on 19 August, the Chair of Scrutiny Board sought responses from the Executive Member for Children and Families and the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills around the following points:

- Number of calls to the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) and referrals to social care.
- Timeliness of children and family assessments.
- Number of child protection plans.
- Number of permanent primary school exclusions.

3.3 In response, the Executive Members and the Director of Children and Families advised that:

- The increase in calls to MAST include general enquiries and requests to be signposted so not every call will result in a referral to social care.
- Although the time taken to complete a children and family assessment has increased, performance is still significantly better than national figures.
- It is expected that the number of child protection plans will fall.
- Officers are working with targeted schools to address exclusion and education psychologists are supporting primary school children with SEND to identify their specific needs.

3.4 The committee will note that the data for Q1 2025-26 highlights a continuing pattern in the following areas:

- Fall in the number of child and family assessments completed within 45 working days.
- Increase in children being home educated.
- Increase in number of primary school permanent exclusions.

There has been a welcome trend towards:

- Reduction in the number of referrals to Children's Social Care.
- Timeliness of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Increase in number of children being discharged from care plan.
- Percentage of families either satisfied or very satisfied with the involvement from the Children & Families Service.
- Percentage of children with up-to-date health assessments, dental checks and up-to-date immunisations.

3.5 At the committee meeting on 18 June 2025, the committee heard about how the proposals in the Children's and Wellbeing Bill is addressing home education.

The committee may wish to consider whether further investigation is required in relation to primary schools' permanent exclusions to develop their knowledge and understanding of the topic further, and to hear about the council's preventative work.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 All local authorities have a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

6.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As a wider strategic document, the Council Plan 2025-2029 provides an opportunity to improve our understanding of outcomes in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion across protected characteristic and socio-economic groups, and target action to eliminate discrimination, advance equality (reduce inequalities) and foster good relations in line with our Public Sector Equality Duties.

7.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

8.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This report sets out the thematic performance data that forms part of the quarterly reports to the Executive. By presenting directorate-specific KPIs and narrative information for the Overview and Scrutiny committee to review, this will help to improve corporate grip, control and delivery in our drive to improve as an organisation.

9.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 To give committee members an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments on the directorate performance set out in Appendix A and B and identify key lines of enquiry that could form part of future reports and feed into the work programme.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- i) Note the performance information detailed in Appendix A and B.
- ii) Feed back on the performance data and narrative contained within Appendix A and B, with a view to considering any future lines of enquiry for the committee to explore.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Q1 2025-26 Executive Performance Report

Appendix B – Q1 2025-26 Executive Performance Report Appendix

Barry Khan
Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton
4 September 2025

Report Author – Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

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Executive Performance Report

Quarter 1 2025-26

Report produced by Strategy and Performance

Contents

Contents.....	2
Executive summary	3
Safe, Healthy and Living Well.....	5
Maximise the potential.....	14

Executive summary

Introduction

Welcome to the **quarter one** performance report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025.

The main report includes an executive summary highlighting a combination of areas doing well and areas to be addressed. The report has been organised by our five revised Council Plan ambitions for 2025/29:

Thriving Places and Empowered Communities, Sustainable and Connected Places, Safe, Healthy and Living Well, Maximise the Potential and One Council, this is to aid in the monitoring of the Council plan over time.

The report also includes the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Appendix of KPI's taken from the Council Plan

Safe, healthy and living well

Going Well

Referrals to Children's Social Care (CSC)

This quarter has seen the lowest quarterly number of referrals for 2 years with 1,292 recorded and is 234 (-15%) fewer referrals than in Q1 last year.

Placement Stability

Despite the increase in the number of children entering care during Q1 2025/26, there has been notable improvement in both short and long term stability for children. The outcome being that children entering care are experiencing fewer placement moves and more consistent care and remaining in more familiar environments for longer.

To be Addressed

Child Protection Plans

The number of open Child Protection Plans (CPP) increased for the 6th successive quarter to 666, 42% higher than 12 months ago (n=197). The rate of CPP per 10k population stood at 58 per 10k at the end of the quarter, statistically significantly higher than the rate recorded nationally (45 per 10k) or the statistical neighbour average (35 per 10k).

Timeliness of Assessment

Over the last 12 months we have seen the average number of working days taken by social workers to complete a Children & Families assessment rise from 26 in Q1 2024/25 to 32 in this quarter. We've also seen the proportion of assessments completed within the 45 working day threshold fall by 5% to 91% in the same period. Although this is the worst quarterly performance reported in 8 years, it remains significantly better than the national or statistical neighbours averages (84% and 86% respectively).

Children in Care

The number of children in care is currently at an all-time historical high in North Yorkshire, increasing further at the end of Q1 2025/26 to 571 children in care, compared to Q4 2024/25 with 565 children in care.

Maximise the potential

Going Well

Timeliness of EHC plans issued

There has been a considerable improvement in the timeliness of new Education and Health Care plans being issued. 59% of EHC plans were issued within the 20-week deadline in Q1, compared to 12% in the same period of 2024/25. June saw performance at **73%**, which was the highest monthly rate seen for four years.

To be Addressed

Permanent Exclusions

Whilst there has been some indication of a reduction in suspensions (temporary exclusions from school for a fixed period), schools choosing to permanently exclude remains at similar levels to last year. There have been 111 permanent exclusions from mainstream schools in 2024/25 to date, compared to 110 at the same point of the previous academic year.



Safe, Healthy and Living Well

Ensure the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well

Children and Families Safeguarding & Child Protection

Summary

This quarter has seen the seasonally adjusted number of contacts received at the front door increase by 5% (n=396) with 8,645 contacts received. This is the highest quarterly number of contacts received since the inception of the MAST and a 13% increase (n=984) compared with Q1 last year. Analysis highlights increased contacts from police, schools and individuals have driven the rise in contacts this quarter.

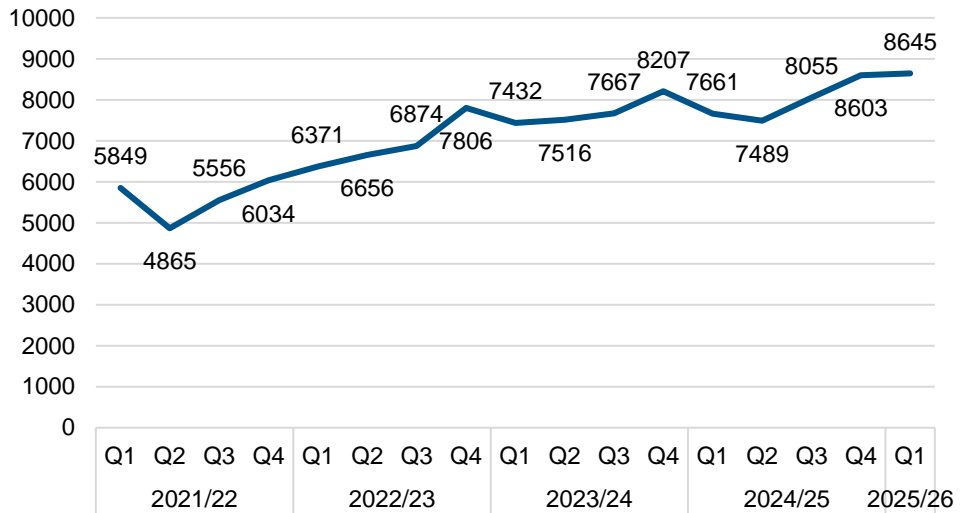
We continue to see more children present at risk of significant harm necessitating a statutory child protection plan. There were 206 such plans issued this quarter, a 13% increase (n=24) compared with Q1 last year. This has led to an unprecedented 666 open CPP at the end of the quarter.

Timeliness of assessment fell by 1.4% this quarter to 91.4%, although this remains significantly better than the national average (84.4%) or the statistical neighbour average (86.2%). However, performance this quarter was much lower than the 96.6% reported in Q1 last year.

Contacts at the Front Door

This quarter has seen another period of very high demand at the front door, with 8,645 recorded. Whilst this is similar to the 8,603 contacts received in the previous quarter, it is 13% higher (n=984) than in Q1 last year. The seasonally adjusted increase in contacts can be attributed to an increase in contacts from the police (+19%, +631 contacts), health services (+8%, +128 contacts) and from individuals (+20%, +103 contacts).

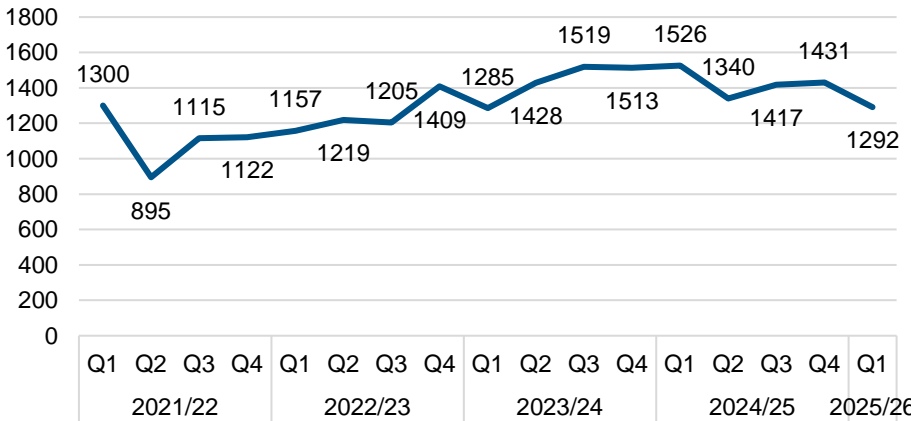
MAST Quarterly Contacts



Referrals to CSC

Despite demand remaining exceptionally high at the front door, this quarter saw referrals fall by 139 (-10.7%) to 1292 this quarter. This is 234 (-15%) fewer referrals than in Q1 last year and is the lowest quarterly number of referrals received in 2 years.

Quarterly Referrals to CSC

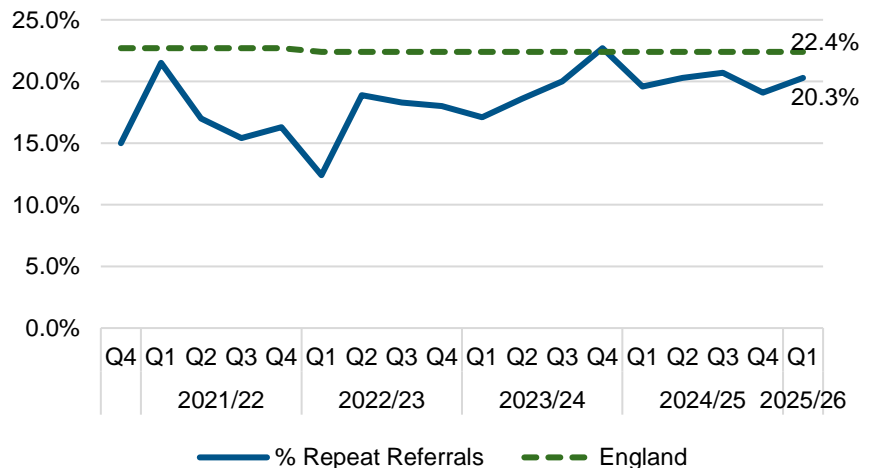


However, despite the reduction in the number of overall referrals we continue to see a high number of children referred at risk of significant harm, demonstrated by the 757 strategy meetings held this month and 486 S47 child protection investigations undertaken this quarter.

However, despite the reduction in the number of overall referrals we continue to see a high number of children referred at risk of significant harm, demonstrated by the 757 strategy meetings held this month and 486 S47 child protection investigations undertaken this quarter.

Repeat Referrals to CSC

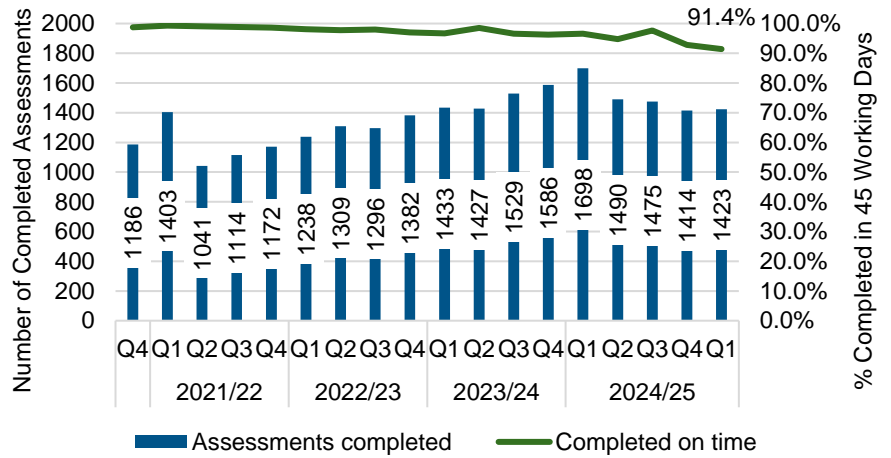
The rate of re-referral rose by 1.2% to 20.3% this quarter and remains statistically significantly lower than the national rate of 22.4%.



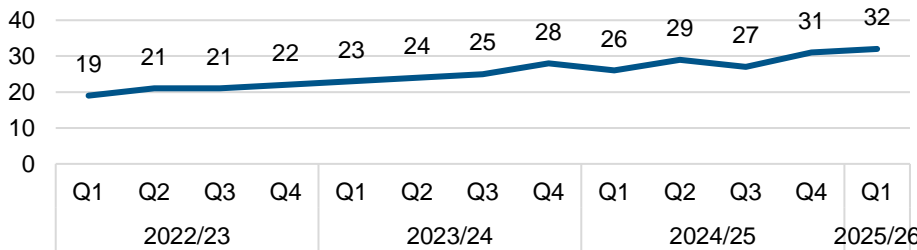
Timeliness of Assessment

Historically, timeliness of assessment has been a key strength in North Yorkshire, and the local authority has consistently been among the top 5 performing local authorities nationally in recent years. However, performance has deteriorated in recent months from 98% in Q3 2024/25 to 91% in Q1 this year. It's worth noting that despite the dip in performance, timeliness of assessment remains significantly better than the most recent national data (84.4% completed in 45 working days) or statistical neighbour average (86.2%).

Number & Timeliness of Children & Family Assessments



Timeliness of Assessment - Average Working Days to Complete

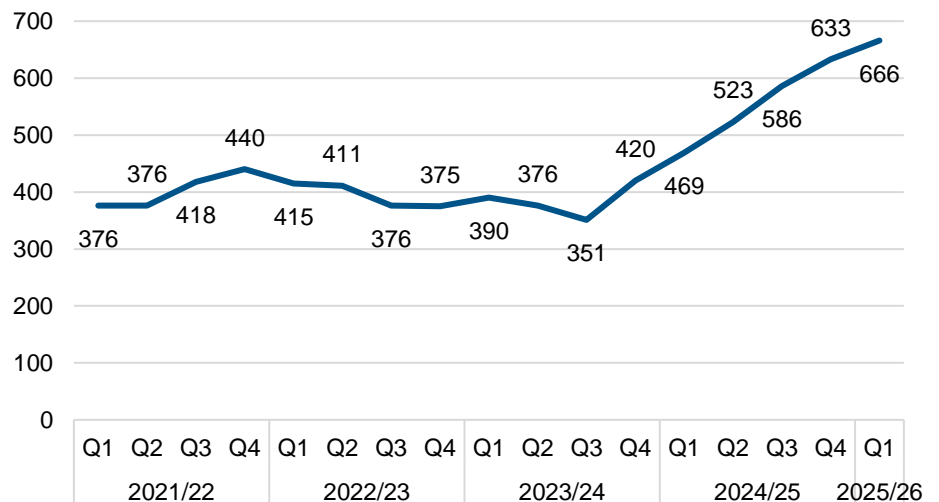


The average number of days taken to complete an assessment has increased from 27 working days in Q3 2024/25 to 32 working days this quarter, which is similar to the national average (32 working days) and the statistical neighbour average (33 working days).

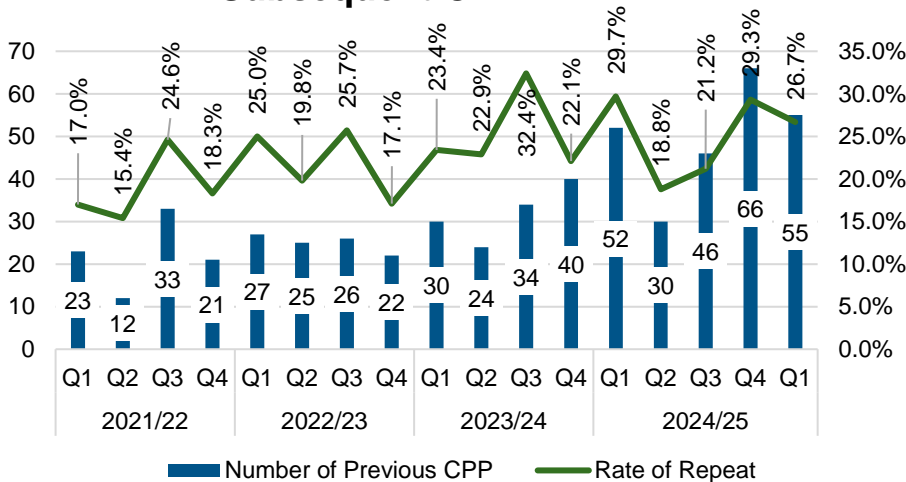
Child Protection Plans

This quarter saw the number of open CPP rise for the 6th successive quarter to 666 at the end of June. This is an increase of 5% (n=33) compared to the position at the end of March and a 42% increase (n=197) compared to the number of open CPP at the end of June last year. This is the highest quarterly number of open CPP in at least 10 years and reflects the increase in the number of children presenting to services at risk of significant harm. However, the rate of increase this quarter is much lower than the average of 12% over the previous 4 quarters.

Number of Open CPP



Rate & Number of Second or Subsequent CPP



It's important to note that the high number of CPP places additional demands on the service and wider partner organisations. The issues faced by children subject to a CPP are typically more complex or entrenched than in the case of a Child in Need and will therefore require more intensive interventions over a longer period.

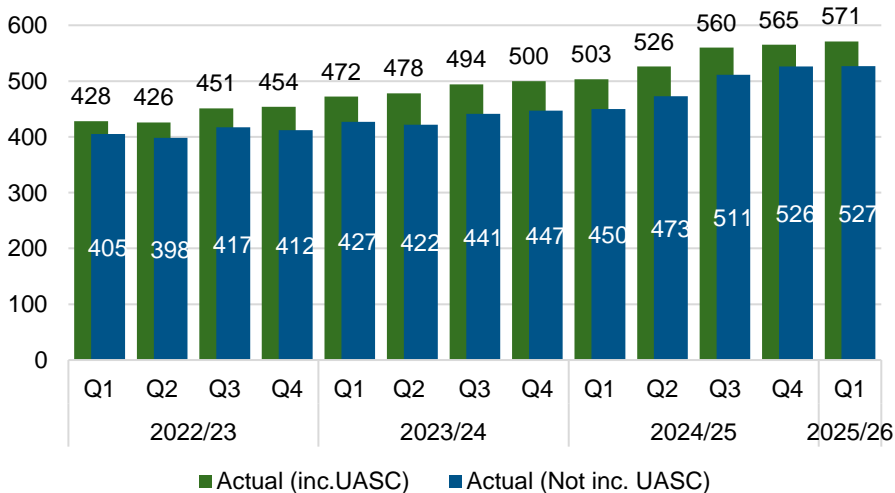
Of the 206 new CPP issued this quarter 55 were second or subsequent plans, equivalent to a rate of 26.7%. It's worth noting that in 27 of 55 second or

subsequent plans more than 2 years had elapsed since the previous plan.

Children Entering into Care

The number of children in care is currently at an all-time historical high in North Yorkshire, increasing further at the end of Q1 2025/26, to 571 children in care, compared to Q4 2024/25 with 565 children in care, this is an increase of 6 individual children and +1%, although it is worth noting the percentage increase and number of children is in line with that at Q4 2024/25, with 5 individual children and +0.9% increase reported. Additionally, when cross referencing back to Q1 2024/25 year on year comparisons demonstrate increases of +68 children and +13.5% increase.

Number of Looked After Children



Regarding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children there has been an increase to 44 children at the end of Q1 2025/26 compared to 39 children at the end of Q4 2024/25, presenting an increase of 5 individual children and +11.4% increase in children. At same point last year is a decrease of 9 individual children and decrease of -17%.

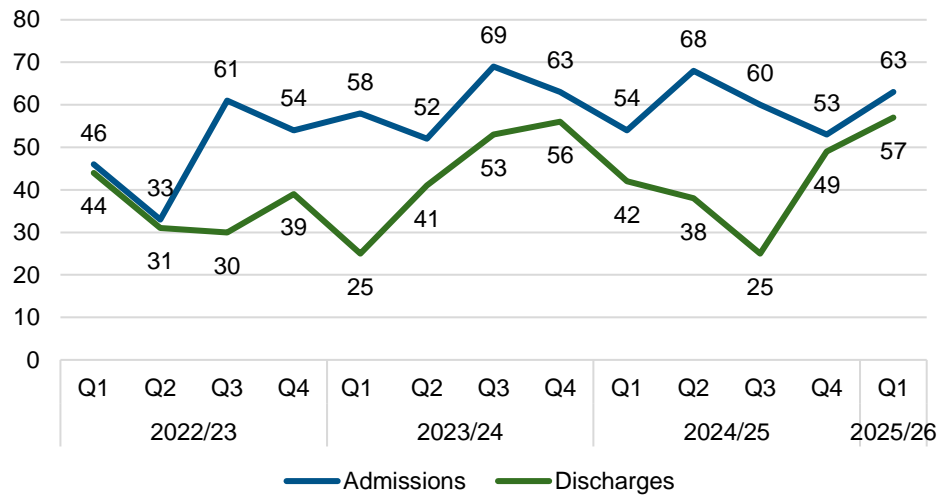
Although the number of children entering care increased further, it is worth noting this growth is similar to that of Q4 2024/25 and Q3 2024/25, demonstrating that the increased rates have

reduced when comparing this quarter's data to the first two quarters in 2024/25 (Q1 and Q2). When analysing the data further regarding admissions and discharges, the data currently is indicating in the last two quarters (Q4 2024/25 and Q1 2025/26), the numbers of admissions and discharges are becoming more aligned and the gap has narrowed between these two indicators.

At Q3 2024/25, 60 admissions were reported compared to just 25 discharges (+35 more admissions than discharges), the impact increased the numbers of children in care further. As a contrast, if you look at the

end of Q4 2024/25, there were 53 admissions versus 49 discharges (+4 more admissions than discharges). Although, at the end of Q1 2025/26 the gap is slightly more with 63 admissions versus 57 discharges (+6 more admissions), as a year on year comparison also this is a decrease compared to performance at Q1 2024/25, 54 admissions versus 42 discharges (+12 more admissions).

Admissions Vs Discharges



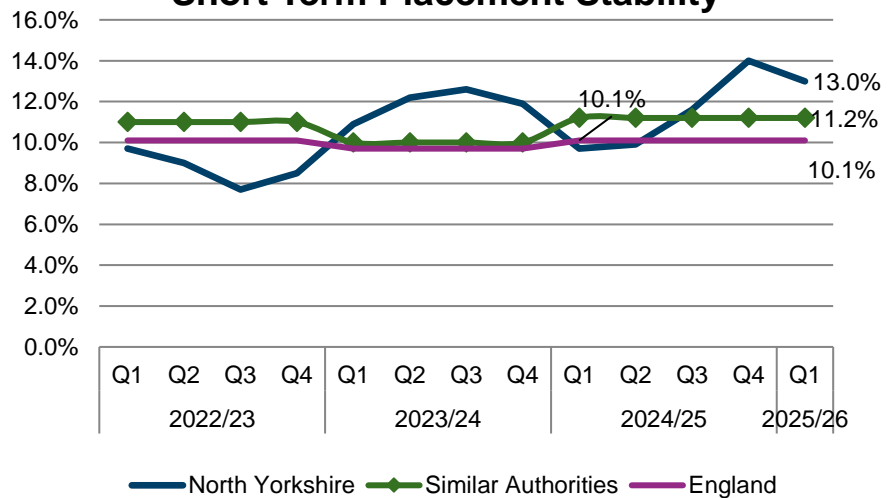
Short and Long Term Placement Stability

Despite the increase in the number of children entering care during Q1 2025/26, there has been notable improvement in both short- and long-term stability for children. The outcome being that children entering care are experiencing fewer placement moves and more consistent care and remaining in more familiar environments for longer, which is important for a child’s emotional and developmental wellbeing. However, it is worth noting that not all placement moves are detrimental for the children, in some cases this can lead to a better match and meet the child’s needs more appropriately and a step in the direction of a better level of permanence for the child.

Short Term Stability

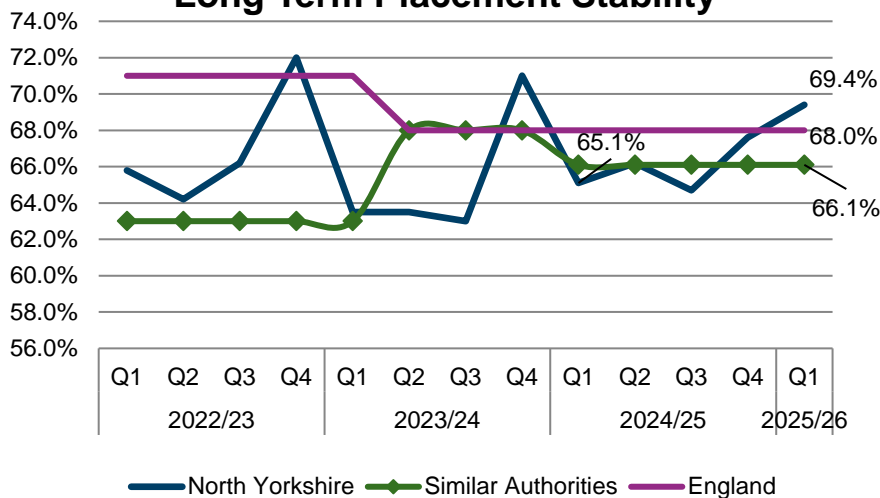
Regarding short term stability at the end of Q1 2025/26, fewer children have experienced 3 or more placements during the period, 74 (13%) of children, compared to 83 (14.7%) of children at the end of Q4 2024/25. Although, this is a positive step and is an improvement when comparing it to the same point last year at Q1 2024/25, the number of children experiencing 3 or more placements moves was reported as 48 (9.7%) of children, this represents a +3% increase year on year, however the number of children in care at that point was also considerably lower at 497 children in care at the end of Q1 2024/25. The national average currently from the 903 DFE Children in Care Return 2023/24, reported 10% of children with 3 or more placements in 12 months and that of our statistical neighbours 11.2%.

Short Term Placement Stability



Long Term Stability

Long Term Placement Stability



Long Term Stability continues to be strong and demonstrates a positive trend for children entering care in North Yorkshire and has improved at the end of Q1 2025/26 to 69.4% with 150 children in long term placements of over 2 years compared to 68.2% at the end of Q4 2024/25, with 146 children in long term placement of over 2 years. When comparing the same point last year this also is demonstrating an increase of +3.1% year on year, compared to Q1 2024/25 (65.1%). Additionally North Yorkshire performance is strong and above both national and statistical benchmarks with national average

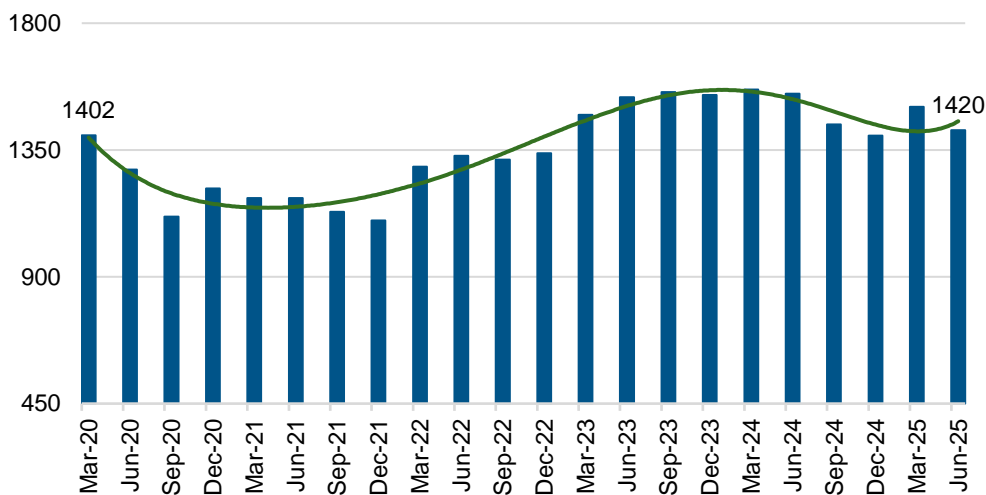
currently reported from DfE releases for 2023/24, as 68% and that of our statistical neighbours also at 66.1%.

Early Help

Activity

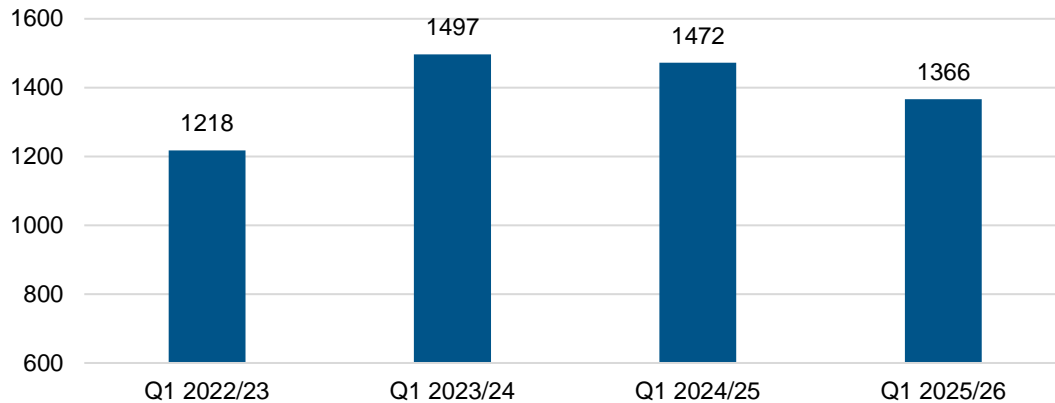
The number of ongoing households receiving support from the Early Help Service has decreased in Quarter 1 2025/26 and has reduced down by 5.5% compared to Q4 2024/25. The current total of 1,420 Households relates to 2,705 children and young people.

Ongoing Early Help Households



Demand through the 'front door' has reduced by 7.2% to 1,366 compared to the Q1 2024/25 (1,472), as shown in the chart below. The low Quarter 1 2022/23 figure may be due to continuing reduced demand during the Covid 19 pandemic. Compared to the previous quarter, Q4 2024/25, then new referrals have decreased even more, by 11.6% from the 1,546 Early Help Episodes in January-March 2025.

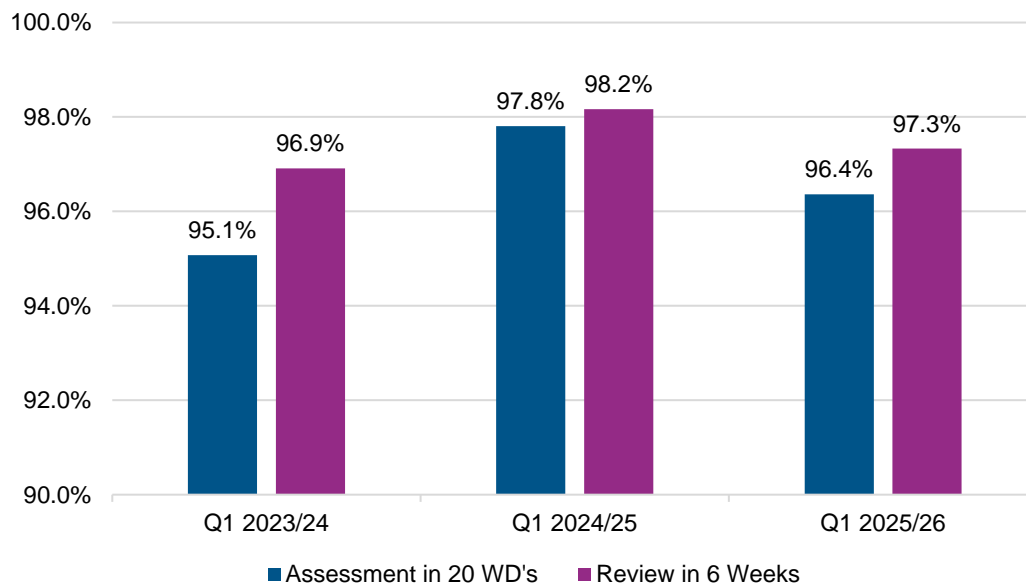
MAST Contact Decision: New Early Help Episode



In Q1 2024/25, the average length of time cases were open was 17.4 weeks (Episode Leads). this has increased slightly to 17.6 weeks in Q1 2025/26. For 0-19 young people, in Q1 2024/25, the figure was 17.6, increasing to 17.9 in Q1 2025/26.

Timeliness – Early Help Assessments

Timeliness of Early Help Assessments



The timeliness of Early Help Initial Assessments continues to be very strong with 96.4% of Initial Assessments completed within the 20 working days target in Quarter 1 2025/26. However, this is a reduction from 97.8% in Q1 2024/25.

In addition, 97.3% of Assessment Reviews were completed within the 6 weeks target in Quarter 1 2025/26 – again a slight reduction from

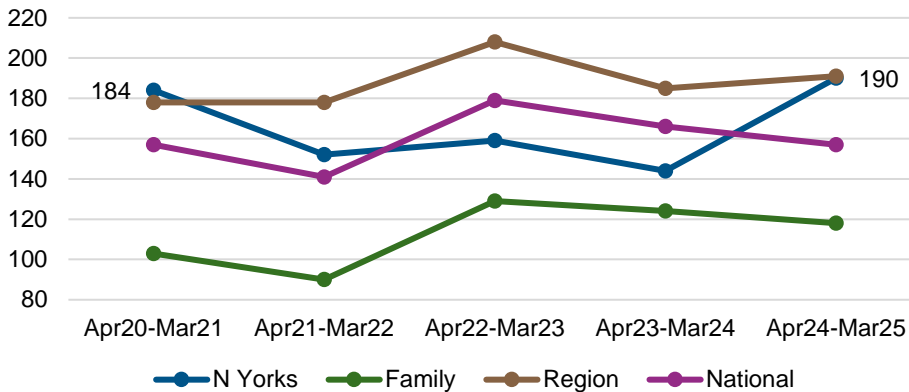
98.2% in Quarter 1 2024/25.

Youth Justice Service

First Time Entrants (FTE's) into the Criminal Justice System

The latest data for the 12 months ending March 2025 showed an increase in the rate of FTE's (r=190) into the criminal justice system in North Yorkshire compared with the rate 12 months previously (r=144). The rate of 190 relates to 106 young people and places North Yorkshire in the 3rd Quartile nationally.

First Time Entrant Rate



The current rate in North Yorkshire is similar to the regional rate (r=191), but higher than the national rate (r=157) and the family group average (r=118).

Recent data is taken directly from the YJS case management system rather than from an extract of the Police National Computer (PNC). Data from the case management system will show more FTE's than the official

data as it will count some offences (e.g., some Motoring Offences) which are excluded from PNC as they are not 'recordable'.

As with the previous data, the most recent data has been impacted by a few recording issues following the move onto the new case management system. The figure of 106 young people includes 4 Out of Area cases. Deducting these cases would reduce the rate from 190 to 183 (102 young people).

The figure of 102 includes 18 non-recordable Motoring Offences which would not be input onto PNC.

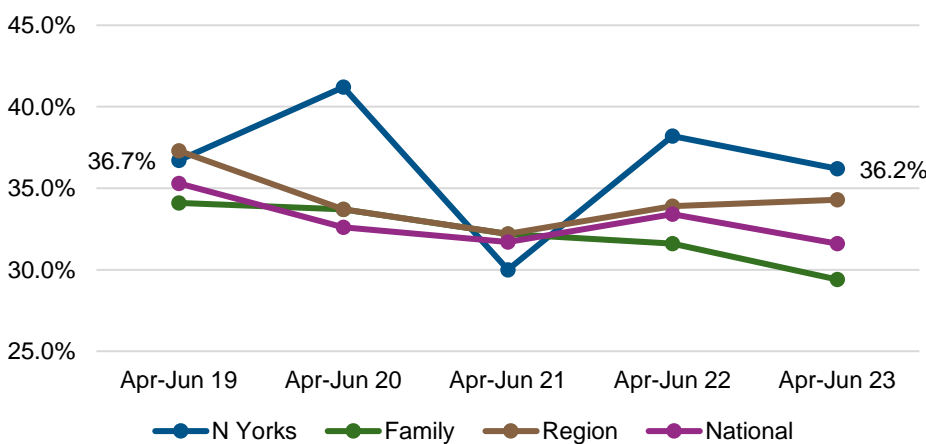
The Ministry of Justice recently published the 2024 calendar year FTE data taken from the official source, an extract of PNC. The data showed 78 FTE's in North Yorkshire equating to a rate of 140. This compares with the data published by the YJB from YOT case management system data for the same period of 99 FTE's equating to a rate of 178 (after deducting the cases included due to inputting errors).

It is anticipated that the rate will drop in the next set of figures as the quarter that will 'drop out' of the figures (April-June 2024) contained a particularly high number of FTE's (n=37).

Reoffending Rates

The latest official Binary re-offending rate for North Yorkshire of 36.2% for the April-June 2023 cohort was a decrease from the figure of 38.2% seen in the cohort 12 months previously. However, the rate is higher than the Family Group average (29.4%), Regional rate (34.3%) and National rate (31.6%).

Binary Reoffending Rate



The April-June 2021 cohort showing a low reoffending rate in North Yorkshire is believed to have been impacted by covid related lockdowns and the recovery of the court system.

The frequency rate for this cohort (average number of reoffences per reoffender) decreased significantly to 3.06 and is lower than the Family Group rate of 5.28, Regional rate (4.96) and National rate (4.25).

The North Yorkshire cohort consisted of 47 young people with 17 reoffenders committing 52 proven reoffences.

The number of young people in the latest cohort is the highest level seen since the April-June 2021 cohort. The average cohort size in the 5 cohorts from Jan-Mar 2022 up to and including Jan-Mar 2023 was 35 with an average of 13 reoffenders.



Maximise the potential

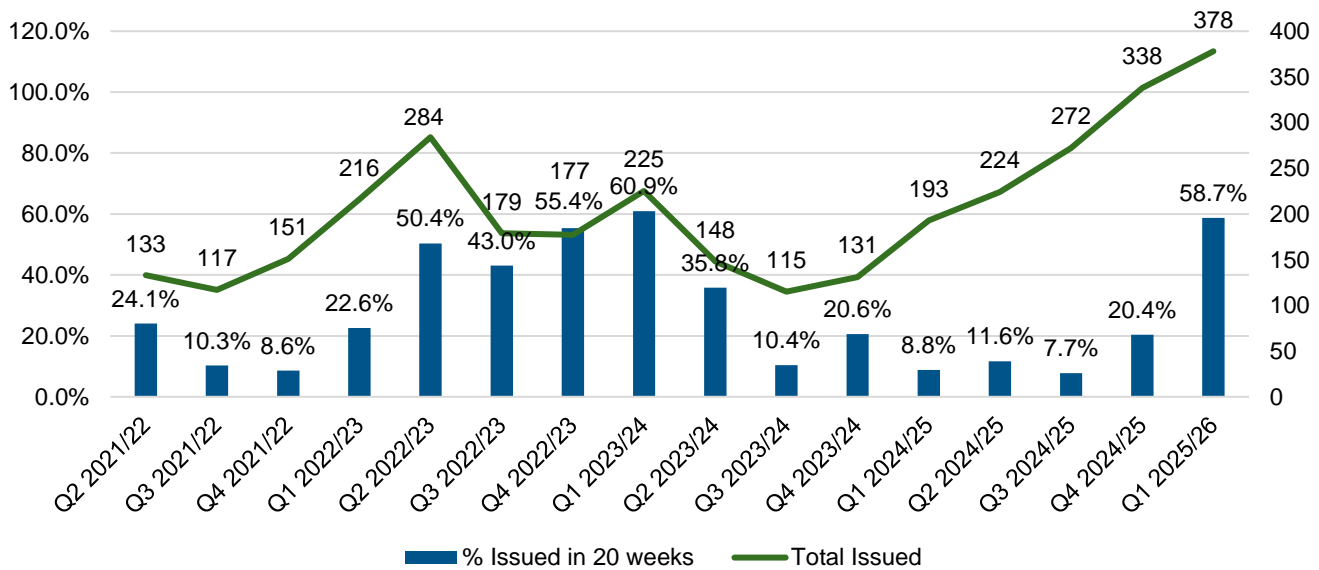
Maximise the potential of North Yorkshire’s people and communities.

Inclusion

Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan Timeliness

There has been a clear improvement in the timeliness of issuing EHC plans since the beginning of 2025 and this has continued through Q1. 59% of EHC plans were issued within the 20-week deadline in Q1, compared to 12% in the same period of 2024/25. June saw performance at 73%, which was the highest monthly rate seen for four years.

Timeliness of EHC plans issued



Previous national comparisons placed North Yorkshire below the national average of 46%. However,

given the sustained improvement in performance, North Yorkshire’s performance would be expected to be well above this national benchmark by the end of the year.

This increase in timeliness has been achieved alongside increasing numbers of new EHC plans being issued, 378 were issued in Q1 2025/26 compared to 193 issued in Q1 2024/25. It is now expected that a higher number of EHC plans will be issued in this year than any previous year.

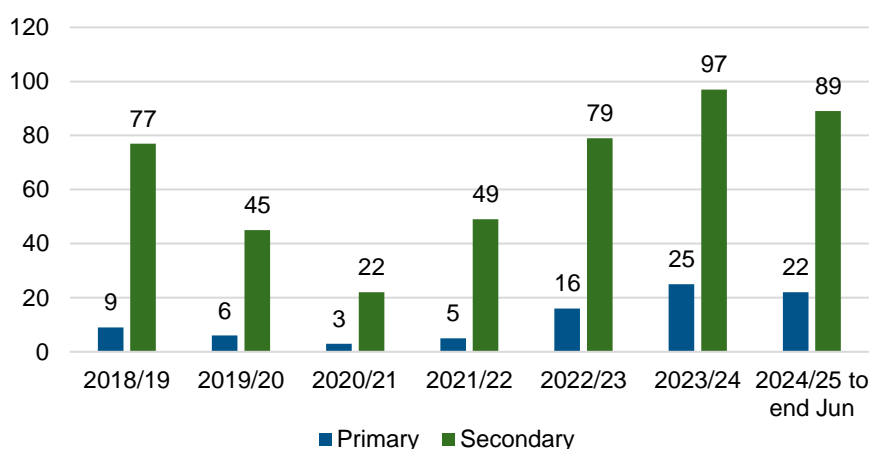
Exclusions from School

Total numbers of children being excluded from schools for either a temporary period or permanently continues to be higher than recorded before the pandemic, however there is some indication that the number of suspensions is beginning to slow or reduce.

It is important to note that schools choosing to exclude is a trend observed nationally and the most recent available national data (Spring term 2023/24 academic year) shows that North Yorkshire rates of exclusion have been at or below national rates for primary and secondary schools.

There have been a total of 111 permanent exclusions from North Yorkshire mainstream schools in 2024/25 academic year to the end of June, pending potential appeals. This compares with 110 in the same point of 2023/24.

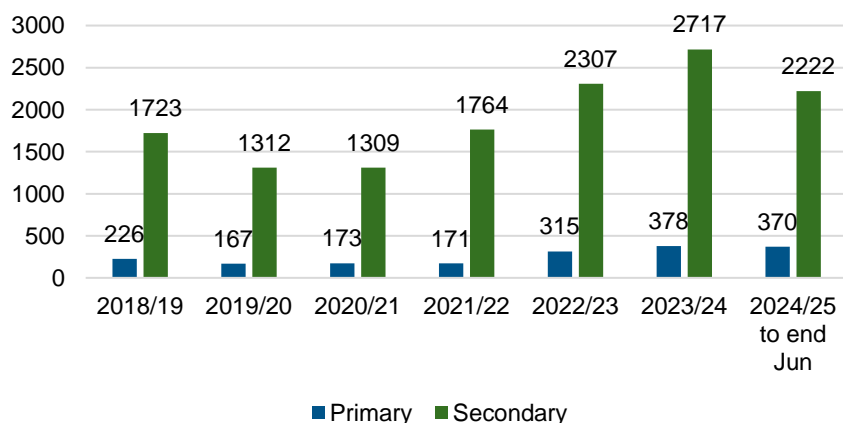
Permanent Exclusions



Rates of secondary schools and primary schools choosing to permanently exclude is very similar to recent years. There is as yet no sign in a reduction in the high level of permanent exclusions from primary schools which increased from 5 in 2021/22 to 25 in 2023/24. So far this year, there have been 22 permanent exclusions from North Yorkshire primary schools.

Whilst there has been an increasing national trend in the numbers of children suspended (temporary exclusions) at least once from schools since the pandemic, there is some indication that this is beginning to slow and reduce. The increase in North Yorkshire from 2022/23 (2609) to 2023/24 (3098) was +18% (n=+489). In 2024/25 to the end of June, there have been 2222 children suspended from secondary schools (totalling 7754 separate suspensions) and 370 from primary schools (370 suspensions), compared to 2717 and 378 at the same point last year respectively, suggesting that there will have been a reduction in total suspensions from secondary schools in this academic year.

Child Suspended



Reasons for schools choosing to suspend are very similar to previous years. Persistent disruptive behaviour has been by far the most common reason (55% of all suspensions), Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour toward an adult, the next most common reason given, makes up approximately 16%.

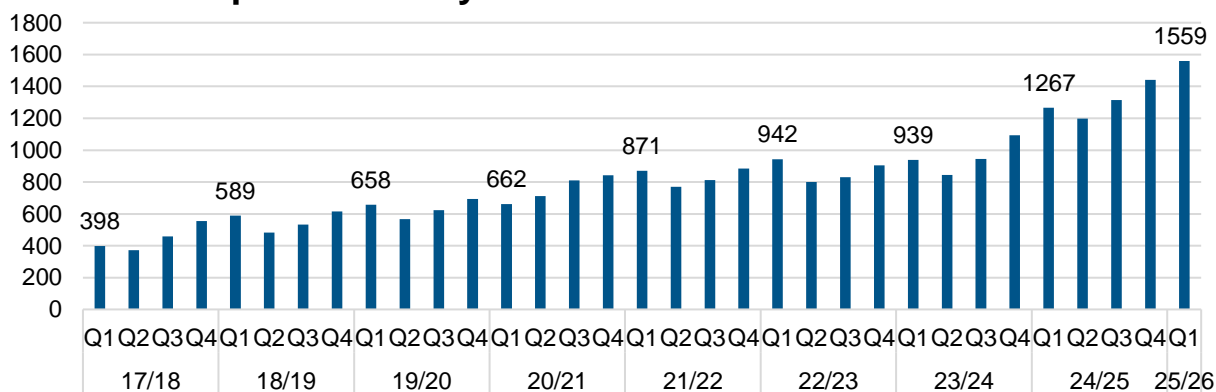
Elective Home Education

There are currently the highest number of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) in North Yorkshire than at any time, 1559 by the end of Q1 2025/26, compared to 1267 at this point last year. It is a parental entitlement to Elective Home Educate and has become increasingly prevalent since the pandemic, with no indication of a decrease in this trend into the future.

Published national comparators put the National rate of EHE as a percentage of the school population at 1.4%, North Yorkshire is 1.5% (DfE, 2024). Based on current internal data, North Yorkshire’s rate would be closer to 1.7% at this point in time, with National data for this year forthcoming.

Nationally published statistics show that an increasing number of parents are choosing to home educate due to mental health concerns, a trend similar to that witnessed in North Yorkshire. The recently published national 10 Year Health Plan (Fit For The Future) announced the expansion of mental health support teams in schools and colleges to “identify needs and provide additional support for children and young people’s mental health through Young Futures Hubs.

Pupils Electively Home Educated at Quarter end



Education and Skills

Attendance

Overall attendance in schools appear to have marginally improved into 2024/25, when compared to recent years, although it continues to be below levels before the pandemic. Pre-pandemic, the primary school attendance rate was recorded as 96.1% (currently 95.2%) in 2018/19 and 94.4% in secondary (currently 90.5%), 91.3% for special schools (currently 84.3%).

Improvements in attendance are most apparent amongst children recorded as being persistently absent (absent from at least 10% of all sessions through the year) in primary schools. As of the end of June, 10.8% of all children were recorded as persistently absent in primary schools, below (better than) the 2023/24 rate of 12.4% and the national rate of 14.6%.

Whilst improvements have also been seen in secondary and special schools, these continue to be above national rates recorded in 2023/24.

North Yorkshire Council has held an Education Matters event this year to share information and promote partnership working for school attendance. These events have been valuable in understanding potential solutions.

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Executive Performance Report Appendix







Quarter 1 2025-26

Report produced by Strategy and Performance




Introduction

The appendix has been organised by the five Council Plan themes: Thriving Places and Empowered Communities, Sustainable and Connected Places, Safe, Healthy and Living Well, Maximise the Potential and One Council. There are 171 KPI's in total, with 107 reported on a quarterly basis and 64 reported on an annual basis.

RAG – An indication of the level of performance an indicator is currently achieving in relation to a set target or national benchmarking level for that indicator. While the RAG rating is linked to the two “Improvement since last” markers, it is a standalone measure, measured by performance to either the target or benchmarking.

	Green - Current performance is on or exceeding target, whether in relation to target or national benchmarking		Red - Current performance is significantly below expected standards, whether in relation to target or national benchmarking.		Baseline - Indicates performance is currently being tracked to inform the benchmarking / target setting process.
	Amber - Current performance is below expected standards, whether in relation to target or national benchmarking		Contextual - These measures present a rounded view of information relevant to the service area although performance may not be within the control of the Council.		In Development - The KPI has been agreed, but data collection is needed to inform performance levels.

“DoT” – Current **Direction of Travel** when compared to the last annual or quarterly figures. This is a measure of how the indicator is moving over two periods – Annual and Quarterly. Key:

	Direction of travel is positive compared to the year-end or last quarter figures		Direction of Travel is negative compared to the year-end or last quarter figures		Performance is static to last year's outturn or last quarter's figures	N/A	Data either at a yearly or quarterly level not available
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Strategic Level Performance:

Code	KPI: Quarterly Indicators	Ambition	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26
CYPS36	Number of children in care	Safe, Healthy and Living Well	450	473	511	526	527
CYPS34	The total number of children subject to a child protection plan (rate per 10,000)	Safe, Healthy and Living Well	41.2 (469)	46.0 (523)	51.4 (586)	55.6 (633)	58.0 (666)
CYPS13	The % of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 weeks	Maximise the Potential	8.8%	11.6%	7.7%	20.4%	58.7%
ASC2	Admissions to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population for people aged 65+	Safe, Healthy and Living Well	677	720	710	682	627
ASC5	% of reablement clients not receiving a subsequent package of social care support within 91 days (*reported a quarter in arrears)	Safe, Healthy and Living Well	65.3%	68.3%	71.0%	71.9%	N/A
ASC3	% of hospital discharges to adult social care managed on pathways 0 or 1, i.e. home first	Safe, Healthy and Living Well	68.3%	68.7%	69.4%	68.3%	69.3%
CD1	% Major planning applications within statutory or extension of time	Thriving and Empowered	83.72%	75.0%	83.72%	86.11%	77.02%
CD2	% Minor planning applications within statutory or extension of time	Thriving and Empowered	76.14%	78.63%	83.02%	88.75%	78.28%
EN2	% of Household waste recycled/ sent for reuse, recycling or composting (*reported a quarter in arrears)	Sustainable and Connected	47.6%	43.9%	42.8%	35.5%	N/A
EN11	Highways inspections carried out within timescale including footways	Sustainable and connected	93.3%	89.5%	94.4%	95.6%	98%
RE10	% of telephone calls answered in 4 minutes	One Council	80.90%	90.96%	89.90%	81.87%	88.15%
RE12	Staff turnover rate	One Council	2.63%	3.80%	2.93%	2.74%	3.05%
	KPI: Monthly Indicators		Feb 25	Mar 25	April 25	May 25	June 25
CD12	Percentage of homes with a valid gas safety certificate (currently reported monthly)	Housing	95.28%	98.81%	97.69%	98.71%	98.11%
CD14	% of responsive repairs to council houses completed within their target timescale (monthly)	Housing		67.76%	88.95%	81.32%	79.65%

Target setting

It is advised, to aid in formulating RAG ratings that the majority of KPI other than those badged as Contextual, Baseline or In Development should have a set target, or one linked to the anticipated direction of travel (DoT) of the KPI. Type of target could include:
















- **Statutory** – As defined by government.
- **Quartile / Benchmarking** - More suited for annual KPI. Performance to be in upper quartile, mid quartile or above average. This is when compared to a standardised group of like authorities or functions.
- **Directorate** - As defined by the directorate, with regards to; the DoT of the KPI, current performance levels, benchmarking and future aspirations.
- **Improving** - The aim is to improve performance of the KPI in relationship to current position This is solely based on the KPIs DoT.
- **Declining** - In certain circumstances the directorate may wish to see performance drop to lower levels than current – i.e. negative movement.

Safe, Healthy and Living Well

- Ensure the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy and living well.

SAFE, HEALTHY AND LIVING WELL – CORPORATE LEVEL KPI								
KPI Code	Primary Indicator	Latest Data	Previous Data	Benchmarking / Target	RAG	DoT		Notes
						Quarter	Year	
Quarterly								
CYPS31	Number of households open to Early Help	Q1 1420	24/25 Q4 1503 Q3 1,401 Q2 1,441 Q1 1,550					
CYPS32	Timeliness of initial assessments (Early Help)	Q1 96.4%	24/25 Q4 94.9% Q3 97.2% Q2 95.6% Q1 97.8%					
CYPS33	Timeliness of assessment reviews (Early Help)	Q1 97.3%	24/25 Q4 98.1% Q3 98.1% Q2 98.0% Q1 97.8%					
CYPS34	The total number of children subject to a child protection plan (rate per 10,000)	Q1 - 58.0 (666)	24/25 Q4 55.6 (633) Q3 51.4 (586) Q2 46.0 (523) Q1 41.2 (469)	National rate (Q4 2024/25) – 45.3 SN Average (Q4 2024/25) – 34.5				Rate has increased by 42% in the last 12 months, driven by an increase in the number of children meeting the threshold of risk of significant harm to merit statutory child protection.
CYPS35	Rate of second or subsequent child protection plans	Q1- 26.7%	24/25 Q4 30.5% Q3 21.2% Q2 18.8% Q1 29.7%	National rate (Q4 2024/25) – 24.2% SN Average (Q4 2024/25) – 21.6%				

North Yorkshire Council Executive Performance Report Appendix Quarter 1 2025-26

CYPS36	The total number of children in care	Q1 - 527	24/25 Q4 526 Q3 511 Q2 473 Q1 450	National Rates and Statistical Neighbour Rates are worked out at the number per 10k so not aligned to our quarterly reporting.				The number of Children in Care remained stable with an increase of just 1 child regarding North Yorkshire children entering care. Regarding UASC children there has been an increase this Quarter up to 44 compared to 39 at the end of Q1 2024/25 The total number of children in care including UASC is currently at 571 compared to 568 children and young people at the end of Q4 2024/25.
CYPS37	The number of admissions to children in care	Q1 - 63	24/25 Q4 53 Q3 64 Q2 68 Q1 55	National Rates and Statistical Neighbour Rates are worked out at the number per 10k so not aligned to our quarterly reporting.				The number of admissions into care have increased by 10 compared to Q4 2024/25, however, looking back at Q2 and Q3 2024/25 it is lower than the admissions reported then. Also, what is encouraging is the number of discharges has increased and are now more in line with admission rates.
CYPS38	The number of discharges from children in care	Q1 - 57	24/25 Q4 49 Q3 27 Q2 41 Q1 48	National Rates and Statistical Neighbour Rates are worked out at the number per 10k so not aligned to our quarterly reporting.				The number of discharges into care have increased by 8, this is reflective of the hard work of the service to get children the best outcomes and will help with the recent high demands on children entering care.
CYPS39	The Percentage of referrals to children's Social Care that are repeat referrals	Q1- 20.3%	24/25 Q4 19.1% Q3 20.7% Q2 20.3% Q1 19.5%	National rate (Q4 2024/25) – 20.5% SN Average (Q4 2024/25) – 17.6%				
CYPS40	The percentage of children with an up-to-date SDQ	Q1- 73%	24/25 Q4 72.9% Q3 68.2% Q2 73.3% Q1 70.6%	National rate (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 82% SN Average (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 75.8%				The percentage of children with an up to date SDQ score has increased up to 73% which is higher compared to Q4 2024/25 and the same point last year at Q1 2024/25.
















Page 57

North Yorkshire Council Executive Performance Report Appendix Quarter 1 2025-26



CYPS41	The average SDQ score for children in care	Q1 – 16.7	24/25 Q4 16.1 Q3 16.7 Q2 17.2 Q1 16.9	National rate (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return 14.7 SN Average (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return 14.5)				The average SDQ score has increased marginally compared to Q4 2024/25 up 0.6, at the same point last year the score is lower by 0.2.
CYPS42	The number of Care Leavers receiving support from the leaving care team	Q1 534	24/25 Q4 522 Q3 525 Q2 528 Q1 520					The number of care leavers continues to grow, impacted significantly from the number of Unaccompanied Asylum seekers, ageing out and ceasing to be looked after and becoming a care leaver.
CYPS43	% of Care Leavers (aged 19, 20 or 21) that the local authority is 'in-touch' with	Q1 98.9%	24/25 Q4 99.5% Q3 99.4% Q2 99.5% Q1 99.5%	National rate (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 92% SN Average (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 96.1%				Although at the end of Q1 2024/25 care leavers is below the previous quarter and year on year comparison this is still strong performance from the service when comparing to the national benchmark and statistical neighbours.
CYPS44	% of Care Leavers (aged 19, 20 or 21) in suitable accommodation	Q1 96.3%	24/25 Q4 92.7% Q3 94.7% Q2 98.3% Q1 97.0%	National rate (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 88% SN Average (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 92.7%				Although at the end of Q1 2024/25 care leavers is below the previous quarter and year on year comparison this is still strong performance from the service when comparing to the national benchmark and statistical neighbours.
CYPS45	% of respondents who were either satisfied or very satisfied with the involvement from the Children & Families Service	25/26 Q1 100%	24/25 Q4 93% Q3 94% Q2 89% Q1 87%					The percentage of families satisfied or very satisfied at the end of Q1 2025/26 has increased up to 100% compared to 93% at the end of 2024.25 this is a +7% increase and +13% increased based on the same point last year.
CYPS46	Number of Contacts Received by MAST	Q1 - 8645	24/25 Q4 8603 Q3 8055 Q2 7489 Q1 7661	No target applicable and not benchmarked				There is no nationally agreed definition of a contact, preventing benchmarking. Contacts have increased in each of the last 4 quarters
CYPS47	Number of Referrals to CSC	Q1 – 1292 (113 per 10k)	24/25 Q4 1431 Q3 1417 Q2 1340 Q1 1526	National rate (Q4 2024/25) – 141 per 10k SN Average (Q4 2024/25) – 105 per 10k				

Page 58

North Yorkshire Council Executive Performance Report Appendix Quarter 1 2025-26




CYPS48	Percentage of C&F assessments completed in 45 working days	Q1 – 91.4%	24/25 Q4 92.8% Q3 97.7% Q2 94.8% Q1 96.6%	National rate (Q4 2024/25) – 83.8% SN Average (Q4 2024/25) – 75.4%				2nd successive quarter to see a fall in performance, although performance remains better than national of SN averages
CYPS49	The percentage of children with an up-to-date health assessment	Q1 – 91%	24/25 Q4 89.2% Q3 83.5% Q2 85.4% Q1 83.5%	National Rate (2023/24 903 DFE Return) 89% SN (2023/24 903 DFE Return) 88.4%				Children services continue to strive to improve the health outcomes for the children in North Yorkshire’s care, this has made a significant difference to the % of children and young people with an up-to-date health assessment. At the end of Q1 2025/26 this is +1.9% compared to Q4 2024/25 and +7.5% compared to the same point last year (Q1 2024/25).
CYPS50	The percentage of children with an up-to-date dental check	Q1 – 79%	24/25 Q4 73.6% Q3 75.2% Q2 70.2% Q1 72.0%	National Rate (2023/24 903 DFE Return) 79% SN (2023/24 903 DFE Return) 77.2%				Dental is another area that children services have strived to improve ensuring children in North Yorkshire’s care get access to a dentist and get a dental check within 12 months, making a significant difference to the % of children and young people with an up-to-date dental check. At the end of Q1 2025/26 this is +5.4% compared to Q4 2024/25 and +7.0% compared to the same point last year (Q1 2024/25).
CYPS51	The percentage of children with up-to-date immunisations	Q1- 76.9%	24/25 Q4 73.4% Q3 71.8% Q2 71.9% Q1 76.7%	National (2023/24 903 DFE Return) 81% SN (2023/24 903 DFE Return) 86.2%				Immunisations are constantly reviewed by children services to improve ensuring children in North Yorkshire’s care working very closely with health partners, which over 2024/25 into 2025/26 have improved significantly. At the end of Q1 2025/26 this is +3.5% compared to Q4 2024/25 and +0.2% compared to the same point last year (Q1 2024/25).
CYPS52	Binary Reoffending Rate	Apr-Jun23 36.2%	Jan-Mar23 28.6% Oct-Dec22 40.0% Jul-Sep22 44.0% Apr-Jun 22 38.2%	National Apr-Jun 23 31.6%				The official Binary re-offending data (3-month cohort) for North Yorkshire increased from the low figure seen in the last cohort, to 36.2%. The latest rate is higher than the Family Group average (29.4%), Regional rate (34.3%) and National rate (31.6%).
Annual								

Page 59
















CYPS30	First Time Entrant Rate per 100,000	Apr24-Mar25 190	Jan-Dec 24 181 Oct23-Sep24 176 Jul23-Jun24 170 Apr23-Mar24 144	National 157 Region 191 Family Group 118		N/A		The latest rate (190) is higher than the Family Group average (118), the Regional Rate (191) and the National Rate (157). It is anticipated that the rate will drop in the next set of figures as the quarter that will 'drop out' of the figures (April-June 2024) contained an unusually high number of FTE's (n=37).
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Maximise the Potential

- Maximise the potential of North Yorkshire's people and communities.







MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL – CORPORATE LEVEL KPI								
KPI Code	Primary Indicator	Latest Data	Previous Data	Benchmarking / Target	RAG	DoT		Notes
						Quarter	Year	
Quarterly								
CYPS9	The % of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in academic year 12 and year 13	Q1 1.5%	24/25 Q4 1.6% Q3 1.6% Q2 1.1% Q1 1.6%	National NEET 3.5% (Feb 2025) Y&H NEET 3.8% (Feb 2025) National Situation Not Known 1.6% (Feb 2025)				

North Yorkshire Council Executive Performance Report Appendix Quarter 1 2025-26

				Y&H Situation Not Known 1.4% (Feb 2025) NYC Situation Not Known 1.6% (Feb 2025)				
CYPS10	The % of care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 that are in education, employment, or training	Q1 59.0%	24/25 Q4 61.3% Q3 59.8% Q2 59.3% Q1 61.0%	National rate (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 54% SN Average (Q4 2023/24 903 DFE Return) 56.7%				Although at the end of the quarter the % of care leavers 19, 20 and 21 that are in education, employment or training is lower than the previous quarter and year on year, this is still strong performance from the service as above national and statistical neighbour benchmarks.
CYPS12	Number of children who are EHE	Q1 1559	24/25 Q4 1441 Q3 1314 Q2 1142 Q1 1267	% of school population EHE (Autumn 2023/24 EHE Census, DfE) National 1.4% North Yorkshire 1.5%				
CYPS13	The % of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 weeks	Q1 58.7%	24/25 Q4 20.4% Q3 7.7% Q2 11.6% Q1 8.8%	National 2024 calendar: 46%				
Annual								
CYPS1	The % of children achieving a good level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage Profile	23/24 71.2%	22/23 70.3%	England 2023/24 67.7% England 2022/23 67.2%		N/A		
CYPS2	School Readiness: the % of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of reception	23/24 47.6%	22/23 51.4%	England 2023/24 51.6% England 2022/23 51.6%		N/A		
CYPS3	The % of pupils achieving the expected level or above in reading,	23/24 58.2%	22/23 55.6%	England 2023/24 61.3%		N/A		

Page 6

North Yorkshire Council Executive Performance Report Appendix Quarter 1 2025-26





	writing and maths combined Key Stage 2			England 2022/23 59.5				
CYPS4	Average Attainment 8 score at Key Stage 4	2023/2024 46.8	22/23 46.8	<u>2023/24 national</u> 46.2 <u>2022/23 national</u> 46.5		N/A		
CYPS5	Progress 8 score at Key Stage 4	N/A	22/23 0.04	<u>2022/23 national</u> -0.03	N/A	N/A	N/A	Awaiting annual release
CYPS6	Overall attendance rate	24/25 Primary 95.3% Secondary 91.6%	Primary 2023/24 94.8% 2022/23 94.7% Secondary 2023/24 90.5% 2022/23 90.9%	National Primary 2023/24 94.5% Secondary 2023/24 91.1%		N/A		Awaiting annual releases
CYPS7	Severe Absence rate	24/25 Primary 0.6% Secondary 3.4%	Primary 23/24 0.6% 22/23 0.6% Secondary 23/24 4.5% 22/23 3.8%	National Primary 2023/24 0.9% 2022/23 0.7% 2021/22 0.6% Secondary 2023/24 3.8% 2022/23 3.4% 2021/22 2.7%		N/A		Awaiting annual releases







Page 62

North Yorkshire Council Executive Performance Report Appendix Quarter 1 2025-26







CYPS8	% of young people with a qualification by age 19 (Level 2 / Level 3)	N/A	22/23 L2 86.5% L3 61.3%	2022/23 National Level 2: 85.5% Level 3: 61.3% 2021/22 National Level 2: 82.9% Level 3: 62.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A	
CYPS11	The % of pupils who attend a good or outstanding school (primary/ secondary) (to be updated when changes to Ofsted grading system announced).	24/25 86.0%		National 2024/25 90.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	Awaiting amendments to Ofsted Outcomes grading
CYPS14	Rate of children with an Education Health Care Plan as % of school population	2024/25 (Academic) Primary: 2.9% Secondary: 3.1%	24/25 Primary 2.5% Secondary 2.6%	National Jan 2024 Primary 3.0% of school population Secondary 2.7% of school population				
CYPS15	The number of children receiving SEN Support as a % of school population	2024/25 (Academic) Primary: 14.0% Secondary: 13.1%	24/25 Primary 13.7% Secondary 12.1%	National Jan 2024 Primary 14.1% of school population Secondary 12.9% of school population				
CYPS16	GCSE 9-5 pass in English and Maths (Basics) at KS4	23/24 47.7%	22/23 45.7%	<u>National 23/24</u> 46.3% <u>National 22/23</u> 45.4%		N/A		
CYPS17	Persistent absence as % of school population (primary/secondary)	24/25 to end of Q4 Primary 11.5% Secondary 22.4%	2023/24 Primary 12.4% Secondary 27.3%	National: 2023/24 Primary: 14.6% Secondary: 25.6%		N/A		As is the case nationally, attendance in schools is yet to recover to levels seen before the pandemic. There have been recent improvements in primary school attendance. Whilst improvements have also been seen in secondary and special schools, these

Page 63

								continue to be above national rates recorded in 2023/24. Awaiting annual releases for recent national comparisons.	
Page 64	CYPS18	% of school population suspended at least once in academic year to date'	Children Fixed term excluded at least once: Academic year to 2024/25 to end Q4: 2126	Academic year to 2023/24 to end of Q4: 2345	National <u>2022/23</u> Children Suspended: 3.61% Suspensions: 9.33% North Yorkshire <u>2022/23</u> Children Suspended: 3.38% Suspensions: 9.88%	N/A	N/A	N/A	Awaiting annual releases
	CYPS19	% of school population permanently excluded in academic year to date	Academic year to 2024/25 to end of Q4: 79	Academic year to 2023/24 to end of Q4: 70	National <u>2022/23</u> 0.11% North Yorkshire <u>2022/23</u> 0.09%		N/A		There is as yet no sign in a reduction in the high level of permanent exclusions from primary schools which increased in recent years. Rates of secondary schools choosing to permanently exclude is very similar to recent years but higher than levels seen in the years before the pandemic.
	CYPS20	Adult Learning - 19+ Adult Skills funded learners - Overall Achievement Rates	23/24 77.1% (End of Academic Year)	22/23 80.6% (End of Academic Year)	All figures from end of academic year 2021/22 Q2 77.3% 2020/21 76.9% (End of academic year)		N/A		At the end of 23/24, there has been a decrease in the % of overall achievers 19+ compared to 2022/23. The overall achievement is also below the national average. Currently at Q1 2025/26 this has improved significantly the end of the academic year is 31/07/2025, so the improved outcomes will be reported at Q2 2025/26.

				National 85.8%				The service has also been inspected recently in 2024/25 and have gained a good with some outstanding areas from OFSTED.
CYPS21	Adult Learning - 19+ Adult Skills funded learners - Overall Retention Rates	23/24 86.1% (End of Academic Year)	22/23 91.2% (End of Academic Year)	2021/22 91.6% (End of Academic Year) 2020/21 88.8% National 90.6%		N/A		At the end of 23/24, there has been a decrease in the % of overall retention 19+ compared to 2022/23. The overall achievement is also below the national average. Currently at Q1 2025/26 this has improved significantly the end of the academic year is 31/07/2025, so the improved outcomes will be reported at Q2 2025/26. The service has also been inspected recently in 2024/25 and have gained a good with some outstanding areas from OFSTED.
CYPS22	Adult Learning - Apprenticeship Overall Achievement Rate	23/24 80.0% (End of Academic Year)	22/23 52.2% (End of Academic Year)	North Yorkshire 2021/22 47.8% 2020/21 78.6% (End of academic year) National 65.0%		N/A		At the end of academic year 2023/24 there has been a significant improvement for Adult Learning Apprenticeships overall achievement with a +27.8% improvement year on year. The service has also been inspected recently in 2024/25 and have gained a good with some outstanding areas from OFSTED. Apprenticeships was one of the areas of the adult learning service that was awarded Outstanding.
CYPS23	Adult Learning - Apprenticeship Overall Retention Rate	23/24 80.0% (End of Academic Year)	2022/23 52.2% (End of Academic Year)	2021/22 52.2% (End of academic year) 2020/21 78.6% (End of academic year) National 65.0%		N/A		At the end of academic year 2023/24 there has been a significant improvement for Adult Learning Apprenticeships retention with a +27.8% improvement year on year. The service has also been inspected recently in 2024/25 and have gained a good with some outstanding areas from OFSTED. Apprenticeships was one of the areas of the adult learning service that was awarded Outstanding.

North Yorkshire Council Executive Performance Report Appendix Quarter 1 2025-26

CYPS24	Number of Education, Health and Care Plans discontinued as needs met within a plan, for children of school age	2024 (calendar) 300	2023 (calendar) 228	2025 6.8% of all January EHC plans 2024 5.5% of all January current EHC plans		N/A	N/A	
CYPS25	% of children with a North Yorkshire EHC Plan currently in a Special Independent or Special non-maintained school placement	2025 (Jan) 5.2%	2024 (Jan) 5.1%			N/A	N/A	
CYPS26	Number of appeals to SEND tribunal	2023/24 (academic) 258				N/A	N/A	To update end Q2
CYPS27	Total pupils on SEND transport	1632 (Dec 2024)	1540 (Dec 2023)			N/A	N/A	
CYPS28	Total pupils on solo SEND transport	249 (Dec 2024)	250 (Dec 2023)			N/A	N/A	
CYPS29	Proportion of Local Authority funded EHC plans placed in mainstream	2025 (Jan) 45%	2024 (Jan) 44%			N/A	N/A	

Page 66

North Yorkshire Council

Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17th September 2025

Fostering Service Update

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Fostering Service with a specific focus on the numbers of children currently Looked After and the number of Foster Carers within North Yorkshire and the support provided to North Yorkshire Foster Carers.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 North Yorkshire continues to see an increasing number of children requiring Foster Care, reflecting wider national trends and local pressures. In response, the Fostering Service has worked tirelessly to meet this growing need through the provision of placements with both unrelated mainstream foster carers and Kinship carers (connected individuals such as family members or close friends).

2.2 While we continue to recruit and support mainstream carers, a growing proportion of children are being placed with Kinship carers under temporary approval, pending full fostering assessments. This reflects our commitment to keeping children within their networks wherever possible. This work aligns directly to North Yorkshire's practice model in working with families to ensure children can remain within the family network and communities.

2.3 North Yorkshire remains low in its use of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). Instead, children are placed with our own approved foster carers, ensuring greater consistency and oversight, stronger relationships between carers and local teams and better alignment with our values and practice model. This approach supports local placement stability, cost-effectiveness, and continuity of care.

2.4 In June 2024, a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee highlighted a shift in fostering trends across North Yorkshire:

- There were more children living in foster care than at any point in the past decade.
- This increase coincided with a decrease in the number of new unrelated foster carer approvals.
- At the same time, there was a notable rise in children being placed with Kinship carers (family or known individuals) under temporary approvals, while full fostering assessments were completed.

3.0 UPDATE ON FOSTERING PERFORMANCE

3.1 To provide an update since the last report to Oversight and Scrutiny Committee here are the key headlines:

- There remain more children living in foster care than at any point in the past decade. The current number of children in foster care has increased up to 426 children at the end of Q1 2025/26 an increase of 6 children compared to Q4 2024/25 (n=420). As a year on year (Q1 2024/25) comparison the number has increased by 51 children a +14% increase – see appendix 1.
- There are currently 75% (Q1 2025/26) of looked after children in foster care. North Yorkshire's performance is significantly stronger than Yorkshire and the Humber at 70%, statistical neighbours 67.6% and nationally 67% - see appendix 2. As a year on year comparison at Q1 2024/25 there were also 75% of looked after children in foster care.
- This increase coincided with a decrease in the number of new unrelated foster carer approvals. Which have seen an improvement at the end of Q1 2025/26 up to 7 unrelated foster carer approvals compared to 6 unrelated approvals at the end of Q4 2024/25 – see appendix 3. As a year on year comparison at the end of Q1 2024/25 there were 9 unrelated foster carer approvals.
- At the same time, there was a notable rise in children being placed with Kinship carers (family or known individuals) under temporary approvals, while full fostering assessments were completed. There are currently 179 children placed with connected carers at the end of Q1 2025/26, this is an increase of 11 children compared to Q4 2024/25 (168 children placed). As a year on year comparison at the same point last year (Q1 2024/25) there were 166 children placed with a Kinship carer representing a +8% increase.

This trend reflects:

- A growing reliance on Kinship care and network-based placements.
- The strength of North Yorkshire's practice model, which prioritises keeping children within their existing support networks.
- The need for continued investment in assessment capacity, training, and support for connected carers to ensure safe and sustainable placements.

3.2 There is a shortage of applicants coming forward to foster which is a national picture and one that a lot of Local Authorities are acutely seeing as an issue. However, encouragingly we have seen a significant increase in the number of enquiries received. In North Yorkshire we have seen our enquiries at the end of Q1 2025/26 increase significantly to 67 enquiries received compared to 42 at the end of Q4 2024/25, this is the highest peak since Q3 2023/24 with 75 enquires received, this was related to a targeted exercise to the Homes from Ukraine facilitators when the programme was coming to an end. Before that there were 109 received after the pandemic at Q1 2022/23. North Yorkshire is not immune to the national foster care crisis but is actively driving marketing and recruitment to try and combat this. – see appendix 4. As a year on year comparison at the end of Q1 2024/25 there were 42 enquires demonstrating an increase of 15 more enquiries received in the period.

3.3 Newly approved unrelated carers have increased at the end of Q1 2025/26 to 7 compared to 6 at the end of Q4 2024/25, after experiencing a decline in Q2 2024/25 and Q3 2024/25, at the same point last year at Q1 2024/25 there were 9 unrelated approvals a decrease of 2 carers year on year.

3.4 The number of approved foster carers has increased to 538 up from 518, Q4 2024/25, the number of approved households is up to 324 compared to 311 (Q4 2024/25). The consistent marketing and recruitment activity is making a real difference for the service. At the same point last year there were 512 approved foster carers, this represents a +26 carers a +5% increase year on year.

3.5 The age profile of carers remains stable with the age 55-59 cohort remaining the largest cohort for kinship and unrelated carers. De-registrations of all foster carer households decreased

from 23 in Q4 2023/24, to 13 at the end of Q1 2025/26 which is a significant improvement of 10 less carers deregistering, this will help the service with placement stability. As a year on year comparison at Q1 2024/25 there were 22 deregistration of foster carers, demonstrating 11 more deregistration's in the period of carers.

3.6 North Yorkshire has responded to this with different recruitment campaigns and adapting our marketing approach. The service has just run a short breaks campaign which received excellent coverage across the BBC. The news piece has received coverage on BBC Look North main 6pm news on July 15th, as well as being the main news item in the lunchtime bulletin. Please see attached link: [BBC look North short term carers fostering segment](#) . It aired in multiple areas of the region including Yorkshire, Cumbria, and Tyne Tees. The online PR coverage was the top story on the BBC website all day on July 15th and 16th July. The service has continued with the golden hello initiative for newly approve unrelated carers.

4.0 CURRENT SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 North Yorkshire is committed to supporting foster carers not only through training and supervision, but also by promoting access to enriching experiences that benefit both carers and the children they care for. There is ongoing work to standardise the leisure pass offer across the county, ensuring that all foster carers, regardless of geographic location receive a consistent and equitable package of benefits. This includes access to local leisure centres, cultural events, and recreational activities.

4.2 A number of foster carers have recently benefited from free tickets to the Open Air Theatre in Scarborough, where they have enjoyed concerts and performances with the children in their care. These opportunities have promoted positive shared experiences between children and their carers.

4.3 North Yorkshire has invested in an updated version of its "Skills to Foster" course, which serves as the preparation programme for all prospective foster carers. This foundational training is a critical part of the assessment journey, equipping applicants with the knowledge, insight, and confidence needed to begin their fostering role. The updated course will continue to provide a realistic view of fostering, including challenges and rewards while offering opportunities for reflection, discussion, and peer learning. Ultimately it will ensure carers feel prepared and supported from the outset of their journey. The content includes the following:

1. What children need –including why children need fostering, their development, including brain development, and how to meet their needs
2. Fostering relationships – including the importance of relationships, children's rights, the team around the child and planning, working with birth families and building support networks for the fostering household
3. A protective and loving home – including understanding harm, risk, abuse and neglect, safeguarding and child protection, disclosures and protective care
4. Therapeutic care – including how to create a therapeutic environment, attachment, impact of trauma, how to build connection and understand behaviour, therapeutic recordings and the importance of self-care.
5. Supporting Identity – including understanding identity, belonging, memory and life stories, EDI, supporting diverse needs of children and cultural competence.
6. Transitions and Endings – the impact of separation and loss, supporting stability, child-centred transitions, preparing for adulthood and more.

4.4 The Mockingbird Family Model is a pioneering approach to foster care that aims to replicate the structure and support of an extended family. North Yorkshire has three established Mockingbird Hubs with two in the East and one in the West and has just recruited a fourth Hub Home in Selby. We are also planning a step down hub from the Children's Homes.

4.5 The model creates small communities called constellations—groups of 6 to 10 fostering households led by a hub home carer. Key Features of the model are:

- Peer support: Foster carers share experiences and advice
- Respite care: Emergency sleepovers and planned breaks
- Social connection: Regular events to reduce isolation
- Stability for children: Stronger relationships and fewer placement breakdowns
- Flexibility: Supports various placement types including Kinship care

4.6 The current constellations are made up of the following:

Constellation one (East)	7 fostering families 12 looked after children
Constellation two (East)	7 fostering families 15 looked after children
Constellation three (West)	9 fostering families 20 looked after children
Constellation four (South East)	In development

4.7 The impact for those children who have unfortunately experienced breakdowns, has been minimised due to the fact that they have then been cared for by people within the constellation who they know and have built a positive relationship with. Children who live within the constellations have opportunities to extend their family network and therefore strengthen their support as they development and transition into adulthood.

4.8 North Yorkshire’s Fostering Service is currently rolling out Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Families (TCIF) training to all staff and foster carers. This initiative aligns with wider council practice, as TCIF is increasingly being adopted across multiple services to support children and young people in distress.

4.9 TCIF is a trauma-informed approach designed to help carers and professionals prevent and de-escalate crises while also strengthening carers’ ability to respond therapeutically to challenging behaviour. We hope it will promote placement stability and emotional safety for children through building a shared language and consistent practice across services. In doing this we hope it will help reduce placement breakdowns while improving outcomes for children with complex emotional needs and foster a culture of resilience, empathy, and proactive support.

4.10 In July 2025 the Foster Service held its Bi Annual conference which was run slightly differently this year with it being referred to as a ‘Family Fun Day’. In the morning Foster Carers had a training session while the children completed a range of activities and then all came together for a picnic lunch before family activities in the afternoon. The day concluded with the presentation of long service awards, recognising the dedication and commitment of foster carers across the county. The event ended with a celebration of achievements, reinforcing the value placed on carers and the positive impact they have on children’s lives. This new format was well received and reflected the service’s commitment to training, recognition, and relationship-building within the fostering community.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

5.1 North Yorkshire has a strong practice model that prioritises keeping children within their existing family and support networks wherever possible. This approach reflects our commitment to

minimising disruption and promoting stability for looked-after children. A significant proportion of children in care are placed with family members or close connections, rather than with unrelated foster carers. These carers are initially granted temporary approval as Kinship Connected Carers, allowing children to remain in familiar environments while a full fostering assessment is completed.

5.2 This model reduces the emotional impact of entering care and being placed away from familiar adults, maintains cultural, familial, and community ties. It also supports long-term stability and permanency planning.

5.3 Fostering North Yorkshire ensures that Kinship carers are provided with training, supervision, and practical support throughout the assessment process. This ensures they are equipped with the skills and confidence to care for children under different legal orders, including Special Guardianship. We support carers through an open-door policy, offering ongoing advice and assistance beyond formal approval.

5.4 Fostering North Yorkshire is committed to ensuring that children do not experience the intrusion of being a Looked After Child for longer than is necessary. We actively support timely and appropriate permanency planning, recognising that long-term stability is best achieved through legal orders that reflect a child's need for security and belonging.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

6.1 The fostering service has a significant impact on other services both within the council and externally. Fostering services in North Yorkshire play a vital role in supporting children in care. When fostering is well supported and stable, it reduces pressure across multiple services by promoting placement stability, educational engagement, emotional wellbeing, and safeguarding.

6.2 The North Yorkshire Fostering Service is committed to delivering high-quality, child-centred care through strong collaboration with partner agencies including Health, Education, Housing, and Youth Services. We recognise that fostering is not an isolated function but a significant part of the wider care system.

6.3 At the end of 2023/24 Looked after children in foundation year obtaining a good level of development was reported as 54.5, this is higher than Yorkshire & the Humber (44.8), Statistical neighbours (41.1) and national statistics (41.4).

6.4 Furthermore, Looked after children achieving a 9-4 pass in English and Maths performance is strong with 22.6% achieving, North Yorkshire performance is strong against Yorkshire and the Humber statistical neighbours 18.8% and nationally 18.1%. See appendix 5.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 North Yorkshire continues to offer a strong financial package to approved foster carers, recognising the vital role they play in supporting children and young people. In April 2025, Foster Care Payments were increased by 2.5%, in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI)—the standard calculation used in fostering. This ensures carers are supported in line with inflation and rising living costs.

7.2 Regional benchmarking confirms that North Yorkshire remains generous in its allowances compared to neighbouring authorities. The increased payment rates ensure that North Yorkshire's allowances remain above the national minimum set by the Government.

7.3 The Day Care rate was increased to £9.77 per hour, aligning with 80% of the National Living Wage being introduced in April 2025.

7.4 In 2023/2024, additional financial enhancements were introduced:

- An above-inflation increase to the Accredited Foster Carer Premium
- Introduction of bridging payments for Accredited Foster Carers
- A new policy to cover the first 100 miles of travel for all foster carers, which had previously been expected to be paid from the child's or young person's allowance

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 All staff within the Fostering Service regularly undertake compulsory training in information security and data protection, ensuring compliance with statutory responsibilities and best practice in safeguarding sensitive information.

8.2 Following recent changes in the management team, agency advisors to the Fostering Panel have participated in a dedicated training session to ensure they remain fully informed of the legal and statutory framework underpinning fostering practice and decision-making.

8.3 The service benefits from access to a specialist lawyer in adoption and fostering, which provides valuable legal oversight and guidance—particularly in relation to court proceedings, Kinship arrangements, and permanency planning. This legal expertise strengthens the quality and timeliness of assessments, reports, and care planning under the Public Law Outline.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Fostering Service in North Yorkshire is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of its work. This includes recruitment, training, placement matching, and ongoing support for carers and children.

9.2 The service recognises the importance of ensuring that children in care are supported to maintain their identity, including cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage. Placement decisions are made with consideration of the child's background and emotional needs.

9.3 Efforts are ongoing to increase the diversity of foster carers, particularly from underrepresented groups such as Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and carers with disabilities. Inclusive recruitment activity and marketing are being reviewed to support this aim.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 While the direct environmental impact of fostering services is relatively low, North Yorkshire's Fostering Service recognises its role in contributing to the council's wider climate change and sustainability goals.

10.2 The service is committed to reducing unnecessary travel by promoting virtual meetings, training, and supervision where appropriate. In addition, we encourage the use of local placements to minimise travel for children, carers, and professionals. We also consider how we can promote digital documentation and communication to reduce paper use where appropriate.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The Fostering Service in North Yorkshire continues to provide a strong and responsive service to children and foster carers across the county, despite ongoing pressures around the recruitment of mainstream carers.

11.2 The county's practice model, which prioritises keeping children within their existing networks, has led to an increase in placements with Kinship carers under temporary approval, while full fostering assessments are completed. This approach supports stability, continuity, and emotional wellbeing for children.

11.3 North Yorkshire has maintained a low reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies, with the majority of children placed with our own approved foster carers, ensuring consistency, quality, and alignment with local values.

11.4 The service continues to innovate and invest in support for carers, including:

- The rollout of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Families (TCIF) training
- The expansion of the Mockingbird Service
- Investment in the Skills to Foster preparation course
- Lobbying of the leisure pass offer to ensure equitable access across the county
- Continued marketing and recruitment activity to attract more carers to North Yorkshire

11.5 Collaborative working with Health, Education, and other partners remains central to meeting statutory responsibilities and supporting carers.

11.6 The service is committed to promoting permanency and reducing the time children spend in care, including through support for Special Guardianship Orders and ongoing assistance for carers post-order.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the overview and progress of the Fostering Service in North Yorkshire.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Number of children in foster care
Appendix 2 Children looked after comparisons
Appendix 3 New Foster carer households
Appendix 4 Initial Enquiries
Appendix 5 Looked after children attainment

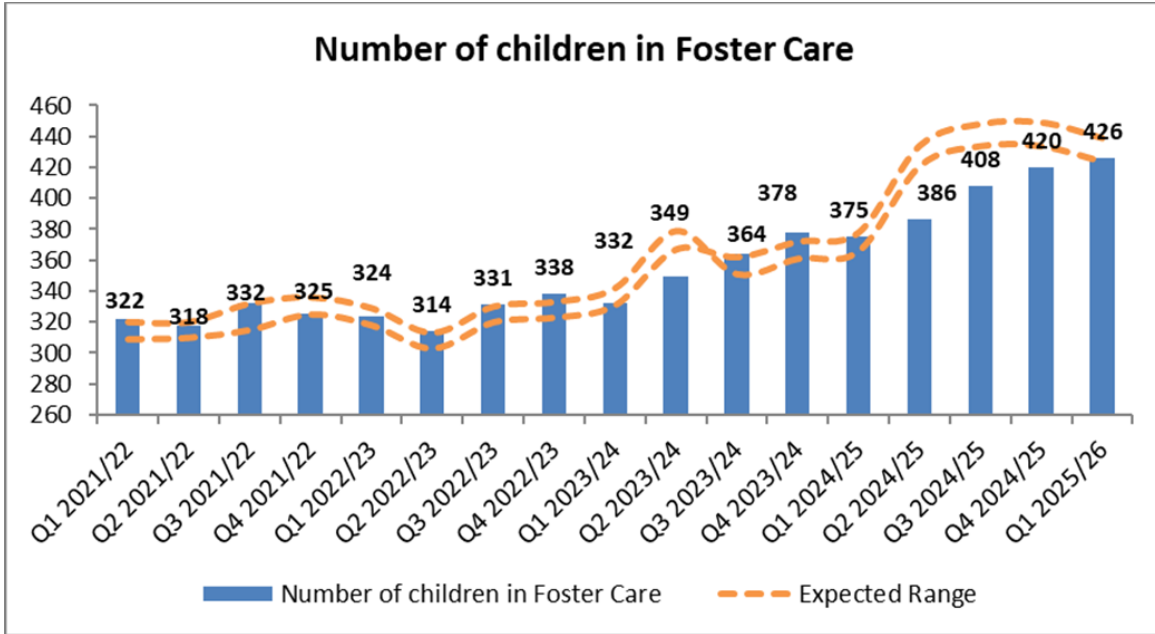
Sir Stuart Carlton
Corporate Director – Children and Young Peoples Services
County Hall
Northallerton
13th August 2025

Report Author – Rosie Appleby Head of Placement Support
Presenter of Report – Rosie Appleby Head of Placement Support

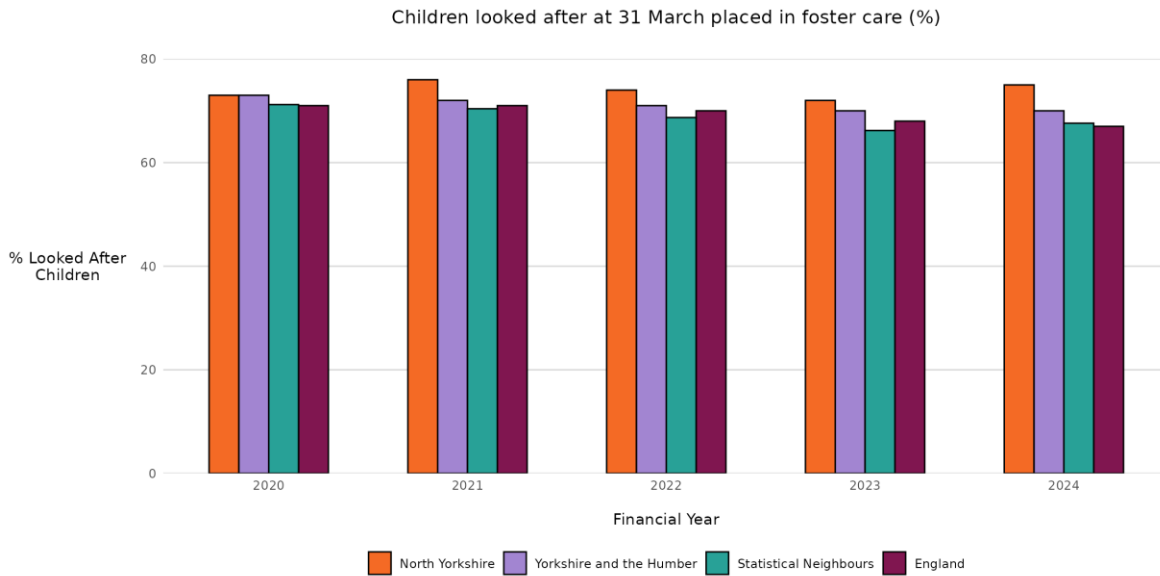
Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendices

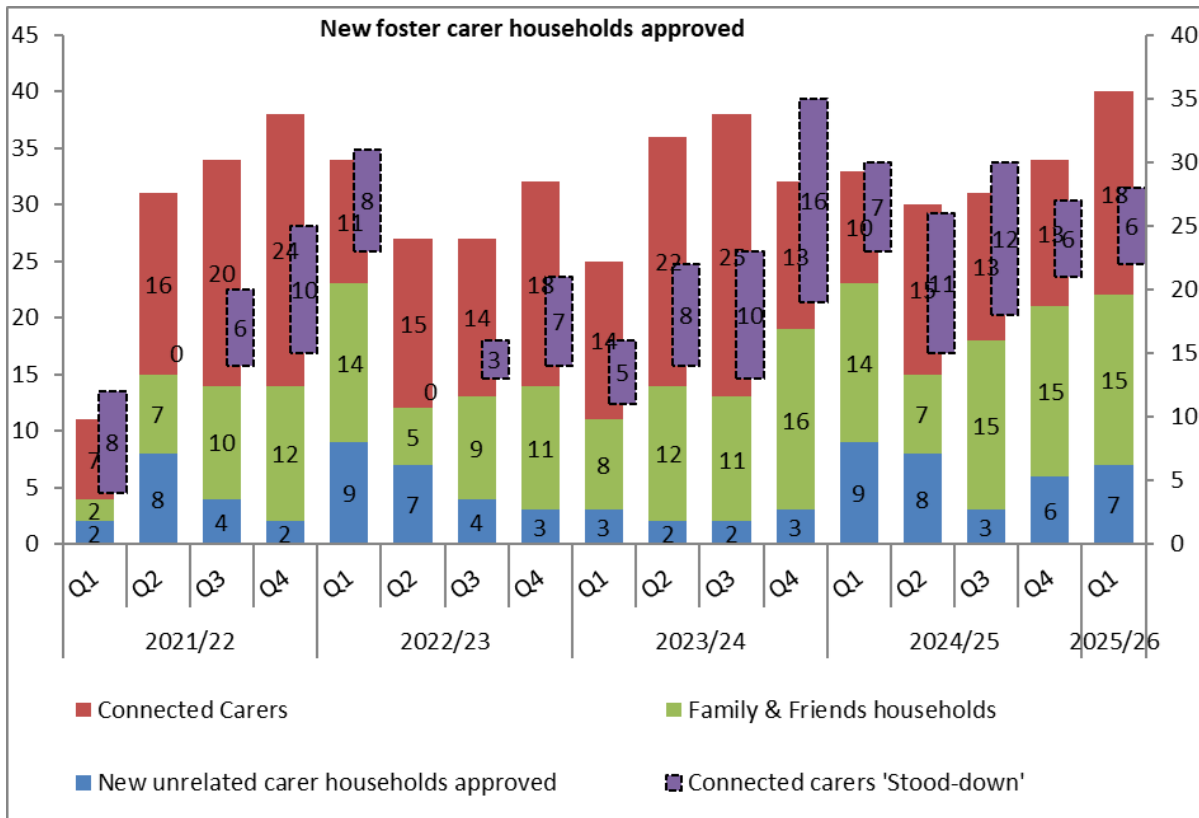
Appendix 1



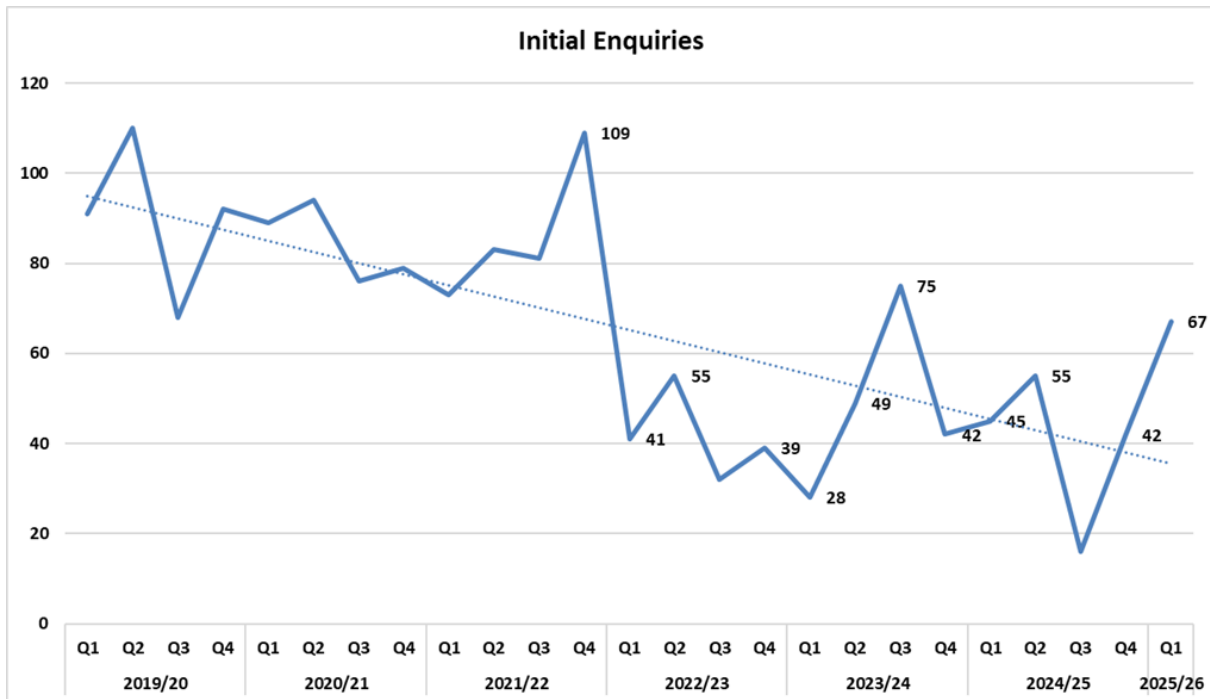
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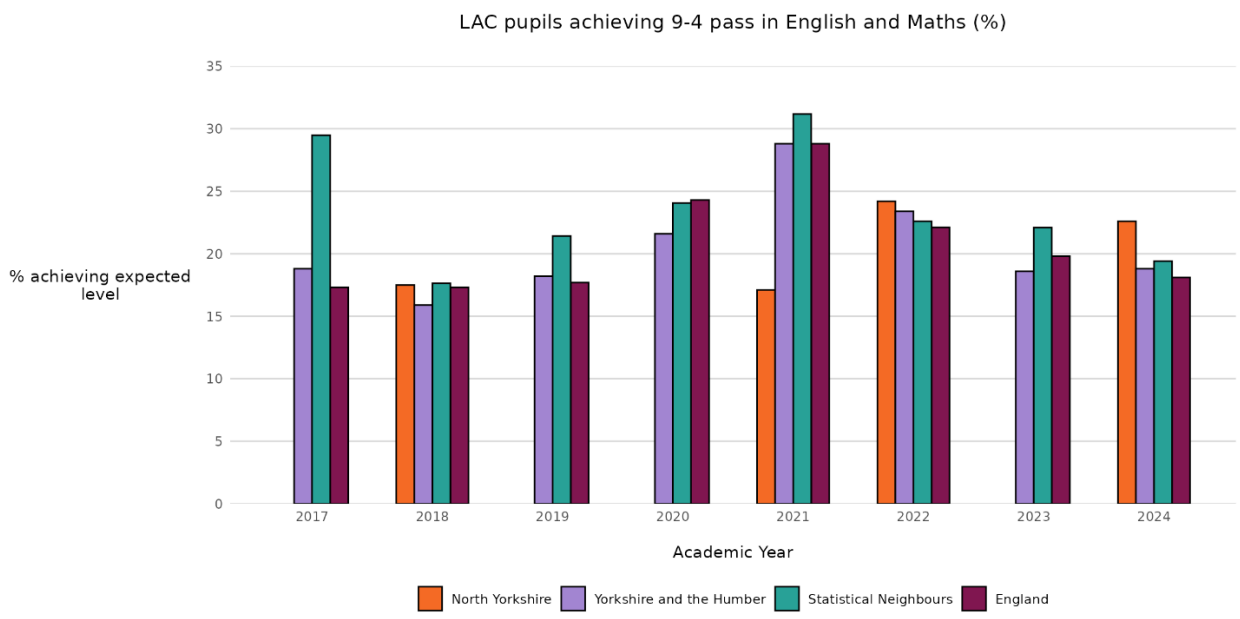
Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Appendix 5



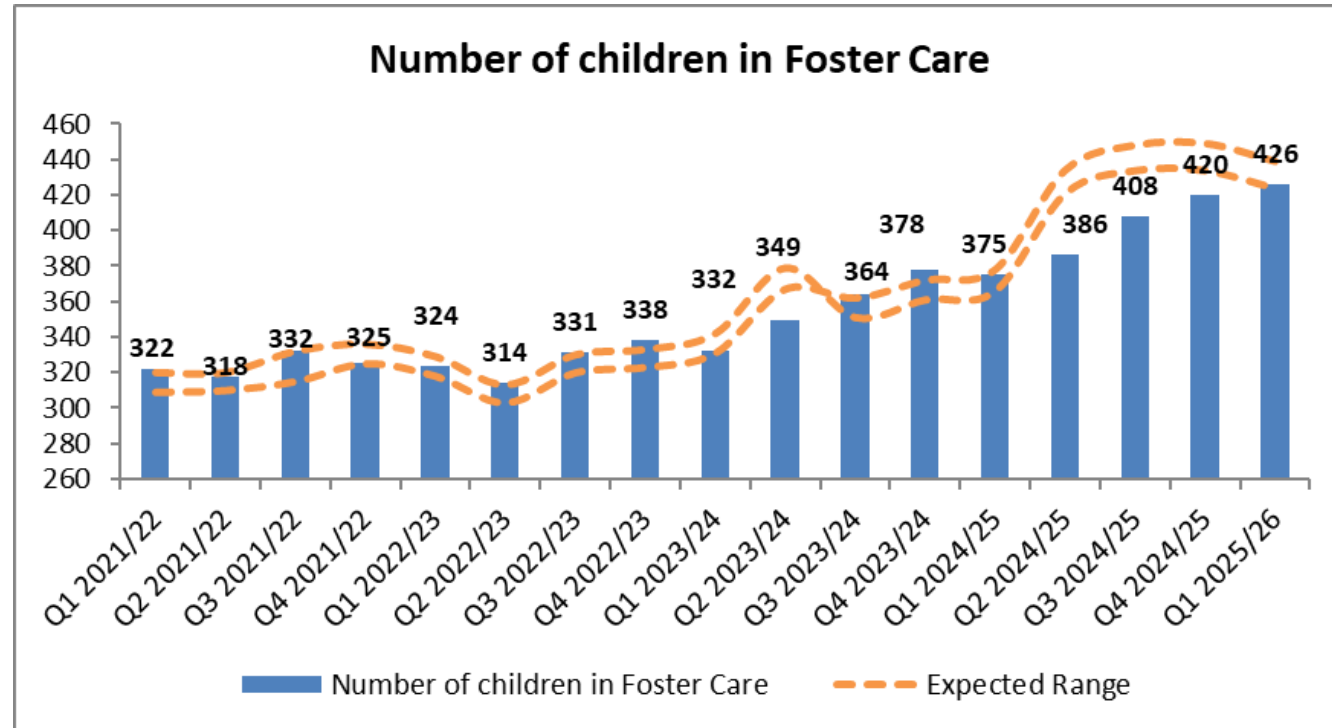


Fostering North Yorkshire

CYPS Scrutiny Committee Update – September 2025

Children living in foster care

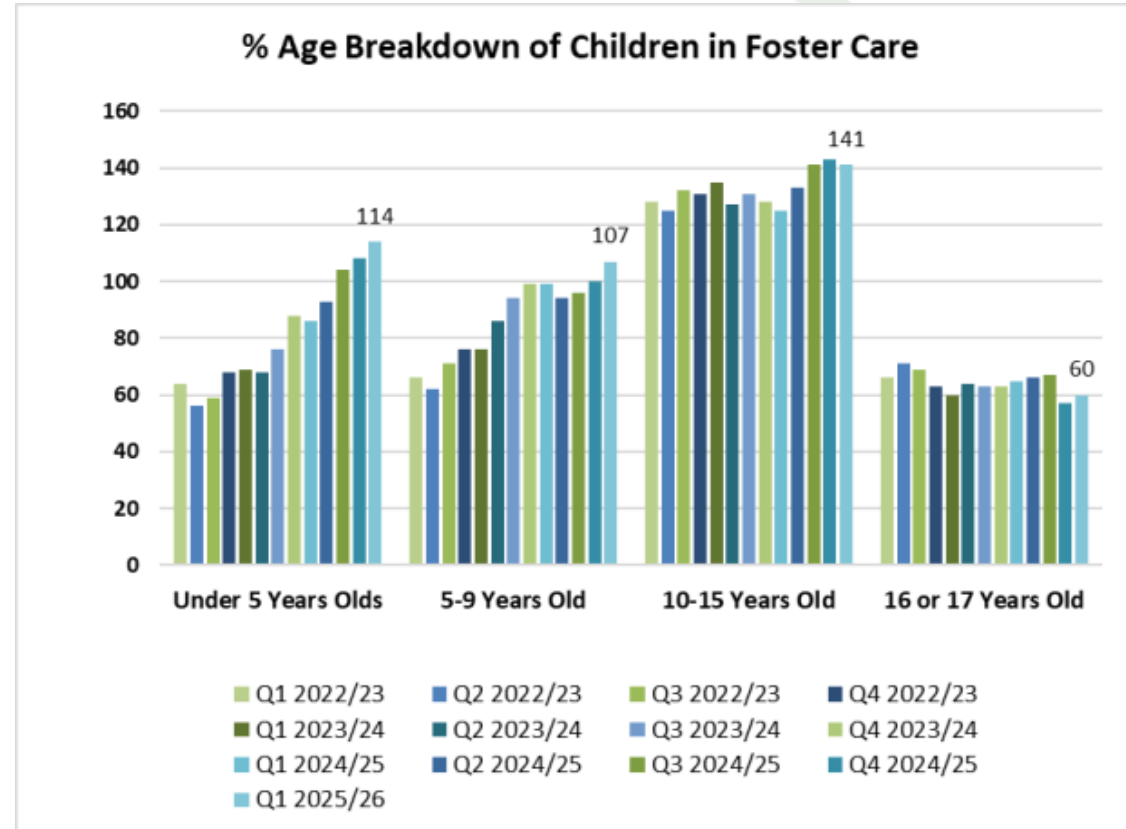
- There are more children living in foster care now than we have seen over the last decade, up 6% in the UK (2023), 75% of all children in care in North Yorkshire. 11 living in IFA (Independent Fostering Agency) fostering arrangements. Therefore, 415 (97.4%) are living in North Yorkshire foster homes.
- Overall, more children in a lower number of Fostering Households – so more multi occupied households etc.



Age profile of children living in foster care

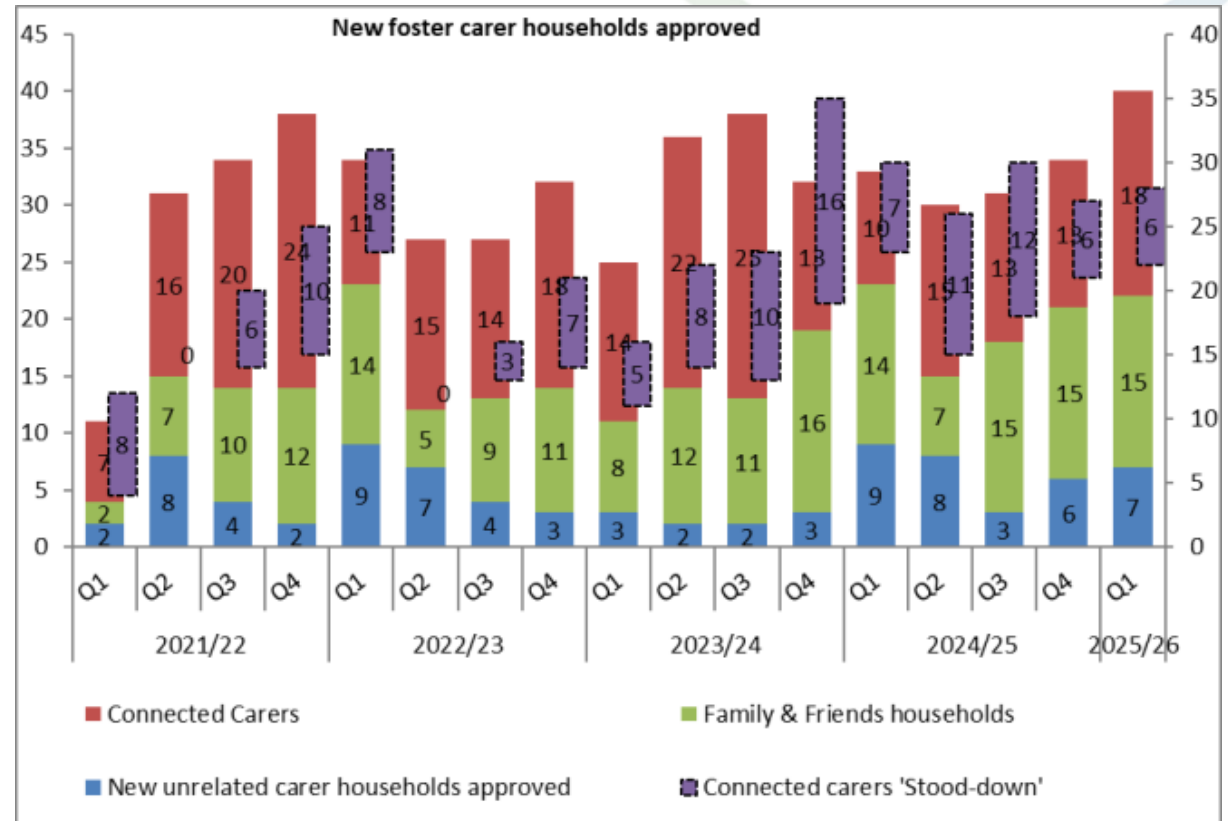
- Increases in under 5's, 5-9 and 10-15 year olds.
- Only decrease seen in 16 or 17 year olds.

Page 79



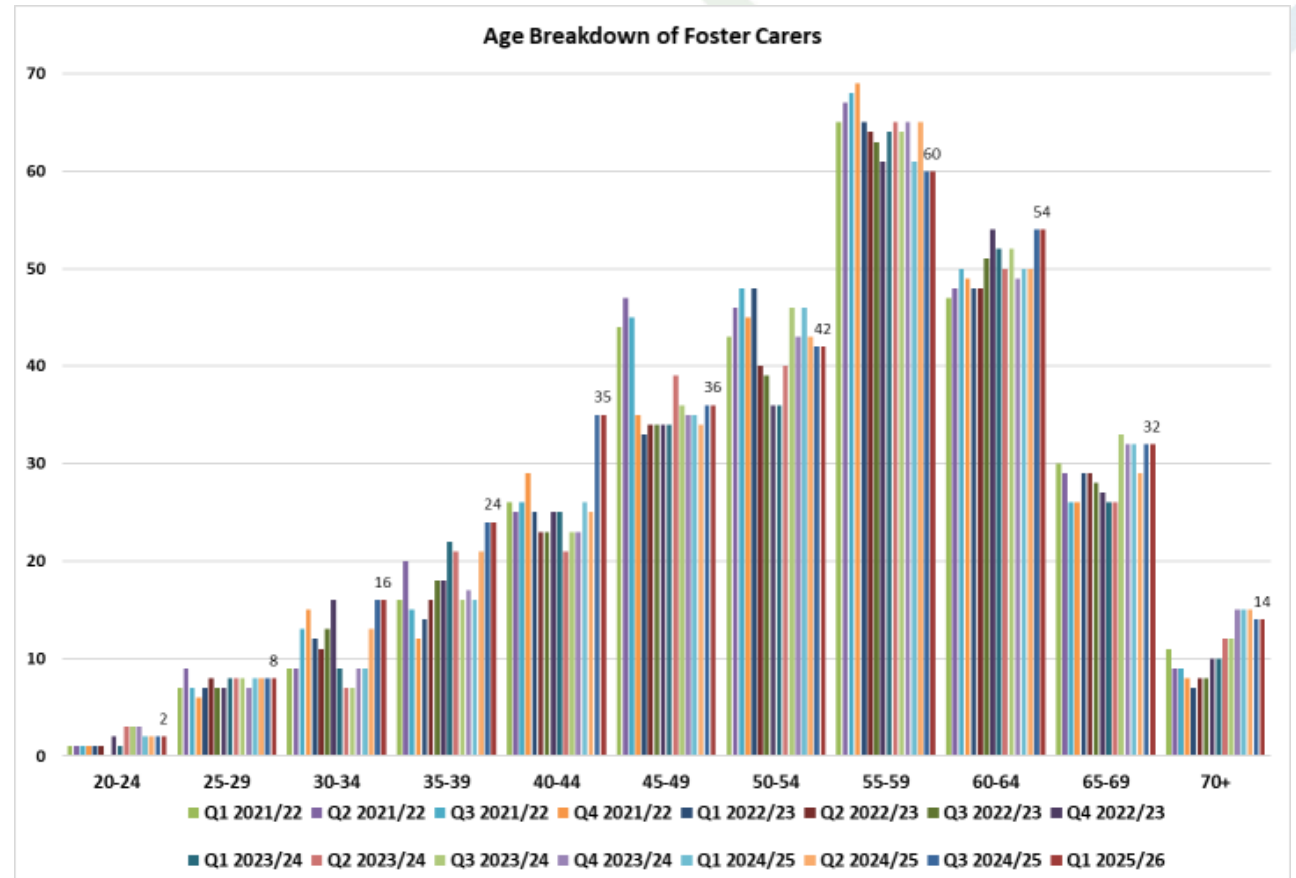
New foster carer approvals

- We have seen a decreasing number of new unrelated carer approvals since the pandemic.
- However, more children are living with their families under connected carers temporary approvals and then becoming family and friend foster carers at full approval.
- This is in line with our practice model.



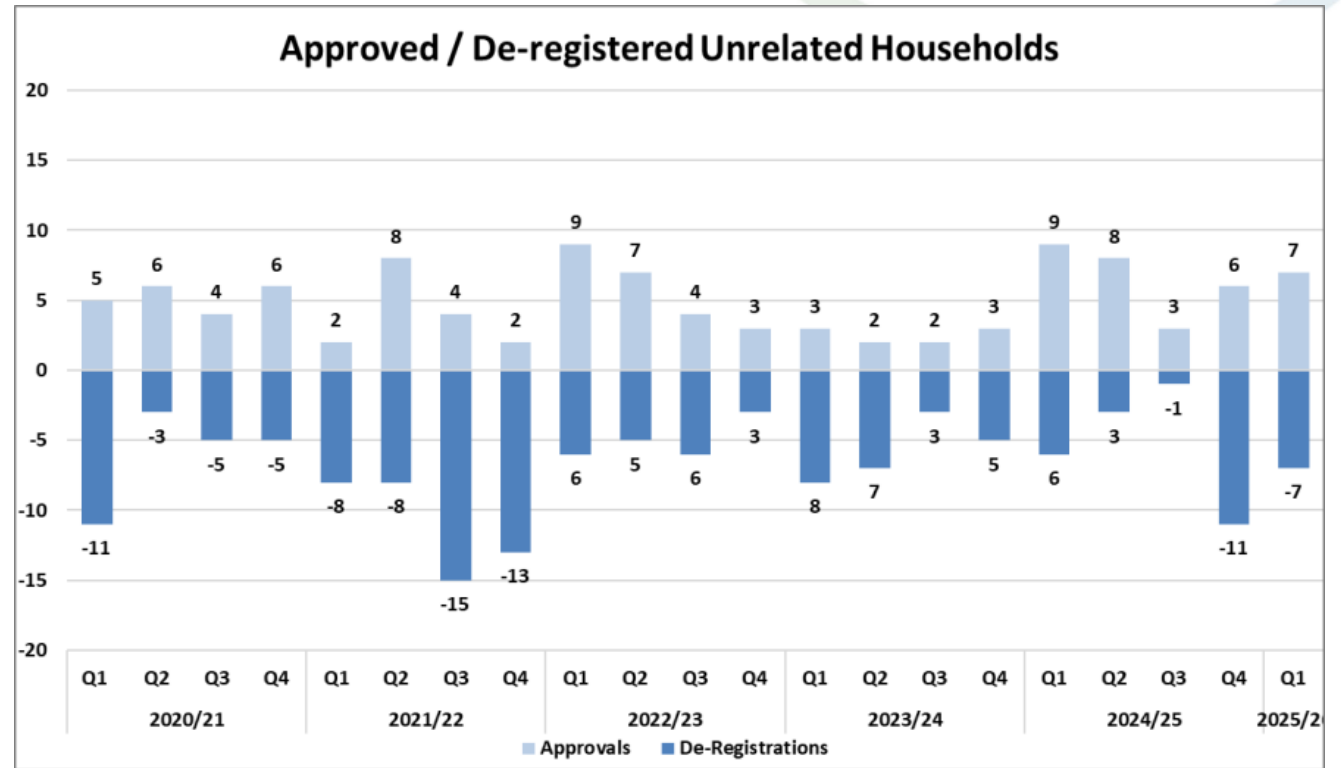
Age profile of foster carers

- The graph shows all foster carers (i.e. family and friend foster carers and unrelated foster carers).
- 55-59 has always been the largest cohort for both unrelated and family friend carers.
- 45-49 (36 carers) and 50-54 (42 carers) continue to remain stable. This will help when the older carers decide to retire.



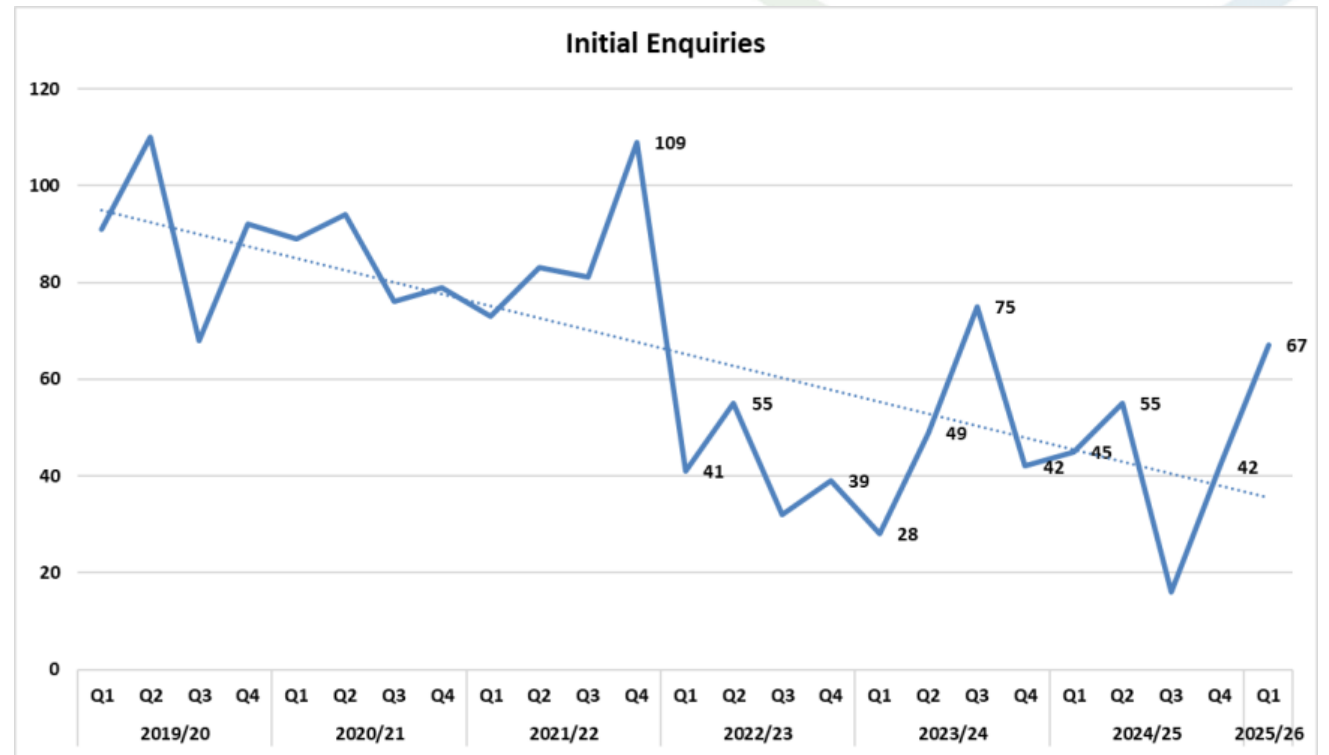
Unrelated de registrations

- It is encouraging to see approvals now stabilising and coming back in line with pre-pandemic approval rates. During 23/24 we saw a decrease in the number of approvals post pandemic.
- Pleasingly in 24/25 there were more approvals than deregistration's, 24 deregistered and 26 approvals



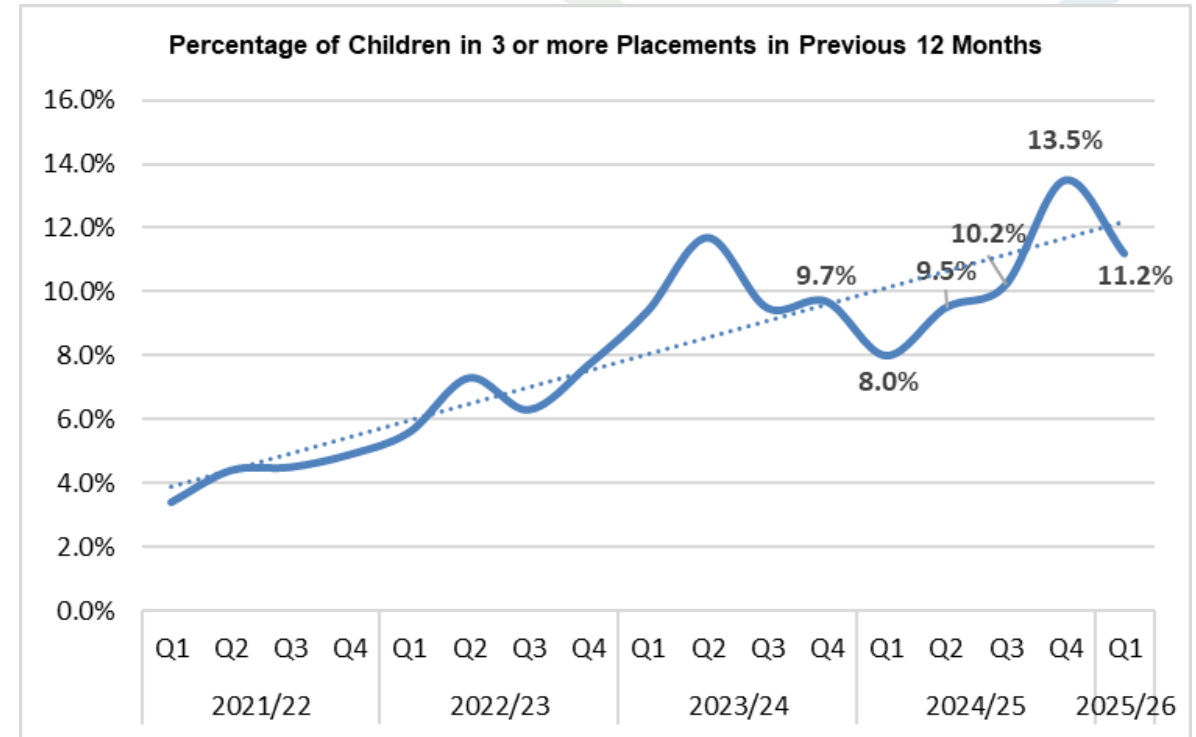
New unrelated enquiries

- Enquires have improved significantly at the end of Q1 2025/26 to 67 enquires.



Increasing short term instability

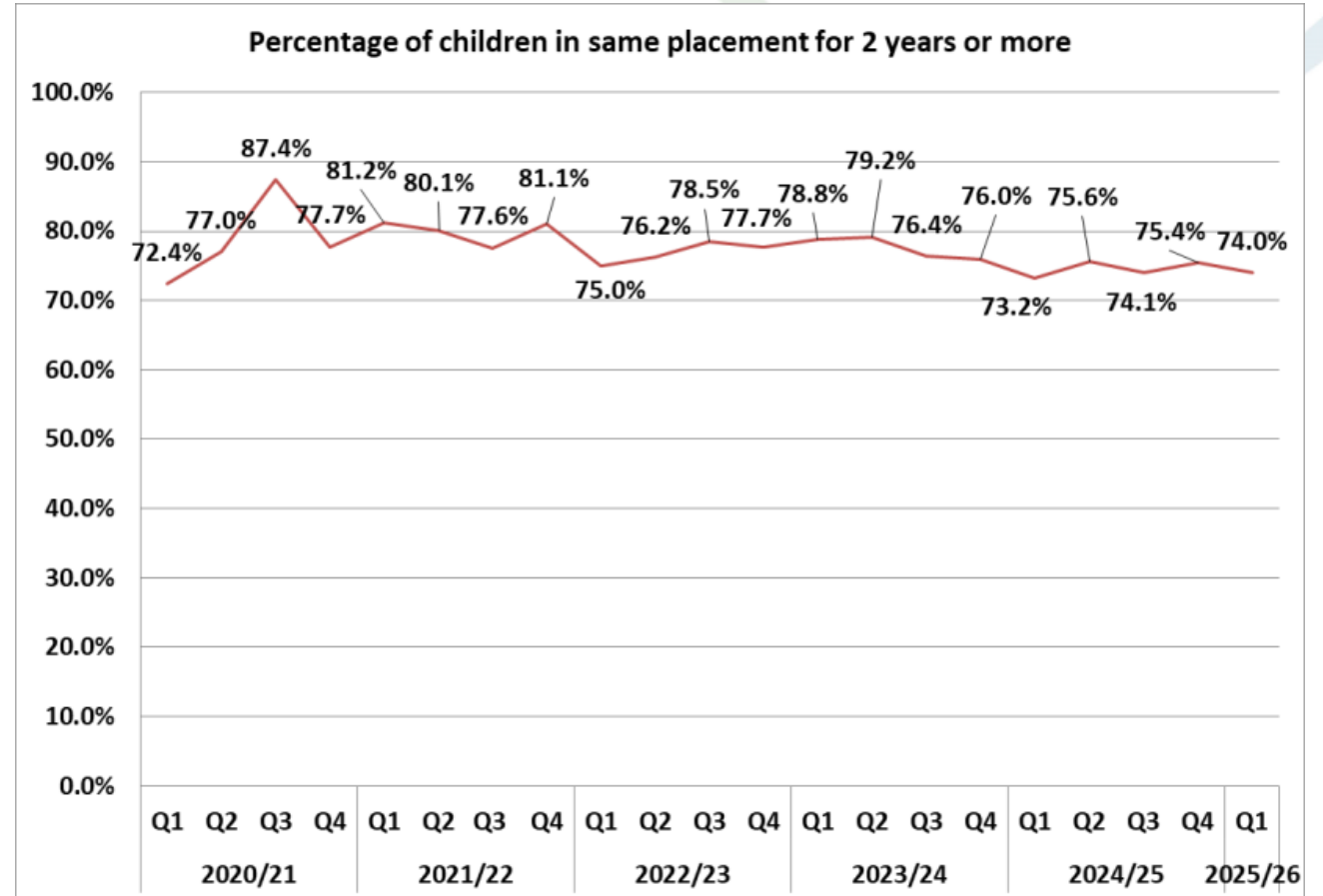
- There are some children that present a challenge in finding a foster home match for – over the last five years this cohort has increased from 10 to 50 (an increase of approx. 3% to 11% of the children living in foster care) – we know children have faced adversity and needs have increased significantly, the current demand of increased numbers of children entering care have also contributed to an increase in children in 3 or more placements in 12 months. However, pleasingly at the end of Q1 2025/26 we have seen an improvement to short term placement stability for children in North Yorkshire care.



Stable long term stability

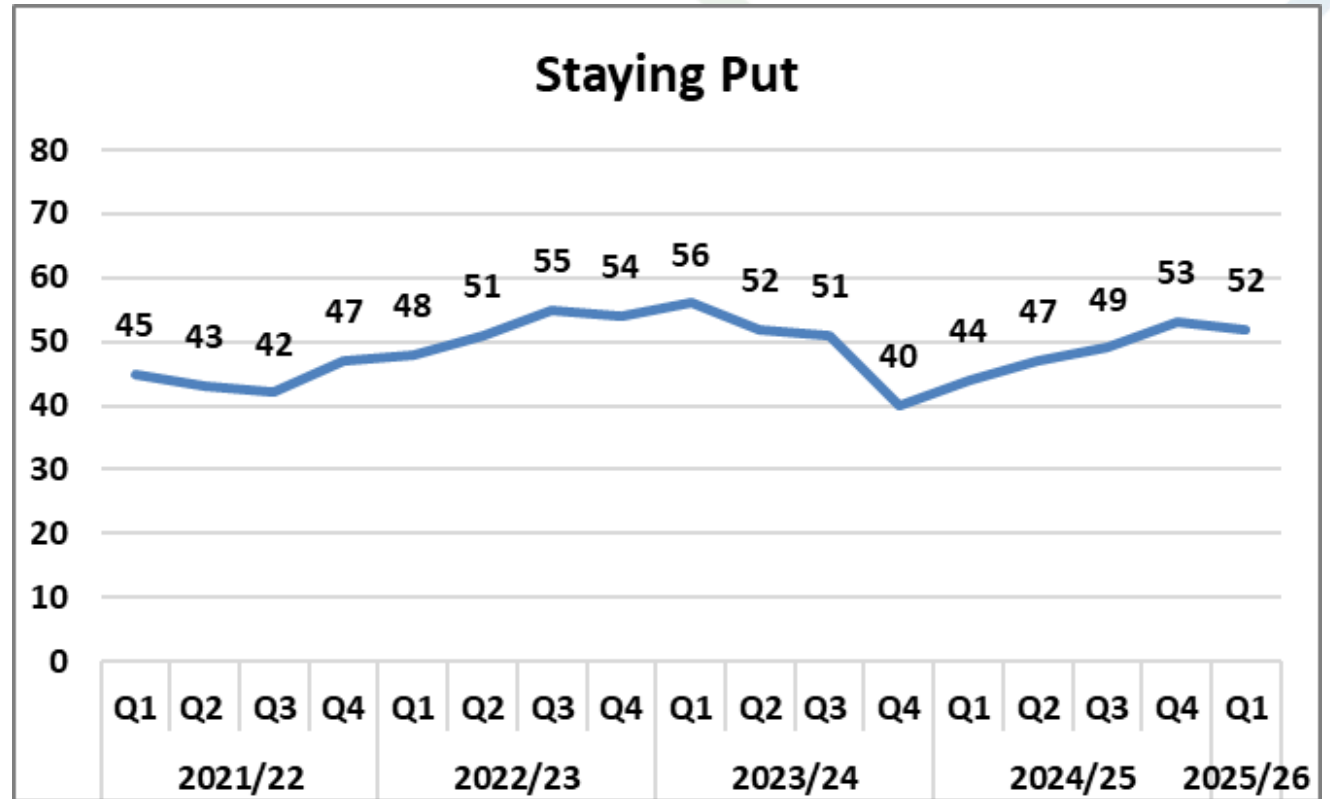
- Long term stability improved during the pandemic due to children unable to move carers.
- Currently the percentage remains stable with a slight decrease from 75% at Q4 2-24/25, at the end of Q1 2025/26 74% children living in foster homes are in stable long term arrangements which is very positive.

• Page 85



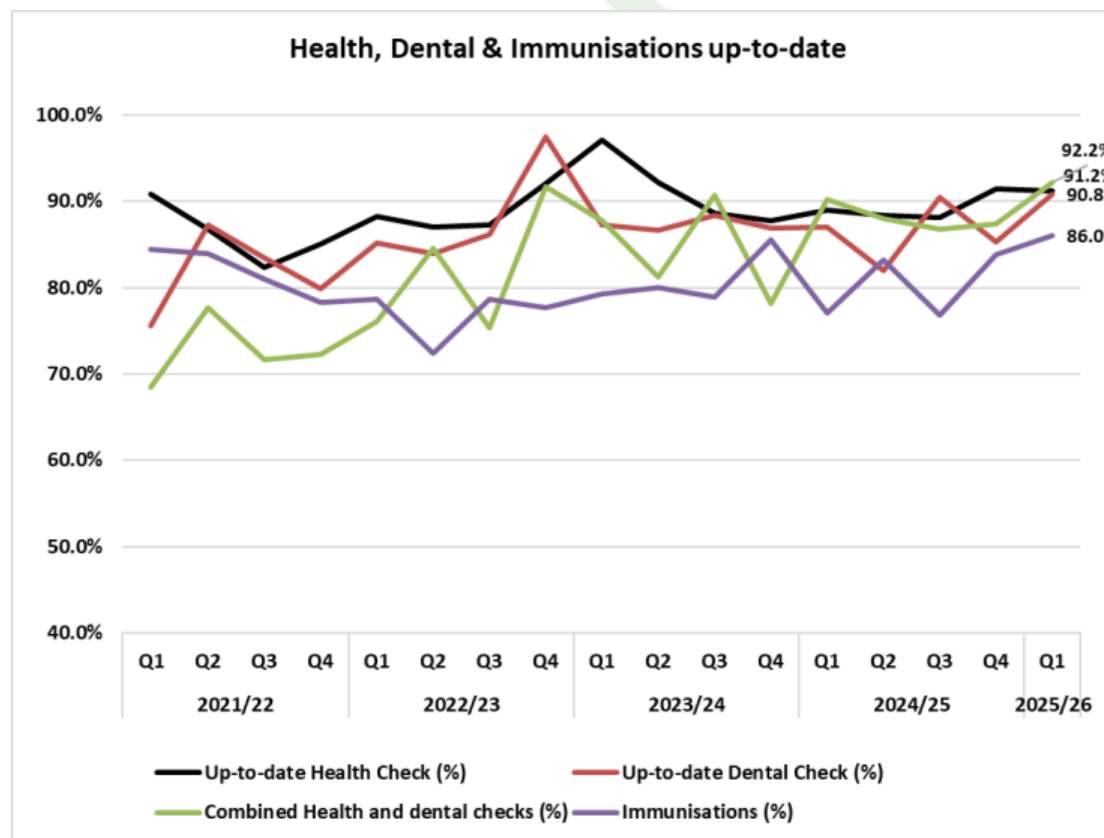
Staying put

- Staying put is when a child in care who has become 18 remains living with their former foster carer – it is a great outcome and supports several young adults studying at University or going on into training or employment.
- This can reduce the fostering capacity for those families for new children becoming looked after.



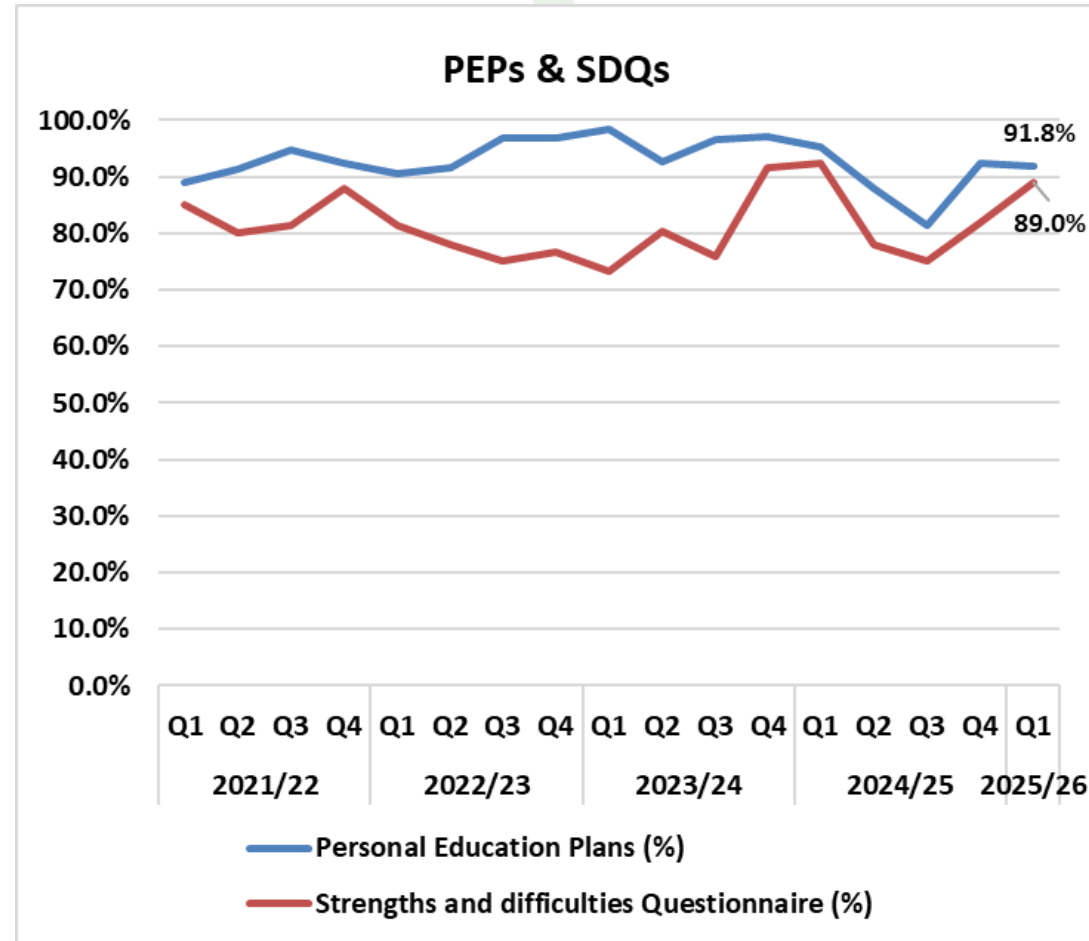
Strong performance re Health and Dental

- This strong performance is good news for children in care. This is a shared responsibility by the fostering service, children's social work teams and health colleagues. With Health, Dental both exceeding 90%, higher than national rates and statistical neighbours.
- The large dip in performance was during the Lockdowns for the COVID-19 pandemic.



Strong Performance - SDQs and PEPs

- SDQs is ‘Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires’ and is a means by which the mental health of children is monitored – the actual questionnaire is completed by the foster carer.
- PEPs is ‘Personal Education Plans’ and this strong performance is very much about the hard work of the virtual school, children’s social work team and schools.
- Strong performance in both areas.



North Yorkshire Council

Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2025

North Yorkshire Council Adoption Service

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an overview of North Yorkshire Council's approach to adoption and adoption support. This includes information and aspects of One Adoption North and Humber Regional Adoption Agency, as North Yorkshire is one of five Local Authorities (City of York Council, Hull City Council, North East Lincolnshire and East Riding of Yorkshire Council) working within this partnership.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 This report outlines the current practice within North Yorkshire's adoption support and sets out a series of strategic developments and practice innovations aimed at enhancing our adoption support across both North Yorkshire and One Adoption North and Humber, to continue to deliver targeted programmes, improve contact planning and remain embedding a consistent, child-centred approach to permanency.

2.2 Adoption Support is a significant provision within our service delivery and can be relevant at various stages throughout the life of the child and their adoptive parents.

Between April 2024 and March 2025:

- 67 new support contacts were received (up from 53 the previous year).
- 155 children were receiving adoption support (an increase of 30).
- North Yorkshire accounted for 42% of all Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) assessments, reflecting its commitment to long-term support for adoptive families.

2.3 Since the establishment of One Adoption North and Humber, North Yorkshire has consistently seen high levels of adoption support when compared to the partner agencies within the regional adoption agency.

2.4 Over the past 3.5 years, North Yorkshire has accounted for an average of 42% of assessments for adoption support across the regional adoption agency. This ties into North Yorkshire's commitment to support permanency for children and families well beyond the initial placement to ensure the best possible outcomes and in upholding our commitment to the adoption community.

2.5 The number of open cases involving children receiving adoption support across One Adoption North and Humber has risen to 300, up from 277 at the end of the 2024/25 reporting period. Notably, North Yorkshire accounts for more than half of these cases, highlighting the significant demand for support services within our part of the region.

2.6 The service can report on data for Quarter 1 (April, May, June) of 2025. The performance figures for each service area are outlined below, providing a clear overview during and up to the end of this period.

Children

- Adoption Orders granted in Q1:0
- Placement Orders granted in Q1: 4 children
- Adoption plans agreed by Agency Decision Maker in Q1: 11 children (*includes 2 sibling groups of 2*)
- Not yet matched or placed: 13 children (*includes 3 sibling groups of 2*)

Adopters

- Approved adopters in Q1: 3 families
- Approved, not yet matched: 10 families

Adoption Support

- Children open to adoption support at the end of Q1: 168 children

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 North Yorkshire partnered with City of York Council, Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire and North East Lincolnshire to form One Adoption North and Humber Regional Adoption Agency on 01 April 2018. The Regional Adoption Agency is hosted by City of York Council. A Head of Agency was appointed alongside the commencement of the partnership.

3.2 North Yorkshire retains responsibility for their children who come into Local Authority care and for any child whose plan becomes that of adoption, until the making of the Adoption Order, granted by the Court. North Yorkshire also retains responsibility for all adoption support children and families and continue to hold a statutory duty to assess any child and their family at the request of an adoption support needs assessment.

3.3 Each partner within One Adoption North and Humber delegates to the Host Authority (City of York Council) to perform the statutory functions relating to the approval of potential adopters in regulation 30B of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.

3.4 One Adoption North and Humber, work alongside One Adoption West Yorkshire in the delivery of the marketing strategy for adopter recruitment.

3.5 North Yorkshire, in collaboration with One Adoption North and Humber, delivers high-quality pre-approval training to all prospective adopters. This training is a mandatory component of the adoption process and is undertaken prior to formal approval. The programme is designed to ensure that individuals are well-prepared and informed before progressing further in their adoption journey (see Appendix A).

4.0 PROVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

4.1 The North Yorkshire offer for adoption support is clear, dependable, and well received by families which in turn means that referral intake and requests for support remains high, as the service prides itself on being a service that is visible, available and consistent.

4.2 From 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 North Yorkshire received 67 new contacts for support compared to 53 in 2023/2024. At the end of 2024/25, 155 children were in receipt of Adoption Support, this is an increase of (n=125) 30 compared to the same point last year. To provide further context, the number open to the RAA has also increased to 300 cases compared to 277 at the end of 2024/25. As often seen in adoption support, this number can fluctuate somewhat, with some children exiting the service and new contacts received.

4.3 Over the past 3.5 years, North Yorkshire has accounted for an average of 42% of assessments for adoption support across the RAA. This ties into North Yorkshire's and the RAA's

commitment to support permanency for children and families well beyond the initial placement to ensure the best possible outcomes and in upholding our commitment to the adoption community.

4.4 North Yorkshire and the wider regional agency is committed to promoting opportunities for the workforce to continue to develop their practice in accordance with good practice and meeting regulatory requirements.

- Workers recently attended Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) training which has allowed for consistency of understanding across the teams and how assessment and support provided to prospective adopters and established adoptive families can be delivered.
- Workers attended various briefings and workshops delivered by Adoption England, and external providers with whom we share good working relationships, i.e. Adoption UK, PAC UK, CoramBAAF, New Family Social and across our pan regional Voluntary Adoption Alliance (VAA).

4.5 Below is a table of the support available to all adopters within North Yorkshire. In Appendix B is more detailed information around the support offer.

<p>Core Support Services</p>	<p>Support Groups Families are invited to join the One Adoption mailing list. Events include summer picnics, Easter crafts, and Christmas parties. Drop-in sessions offer both child-focused and adult-focused support.</p> <p>Workshops Delivered by North Yorkshire virtually and open to all: Supporting Education Therapeutic Parenting Techniques Contact and Identity Parenting Adopted Teens (Pan-regional)</p> <p>Peer Mentor Service Delivered via Adoption UK Provides mentoring to adopters at all stages. Recent changes include the end of the adoption passport and a shift to volunteer-led support on training.</p> <p>Youth Engagement – The Bridge Project Funded by John Lewis, delivered by Adoption UK. Supports adopted youth (14–17) with self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. Youth-led activities include training resource creation and engagement with professionals.</p>
<p>Specialist Programmes</p>	<p>Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Support New workshops in development with FASD Network. Aims to raise awareness and provide early intervention. Recognises the prevalence of FASD among adopted children.</p> <p>Safe and Meaningful Contact Guidelines Based on the PLWG Report on Adoption 2025. Emphasises child-centred contact planning and lifelong support. Training supports identity, stability, and adoptive parent empowerment.</p> <p>Staff Development Training includes gender diversity, emotional capacity assessment Staff attend briefings from national and regional partners.</p> <p>Enhancing Adoptive Parenting (EAP) A 10-week, evidence-based programme delivered in-home. Focuses on behaviour management, trauma understanding, and relationship building.</p> <p>Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) Addresses harmful behaviours using peaceful resistance principles. Delivered in groups or individually; 5 groups have supported 24 families since 2023.</p> <p>Theraplay Enhances attachment and emotional connection through structured play. Delivered individually at various stages of adoption.</p>

Pilot Projects	<p>Pilot 1: Stronger Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early support for adopters (and special guardians) of children aged 8–12. • Aims to reduce crisis interventions and build peer support networks. <p>Pilot 2: Pan-Regional Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on co-production with adopted youth and adults. • Activities include advisory groups, digital engagement, and resource development.
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4.6 As part of a wider commitment to improving outcomes for adoptive families across One Adoption North and Humber, two pan-regional pilot programmes have been developed in collaboration with One Adoption West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. These pilots aim to strengthen early support and enhance lived experience engagement. By pooling resources and expertise across regions, the pilots offer a more consistent and family-focused approach to adoption support. They reflect a shared vision of delivering timely, evidence-based interventions that meet the evolving needs of children, young people, and families throughout their adoption journey.

Pilot 1: Early Support – Stronger Families Programme

In collaboration with One Adoption West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, funding has been devolved to develop *Stronger Families*, an early support initiative for adoptive parents and special guardians. The programme will be delivered by an independent provider from the Yorkshire and Humber Approved Provider List, offering therapeutic parenting groups for carers of children aged 8–12 across the pan-region.

This pilot aims to:

- Provide timely access to support, reducing delays and pressure on wider services.
- Address low-level needs early, preventing escalation to high-cost interventions.
- Promote proactive engagement with support services, reducing crisis-driven referrals.
- Foster informal peer networks through group delivery, complementing formal peer support offers.

Implementation is planned for Autumn 2025.

Pilot 2: Pan-Regional Collaboration and Innovation

This pilot pools funding to strengthen regional working and drive innovation in adoption support. Key priorities include:

1. Tailored support for adopted people and their families.
2. Ensuring lived experience informs service design and delivery.
3. Supporting adopted people to maintain important relationships and understand their adoption journey.

Activities will focus on co-production with adopted young people and adults (18–25), including:

- Developing training and resources for adopters and adopted individuals.
- Enhancing digital engagement and accessibility.
- Establishing an Adopted Persons Advisory Group to shape strategic direction.

Together, these pilots demonstrate the value of pan-regional collaboration in delivering consistent, responsive, and family-focused adoption support services.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

5.1 North Yorkshire’s Strength in Relationships Practice Model is firmly rooted in a strengths-based, family-first approach, with a strong emphasis on keeping children safely within their birth families wherever possible. The practice model builds around the principles of systemic practice, which takes a relationship-based approach, delivering change through a relational way of working that aims to bring out, share and respect the stories and strengths of all involved to enable a positive way forward.

5.2 As a result, we continue to see lower numbers of children progressing with plans of adoption compared to other regions. This reflects a deliberate and thoughtful strategy that prioritises early intervention, family support, and permanence through kinship care or reunification where appropriate. While adoption remains a vital pathway for children who cannot remain with their birth families, the model ensures that it is pursued only when all other safe and sustainable options have been fully explored.

6.0 CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 The Public Law Working Group (PLWG) Report on Adoption 2025 focuses on improving adoption practice, with a strong emphasis on modernising approaches to contact, enhancing lifelong support, and ensuring adoption processes are centred around the needs and rights of children and families.

6.2 The PLWG Report highlights a shift towards greater openness in adoption, with a strong emphasis on maintaining meaningful connections between adopted children and their birth families where appropriate. It calls for enhanced, child-centred contact planning, stronger post-adoption support, and increased judicial scrutiny to ensure contact arrangements are well-evidenced and flexible over time.

6.3 In response, the *Safe and Meaningful Contact* training equips practitioners with tools to make informed, evidence-based decisions about contact for children in care or permanent arrangements. It supports ensuring that the child's needs are paramount and focuses on identifying how contact can be safely managed to benefit their emotional wellbeing. This approach strengthens permanency planning by supporting lifelong identity needs, reducing placement disruption risks, and empowering adoptive families. It also encourages positive engagement from birth relatives and ensures contact plans are adaptable as children grow.

6.4 To embed this practice, each local authority aims to develop contact champions within care planning and adoption teams. These champions promote consistency, share expert knowledge, advocate for children's needs, and encourage collaboration across services, ensuring contact planning remains child-focused, safe, and meaningful.

7.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

7.1 North Yorkshire's comprehensive adoption support offer has a significant and positive impact on a range of services and partner organisations across the region and beyond. The collaborative and integrated nature of the support model strengthens multi-agency working and enhances outcomes for children and families. There is close working between the different services in the Children's directorate.

7.2 North Yorkshire's high engagement with adoption support services contributes to the overall performance and strategic direction of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). The county consistently accounts for a substantial proportion of adoption support assessments, influencing regional priorities and resource allocation.

7.3 Partnerships with organisations such as Adoption UK, the FASD Network, and the John Lewis-funded Bridge Project enable the delivery of specialised programmes and peer-led initiatives. These collaborations expand the reach and diversity of support available to families, while also promoting innovation and co-production.

7.4 Workshops on supporting education and therapeutic parenting techniques help bridge the gap between adoptive families and schools, promoting trauma-informed practices and inclusive learning environments.

7.5 The Bridge Project has fostered strong relationships with youth services, virtual schools, and local authority teams. These connections enhance the support available to adopted young people and ensure their voices are heard in service development and policy discussions.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The funding for the adoption support comes from the existing North Yorkshire budget and also from One Adoption North and Humber.

8.2 The adoption allowance budget continues to be managed well with a strong focus on sustainability, equity, and responsiveness to need. Careful oversight ensures that financial support is targeted appropriately, prioritising families with the greatest need while maintaining fairness across the local authority. Regular reviews and robust decision-making processes help to ensure that allowances are allocated in line with policy criteria, supporting placement stability and enabling families to access the resources required to meet their children's needs. This approach not only maximises the impact of available funding but also contributes to the long-term success of adoptive placements.

8.3 Although not a direct financial implication for North Yorkshire, it is worth noting the government has recently announced that whilst the total funding for the ASGSF for 2025-26 remains effectively the same as last year (£50 million), changes to the 2025-26 fund include:

- The fair access limit (FAL) for therapy has been reduced from £5,000 to £3,000 per child per year.
- The limit for specialist assessments remains at £2,500. There is no longer a separate FAL for this, any specialist assessment would be funded using the FAL or £3,000, any remaining funds could then be used for therapy.
- Additional match-funded support for exceptional cases is no longer available.

8.4 This will have a significant impact on children and families, and we continue to work in collaboration with regional adoption agencies and Adoption England, to explore delivery models that seek to support families. Collectively we acknowledge that this has been a very challenging time for many families across the region and the service will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the service provides the best possible service.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The workforce regularly undergo compulsory information security and data protection training.

9.2 An information sharing agreement is in place between partner agencies and One Adoption North and Humber.

9.3 North Yorkshire's adoption support services operate within the framework of UK adoption law, including the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which mandates the provision of post-adoption support. The increase in referrals and support cases reflects the authority's commitment to fulfilling its statutory duties.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The adoption team play a necessary role in enabling North Yorkshire to effectively meet the needs of adoptive children and families through the services delivered both directly within North Yorkshire and across the Regional Adoption Agency.

10.2 Currently there is a shortage of prospective adopters both locally and nationally, which continues to present a significant challenge for the timely placement of children. Despite ongoing recruitment efforts, the number of approved adopters remains insufficient to meet the needs of

children waiting for adoption, particularly those with more complex needs, children who are part of sibling groups and those being placed through early permanence arrangements. The shortage presents a significant challenge to achieving timely and stable placements and highlights the need for on-going recruitment strategies and support for prospective adopters willing to consider these types of placements.

10.3 North Yorkshire's adoption support services are designed to be accessible to all adoptive families, regardless of background, location, or stage in the adoption journey. The virtual delivery of workshops and individualised support (e.g. EAP, Theraplay, NVR) ensures that families in rural or remote areas, or those with mobility or time constraints, are not disadvantaged.

10.4 North Yorkshire's adoption support offer demonstrates a strong commitment to equality through inclusive service design, targeted support for diverse needs, and active engagement with service users. Continued attention to accessibility, cultural competence, and lived experience will be essential to maintaining and enhancing equitable outcomes across the region.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Pan-regional collaboration and shared delivery models (pilots with One Adoption West and South Yorkshire) promote efficient use of resources. This reduces duplication and supports a more sustainable approach to service planning and delivery.

11.2 Where in-person services are required (e.g. Theraplay, NVR, Bridge groups), they are often delivered locally or regionally. This minimises long-distance travel and encourages the use of community venues, which can reduce the environmental footprint compared to centralised service models.

11.3 The use of digital communication (e.g. mailing lists, online resources, and virtual training) contributes to a reduction in paper consumption and travel. This aligns with broader sustainability goals and supports environmentally responsible practice.

12.0 CONCLUSIONS

12.1 North Yorkshire's adoption service offer demonstrates a robust, responsive, and evolving commitment to children and families throughout the adoption journey. From comprehensive pre-approval training to post-placement support, the service provides a continuum of care that is both evidence-informed and rooted in lived experience.

12.2 The training programme equips prospective adopters with essential knowledge and reflective tools, preparing them for the realities of adoptive parenting. Specialist modules, such as sibling adoption, Early Permanence Placements (EPP), and Connected People training, ensure that adopters and their support networks are well-informed and confident in their roles.

12.3 Post-approval, North Yorkshire continues to lead in adoption support across the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), offering a wide range of services including therapeutic parenting programmes, support groups, and targeted interventions such as Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) and Theraplay. The service's visibility and consistency have contributed to high engagement levels and positive outcomes for families.

12.4 Innovative projects such as the Bridge programme and pan-regional pilots reflect a forward-thinking approach, placing lived experience and co-production at the heart of service development. These initiatives not only empower adopted young people but also shape future practice and policy.

12.5 North Yorkshire remains committed to delivering high-quality, accessible, and meaningful adoption support. Through collaboration, adaptability, and a strong focus on permanency and identity,

the service continues to uphold its mission: to ensure every adopted child and family receives the support they need to thrive.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress of the Adoption Support Services provided to adopted children and their families in North Yorkshire.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Adoption preparation training

Appendix B – Adoption support offer

Sir Stuart Carlton
Corporate Director – Children and Young Peoples Services
County Hall
Northallerton
12 August 2025

Report Author – Claire Dimmey, Adoption Service Manager
Presenter of Report – Rosie Appleby, Head of Placement Support

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendix A

Pre-Approval Training for Prospective Adopters (Pre-approval and prior to a child being placed)

Pre-Approval Prospective Adopter Preparation Training Overview

The pre-approval training programme for prospective adopters is delivered over three structured days. The day's focus on key themes essential to understanding the adoption journey and preparing adopters for the challenges and rewards of adoptive parenting. Each day is structured to build understanding, promote reflection, and equip participants with practical tools and insights. An experienced adopter is part of this training programme to offer their own personal perspectives and experiences.

Day 1: Understanding the Adoption Journey

- **The Adoption Process**

An overview of the stages involved in becoming an adopter, including assessment and approval. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their motivations and readiness for adoption.

- **Legal Framework**

A detailed explanation of the legal processes underpinning adoption, including court proceedings and parental responsibility.

- **A Child's Journey Through Adoption**

Exploration of the child's experience from entry into care to placement, highlighting emotional and developmental impacts.

Day 2: Child Development and Therapeutic Approaches

- **Attachment and Trauma**

Examines how early trauma affects attachment and the long-term implications for a child's emotional wellbeing, including pre-birth trauma, on child development and the implications for adoptive parenting.

- **Interactive Activities** to illustrate the hidden emotional and behavioural layers beneath a child's outward behaviour, and to demonstrate the barriers children may build as a result of trauma and loss

- **Therapeutic Parenting**

Introduction to therapeutic parenting strategies designed to support healing and build secure relationships.

Day 3: Identity, Contact, and the Role of Play

- **Identity and Loss**

Participants explore the cumulative losses experienced by children in care and the impact of separation, loss, and identity formation for adopted children.

- **Contact After Adoption**

Overview of different types of post-adoption contact and considerations for early permanence placements.

- **The Importance of Play**

Practical session demonstrating play-based techniques, including Theraplay, to support attachment and emotional regulation.

Exploring adopting a sibling group

This training programme is designed to support prospective adopters in considering the unique dynamics and implications of sibling adoption. The aim is to enable applicants to reflect on their individual circumstances and how these may influence their matching criteria.

Key Objectives

- **Personal Reflection and Matching Criteria**

Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their own circumstances, capacities, and support networks to inform decisions around matching, particularly in relation to sibling groups.

- **Exploring the Positives and Challenges of Adopting Siblings**
Provides a balanced overview of the benefits and complexities associated with sibling placements, including emotional bonds, behavioural dynamics, and long-term outcomes.
- **Support Packages for Sibling Adopters**
An outline of the support available to adopters matched with sibling groups is provided, including therapeutic services, and ongoing professional guidance.

Early Permanence Placements (EPP) Preparation

This training is designed to support prospective adopters in understanding Early Permanence Placements (EPP) and evaluating whether this route aligns with their personal circumstances and adoption journey.

Aims

- **To prepare adopters for EPP**
Adopters are given detailed information on the EPP process, including its legal, emotional, and practical implications. It aims to equip adopters with the knowledge and confidence needed to consider this pathway.
- **To support decision-making around EPP suitability**
Adopters are encouraged to reflect on their readiness and capacity to engage with EPP, considering the potential uncertainties and responsibilities involved. The session facilitates informed decision-making about whether EPP is the right route for them.

Connected People Training: Supporting Family and Friends in the Adoption Journey

Overview

In North Yorkshire the Connected People training is delivered in two parts and is designed to support the wider network of prospective adopters—including family and friends—by increasing their understanding of the adoption process and the needs of adopted children. The training aims to equip support networks with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide informed, empathetic, and consistent support throughout the adoption journey.

Part 1: General Awareness and Preparation

This session is open to any family members or friends identified by the adopters as part of their support network.

Key Topics Covered:

- The Adoption Process
- Understanding the Adopter's Journey
- Attachment and Child Development
- Brief overview of Therapeutic Parenting
- Trauma Awareness
- Support Promises - Family and friends are invited to reflect on and articulate the support they can offer now and in the future.

Part 2: Child-Specific Preparation

This session is delivered once a specific child/ren have been identified. It may involve the same or additional family and friends.

Key Topics Covered:

- Process Mapping and Next Steps
- Child Overview - a brief introduction to the child, including information to help the support network understand their needs.
- Introductions and Meeting Family Members
- Legal Process
- Emphasis on Self-Care in the Early Days
- Revisiting Attachment
- Secondary Trauma and Post-Adoption Depression
- Contact After Adoption
- Confidentiality, maintaining the child's privacy and being mindful of their story, social media

Appendix B

North Yorkshire Adoption Support (Post approval and post a child being placed in the care of adopters)

Support groups

Within the assessment stage, all prospective and established adoptive families are invited to join the One Adoption mailing list. As part of this mailing list, all individuals are welcomed to join our range of annual social events that happen across the RAA, these include summer picnics, Easter crafts and Christmas parties. Together with this there are several drop-in sessions offering support that take place across the RAA, with a mix of stay and play groups and adult focused groups.

Workshops

North Yorkshire adoption team provide several workshop groups that happen throughout the year, these take place virtually and therefore all are welcome to join. The themes of these workshops are

- Supporting Education
- Therapeutic Parenting Techniques
- Contact and Identity
- Parenting Adopted Teens (Pan Regional offer – open to One Adoption West Yorkshire and One Adoption South Yorkshire adoptive families)

Therapeutic Parenting Techniques

Enhancing Adoptive Parenting (EAP) is research driven and an evidence-based parenting programme for use with new adopters. The programme has cognitive behavioural aspects, and the aim is to support the stability of the adoptive placement; to reduce the level of child difficulties; to enhance parenting skills and understanding; and to improve relationships. It is a 10-week parenting programme in which the sessions take place within the home with the parents. The parents are also expected put into practice, and reflect, on the elements of each session and then bring reflections to the next session. The sessions combine practical parenting advice as well as help in understanding the child. The programme covers topics such as advice on

- managing challenging behaviour and setting limits
- promoting increased reflection on the child's prior experience and possible links with current behaviour and needs
- helping adopters to maintain empathy and warmth and resist withdrawal
- promoting calm and sensitive responding and encourages adopters to examine their own emotional responses to challenging behaviour

NYC has trained workers to deliver EAP, they do this on an individual basis and at different stages of a child's life stage, for example either before or after the making of an adoption order.

Non-Violence Resistance (NVR) Managing Conflict

Non-violent resistance addresses destructive and harmful behaviours in children and adolescents. The methods and ideas of non-violent direct action and resistance from Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks are used in community and family settings to help parents and carers with their parenting. NVR can help parents and carers overcome their sense of helplessness. It can help develop a support network that will stop violent and destructive behaviours both in and out of the home. It can improve relationships between family members and the outside world. Key concepts of non-violent resistance in parenting include:

- de-escalating conflicts
- increasing parental presence
- taking a firm stand against any acts of violence done by yourself and your child or adolescent announcing this commitment to your child or adolescent
- arranging sit-ins
- breaking the cycle of shame and silence
- recruiting and utilising supporters

- creating reconciliation gestures that are not linked to the young person's behaviour but increase positive interactions between parents and young people

North Yorkshire have workers within the team who are trained to deliver this on either a one-to-one basis or within a group setting and since 2023 have delivered five groups to date, reaching 24 families within NYC to date.

Theraplay

Theraplay is a child and family treatment for enhancing attachment, self-esteem, trust in others and joyful engagement. It is based on the natural patterns of healthy interaction between parent and child, and is personal, physical and fun.

Theraplay interactions focus on four essential qualities found in parent–child relationships: Structure, Engagement, Nurture and Challenge.

Theraplay sessions create an active and emotional connection between the child and parents, resulting in a changed view of the child as worthy and lovable and of relationships as positive and rewarding. In treatment, the Theraplay practitioner carefully guides the parent and child through playful, fun games, developmentally challenging activities, and tender, nurturing activities. The very act of engaging each other in this way helps the parent regulate the child's behaviour and communicate love, joy, and safety to the child. This in turn will help the child feel secure, cared for, connected and worthy. With Theraplay, family interaction patterns have improved positive changes have been reported in children's behaviour, self-esteem, and connections with others.

Theraplay can help children who have experienced trauma begin to heal, can help children with developmental disorders feel more comfortable with social interaction, and can help families to experience happiness and connection.

In NYC we have trained workers to deliver Theraplay, they do this on an individual basis and at different stages of a child's life stage, for example either before or after the making of an adoption order.

Peer Mentor Service

The Peer Mentoring Service in One Adoption North and Humber (contracted via Adoption UK) remains consistent and stable, with a cohort of adopter peer mentors who provide a mentoring service to prospective adopters, approved adopters waiting for a match, and adopters with children placed.

There have been some recent developments with this agreement, Adoption UK have ceased providing the adoption passport, the membership which was offered to adopters within their first 12 months of approval has ceased. The co-delivery of adopter preparation training is now being set up through the RAA on a volunteer scheme, this is in the planning stages.

The Bridge Project (delivered by Adoption UK and funded by the company John Lewis)

The Bridge is a welcoming and friendly group project for adopted young people aged 14-17, in the North and Humber region. It offers a space for young people to work together to develop skills such as self-esteem, confidence, and the ability to engage with other people while having some fun along the way. The project also aims to help young people make connections, learn skills and explore their next steps into training and work.

There are now 5 local Bridge groups meeting one evening every fortnight. There has been contact with over 50 young people and their families. Out of this number, there are approximately 30 young people who regularly participate in these groups. These young people have established significant and genuine relationships with the dedicated adults and staff managing Bridge groups.

Bridge has been successful in developing partnerships with other agencies, both within Local Authority's, Youth Service, Youth Voice and Virtual Schools, as well as within the charity sector. Adoption UK currently have 3 volunteers and are open to bringing new people on board.

Without doubt the biggest success has been young people taking responsibility and ownership of "their" group. Various guests, including senior leaders from across the regional Local Authorities and RAA have come and had discussions with the young people attending the groups. There has also been attendance at the groups from other services including the Police Service placed within the Youth Justice Service and people who have come to share their own lived experiences of being adopted.

Some prospective adoptive families have attended a group to meet with the young people, to hear their views and advice. This has been an empowering experience for the young people, in a way that enables them to feel valued and listened to and that they are contributing to not only the lives of others, but to the culture of practice within our regional agency.

At the end of last year Bridge members went to London and had a 90-minute meeting with Janet Daby MP, Minister for Children and Families at the Department of Education, sharing their lived experiences. Janet kindly wrote a heartfelt letter back to the young people thanking them for their contributions.

Young people from across Bridge groups attended a One Adoption North and Humber all staff development day, meeting the staff from across the agency and talking about their lived experiences with the assembled audience. One young person wrote some poems and songs, and these are now being used in the training of prospective adopters. Also, the young people produced a game from an adopted teenager's perspective to be used within the assessment and training process for prospective adopters across the region.

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – offering support to our adoptive families and prospective adopters

One Adoption North and Humber are currently developing new workshop modules with a specific focus on (FASD). This is in collaboration with the FASD Network, with the aim of raising awareness and promoting early intervention strategies for families, along with support and guidance for established adoptive families.

Nationally there has been an increase in FASD for children who are placed for adoption, although it is not often diagnosed at the point of a child moving in with their adoptive family. Research studies have found that between 54% and 70% of mothers whose children were adopted from care misused drugs and/or alcohol during pregnancy, (Placing Children with Disabilities with Adoptive Families, scoping report, Brown & Selwyn 2023).

In addition, we are looking to enhance our early placement support, recognising the critical role that guidance, connection, and therapeutic input can have in achieving family stability and belonging for children, at the earliest stages of family life. Supporting adopters comprehensively is essential to the stability and success of adoptive families.

Adoption brings both joy and challenge, and when adopters feel informed, supported, and connected, they are better able to provide the nurturing, resilient care that children need and deserve. Our holistic model of preparation, ongoing support, and community connection ensures that no adopter feels alone, and every child has the best possible chance to thrive.

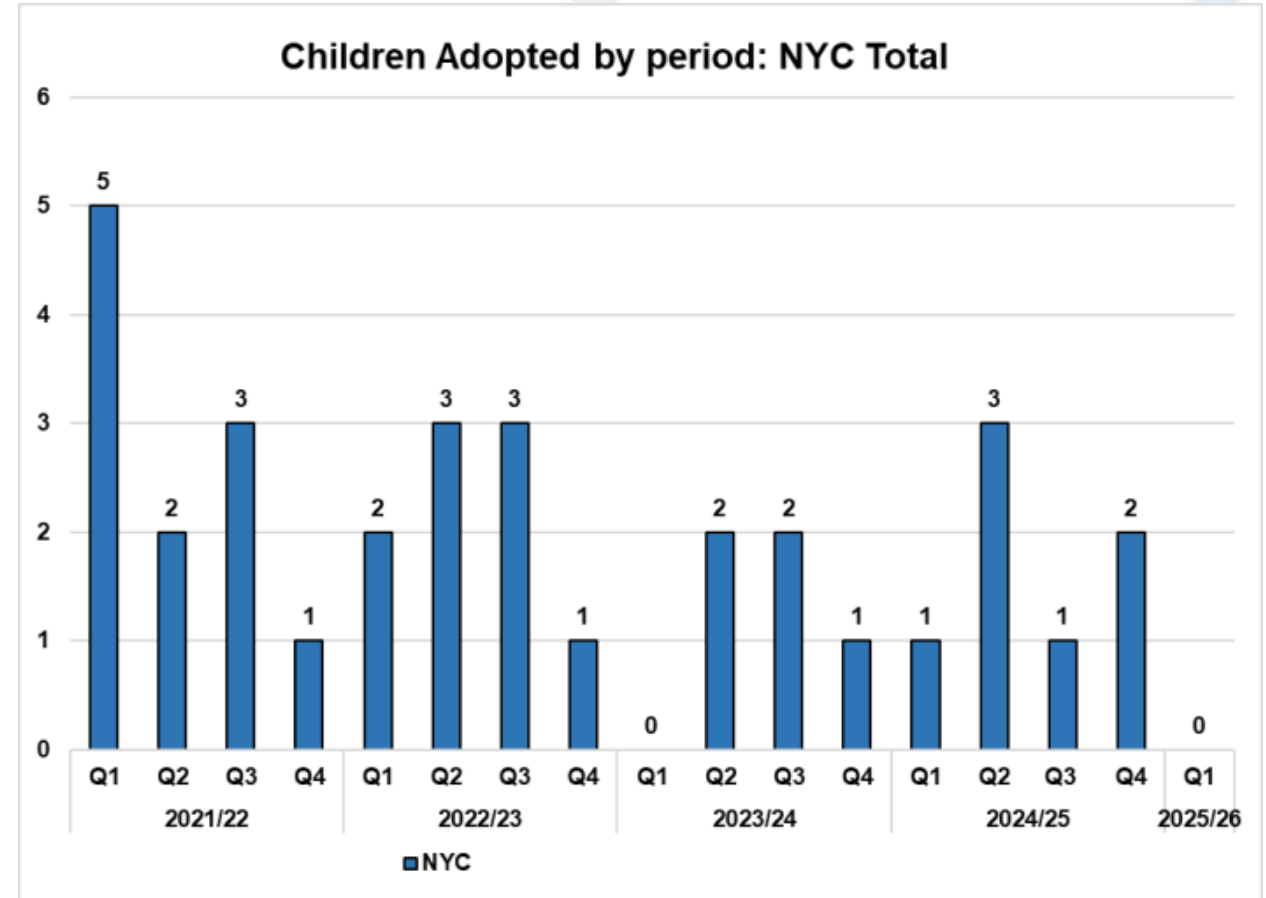
Adoption North Yorkshire

CYPS Scrutiny Committee Update – September 2025

North Yorkshire Adoptions

- At the end of 2024/25, from data shared by the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), North Yorkshire reported 7 adoptions in 2024/25. As a comparison at the end of 2023/24 there were 5 adoptions in North Yorkshire, representing an increase of 2 children adopted. The numbers in the last 2 years are lower than the previous 2 years (2021/22 to 2022/23).
- At the end of Q1 2025/26 there were zero children adopted to date in North Yorkshire.

Page 104

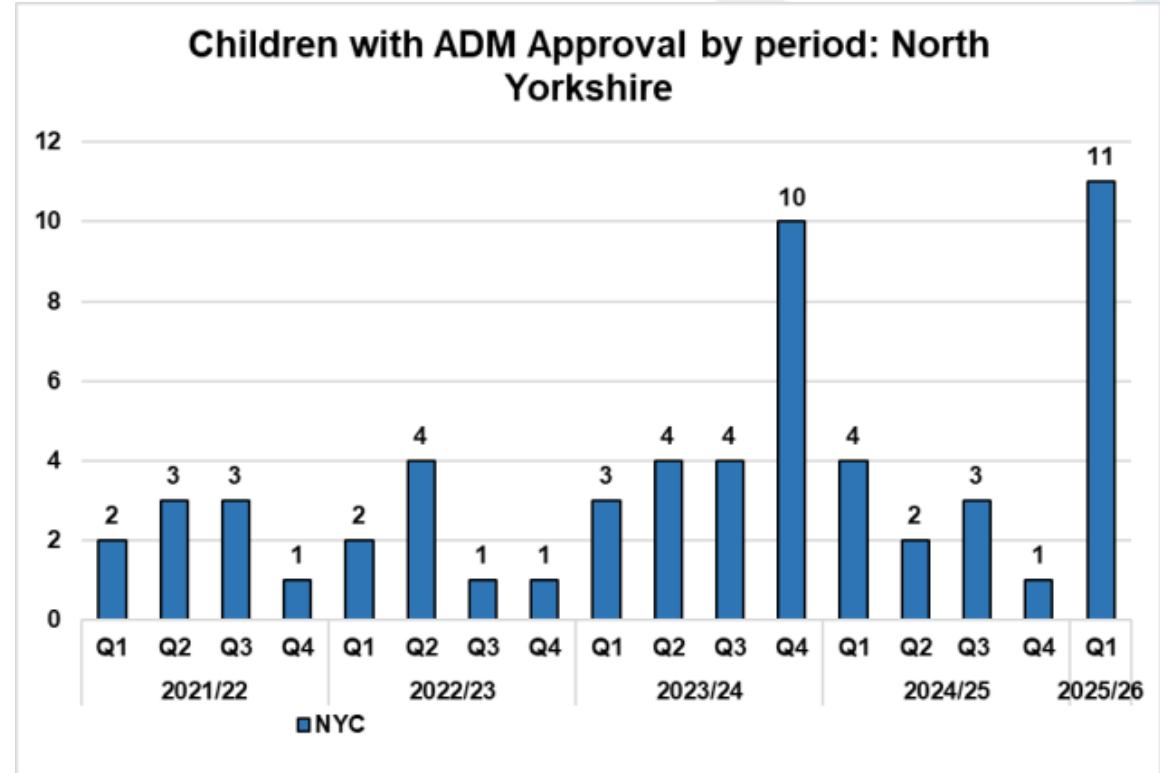


One
Adoption Agency
NORTH & HUMBER



North Yorkshire Adoptions with ADM Approval

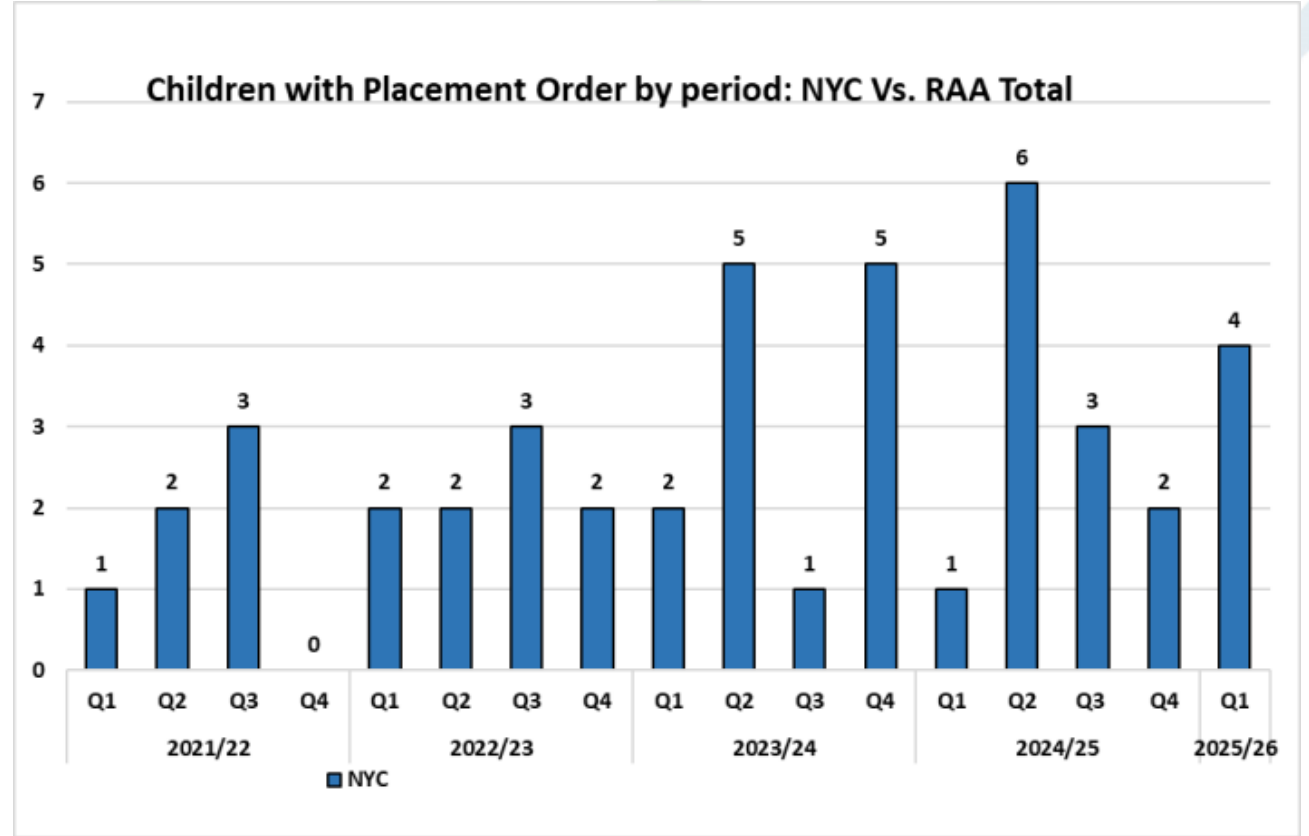
- At the end of 2024/25 there were 10 children approved by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) with plans for adoption in North Yorkshire, compared to 21 in the previous year 2023/24.
- At the end of Q1 2025/26 the number of children with an ADM approval in North Yorkshire have increased considerably up to 11, this is 10 more than Q4 2024/25 and 7 more than Q1 2024/25.



North Yorkshire Children with a Placement Order

- At the end of 2024/25 there were 12 children with a placement order in North Yorkshire, compared to 13 in the previous year at Q4 2023/24, so remaining in line year on year.
- In Q1 of 2025/26 the number of children granted a placement order was reported as 4, compared to Q1 in 2024/25 there was 1 this is an increase of 3 children year on year.

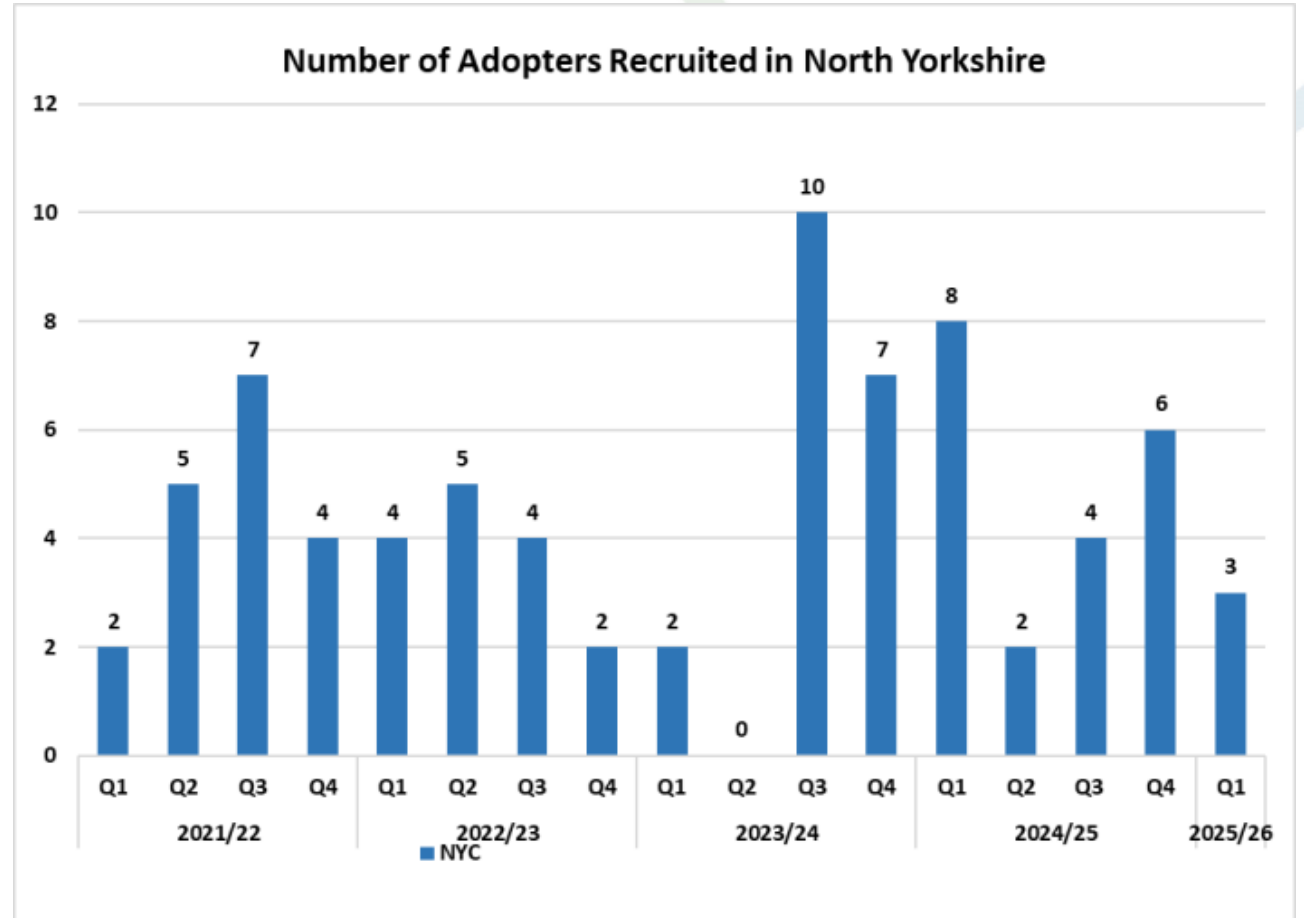
Page 106



Number of Adopters Recruited

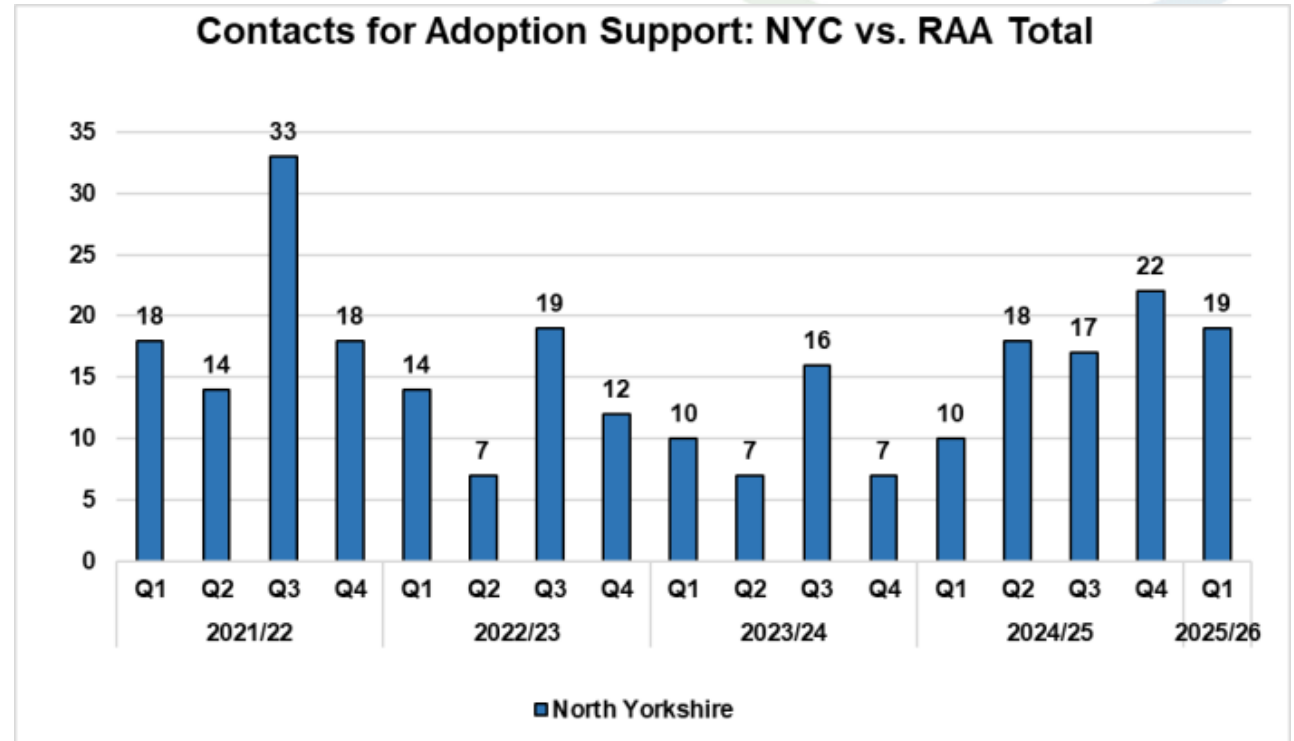
- At the end of 2024/25, the number of approved adopters was 20, compared to 19 at the end of 2023/24.
- As a year-on-year comparison at the end of Q1 2025/26 there has been 3 approved adopters, compared to 8 at the end of Q1 2024/25.

• Page 107



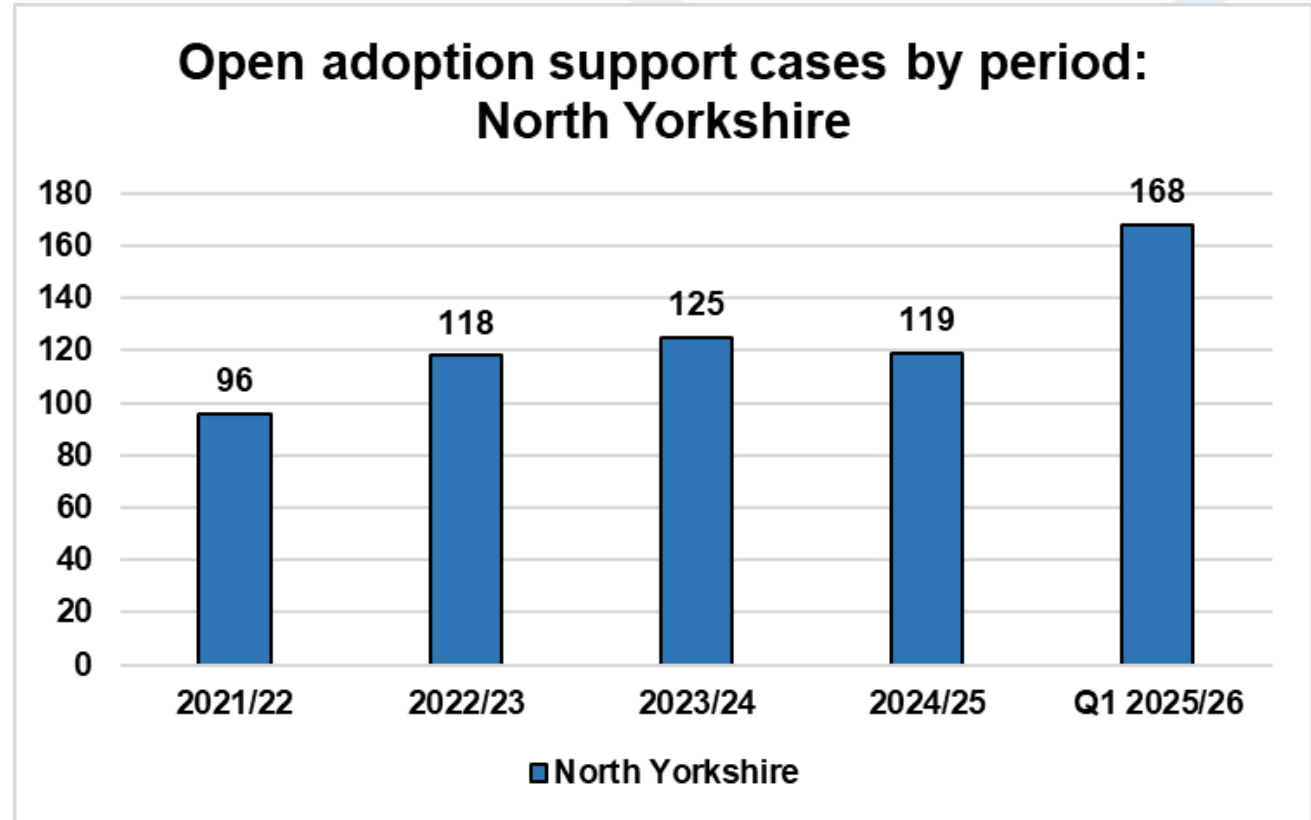
Adoption Support Contacts

- At the end of 2024/25 there were 67 new contacts for adoption support in North Yorkshire compared to 40 in the previous year 2023/24, this is a significant increase of 27 new contacts year on year.
- At the end of Q1 2025/26 the number of new contacts for adoption support in North Yorkshire was reported as 19, compared to Q1 2024/25 10 contacts, this is an increase of 9 contacts year on year.



Open Adoption Support Cases

- At the end of 2024/25 there were 119 open children for adoption support in North Yorkshire compared to 125 at the end of 2023/24, a decrease of 6 open cases.
- Currently at the end of Q1 2025/26 the number of children open to adoption support is 168 which is a significant increase at the start of 2025/26 compared to year end of 2024/25.



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NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Draft Committee Work Programme 2025/2026

SCOPE OF THE COMMITTEE

- The interests of young people, including education, care and protection and family support

Meeting dates

- Scheduled Committee Meetings: 18 June 2025, 17 September 2025, 17 December 2025, 25 March 2026 in person.
- Scheduled Mid Cycle Briefings: 1 April 2025, 5 August 2025, 17 November 2025, 19 January 2026 via Teams.

Meeting	Subject	Aims/Terms of Reference	Report
Wednesday 18 June 2025	Young People’s Champion Annual Report 2024/2025	To receive the annual report	Cllr Alyson Baker (Young People’s Champion)
	Minority Inclusion Support	Update on the Minority Inclusion Support provided by North Yorkshire Council	Barbara Merrygold (Head of Early Help)
	Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill	Summary of the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill and implications for North Yorkshire Council	Stuart Carlton (Corporate Director)
Wednesday 17 September 2025	Briefing relating to the Post Implementation Review of the Home to School Travel Policy	A briefing on the post implementation review (PIR)	Amanda Fielding (Assistant Director, Inclusion)
	Performance Report for Quarter 1 2025-26	Summary of the latest Children and Families performance report	Alice Fox (Senior Scrutiny Officer) Chris Watson (Corporate Strategy and Performance Lead)

	Foster Service Update	Number of children in care and of foster carers	Mel Hutchinson (Assistant Director, Children and Families) Rosie Appleby (Head of Placement Support)
	North Yorkshire Council Adoption Service	Adoption Processes and Support	Mel Hutchinson (Assistant Director, Children and Families) Rosie Appleby (Head of Placement Support)
Wednesday 17 December 2025	North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/2025	Summary of North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/2025	Heather Pearson (Chair of NYSCP and Independent Scrutineer)
	AI and how North Yorkshire Council is utilising AI techniques	Summary of how Children and Young People's Services utilise AI and what the future looks like	Jonny Hoyle (Development Lead Child Permanence)
	SEND Update	Progress update of the SEND action plan	Amanda Fielding (Assistant Director, Inclusion) Chris Reynolds (Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resource)
	SEND Employment Forum	Update on the SEND Employment Forum	Amanda Fielding (Assistant Director, Inclusion) Chris Reynolds (Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resource)
	Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report 2024/2025	To receive and note the annual report	Anita Dobson (Chair of the Child Death Overview Panel)

Wednesday 25 March 2026	School Attendance Update	Update on attendance and exclusion of primary and secondary school children in North Yorkshire	Amanda Fielding (Assistant Director)
	North Yorkshire SACRE Annual Report 2024/2025	Annual update to the committee	Julie Pattison (Principal Adviser Monitoring, School Improvement Team)
	Performance Monitoring Data	Bi-annual summary of the latest Children and Families performance report	Alice Fox (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

ITEMS FOR MID CYCLE BRIEFINGS

DATE	POTENTIAL ITEM
Tuesday 1 April 2025, 11am-12pm (in respect of the Committee meeting on 18 June 2025)	To be determined
Tuesday 5 August 2025, 10-11am (in respect of the Committee meeting on 17 September 2025)	To be determined
Monday 17 November 2025, 3-4pm (in respect of the Committee meeting on 17 December 2025)	To be determined
Monday 19 January 2026, 10-11am (in respect of the Committee meeting on 25 March 2026)	To discuss draft work programme for 2026/27

Mid Cycle Briefings are attended by the Chair, Vice Chair and Group Spokespersons only.

Please note that the work programme is under continuous review and items may be rescheduled several times during the year.

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